



Customer satisfaction and managerial sales recommendations for *B2B* high-involvement products: the case of business aircraft

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Executive Summary

Due to a need to deepen academic knowledge pertaining to customer satisfaction and personal selling in business-to-business (*B2B*) environments, and the existence of important gaps between *B2B* theory and practice, this research attempted to provide a comprehensive outlook of customers' overall satisfaction for *B2B* high-involvement products by focusing on the global business aircraft industry. To this end, a conceptual model inspired from Spreng, MacKenzie & Olshavsky (1996) was conceived and incorporated one dependent, and six independent variables. More precisely, pre-purchase desires and expectations, desires and expectations congruency, and post-purchase product attributes and information satisfaction acted as independent variables. On the other hand, overall customer satisfaction for *B2B* high-involvement products, in this case business aircraft, figured as the dependent variable. Six main research hypotheses were then formulated and tested using elaborate statistical analyses, in order to generate ten managerial sales recommendations aimed at improving not only business aircraft manufacturers and operators' sales performance, but also their customers' overall level of satisfaction.

A questionnaire was sent electronically to worldwide business aircraft owners, and stakeholders identified as currently playing or having played an active role in the purchasing process of a business aircraft on the customer's end. For clarification purposes, all stakeholders and business aircraft owners aimed by this research were either evolving within the global business aircraft/aerospace industry or not. In fact, some were identified as working in different fields, such as legal, finance, consultancy, flight operations, aircraft maintenance, engineering, external sales representatives, and various other ones.

As a result, 387 participants responded to this survey and allowed our research team to determine that business aircraft do confer an enhanced level of convenience and flight experience to their owners, but not any social status or prestige. Product attributes' satisfaction involving attributes related to luxury & comfort, performance and service was also found to have the most influence onto customers' overall satisfaction, comparatively to information satisfaction. Furthermore, personal selling quality was identified as having a beneficial impact onto customers pre-purchase desires' degree of fulfilment.

The conceptual model conceived for this research turned out to be appropriate for the testing of several hypotheses, but not all of them. Indeed, the one regarding the direct relationship between pre-purchase expectations and post-purchase expectations congruency remains invalidated. The fact that such model was inspired from one originally used in a business-to-consumer (*B2C*) environment may partly explain this occurrence. As such, this also indicates that it would require specific adjustments prior to being used again in future *B2B* researches.

With an average overall satisfaction level of 56,3%, participants were particularly dissatisfied regarding service-related attributes and the personal selling quality encountered during the purchasing process of their aircraft. More precisely, 105 business aircraft owners demonstrated an average satisfaction level of 54,9%, compared to 56,9% for all 139 stakeholders who participated to this study. Convenience, performance attributes, and perceived value were also identified as the most influential satisfaction determinants in customers' purchase decision with respective influence degrees of 85,8%, 83%, and 82%. Therefore, an aircraft's performance, ability to buy time and save money constitute the most important aspects that customers consider, when acquiring a business aircraft. Lastly, ten managerial sales recommendations encompassing aspects such as product information, customer approach, salespeople attitude, external stakeholders' involvement, salesforce education, ongoing support, and durable business relationships were generated.

Several of this research's limitations were then examined, including the fact that overall satisfaction was not measured using Likert scale, and future research perspectives were also explored. These ones brought forth either new or complementary methodologies to this research, and emphasized the importance of conducting researches that may be beneficial to the global business aircraft industry, such as examining and comparing customer satisfaction pertaining to different types of *B2B* high-involvement products like luxury yachts, automobiles, and helicopters.

Keywords: Business aircraft; *B2B* sales; customer satisfaction; high-involvement products; sales performance; personal selling; managerial sales recommendations

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Introduction

Multiple researchers have argued in the last few years that there exists an important gap between business-to-business (*B2B*) theory and practice (Gummesson, 2013; Ruiz, Kowalkowski, 2014; LaPlaca, da Silva, 2016). While much research and many case studies have already been conducted in a business-to-consumer (*B2C*) environment, much less attention has been devoted to a *B2B* context. There is still an important need to deepen academic knowledge and create novel perspectives on various non-economic factors, such as feelings, emotions, trust, consumer satisfaction, and purchase motivations related to or involved in organizational purchasing (LaPlaca and da Silva, 2016).

One of these factors mentioned by LaPlaca and da Silva (2016), more precisely consumer satisfaction, can be regarded as the ultimate objective a company aims for when designing and selling a product. It has come to be regarded as the foundation for many companies operating in various markets (Szymanski and Henard, 2001). In a *B2B* context, such factor has the ability to influence customers repurchase decision, word-of-mouth behavioural intentions, quality of future business relationships, and the level of loyalty towards manufacturers (Molinari, Abratt and Dion, 2008; Gil-Saura, Frasquet-Deltoro and Cervera-Taulet, 2009). Furthermore, and according to Molinari, Abratt and Dion (2008): “research in satisfaction in *B2B* markets is lagging behind consumer marketing” (p. 364).

In this line of thought, and for the purpose of this research, the following literature review will attempt to analyze, interpret, and compare various academic articles and studies that were conducted to deepen knowledge pertaining to the influential determinants of *B2B* consumers’ satisfaction, after organizational purchasing. Such literature review will focus on defining the concepts that will be studied in this research. Specifically, the current research examines multiple existing conceptual models from the fields of *B2B* and *B2C* consumer satisfaction, along with the variables that compose them, explores academic articles and studies that can enhance academic knowledge pertaining to each of these variables, and lastly assesses existing methods to measure overall consumer satisfaction in a *B2B* context. This extensive literature review shall pave the way towards a methodological data-gathering process that will be conducted within the global business aircraft industry.

Based on such review, this study will be based on a conceptual model adapted from a pre-existing one conceived by Spreng, MacKenzie & Olshavsky (1996) that is depicted and tested in their Journal of Marketing article entitled: “A re-examination of the determinants of consumer satisfaction.” An explanation pertaining as to why this specific model was selected, and the role of each of its variables will be provided, by examining supporting academic articles originating from various fields of study related to each one of these variables. Research hypotheses will then be formulated and tested, in order to identify the role and influence of specific *B2B* consumer satisfaction determinants used in this model. Data acquired mainly through quantitative, but also qualitative methods shall also be statistically and methodologically analyzed. Finally, all obtained results will be interpreted, discussed and used, in order to formulate diverse marketing and sales managerial recommendations for business aircraft manufacturers and operators. Such recommendations shall aim to improve manufacturers and operators’ sales performance, along with improving their customers’ overall level of satisfaction.

Lastly, the principal limitations of this research will be discussed, along with some future research opportunities directly related to the results obtained and the examined fields of study.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

This first chapter aims to introduce every concept that will be addressed throughout this research. Furthermore, this literature review has for objective to bring forth previous academic research that introduced similar ideas and theories, in order to identify existing gaps in a *B2B* context. Finally, the following pages shall also help the reader to better understand the theoretical concepts that support and motivate the completion of this research. Due to the scarcity of *B2B* researches, it must be noted that this review mostly covers academic researches executed in a *B2C* context.

The first section shall define the concept of *consumer satisfaction*, and introduce the determinants that compose and influence it. The concept of *high-involvement* product shall then be defined, along with any additional concepts that may support it. The third section shall introduce and define various concepts that compose, influence and act as determinants of *consumer satisfaction*. Finally, various conceptual models issued from prior academic research and that played a key role in the conception of this research's model will then be examined and interpreted.

1.1 Consumer Satisfaction

In order to identify which determinants compose and influence *consumer satisfaction* for *high-involvement* products in a *B2B* context, it is imperative to preemptively define such concept, as it represents the principal outcome of this research's conceptual model. As noted by Giese and Cote (2000): “[...] researchers have yet to develop a consensual definition of consumer satisfaction” (p. 1). Yi (1990) also demonstrates that it is equally unclear whether or not satisfaction is defined as an evaluative process, or the outcome of an evaluative process (Giese and Cote, 2000). Most researchers also argue about the nature of the *consumer satisfaction* concept. Some of them, such as Bolton and Drew (1991) or Tse and Wilton (1988), portray it as a cognitive response, while others like Halstead, Hartman, and Schmidt (1994) or Westbrook and Reilly (1983) argue it is actually an affective response. Many differences also exist regarding the terms used to designate this concept (Giese and Cote, 2000).

However, the literature reviewed, especially in a *B2C* context, shares some common elements. More precisely, three components of *consumer satisfaction* seem to be recurrent and apply to this concept, regardless of the authors, researchers or articles that attempt to

deepen academic knowledge related to this field of study. The first component regards the fact that *consumer satisfaction* is an affective response that occurs following a particular business-related occurrence such as a transaction, consumption experience, or a specific product usage. This response can vary in intensity, depending on the type of situation in which it occurs, and this intensity refers to the satisfaction's response strength. The response strength will always vary, according to a scale composed by a multitude of terms ranging from "weak" to "strong" (Giese and Cote, 2000).

The second component of this concept was mentioned above, as it regards the type of business-related occurrence after which it takes place. Giese and Cote (2000) describes this business-related occurrence as a "focus," and it serves to identify "the object of a consumer's satisfaction" (p. 2). During this second component, the consumer will compare either the performance of the product or the experience of the service he purchased to some previously established standards. These standards may be used to compare one or multiple aspects of the focus, such as for example the product in its entirety, the consumption experience, the salesperson involved in the transaction or even the store at which the product or service was purchased (Giese and Cote, 2000). The clarity of this component is crucial to the concept of *consumer satisfaction* as it allows the avoidance of any "chameleon effects."

Marsh and Yeung (1999) describe "chameleon effects" as a change of the satisfaction constructs by the context in which they appear and maintain that they represent an important problem in the field of satisfaction research. It is therefore imperative that researchers take the time to precisely define the meaning of *consumer satisfaction* to the participants of their studies, prior to beginning any experiments or data-gathering processes.

Finally, the third component of *consumer satisfaction* relates to the timing at which it takes place. The literature tends to agree that this concept takes place after the purchase of a product or service, but also points out that it can take place at many other time frames, due to the fact that satisfaction varies greatly over time and that it will eventually take place when the evaluation of such product or service happens (Giese and Cote, 2000). Furthermore, no agreement seems to have been reached in regards to the duration of this concept, which consists in how long a specific satisfaction response lasts (Bolton and

Drew, 1991; Halstead, Hartman and Schmidt, 1994; Giese and Cote, 2000; Marsh and Yeung, 1999; Tse and Wilton, 1988; Westbrook and Reilly, 1983 and Yi, 1990).

It is also important to consider the opposite of *consumer satisfaction*, more precisely the concept of *consumer dissatisfaction*, as it represents an integral part of the former one. Not only should *consumer dissatisfaction* be perceived as the total opposite of *consumer satisfaction* within the realm of satisfaction, it shall also be viewed as a different dimension. Indeed, even though *consumer dissatisfaction* is still based on the same three components as *consumer satisfaction*, consumers can be satisfied with some specific aspects of the product or service purchase while also being dissatisfied with others (Giese and Cote, 2000).

Therefore, in order to avoid any confusion and, as suggested by Peterson and Wilson (1992), avert a lack of “definitional and methodological standardization,” this research will assume that *consumer satisfaction* is defined as a summary affective response of varying intensity directed at specific moments of product acquisition and consumption (Giese and Cote, 2000). Consequently, such definition allows a clear methodological examination and analysis of non-economic factors viewed as determinants of *B2B consumer satisfaction*, as prescribed by recent studies emphasizing the need to deepen related academic knowledge (LaPlaca and da Silva, 2016).

1.2 High-Involvement Products

A few studies focusing on *high-involvement* product purchases, mainly in a *B2C* context, were conducted during the late 1980’s and early 1990’s. However, information about such type of product from a *B2B* perspective remains scarce. As with the concept of *consumer satisfaction*, it is important to prior define which elements or components are required to classify a product as being of *high-involvement*. According to one of the few *B2C* studies related to such concept, Pattersen (1993) defines *high-involvement* products as “the initiation of some type of problem-solving behaviour when the purchase is perceived as high in personal importance and involves comparatively higher amount of risks” (p. 450).

More precisely, *high-involvement* products cause consumers to care more and to be more cautious, during their purchasing process, due to a greater level of associated risk. Dholakia (2001) mentions that product involvement and risk are both motivational

constructs that influence the information search decision-making process. Therefore, the fact that such type of product can influence a consumer's attitude in such a profound manner, and that it may initiate a problem-solving behaviour can lead to an inference that such products do not only have a greater affective and cognitive meaning, but are also perceived as being generally much more complex than *low-involvement* products. This statement is supported by Boutang and De Lara (2016) who bring forth the fact that complex products usually comprise multiple attributes and will normally be associated with higher levels of involvement than simple ones.

Their purchasing process is also perceived as being longer, harder, riskier, and more complex. According to Clark and Belk (1978), consumers will usually spend more time looking for product information in the case of *high-involvement* products, in order to make a wise purchase decision and reduce the risks associated with it. Hoyer and MacInnis (2001) also stated in their book entitled "Consumer Behavior" that most prior conducted studies classified *low* and *high-involvement* products based on "the extent of risk perceived by consumers." Kapferer and Laurent (1982), along with Kapferer (1998), also agree that a product's level of involvement is directly correlated to its level of associated risk.

From another perspective, Martin (1998) claims that along with conjuring positive feelings, memories are also evoked when a *high-involvement* product is being examined by a consumer. Such claim follows the same thought process as Pattersen's (1993) statement mentioned earlier, due to the fact that both researchers bring forth the affective and cognitive aspects related to *high-involvement* products. Indeed, memories represent a very personal and unique consumer characteristic. More importantly, they have the capability of influencing a consumer's emotions and desires, which in turn can positively or negatively influence his purchasing decision.

Gu, Park and Konana (2012) also claim that such type of product is usually more durable, require a greater amount of time and efforts to gather purchasing information and is considerably riskier to acquire, when viewed from a financial and affective standpoint. Examples of durable products include cars, electronic and consumer appliances as a wrong purchase decision will lead to serious financial repercussions and may even oblige customers to deal with a poor product for a relatively long duration of time (Kapferer and Laurent, 1985). Another interesting point brought forth by Gu, Park and Konana (2012) is

that “word-of-mouth (*WOM*) may have a greater influence on consumer purchase decisions high-involvement products” (p. 183). In this case, *WOM* refers to any opinions shared online or physically, between two or more consumers, regarding past user experiences and current or past product reviews (Gu, Park and Konana, 2012).

Two main types of *WOM* information can be identified, more precisely internal or external word-of-mouth. Internal *WOM* is hosted by retailers and usually originates from salespeople or sales-related information sources, such as a company’s website, brochures or specification sheets. External *WOM*, however, is hosted by third-party intermediaries, such as websites specialized in product reviews or independent consultants or experts (Gu, Park and Konana, 2012). More information regarding this specific type of variable will be provided further in this chapter.

Such findings demonstrate that, similarly to the definition of the *consumer satisfaction* concept, there is not one standard or globally used definition for the concept of *high-involvement* products from a *B2C* perspective, and almost none in a *B2B* context. For the purpose of this research, the following pages and remaining sections of this study will assume that *high-involvement* products have the capability to influence a consumer’s emotions and desires, are more durable and complex, and involve a longer, riskier and intricate purchasing process in comparison to low-involvement products.

1.3 Determinants of Consumer Satisfaction

Next to having accurately established the definitions of both *consumer satisfaction* and *high-involvement* product concepts, we must clearly identify which determinants compose and influence this summary affective response that is the concept of *consumer satisfaction*. This will allow for a more precise orientation of this research, and lead to the creation of a testable conceptual model. A vast array of non-economic factors have the potential to influence *consumer satisfaction*, however, due to the fact that this research will focus on interpreting and analyzing *B2B consumer satisfaction* related to *high-involvement* products, more precisely business aircraft, careful identification of such determinants must take place.

According to the literature, non-economic factors such as service quality, perceived value, purchase expectations, perceived performance, perceived desires, level of trust, information communication and satisfaction, product attribute satisfaction, existing

relationship quality, and positive disconfirmation effect all have the ability to negatively or positively influence the outcome of *B2B consumer satisfaction*, depending on both the type of product or service that had been purchased, and its purchasing context (Agnihotri et al., 2015; Churchill and Surprenant, 1982; Cronin, Brady and Hult, 2000; Ekinci, Dawes and Massey, 2008; Fayawardhena, 2010; Gil-Saura, Frasquet-Deltoro and Cervera-Taulet, 2009; Kohli, Devaraj and Mahmood, 2004; Lam, Shankar and Murthy, 2004; Madaleno, Wilson and Palmer, 2007; Molinari, Abratt and Dion, 2008; Ramaseshan, Rabbanee and Hui, 2013; Rauyruen, Miller and Barrett, 2007 and Spreng, MacKenzie and Olshavsky, 1996).

It must be noted that the position of such above-mentioned determinants in the various conceptual models examined always varied, and no consistent order or level of importance could be identified. Indeed, according to Cronin, Brady and Hult (2000): “[...] model structure appears highly dependent on the nature of study.” (p. 196). As such, current literature offers many different approaches to the *consumer satisfaction* problematic, however, it was particularly difficult to identify specific non-economic determinants pertaining to *B2B consumer satisfaction* regarding *high-involvement* products. To do so, we reviewed several existing conceptual models that laid out the foundation for certain studies in various academic fields. However, five specific models played an instrumental role in the conception of the one that will be used, in order to successfully conduct this research.

1.4 Conceptual Models Examined

Prior to conceiving the conceptual model on which this research will be based, several models in the field of *consumer satisfaction* and *high-involvement* products’ research were examined. As stated earlier by Cronin, Brady and Hult (2000) the structure of each model varied according to the nature of the study, however, several aspects were identified and played an instrumental role in the conception of this research’s conceptual model. Those aspects can be better understood by examining five specific models assessed during this literature review.

1.4.1 Disconfirmation of Expectations Paradigm

Four out of five models, more precisely the ones of Patterson (1993), Patterson, Johnson & Spreng (1997), Voss, Parasuraman & Grewal (1998) and Spreng, MacKenzie

& Olshavsky (1996) emphasize the importance of comparing pre and post-purchase expectations and perceived performance of the product or service, following its acquisition. Such comparison is in line with Giese and Cote (2000) second component of *consumer satisfaction* where the consumer will compare either the performance of the product or the experience of the service he purchased to some previously established standards.

According to Patterson (1993), this process can also be referred to as the disconfirmation paradigm, where satisfaction is directly linked to “the size and direction of the disconfirmation experience” (p. 451). He also claims that this disconfirmation is also related to the consumer’s initial expectations about a specific product’s performance (Patterson, 1993). In this case, the term “expectation” is introduced. According to Churchill & Surprenant (1982) and Patterson (1993), expectations are supposed to “reflect product performance and create a frame of reference about which one makes a comparative judgment” (p. 451). They are also formed by prior knowledge or experience of products’ attributes, exposure to certain external stimuli such as price or advertising and reference groups’ information like *WOM* or product usage observation (Patterson, 1993).

All four of these models use the disconfirmation of expectations paradigm, in order to assess the overall consumer satisfaction related to a specific product or service. In short, *consumer dissatisfaction* is an outcome when there is a negative disconfirmation, more precisely when perceived performance is inferior or smaller than consumer expectations. However, *consumer satisfaction* or enhanced satisfaction are possible outcomes when there is a confirmation or positive disconfirmation, more precisely when perceived performance is equal to or larger than consumer expectations (Patterson, 1993). In order to fully understand the meaning of the concept of “disconfirmation,” it is imperative to define what the concept of “perceived performance” means in these conceptual models.

1.4.2 Perceived Performance and Product Attributes

This concept relates to the comparison of product performance to prior expectations, once consumers have purchased and used it. The result being either positive or negative disconfirmation, when perceived performance either exceed or is inferior to prior expectations (Patterson, 1993). Patterson, Johnson & Spreng's (1997) conceptual model depicted below (*cf.* figure 1) pushes this concept further by taking into consideration decision complexity and the type of product involved in the process. More precisely, many authors suggest that different satisfaction processes operate depending on the product category involved, such as *high* or *low-involvement* products (Anderson, 1994; Bolton and Drew, 1991b; Cadotte et al., 1987; Halstead et al., 1994; Oliver, 1989; Spreng et al., 1996). However, according to Patterson, Johnson & Spreng (1997), there is a lack of consistent results in regards to *high-involvement* products and some studies in the past literature demonstrated a stronger effect of performance, whereas others demonstrated a stronger effect of disconfirmation; this effect will be explained in the following subsection. Such claim therefore supports the objective of this research to deepen academic knowledge related to *consumer satisfaction for B2B high-involvement* products.

It is also interesting to compare the influence of product attributes on either perceived performance or performance expectations. Patterson's (1993) conceptual model represented below (*cf.* figure 2) is conceived in such a way that product attributes directly influence perceived performance, whereas Patterson, Johnson & Spreng (1997) and Voss, Parasuraman & Grewal's (1998) models (*cf.* figures 1 and 3) do not utilize this variable. Instead, Patterson, Johnson & Spreng's (1997) model indicates the influence of purchase situation and individual variables, such as novelty, importance, stakeholding and importance, on both performance and expectations factors. From another standpoint, Voss, Parasuraman & Grewal's (1998) model reflect the influence of both objective price and quality cues variables on both pre-purchase price perceptions and performance expectations factors. The model then evolves to both objective price and performance variables influencing post-purchase price and performance perceptions.

Figure 1: Patterson, Johnson & Spreng (1997) Conceptual Model

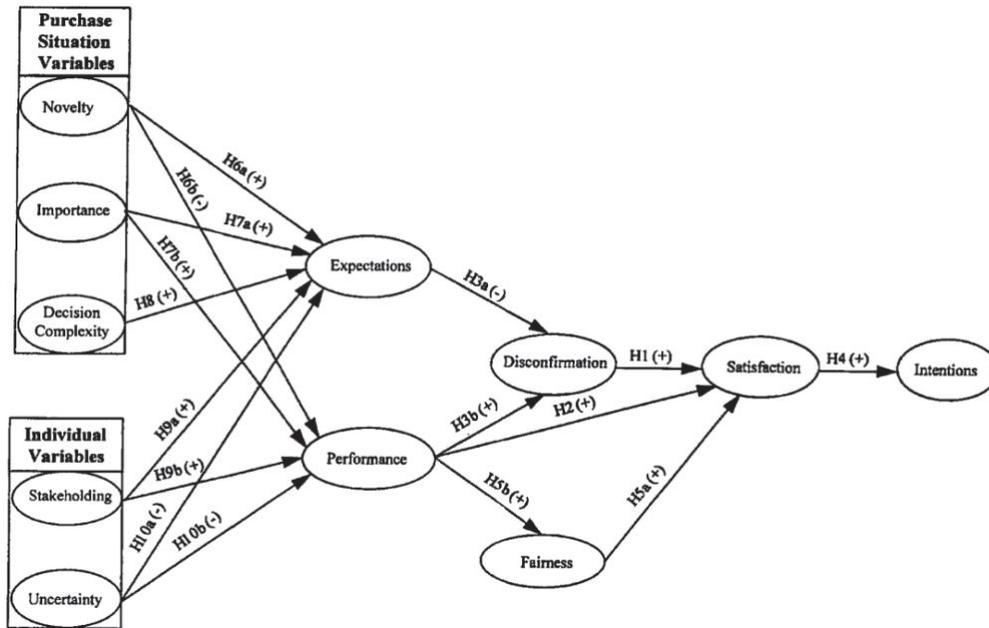


Figure 2: Patterson (1993) Conceptual Model

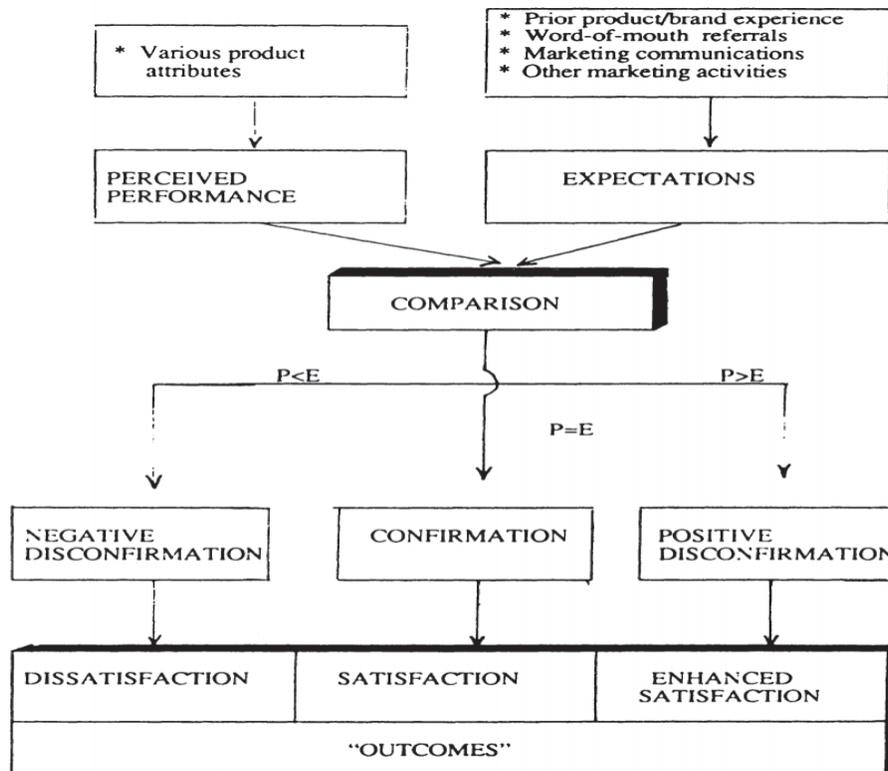
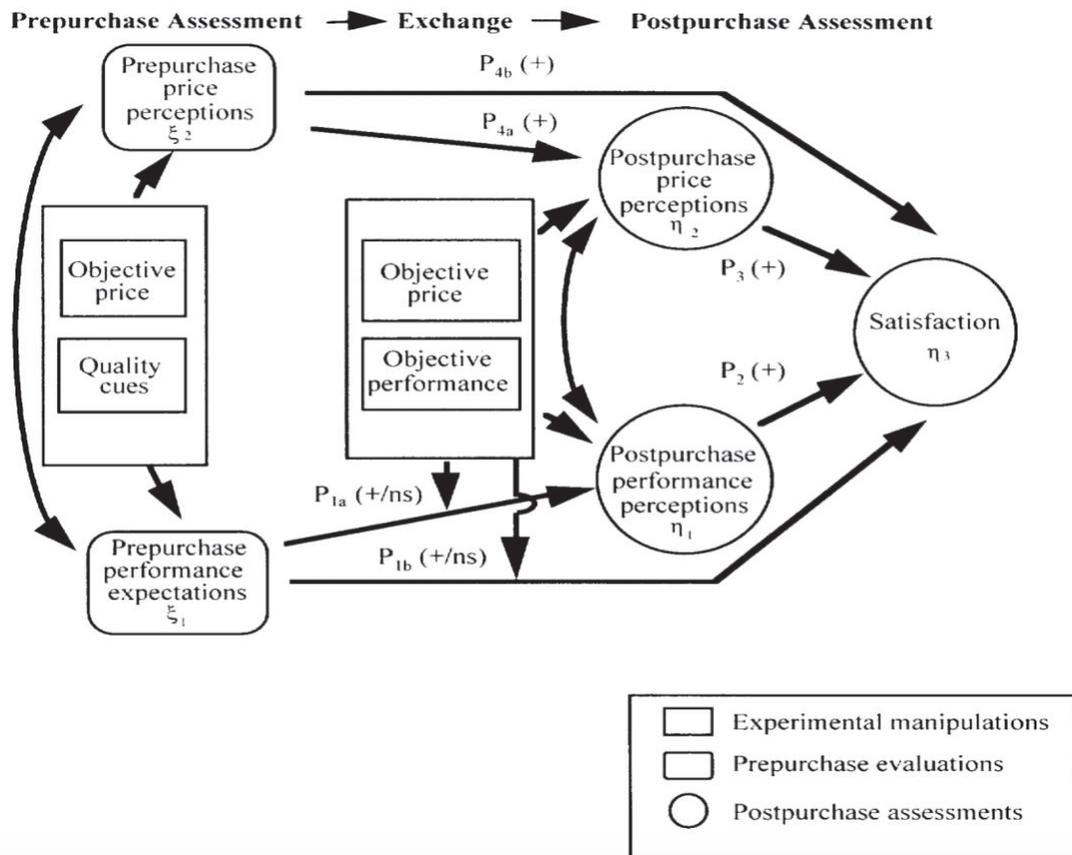


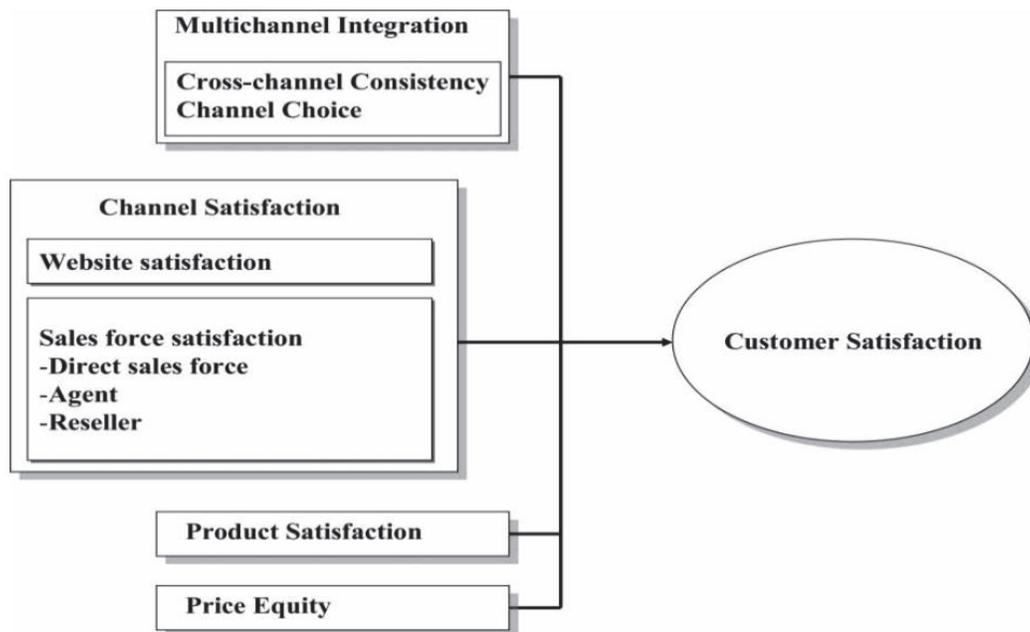
Figure 3: Voss, Parasuraman & Grewal (1998) Conceptual Model



1.4.3 The Effect of Disconfirmation

The effect of disconfirmation relates to the extent if prior expectations have been met or not (Patterson, 1993). More precisely, it consists in evaluating whether or not all expectations have been met, according to specific comparison standards, following the purchase and usage of a product or service. As mentioned earlier, most conceptual model examined during this literature review, except the one from Madaleno, Wilson & Palmer (2007) (*cf.* figure 4) utilizes this concept in order to assess overall *consumer satisfaction*. It is important to mention that Oliver (1980) pointed to the importance of measuring disconfirmation differently from expectations, as product usage or consumption can alter the retention of expectations. In other words, Oliver (1980) indicates that product experience can cause consumers to forget their initial expectations over time. This finding therefore emphasizes the importance of measuring the effect of disconfirmation separately from the effects of known expectations on consumer satisfaction.

Figure 4: Madaleno, Wilson & Palmer (2007) Conceptual Model



1.4.4 Price and Quality

Voss, Parasuraman & Grewal (1998) model (*cf.* figure 3) attempts to demonstrate that pre-purchase expectations are influenced by both price and quality information, and that overall *consumer satisfaction* is impacted not only by performance, product quality and expectations, but also pricing. The emphasis placed on pricing is beneficial to this research, due to the fact that *high-involvement* products are often much more expensive than *low-involvement* ones and pricing, along with other financial characteristics of the transaction, play an important role in determining overall *consumer satisfaction*. The authors of this model also demonstrate that once consumers are placed in uncertain environments, which also constitute another aspect linked to *high-involvement* products, are most likely to utilize price as a hint in developing pre-purchase performance expectations (Voss, Parasuraman & Grewal, 1998).

One of the most important findings associated with this model and study pertains to the fact that performance expectations have a significant impact on satisfaction and performance perceptions solely when price and product performance/quality are consistent. In short, the level of performance delivered by the product must match the product's price level, in order for consumers to truly associate their quality, performance and satisfaction

judgments with their initial pre-purchase performance expectations (Voss, Parasuraman & Grewal, 1998). Therefore, a high price and low-quality product or a low price and high-quality product will lead to inconsistent matches between consumer post-purchase satisfaction judgments and pre-purchase performance expectations. Voss, Parasuraman & Grewal (1998) also indicate that consumers who purchased low price and high-quality products were more likely to be satisfied than the ones who purchased high price and low-quality products. More precisely, consumers who were less price tolerant and more demanding, concerning pre-purchase pricing, are more likely to exhibit higher satisfaction levels than less demanding and more price tolerant ones.

Finally, Voss, Parasuraman & Grewal (1998) mention a notable point about reference pricing, during their discussion about future research opportunities. Indeed, they wonder if the use of a high external reference price would increase consumers' internal reference price and, consequently, their price tolerance. It could be debated that this question is linked to the domains of sales and price equity, which would therefore be linked to Madaleno, Wilson & Palmer's (2007) conceptual model that examines determinants of consumer satisfaction in a multi-channel *B2B* environment. This model also offers a broader perspective and understanding of the influence of sales force satisfaction on *consumer satisfaction*.

1.4.5 Sales Force Satisfaction and Price Equity

Madaleno, Wilson & Palmer's (2007) model (*cf.* figure 4) introduces a new variable pertaining to sales force satisfaction. The goal of this research being to generate specific marketing and sales managerial recommendations, in order to improve *consumer satisfaction* for *B2B high-involvement* products, this variable plays a crucial role in demonstrating the role and influence of sales on overall *consumer satisfaction*. The authors characterize this variable as being offered either directly by the manufacturer or fully owned by an intermediary. This intermediary can then be represented by agents selling only one particular brand's products, or resellers selling many different brands' products. Madaleno, Wilson & Palmer's (2007) model also includes a website satisfaction variable, as today's consumers have access to an important amount of information online, which may or not affect their pre-purchase perception of certain products, along with their satisfaction related to sales force contributions and efforts.

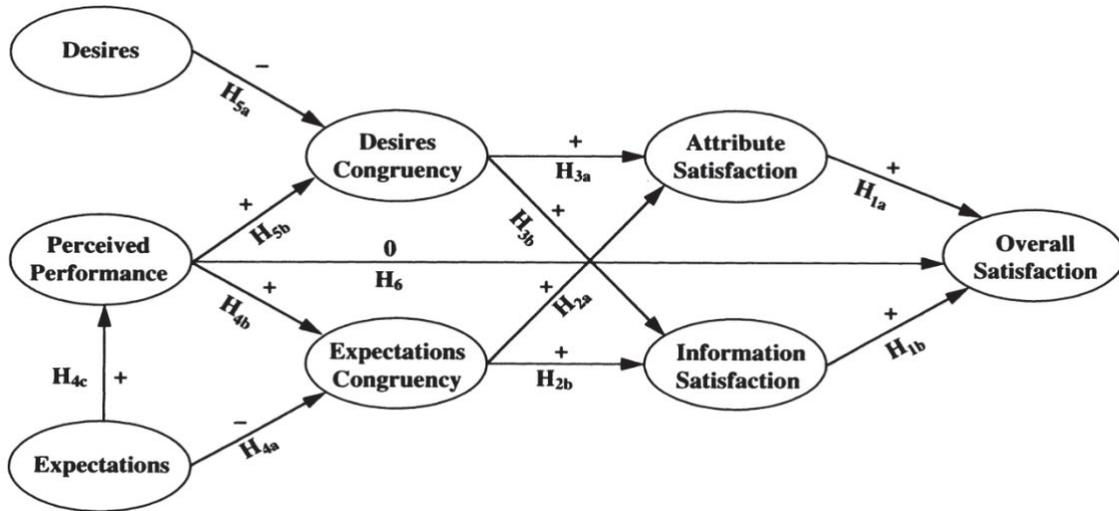
Although Madaleno, Wilson & Palmer's (2007) model does not address this specific variable in much depth, a particular emphasis will be placed on assessing the role and impact of sales force and sales support teams onto overall consumer satisfaction, when examining the different items constituting the conceptual model that will be used for this research. Indeed, Madaleno, Wilson & Palmer (2007) demonstrated that sales force satisfaction has a quantifiable impact onto consumer satisfaction, and that further efforts must be made to understand the role and impact of this specific variable.

In line with Voss, Parasuraman & Grewal's (1998) model and research, Madaleno, Wilson & Palmer's (2007) study also addresses the question of price equity and price tolerance. Their findings indicate that payment equity has the ability to positively or negatively influence overall consumer satisfaction. Voss, Parasuraman & Grewal (1998) were therefore right in assuming that price tolerance, consumer satisfaction and price equity were interrelated. Such finding is also congruent with Bolton & Lemon (1999) and Verhoef (2003) studies that demonstrated that customers' perceptions of prices' fairness are formed relatively to competitors' prices and that pricing mechanisms also play a crucial role in establishing prices offered by various companies and manufacturers.

1.4.6 Expectations vs. Desires

The previous models examined above have brought forth different aspects ranging from the paradigm of expectations disconfirmation, the effect of disconfirmation and the importance and impact of product attributes, perceived performance, price, price equity, product quality and sales force satisfaction onto *consumer satisfaction*. Spreng, Mackenzie & Olshavsky's (1996) model depicted on the following page (*cf.* figure 5) adds to the mix the role, influence and importance of desires when measuring overall *consumer satisfaction*. This model is also useful to appropriately differentiate expectations from desires, as both terms initially entail a similar meaning.

Figure 5: Spreng, Mackenzie & Olshavsky (1996) Conceptual Model



The authors first describe expectations as both the probability of an event's occurrence, followed by its evaluation consisting of determining its associated level of "goodness" or "badness" (Spreng, Mackenzie & Olshavsky, 1996). Their definition of such term is also corroborated by previous studies conducted by authors such as Bearden & Teel (1983), Westbrook (1987), Churchill & Surprenant (1982), Oliver (1980) and Tse & Wilton (1988). Similarly to Oliver (1980), they believe that the effect of disconfirmation needs to be measured separately from expectations, and that expectations must be separated in two distinct groups. More precisely, the first group is to be composed of predictive expectations that require the consideration of the probability related to the occurrence of future events. Whereas the second group is to be composed of judgmental expectations, which require the use of standards of comparison when evaluating the level of "goodness" or "badness" associated with an event, product or service usage. Spreng, Mackenzie & Olshavsky (1996) finally conclude by defining expectations as: "beliefs about a product's attributes or performance at some time in the future (Olson & Dover, 1979)" (p. 16).

They carry on to define desires as the most fundamental needs, life goals or desired end states that can be classified in two generic categories being higher and lower-level desires. Higher-level desires relate to products that can provide certain benefits, which can then be narrowed down, in order to identify the specific product attributes desired (Spreng, Mackenzie & Olshavsky, 1996). These authors also indicate that desires can either be

abstract and states, such as security, intermediate benefits, such as products that can provide an acceptable level of security to its users, or a means to provide the specific benefits sought by users, such as an aircraft's anti-stall system which will consequently provide its users with the desired level of security. Therefore, desires can be defined as attributes or benefits directly associated with higher-level values or needs, such as for example safety, security or protection (Spreng, Mackenzie & Olshavsky, 1996).

In their own words, they differentiate expectations from desires by stating that: "expectations are beliefs about the likelihood that a product is associated with certain attributes, benefits, or outcomes, whereas desires are evaluations of the extent to which those attributes, benefits, or outcomes lead to the attainment of a person's values." (p. 17). It must also be noted that, according to Spreng, Mackenzie & Olshavsky (1996), expectations are malleable and oriented towards the future, whereas desires are stable and occur mostly in the present.

Thus, this research will assume that *desires* are stable and present-oriented product attributes or benefits that are either associated with specific higher-level values/needs or lead to their fulfillment.

1.4.7 Product Attributes Satisfaction and Information Satisfaction

The model used by Spreng, Mackenzie & Olshavsky (1996) also includes two satisfaction-related variables pertaining to both the information acquired and used, during the transaction process, and the attributes of the purchased product or service. Both of these variables are hypothesized to have a direct impact on the overall level of consumer satisfaction. Attribute satisfaction pertains to a consumer's satisfaction with the product itself, and its attributes. More precisely, attribute satisfaction results from the consumer's satisfaction judgment, following its observation of a product's attributes performance (Oliver, 1993; Spreng, Mackenzie & Olshavsky, 1996). In other words, the observed performance of a product's attributes will either positively or negatively influence a consumer's attribute satisfaction.

Information satisfaction pertains to the satisfaction judgment of the information used, when choosing a specific product or service (Spreng, Mackenzie & Olshavsky, 1996). Such information is likely to originate from a company's marketing communications efforts, and more precisely from various sources such as personal selling,

advertising campaigns, corporate websites and social media. Gardial et al.'s (1994) study provides a good example to illustrate information satisfaction. They demonstrated that if salespeople promise more than they can actually deliver, and if the persuasion-based expectations used are disconfirmed, consumers will be dissatisfied with the information used when choosing a service or product (Gardial et al., 1994). It must also be noted that due to the nature and objectives of this research, a particular emphasis will be placed on the role and influence of sales-related activities and notions on this specific variable.

1.4.8 Expectations and Desires Congruency

As mentioned earlier, and as depicted by a wide variety of existing academic studies, the effect of disconfirmation is a widely utilized concept in the field of consumer satisfaction research. However, Spreng, Mackenzie & Olshavsky's (1996) model demonstrates the existence of two similar concepts, more precisely the effects of expectations and desires congruency. The authors define expectations congruency as: "the consumer's subjective assessment of the comparison between his or her expectations and the performance received." (p. 18). In other words, expectations congruency represents the gap between the consumer's expectations, prior to testing the product, and the actual performance observed, during product testing.

Spreng, Mackenzie & Olshavsky (1996) propose that this concept has the ability to directly influence product attribute satisfaction, due to the fact that consumers usually judge product performance on an attribute level. Furthermore, they propose that it can also influence information satisfaction if one of the product attributes did not perform as well as described by prior received product information. In this specific case, it would cause consumers to be dissatisfied with the information given.

Similarly to the way the authors defined expectations congruency, they describe desires congruency as: "the consumer's subjective assessment of the comparison between his or her desires and the performance received." (p. 18). Spreng, Mackenzie & Olshavsky (1996) propose that desire congruency directly influences product attribute satisfaction and information satisfaction, due to the fact that desires are attributes or benefits directly associated with higher-level values or needs. Therefore, desires' congruency can positively or negatively influence attribute satisfaction on the attribute level. For example, if a consumer wants the safest business aircraft on the market; if after use, the aircraft is

perceived to fulfill such desire and provide such benefit, then he or she will be satisfied with the product attribute providing such benefit. In this case, the aircraft anti-stall system would be the product attribute for which the consumer is satisfied, leading to an increased product attribute satisfaction.

Spreng, Mackenzie & Olshavsky (1996) also bring forth the assumption that pre-purchase rules used in selecting a service or product infer that consumers buy products they expect should fulfill their desires. Therefore, a positive relationship is hypothesized between information satisfaction and desires congruency; A product performance close to desires should result in a satisfied consumer regarding the information used during the product selection process. Thus, desires' congruency also has the ability to directly influence, either positively or negatively, information satisfaction.

1.5 Assessed Dependent and Independent Variables

1.5.1 Dependent Variable: Overall Satisfaction for *B2B* High-Involvement Products

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the goal of this research is to identify which determinants compose and influence *consumer satisfaction* for *high-involvement* products sold in a *B2B* context. In this case, the dependent variable assessed is *consumer satisfaction* for *B2B high-involvement* products. For this purpose, the global industry of business aircraft will serve to acquire data and perform scientific observations, as business aircraft represent *high-involvement* products sold within a *B2B* context. If we refer back to the definition of *high-involvement* products, established earlier in this chapter, such products have the capability to influence a consumer's emotions and desires, are more durable and complex, and involve a longer, riskier and more intricate purchasing process, in comparison to *low-involvement* products.

Business aircraft transactions require a lot of time and efforts on behalf of the customers, as the duration of the purchasing process ranges between several weeks to many months, prior to fully completing the transaction and transferring ownership of the aircraft to the customer. This type of acquisition is also quite expensive, intricate, and involves a considerable amount of financial risk, similarly to a wide extent of multimillion-dollar purchases. It must also be noted that business aircraft are extremely complex and technologically advanced products that require many years of research & development,

along with several months to be assembled, certified by civil aviation authorities, and labelled as being fully operational.

Available information about public and private international corporations indicates that many of them currently own and operate a business aircraft. Nevertheless, such type of *high-involvement* luxury product can also be sold to certain high net-worth individuals in a business-to-consumer (*B2C*) context. However, and in response to Molinari, Abratt and Dion (2008) study demonstrating that: “research in satisfaction in *B2B* markets is lagging behind consumer marketing.” (p. 364), this research will focus solely on *consumer satisfaction* related to business aircraft sold in a *B2B* context.

Finally, it must be noted that the concept of *consumer satisfaction* was defined earlier in this chapter as a summary affective response of varying intensity directed at specific aspects of product acquisition and consumption (Giese and Cote, 2000).

1.5.2 Independent Variables

The previous sections of this chapter identified and defined various determinants capable of influencing *consumer satisfaction* for *B2B high-involvement* products. Due to the fact that this research is based on an adaptation of Spreng, Mackenzie & Olshavsky’s (1996) conceptual model depicted in their article entitled “A re-examination of the determinants of consumer satisfaction,” six independent variables were identified and selected: desires, expectations, desires’ congruency, expectations congruency, product attributes satisfaction and information satisfaction. However, a review of the existing literature demonstrated that four of these independent variables, more precisely desires, expectations, product attribute satisfaction and information satisfaction, can be subdivided into specific items, in order to allow a more precise assessment of their role and influence on *consumer satisfaction* for *B2B high-involvement* products. This section aims to define each item subdividing these four independent variables.

1.5.3 Desires

As defined earlier, desires are stable and present-oriented product attributes or benefits that are either associated with specific higher-level values/needs or lead to their fulfillment (Spreng, Mackenzie & Olshavsky, 1996). Thus, it can be inferred that customers and companies possess a wide variety of desires that play an important motivational role in their decision to purchase a business aircraft. Desires may also have the ability to influence

their overall satisfaction for this *B2B high-involvement* product. This research proposes that this first pre-purchase independent variable can be subdivided into three specific items: social status and prestige, convenience, and experience.

1.5.3.1 Social Status and Prestige

As evoked by Kapferer and Bastien (2012) in their book entitled *The Luxury Strategy: break the rules of marketing to build luxury brands*, business aircraft are an integral part of the world of luxury, similarly to yachts and intricate pieces of jewelry, and can therefore be classified as luxury products. This being established, which motivational factors play an influential role in convincing companies to purchase a private jet? Their quest for social status and prestige may be the answer to such question.

According to different authors such as Nelissen and Meijers (2011), de Botton (2004), Frank (1999), Miller (2009) and Schor (1998), today's consumer culture seems to be characterized by a strong attachment to material expenditures as a means of establishing and describing social relationships. In other words, consumers, and in some instances companies, are expressing a willingness to pay a premium, in order to obtain luxury-branded products. Nelissen and Meijers (2011) argue that the reason for this behaviour is to gain social status.

Hyman (1942) defines social status as a higher position compared to others on certain dimensions deemed important by society, such as academic knowledge, perceived level of success, power and wealth. Bierstedt (1970) and Dawson and Cavell (1986) claim that status refers to the position of an individual, in a group or in society, awarded by others. On the other hand, Donnerwerth and Foal (1974) defined status as follows: "an expression of evaluative judgment that conveys high or low prestige, regard or esteem" (p. 786). Such statements allow an inference that social status relates to the concepts of prestige, power and wealth, which will be defined further in this section. Other authors such as Bourdieu (1984) and Hirsch (1976) indicate that utility derived from expenditures delivering no functional benefits could accumulate from their merits as signals of social status. This particular statement relates to the concept of conspicuous consumption, which will also be defined later in this section. Cummins (2005), Miller (2009) and Saad (2007) on the other hand demonstrate that human preference for consuming luxury goods comes from a

tendency to signal traits that could improve status, which implies that purchasing and displaying certain luxury products could improve a person's social status.

Indeed, it has been demonstrated that products can be used in a symbolic manner (Levy, 1978). Goffman (1959), Belk (1988), Ewen (1988) and Braun and Wicklund (1989) depicted in their studies the fact that consumers purchase, use and display specific types of products and services, in order to enhance their sense of self, share an image of what they are like, represent their feelings and thoughts, and attract the types of relationships or affiliations they wish to have. It is interesting to note that multiple interviews conducted with aeronautical experts and executives, by major consultancy firms, have demonstrated that certain corporations use and display their business aircraft to potential customers, in order to signal their strong financial performance, impress them, and ultimately attract them. In a similar mindset, Packard (1959) suggested that consumers will purchase, use and display certain products solely to demonstrate a superior level of status to their entourage and themselves.

Current academic literature identifies three types of social status. The first type pertains to status by definition or assignment, such as royalty, the second type is by achievement, such as military personnel being promoted to a higher rank following an extraordinary accomplishment, and the third type being status by acquisition, consumption and display (Brown, 1991; Eastman, Goldsmith and Flynn, 1999; Hayakawa, 1963). This research will particularly focus on the third type of social status mentioned above and define this concept as the position of an individual or company, in a group or society, awarded by others, according to its level of power and prestige engendered by a higher position compared to others on important cultural dimensions such as wealth and success, which can substantially be improved by acquiring, consuming and displaying luxury products.

As mentioned earlier, Donnerwerth and Foal (1974) defined status by associating it with the concept of prestige. More precisely, they claimed that social status conveys either a high or low level of prestige, regard or esteem. Vigneron and Johnson (1999) define prestige by first and foremost establishing two distinct categories of brands and products: prestige and non-prestige brands. They then carry on by stating that prestige brands exhibit five perceived values, dependent on a specific socioeconomic framework. Indeed,

consumers may perceive such five values differently, due to their different socioeconomic backgrounds which consequently impact the way they differentiate prestige brands from non-prestige ones.

The first value exhibited by prestige brands is perceived conspicuous consumption. More precisely, the act of consuming prestige brands can be perceived by others as a signal of status and wealth, but their higher price tags only enhance the value of such a signal. The concepts of wealth and conspicuous consumption will be further defined in this section. The uniqueness of a brand represents the second value exhibited by prestige brands; If a particular brand is owned and used by many consumers, it cannot be described as a prestige brand as it must convey a sense of exclusivity. Prestige brands must also be associated with specific social values, which can influence either positively or negatively consumers' purchasing decision. The fourth value exhibited by prestige brands is perceived hedonic value; brand selection will be affected by certain subjective intangible benefits such as aesthetic appeal, which will ultimately contribute to satisfying specific consumers' emotional desires. Lastly, perceived quality value is an essential element of prestige brands. In other words, the technical superiority, first-rate care and specialized handcraft skills needed during the production process are integral components of prestige brands.

Vigneron and Johnson (1999) also state that "prestige products have been used as an example of extreme-end high-involvement decision-making." (p. 4). Such statement therefore indicates that prestige brands/products represent an important portion of the *high-involvement* products' category. It also indicates that both concepts seem to be strongly interrelated and complementary to each other. Rossiter, Percy and Donovan (1991) support this statement, due to the fact that their research framework assumes that prestige brands and products are *high-involvement* ones, and that social approval, sensory gratification and intellectual stimulation represent the primary factors in purchasing prestige products. This research will therefore assume that *high-involvement* products exhibiting perceived conspicuous, unique, social, hedonic and quality values, and causing enhanced social approbation can be defined as prestige brands/products.

As mentioned earlier, Hyman (1942) defined the concept of social status as a higher position compared to others on certain dimensions deemed important by society. One of these dimensions was power, it is therefore important to define this concept. Rucker and

Galinsky (2008) define power as a psychological state that can be triggered simply by reminiscing certain events that lead to a feeling of powerlessness or powerfulness. Such statement is also corroborated by authors such as Anderson and Galinsky (2006), Galinsky, Gruenfeld and Magee (2003), Magee, Galinsky and Gruenfeld (2007) and Smith and Trope (2006), who triggered and assessed several participants' feeling of powerfulness and powerlessness, by instructing them to recall specific past events that either made them feel powerful or powerless.

Furthermore, current literature demonstrates that this psychological state engenders the ability to control both one's own and others' resources and outcomes, such as economic resources, positions of authority, respect from others and expertise just to name a few (French and Raven, 1959; Hunt and Nevin, 1974; Keltner, Gruenfeld and Anderson, 2003 and Thibaut and Kelley, 1959). It can therefore be inferred that power can vary from one situation to another, within one individual, and according to the hierarchical arrangement of each context. In light of the findings conveyed by academic literature, this research will define *power* as a psychological state that engenders the ability to control one's own and others' resources and outcomes, depending on both the situation and hierarchical arrangement of each context.

Veblen (1899) once wrote: "The basis on which good repute in any highly organized industrial community ultimately rests is pecuniary strength; and the means of showing pecuniary strength, and so of gaining or retaining a good name, are leisure and a conspicuous consumption of goods" (pg. 51). The term *conspicuous consumption* has been a recurrent one so far, being related to the previously defined concepts of *social status* and *prestige*. O'Cass and McEwen (2004) and Mason (1981) indicate that conspicuous consumption is often practised in order to improve someone's level of prestige in society, by publicly exhibiting opulent wealth to others. Eastman et al. (1999) argued that such status-seeking behaviour can be observed when someone decides to increase its consumption of status goods, such as luxury products or prestige brands, in order to enhance its social status. It must be noted that multiple authors have brought forth a similar definition, such as McCracken (1988), O'Shaughnessy (1992), Packard (1959) and Bell et al. (1991). Therefore, this research will define *conspicuous consumption* as the act of

purchasing status goods, more precisely luxury and prestige products, in order to enhance one's social status by displaying them to the public eye.

In conclusion, *social status* can be defined as the position of an individual or company in society or a specific group, awarded by others, according to its level of power and prestige engendered by a higher position compared to others on important cultural dimensions, such as wealth and success. This position can also be substantially improved by acquiring, consuming and displaying luxury products. On the other hand, *prestige* is to be associated with *high-involvement* products exhibiting perceived conspicuous, unique, social, hedonic and quality values; thus, procuring its owners enhanced social approbation.

Many authors have demonstrated that individuals attempt to improve their social status and level of prestige by acquiring luxury products. However, literature remains scarce in regards to status-seeking behaviour in a *B2B* context. Could it be possible that certain companies decide to purchase a business aircraft, in order to enhance their social status and level of prestige? Such question, along with the scarcity of academic knowledge related to *B2B* status-seeking behaviour are arguments supporting the relevancy of this first item in this research.

1.5.3.2 Convenience

Making flight arrangements for business executives is not an easy task, as they must not only respect their busy schedules but also afford enough flexibility to be rescheduled, in case of last-minute changes. Tickets must also be purchased well ahead of time, in order to guarantee the executive a seat on the specific flight required. Furthermore, commercial flights generally necessitate executives to arrive at the airport at least two hours prior to boarding time, in case of international flights, and at least an hour prior to boarding time, in case of domestic and regional flights.

Such periods of time are required, in order to account for any traffic on the way to the airport, properly and timely check any out-of-cabin bags, queuing time and clearing security ahead of boarding time to allow a relatively stress-free and enjoyable travel experience. However, such requirements demand a considerable amount of time and efforts on behalf of business executives. In other words, commercial travel is not the most convenient way of travelling for high-ranked businessmen and businesswomen. This inconvenience may therefore act as a motivational factor in the purchasing decision of a

business aircraft, as it represents a viable solution in the form of a product and service to such lack of convenience. It could also be hypothesized that convenience positively or negatively influences overall consumer satisfaction for *B2B high-involvement* products.

Indeed, some advantages of buying a private jet are that it allows its users to depart at any time of the day and night from a few hours' notice, eliminates any waiting time spent in queues, at security or more generally in airports, eliminates the need for checking-in luggage, optimizes the intimacy level of its users, offers crucial services such as high-speed internet connectivity anywhere in the world, and permits last-minute flight plan changes while being either on the ground or in the air.

Academic literature on convenience has evolved a great deal over time. Copeland (1923) first depicted the concept of *convenience* as a products' category called *convenience goods*. This category included intensively distributed goods necessitating minimal time, physical and mental efforts to purchase. Early marketing usage therefore represented convenience not as a product characteristic or attribute, but as the amount of time and efforts necessary in purchasing a good or product (Brown, 1990). It is only later that academics started to perceive convenience as a product attribute reducing its non-monetary price, and encompassing different resources such as time, energy and opportunity that consumers were giving up when purchasing services and products (Etgar, 1978; Kelley, 1958 and Kotler and Zaltman, 1971). More recently, Vargo and Lusch (2004) described convenience as a new marketing perspective arguing that companies are only capable of making value proposition to its consumers; thus, proposing that convenience creates value for its users. Carrigan and Szmigin (2006) also proposed that convenience can be perceived as a lifestyle choice that improves the quality of life of consumers living demanding and on-the-go lives; Therefore, linking convenience to the concept of experiential consumption. Non-monetary cost being central to the concept of convenience, it is also important to analyze some of the academic literature pertaining to the concepts of time and effort.

Jacoby, Szybillo and Berning (1976) described the concept of time as a limited and scarce resource. Similarly, Berry (1979) and Gross (1987) stated that time is a finite resource that can't be expanded like money. Other researchers, such as Feldman and Hornik (1981), associated the expression *saving time* to achieving a greater efficiency,

whereas some like Anderson and Shugan (1991) determined that it was more common to view time as a cost and not an investment. Another interesting aspect pertaining to the concept of *time* is temporal orientation; people do not equally perceive and value *time* or *time scarcity* (Bergadaa, 1990; Durrande-Moreau and Usunier, 1999; Graham, 1981; Hornik, 1984; Murphy and Enis, 1986 and Shimp, 1982). Gagliano and Hathcote (1994) also demonstrated that cultural factors have an important influence on the way people perceive time and how it affects their evaluation of convenience.

In regards to the literature pertaining to the *effort* concept, Seiders, Berry and Gresham (2000) and Lovelock (1994) demonstrated that effort, also known as consumers' energy expenditures, is a type of non-monetary cost that has the ability to influence convenience and satisfaction, in a similar manner as time. Downs (1961), Mabry (1970) and Jacoby, Szybillo and Berning (1976) denoted that the usual costs of consumption are time, effort, and money. In addition, stamina constraints have also been proven to influence the choice and purchase decision of a consumer amongst different types of products and services. O'Shaughnessy (1987) and Voli (1998) proved this statement by demonstrating that consumers established their choice of performance-based products by selecting brands that were more labour saving; which also allowed them to buy time. Three types of effort are brought forth by literature, more precisely emotional, cognitive and physical efforts (Mohr and Bitner, 1995 and Youngdahl and Kellogg, 1997).

In conclusion, this research defines the concept of *convenience* as a product attribute or characteristic that reduces its non-monetary cost by allowing its users to save on resources such as *effort* and *opportunity*, to buy *time*, and to benefit from added value by being more efficient, which consequently improves their overall quality of life. *Convenience* is also believed to positively or negatively influence *consumer satisfaction*.

1.5.3.3 Experience

As demonstrated earlier in the subsection pertaining to social status and prestige, business aircraft are incontestably luxury products. Kapferer and Bastien (2012) state that luxury products are not only products, but also constitute luxury experiences. Luxury products being manufactured by luxury brands, they carry their respective brand's reputation, service quality, exclusive signature and cultural hallmark (Kapferer and Bastien, 2012). Therefore, purchasing a business aircraft also translates to purchasing a

luxury experience. This reflection can be pushed further by deducing that companies' desire to enhance the flight experience of their high-ranked executives play a motivational role in their decision to purchase a private jet. It could also be discussed that such enhanced flight experience may also lead to an improvement of the executives' life quality, while also representing an opportunity to publicly display the multiple advantages related to the purchase and usage of a business aircraft.

Hollbrook and Hirschman (1982) defined an *experience* as “an individual's consumption of and interaction with products or services that involve significant affection” (pg. 167). Csikszentmihalyi (1990) pushes this reflection further by claiming that an experience is an event or a context that offers joy, value and captivation, which lead to a feeling of letting be. Carbone and Haeckel (1994) define this concept as a bundle of sensory information originating from encounters with products, services and businesses. More recently, Pitkänen and Tuohino (2006) and Tarssanen and Kylänen (2007) respectively described an experience as an affective event that has a strong impact on the person perceiving it, and an emotional occurrence that can lead to personal changes. A review of the academic literature pertaining to this field demonstrates that the existing definitions of this concept are various, however, most of them share and point towards an affective component that has the ability to influence or change a person's emotions and/or senses. Same and Larimo (2012) even developed a *lexicon of experience* ranging from the years 1964 to 2007, which regroups a wide array of definitions brought forth by a multitude of authors.

Furthermore, certain studies indicate that such concept is related to the fact that people are increasingly looking for sensations, happiness, a feeling of fulfillment and specific core values in various market offerings (Fortezza and Pencarelli, 2011). Tynan and McKechnie (2009) also mentioned the fact that customers and users are eager to obtain pleasure over functional benefits, while companies are constantly looking for innovative solutions that will grant them a competitive advantage. Indeed, Pine and Gilmore (1998) and Holbrook (2000) stated that customer experiences are not only useful to entertain and educate customers, but also to display specific knowledge, social behaviour and values, or to offer a visual or aesthetic encounter. Therefore, this concept can simultaneously help companies to elevate current customers' and users' level of satisfaction, but also to attract

different ones and serve as an opportunity to publicly display certain values or social behaviour. In this instance, the concept of *experience* or *experiential marketing*, often evoked by academic literature, offers an optimal solution to both parties involved, more precisely customers/users and companies.

Ismail (2011) identified several antecedents to customer experience, some being also present in the customer satisfaction literature. More precisely, this author identified advertising, price, employees, servicescape, core service, *WOM* and mood as antecedents to customer experience. Some of them, such as price and *WOM*, have been mentioned earlier in this research. Grönroos (2001) also identified service and experience quality as an antecedent to specific outcomes like customer satisfaction. Such antecedents are argued to either positively or negatively affect customer experience, which in turn will impact brand loyalty (Ismail, 2011). Other authors who have conducted studies in this specific field, such as Barsky and Nash (2002) and Berry et al. (2002), also argued and asserted that customer experience can affect loyalty behaviours either positively or negatively. Finally, Verhoef et al. (2009) also stated that complete customer experience encompasses different steps such as product search, purchase, usage or consumption and after-purchase evaluation.

In conclusion, this research defines the concept of *experience* as a mix of sensory information originating from encounters with products or services that has an affective influence on a person's emotions and/or senses before, during, and after a transaction.

1.5.4 Expectations

As established earlier, and according to Spreng, Mackenzie & Olshavsky (1996), expectations are: "beliefs about a product's attributes or performance at some time in the future (Olson & Dover, 1979)" (p. 16). Patterson (1993) also indicated that they are formed by prior knowledge or experience of products' attributes, exposure to certain external stimuli, such as price or advertising, and reference groups' information like *WOM* or product usage observation. This research assumes that expectations play an important role in not only motivating customers or companies to purchase a business aircraft, but also in influencing their level of satisfaction for this B2B high-involvement product. This second pre-purchase independent variable can be divided into three items: experience and service

quality, product performance, and perceived value and premium. The following subsections will attempt to describe and define each of these items.

1.5.4.1 Experience and Service Quality

As demonstrated in the previous section of this research entitled *Desires*, and more precisely in its subsection entitled *Experience*, purchasing a luxury product, such as a business aircraft, also translates to purchasing a luxury experience. This subsection places the emphasis on defining the concepts of experience and service quality and describes the relatively wide quality spectrum that applies to both of these concepts. Most companies and consumers who decide to purchase a business aircraft usually have chartered or used one, in the past. If not, they usually rely on external experts or consultants to advise them, during the purchasing process. Due to this reason, they are able to compare many aspects of one particular model or manufacturer to another, including the experience and service quality offered.

It must first be established that there exists a notable difference between experience quality and service quality. According to Otto and Ritchie (1996) and Chen and Chen (2010), experience quality tends to be more subjective in terms of measurements, whereas service quality is described as being more objective. This can be explained by the fact that consumers tend to evaluate experience quality as a whole, and not by decomposing it in different specific parts. Their evaluation is also influenced by their personal background; therefore, it is self-centric. The authors also mentioned that perceived benefits originating from experience quality are mostly affective, and experiential and symbolic in nature. Such statement is in line with Pitkänen and Tuohino (2006) and Tarssanen and Kylänen (2007) earlier definition of the experience concept. As a reminder, they respectively described an experience as an affective event that has a strong impact on the person perceiving it, and an emotional occurrence that can lead to personal changes.

It must also be noted that experience quality, just like service quality, are two concepts deprived of tangible evidences on which to evaluate their quality level (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1985). In this instance, some authors such as McConnel (1968), Olander (1970) and Zeithaml (1981) suggested that price becomes an indicator of quality, when further information or cues necessary to formulate a quality evaluation are unavailable. Experience quality may vary largely from one business aircraft model or

manufacturer to another. Therefore, how can it be possible to appropriately evaluate experience quality, and what are some business aircraft components related to this first concept?

Even though a wide variety of methods may exist to evaluate experience quality, such as surveys and semi-structured interviews, it is interesting to point out that Otto and Ritchie (1996) developed an experience quality scale composed of four factors (Chen and Chen, 2010). More precisely, these four factors are: hedonics, involvement, recognition and peace of mind. Otto and Ritchie (1996) described *hedonics* as the consumer's affective responses, such as memorability, enjoyment and excitement; *Involvement* relates to the desire to have a choice and control in the service offering, to be educated and informed about the offerings, and being influenced by a sense of mutual cooperation; *Peace of mind* is described as the consumer's concern and need for both psychological and physical safety and comfort; Finally, *Recognition* pertains to the fact that consumers must feel important, confident, and be taken seriously by the selling party. Such scale may therefore be useful in measuring the experience quality of companies' executives travelling aboard a business aircraft.

Some examples of business aircraft functionalities that can impact *experience quality* include overall comfort, such as flight smoothness and seats' comfort, reclining and sliding capabilities; Cabin ambiance, such as enhanced natural lighting, due to larger-than-competition windows, and cabin convenience, such as a phone application allowing the user to control cabin lighting and temperature; The overall quality and accessibility of onboard amenities, such as fast Wi-Fi and reliable satellite phones/televisions, and the perceived level of luxury associated with the internal and external completion work, which includes veneers, leathers, carpets, china and paint job quality, along with the overall cabin design. Personal attention, and the level of courtesy and confidentiality offered by the manufacturer's sales team and employees, pre-and post-purchase, also play an important role in establishing consumer *experience quality* (Verhoef et al., 2009).

In regards to the concept of *service quality*, its definition is considerably different than the one of *experience quality*. This concept is described as being considerably more objective, and its evaluation is a lot more attribute-based and focused on the external service environment. The scope of service quality is also more specific, brings forth

functional and utilitarian benefits, and its psychological representation is described as being cognitive and attitudinal (Otto and Ritchie, 1996 and Chen and Chen, 2010). Carman (1990) study was one of the first to demonstrate that consumers tend to break service quality dimensions into multiple subdimensions, showing the complexity of human perception when it comes to evaluating service quality. It must be noted that such service quality dimensions will be described further in this subsection.

Grönroos (1984) described a *service* as being immaterial and characterizes it as an activity where production and consumption occur almost simultaneously. A few years later, Grönroos (1988) refined his view of what constitutes a *service* by stating that, in order to be qualified as a service, four basic characteristics must be identifiable. More precisely, services are relatively intangible, are activities or series of activities rather than things, are produced and consumed simultaneously, and the customer must participate or be involved to some extent in the production process. It is important to note that this last characteristic is in line with a more recent study realized by Vargo and Lusch (2006) which states that “the customer is always a co-creator of value” (p. 2). Grönroos (1984) also described service quality as being separable into two distinct dimensions: functional and technical quality. He described functional quality as being the expressive performance of a service answering the question of *how* the consumer receives the service. On the other hand, technical quality is the instrumental performance of a service, and describes *what* the consumer receives as a consequence of his interaction with the company (Grönroos, 1984).

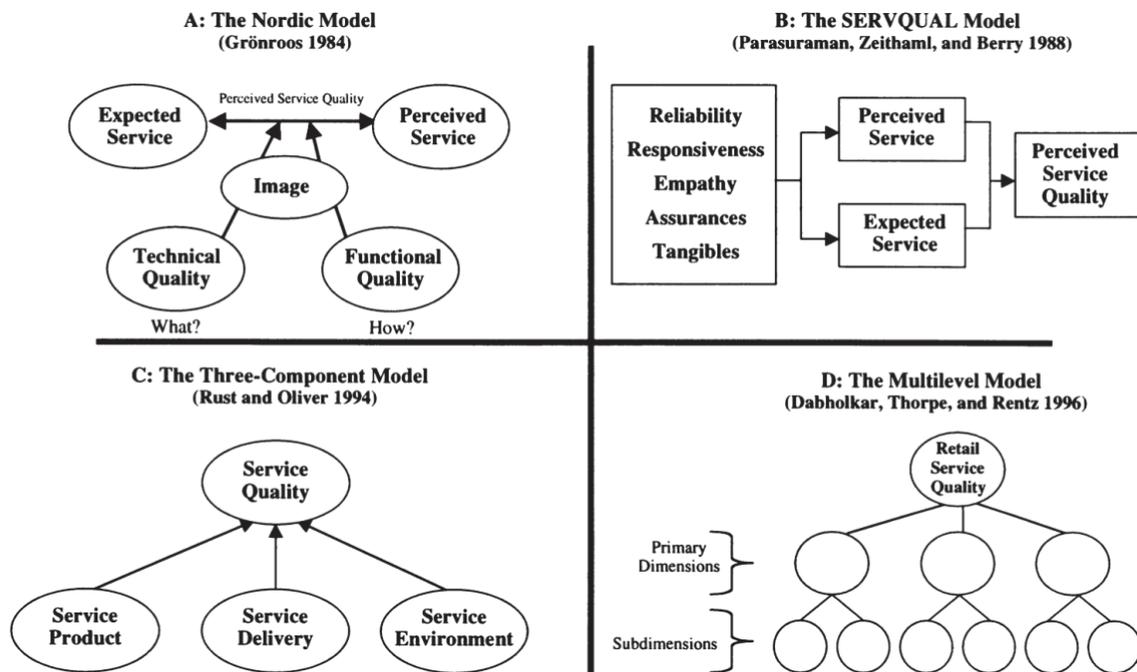
One of the first models used to measure *service quality* was Grönroos’ (1984) Nordic Model, which compared the expected to the perceived service performance using the two-above-mentioned functional and technical quality dimensions. The SERVQUAL Model was then conceived by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988), which also compared expected to perceived service performance, however, according to five dimensions being reliability, responsiveness, empathy, assurances and tangibles. Many other service quality models (*cf.* figure 6) then followed these first two, such as Rust and Oliver’s (1994) Three-Component Model, Dabholkar, Thorpe and Rentz’s (1996) Multi-level Model, Brady and Cronin’s (2001) adapted SERVQUAL model involving three dimensions and nine subdimensions, and more recently Petrick and Backman’s (2002) SERV-PERVAL scale which includes five specific dimensions: quality, monetary price,

non-monetary price, emotional response and reputation (Brady and Cronin, 2001 and Chen and Chen, 2010).

The literature therefore indicates that several authors have attempted to improve the measurement's efficiency of *service quality* by adapting older models and conceiving new ones, over the last few years. This said, no particular model seems to be predominantly preferred by academics, and the quest to conceive a globally accepted one continues.

Service quality associated with certain specific services, such as after-sales support, can also influence overall customer satisfaction, repurchase intentions, and relationship quality (Rigopoulou et al., 2008). It must also be mentioned that service quality is perceived by some authors as being an integral part of the overall experience quality (Astrapellos et al., 2010). The unification of both experience and service quality concepts gave birth to the concept of *service experience* (Otto and Ritchie, 1996). Such concept is described by Otto and Ritchie (1996) as being a holistic, multidimensional measurement of customers' reactions and feelings in response to a specific service. In light of this finding, this research will assume that *service quality* can be characterized as a part of the more holistic *experience quality* concept.

Figure 6: Brady and Cronin (2001) Service Quality Literature Conceptualizations



Examples of specific business aircraft customer *services* include enhanced sales force and employees' availability, and going above and beyond customers' expectations by providing them with free demonstration flights and access to air shows; Providing customers with business planning solutions, which allows them to better understand their needs and select the most appropriate aircraft model; Extensive and courteous after-sales support worldwide, convenient worldwide maintenance programs, access to an extensive worldwide network of pilots and crew members, and premium services at certain regional airports, such as fueling, parking and catering VIP priority.

In conclusion, this research defines *experience quality* as an intangible concept, which tends to be subjective in terms of measurement and is evaluated holistically. It must be noted that its evaluation is self-centric, as it is based on personal past experiences and knowledge. Perceived benefits originating from such concept are affective, experiential and symbolic in nature. These benefits may lead to an emotional impact that can ultimately cause various personal changes, depending on the perceived quality extent of such benefits by the consumer. A few examples of business aircraft functionalities and aspects that can positively or negatively influence experience quality are flight smoothness, perceived level of luxury and the overall degree of courtesy demonstrated by the manufacturer's sales team and employees.

In regard to the concept of *service quality*, this research defines it as being considerably more objective than the one of *experience quality*, and its evaluation is a lot more attribute-based and focused on the external service environment. The scope of *service quality* is also more specific, brings forth functional and utilitarian benefits, and its psychological representation can be described as being cognitive and attitudinal. In order to accurately evaluate a service's quality, and both of its technical and functional quality dimensions, it must be definable as an intangible activity or series of activities produced and consumed simultaneously, in which the customer must participate or be involved to some extent in its production process. *Service quality* is also an integral part of the more holistic experience quality concept. Some examples of business aircraft customer *services* include business planning solutions, ever-ready after-sales support, and access to an extensive worldwide network of pilots and crew members.

1.5.4.2 Product Performance

Companies or customers who decide to purchase a *high-involvement* product, such as a business aircraft, need to reflect on many performance-related aspects, prior to signing a manufacturer's purchase agreement. Indeed, their predicted usage of the product will affect their performance requirements. For example, a customer who frequently makes business trips to London City, England, will require his aircraft to be qualified for steep approaches, in order to be able to land at this specific airport where many business or commercial aircraft are technically unable to. Supplementary examples of business aircraft performance-related aspects will be provided further in this subsection. Furthermore, it is important to mention that pre-purchase expectations acquired or formed during a previous business aircraft usage will also positively or negatively influence product performance satisfaction. A look at the existing literature will allow this research to appropriately define the concept of perceived performance and elaborate on the influential role it plays in determining overall *consumer satisfaction* for *B2B high-involvement* products.

Zeithaml (1988) stated that products are often chosen solely according to an evaluation of their extrinsic cues. However, and as mentioned earlier in this research, purchasing a *high-involvement* product such as a business aircraft requires a longer, harder, riskier, and more complex process. According to Clark and Belk (1978), consumers will usually spend more time looking for product information in the case of *high-involvement* products, in order to make a wise purchase decision and reduce the risks associated with it. Therefore, an evaluation of intrinsic cues also needs to take place. In order to provide further clarification, extrinsic cues usually relate to physical product-related aspects, such as for example wing span, whereas intrinsic cues may relate to financial aspects of the product or its impact on a company's profitability. This is in line with Slack's (1991) study stating that there are internal and external reasons to pursue a specific course of action.

Cronin and Taylor (1992) demonstrated that customers who used direct performance assessments provided clearer evaluation measurements than those who used expectations assessments. Indeed, this statement is supported by Neely, Gregory and Platts (1995) who claimed that the act of measuring and quantifying knowledge is more satisfactory than hypothetical and qualitative statements pertaining to one particular topic. The authors also conceived a performance measurement system, in order to effectively

quantify the efficiency and effectiveness of actions, which in themselves represent and lead to performance.

Selnes (1993) also indicated that customers need norms, or comparison standards, in order to evaluate what is good from mediocre. In this regard, Cadotte et al. (1987) identified two different types of norms. The first one being the normal perceived performance of a specific brand, and the second one being the average perceived performance for a group of similar brands in a determined product category. This second norm therefore implies that customer experience and knowledge related to a specific product class may be an important performance determinant and play an important role in the way customers judge product performance. This is where prior experiences come into effect and have an influential role on perceived or required product performance.

As mentioned by Neely, Gregory and Platts (1995), *performance* is a topic that is often discussed, but not often specifically defined. According to Kotler (1984), the action of performing refers to a company satisfying its customers, by offering them more efficiency and effectiveness than its competitors. In this case, the term *efficiency* relates to reducing costs and improving profitability, whereas the term *effectiveness* relates to product reliability, which can lead to enhanced customer satisfaction (Neely, Gregory and Platts, 1995). Therefore, it can be inferred that *product performance* leads to enhanced *effectiveness* and *efficiency*, which can in turn positively impact *customer satisfaction*. Some examples of product performance aspects related to business aircraft include range, maximum takeoff weight, landing and takeoff distance, fuel efficiency, included avionics suite, seat configuration, maximum speed, cruising speed, and maximum operational ceiling.

In conclusion, this research defines the concept of *product performance* as actions that can both be quantifiable and accomplished by a specific product, which has been chosen following a thorough evaluation of its extrinsic and intrinsic cues, according to specific comparison norms, and that lead to enhanced *effectiveness* and *efficiency* capable of positively influencing customer satisfaction.

1.5.4.3 Perceived Value and Premium

Current literature defines consumers' *perceived value* in a variety of ways. Indeed, companies purchasing a *high-involvement* product, such as a business aircraft, also wish to obtain product value, in order to not only be able to justify its purchase, but also gain a competitive advantage over their competitors. As stated by Holbrook (1994), customer value is "the fundamental basis for all marketing activity" (p. 22). It can be argued that the equity theory represents the foundation of perceived value, as it considers the proportion of the consumer's outcome and input to that of the manufacturer's outcome and input (Oliver and DeSarbo, 1988). More precisely, Snoj, Korda and Mumel (2004) stated that customers purchase products to satisfy some of their needs. In other words, they do not only purchase a product but a combination of attributes which ultimately derive benefits and value. Finally, the total disutility represented by the sacrifices that were required to obtain the product must be subtracted. The benefits provided by such product can either originate from external, internal, intrinsic and extrinsic product attributes, and the sacrifices required can be represented by the product's nominal price and all of the other costs related to its usage (Zeithaml, 1988; Sweeney et al., 1999; Slater and Narvey, 2000; Ulaga and Chacour, 2001).

Following a similar line of thought, Zeithaml (1988) defined the concept of *perceived value* as "the consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given" (p. 14). Lovelock (2000) pushed this definition further by describing value as a trade-off between benefits and perceived costs. Snoj, Korda and Mumel's (2004) study accurately summarized several authors' definitions of the perceived value concept and accurately identified some of their commonalities. More precisely, four common aspects were identified. First, a consumer perceives a product's value according to his knowledge of its purchasing process and usage. Second, a product's value cannot be defined by the organization that manufactures or provides it, as it can only be defined by consumers' perception of it. Third, the concept of perceived value is a multidimensional one. Finally, a majority of the authors agree to state that perceived value is a trade-off between benefits and sacrifices perceived by consumers in a manufacturer's offering.

Interestingly, it must also be noted that recent research indicated that *perceived value* may represent a better prognosticator of repurchase intentions than product quality or customer satisfaction (Cronin et al., 2000; Oh, 2000). Cronin et al. (2000), Dodds, Monroe and Grewal (1991) and McDougall and Levesque (2000) also established that this concept is an important precursor to behavioural intentions and *customer satisfaction*. Bolton and Drew (1991) and Sirdeshmukh et al. (2002) studies also identified *perceived value* as an important determinant of customer loyalty in different business sectors such as commercial air travel, telecommunications and retailing.

Furthermore, the literature also indicates that several authors attempted to measure perceived value, such as Gale's (1994) self-reported unidimensional measure and Petrick and Backman's (2002) multidimensional scale. However, and as mentioned in Snoj, Korda and Mumel's (2004) study, researchers agree that a multidimensional scale is more appropriate than a unidimensional one, as the measure of the latter one is often criticized due to its supposition that consumers perceive value similarly. Petrick and Backman's (2002) five dimensions' SERV-PERVAL scale is one out of many multidimensional scales available to measure perceived value. More precisely, and as mentioned earlier in this research, their scale is composed of five dimensions being emotional response, monetary price, non-monetary price, reputation and quality (Chen and Chen, 2010).

Examples of some benefits and added value from owning and using a business aircraft include enhanced flexibility and reliability of operations, important time savings, increased productivity for executives, the ability to attract and retain key executives and the ability to support customers in a more effective manner. The residual value of a business aircraft can also be perceived as a benefit and therefore added value, due to the fact that some specific aircraft models lose some of their financial value much faster than others.

Another concept similar to *perceived value*, and also relevant to this research is called *premium*. This research established earlier that business aircraft are a luxury product, but it is essential to distinguish the difference between luxury motivations and *premium* reasons to purchase such a high-involvement product. Indeed, it can be easy to confuse both types of purchase motivations. Although literature relating to the term *premium* is scarce, Kapferer and Bastien's (2012) book states that *premium* is not to be confused with *luxury*, as it represents a more substantiated and cautious purchase process. Both authors

clearly defined *luxury* as a more irrational purchase process, in order to gain wealth, social status and prestige. However, they defined *premium* as the willingness to pay a higher than average monetary price for specific pragmatic reasons. It can therefore be inferred that *premium* is a rational investment based on specific reasons and criteria, such as performance, price, potential economy of time, affordability and enhanced convenience.

This being established, the earlier subsection of this research entitled *Social Status and Prestige* demonstrated that it is possible for companies to exhibit luxury-related purchase motivations. However, and as stated earlier in the case of a *high-involvement* product purchase process, a thoughtful analysis must be performed, and specific criteria established and fulfilled, prior to acquiring and transferring full ownership of the product to its owner. A mix of luxury and *premium* purchase motivations is therefore possible, especially in a *B2B* context where companies need to appropriately justify their decision to purchase a complex and expensive product like a business aircraft. It must also be noted that the power of a *B2B* brand or company originates from its capability to substantially add value at a minimized level of corporate risk; thus, allowing it to gain a medium to long-term competitive advantage over its close competitors. This is how *premium*, which involves a considerate amount of time and caution when purchasing a product, allows companies to fulfill such objective.

In conclusion, this research defines the concept of a product's *perceived value* as a trade-off between benefits and perceived costs that is influenced by consumers' knowledge of its purchasing process and usage. Such concept also represents an accurate indicator of repurchase intentions, acts as a precursor to customer satisfaction, and represents a determinant of customer loyalty. Finally, a product's perceived value cannot be defined by its manufacturer, as it can solely be attributed according to customers' perception of it.

In regards to the concept of *premium*, it encompasses a more substantiated and cautious purchase process than a luxury-related product. More precisely, it represents the willingness of consumers to pay a higher than average monetary price for pragmatic reasons. In other words, it can be defined as a rational investment based on criteria such as performance, price, economy of time and convenience. It must also be stated that *Premium* provides companies with the ability to add value at a minimized level of corporate risk;

thus, allowing them to gain a medium to long-term competitive advantage over their close competitors.

1.5.5 Product Attributes Satisfaction

As stated earlier, business aircraft can be classified as *high-involvement* products. As such, they contain a vast range of product attributes. Oliver (1993) states that consumers are exposed to a concept entitled *attribute experience*, which consists of perceiving different service or product features and comparing their *attribute performance* using “satisfaction units.” From these observations then results the concept of *attribute satisfaction*, which Oliver (1993) describes as being the “psychological fulfillment response consumers make when assessing performance” (p. 421). Spreng, MacKenzie and Olshavsky (1996) support Oliver’s (1993) statement and also define *attribute satisfaction* as “the consumer’s subjective satisfaction judgment resulting from the observations of attribute performance” (p. 17).

Martin (1998) also interestingly highlights that *high-involvement* and relationship-prone products tend to have specific product attributes in common. The author was able to identify ten attributes, more precisely nostalgic value, uniqueness, price risk, association, quality and excellence, sensory appeal, personification, sign value, interactivity and facilitation. Some of them, such as uniqueness, price risk, quality and excellence, personification and sign value can easily be associated with a high-involvement product like a business aircraft. Indeed, customers have the ability to highly personalize their aircraft, which makes every one of them a unique, high-value and luxurious quality product that sells at a high price tag.

This research focuses on three distinct types of product attributes satisfaction. More precisely, product attributes satisfaction related to comfort and luxury, performance and offered services will be analyzed, in order to determine their influence on overall consumer satisfaction for *B2B high-involvement* products. Product attributes related to comfort and luxury can be defined as product features enhancing consumers’ level of comfort and influencing their perception of luxury. In line with the earlier subsection of this research addressing *perceived value and premium*, Sheth et al. (1988) and Vickers and Renand (2003) indicated that the status value associated with luxury products is usually perceived as the most important aspect influencing the selection of such type of products. It can

therefore be inferred that the satisfaction level related to comfort and luxury product attributes play an influential role in the consumers' purchase decision. Examples of such type of product attributes include exclusive types of leather, veneer and carpeting inside the cabin, extensive porcelain ensembles, multiple screen displays, entertainment systems, wider seats, increased legroom and high-speed wireless internet accessibility.

Product attributes related to performance can be defined as product features directly influencing the aircraft performance, such as increased engine thrust, state of the art avionic equipment, enhanced wing flexibility, steep approach capability and available head-up display. It must also be mentioned that such product attributes lead to enhanced *effectiveness* and *efficiency* capable of positively influencing customer satisfaction, as mentioned earlier in this research's subsection regarding *product performance*.

Finally, product attributes related to offered services can be described as any features directly or indirectly capable of having an impact on the perceived service quality associated with the purchase of a business aircraft. There exists a rationale behind the decision of business aircraft manufacturers to offer such type of product attributes. Indeed, the available literature, along with Oliva and Kallenberg's (2003) study, demonstrated that manufacturers as a whole need to integrate more services into their core offerings for three specific reasons. First, Anderson et al. (1997), Knecht et al. (1993), Potts (1988) and Quinn (1992) proved that services tend to generate higher margins than products, important revenue streams from products with a long-life cycle, such as business aircraft, and tend to provide a more stable source of revenue due to their resistance to economic cycles. Second, customers are constantly seeking more services (Oliva and Kallenberg, 2003). Third, Heskett et al. (1997) stated that services represent a sustainable source of competitive advantage as they are much harder to imitate than products, which constitutes an essential strategy for players evolving in such a competitive industry like business aviation.

A few examples of service product attributes related to the purchase and usage of a business aircraft include an efficient and courteous after-sales support, a personalized approach during the purchasing process, enhanced service quality and rapidity at service centres, and a favoured treatment at certain airports in regards to parking and fuelling priority, along with a special access for crew members at the lounge.

In conclusion, this research defines the concept of *product attributes satisfaction* as the consumers' assessment of different services or product features, which relate to the concept of *attribute experience*, in order to ultimately be capable of comparing their *attribute performance* using "satisfaction units." From such assessment then results a psychological fulfillment response and satisfaction judgment from the consumers involved.

1.5.6 Information Satisfaction

As mentioned earlier in this research and taking into consideration that business aircraft constitute *high-involvement* products, consumers will spend more time looking for product information, in order to make a wise purchase decision and minimize associated risks (Clark and Belk, 1978). This said, Spreng, Mackenzie & Olshavsky (1996) describes *information satisfaction* as the satisfaction judgment of the information used, when choosing a specific product or service. They claim such information usually originate from a company's marketing communications efforts, and from various other sources such as personal selling, advertising campaigns, corporate websites and social media.

This research will assume that *information satisfaction* can be influenced by three specific variables. As such, personal selling, word-of-mouth (*WOM*) communication, and external experts involved in the purchasing process on the customer's side, such as external sales representatives, consultants, brokers, operators, specialized lawyers and chief pilots' influence on information satisfaction will be examined. Knowledge pertaining to these sources of information will be deepened thanks to an exhaustive literature review, and their influence on *information satisfaction* analyzed. It will then be possible to use this analysis to measure the extent of the influence of *information satisfaction* onto overall *consumer satisfaction* for *B2B high-involvement* products.

1.5.6.1 Personal Selling

As stated by Spreng, Mackenzie & Olshavsky (1996), personal selling may positively or negatively impact overall *information satisfaction*. This subsection aims at examining the existing academic literature related to the sale of luxury and high-involvement products in a *B2B* context, which can be closely associated with the purchase process of a business aircraft. Such examination aims at identifying and deepening knowledge regarding current and potential sales techniques and strategies that could be used by global business aircraft manufacturers.

First of all, it is imperative to define what the concept of *personal selling* stands for. According to Tanner and Raymond (2010), current marketing literature is consistent in defining this concept as an “interactive, personal, paid promotional approach between a buyer and seller” (p. 222). However, Dixon and Tanner’s (2012) research points out that field practitioners had a difference of opinion with researchers regarding this definition, as practitioners believed that sales should be considered a non-linear phenomenon. Consequently, both parties agreed that a broader definition was required, in order to take into account the evolution of sales throughout the past years. More precisely, Rackham (2011) demonstrated that simple products do not require a salesperson to be involved in the selling process anymore, as technology can easily replace them. However, more complex products still require a salesperson to be involved. As a result, the author claimed that the selling field is being split into two different categories; one requiring technology to enable sales transactions, and one requiring a co-creation process within the different actors involved in the personal selling process.

Consequently, Dixon and Tanner’s (2012) research defines *personal selling* as “the phenomenon of human-driven interaction between and within individuals/organizations in order to bring about economic exchange within a value-creation context” (p. 10). As mentioned before, such broader definition allows for more parties to get involved, and also to include different selling processes, such as the ones involving technology. Due to the complexity and multitude of processes involved in the selling process of a business aircraft, this research will use some parts of Dixon and Tanner’s (2012) definition of *personal selling*.

When it comes to the literature pertaining to luxury selling, many articles and research seems to have been done in a *B2C* context, but it was impossible to identify any that had taken place in a *B2B* context. Consequently, such finding highlights the novelty of this research’s topic. Secondly, literature pertaining to the sales of *high-involvement* products in a *B2C* context is quite sparse, but inexistent regarding sales of high-involvement products in a *B2B* context. This said, Patterson’s (1993) article highlights some interesting principles that may be applied to the selling process of *B2B high-involvement* products. Even though this author’s research regard *consumer satisfaction* following a *high-involvement* purchase, he claims dissatisfaction is most often caused by

after-sales services, and those companies' sales departments play an important role in raising customers' expectations about their brand, which can be either helpful or hurtful depending on the product's performances (Patterson, 1993). Thus, it could be inferred that after-sales services should not be omitted or underestimated as they play a crucial role in determining overall consumer product satisfaction, and sales departments should be careful not to raise consumers' expectations to a point where they cannot be met as it could negatively impact overall *consumer satisfaction*. Finally, the author also mentions that concessions from sales departments can be a good way to directly influence consumers disconfirmation and compensate for certain negative occurrences that may have taken place during the selling process (Patterson, 1993).

In regards to *B2B* selling processes, Åge (2011) interestingly suggests a new conceptual model encompassing the need for organizational salespeople to adapt to new technologies, the strategic role of selling within organizations, more frequent team-based approaches to selling, increased buyer knowledge, and increased emphasis on long-term relationships with customers. The author's model includes four categories, respectively being *business standardization*, *business fraternization*, *personalization* and *probationary business rationalization*. The first category, *business standardization*, can be defined as all formal and standardized organizational activities that take place during the selling process. Such of these activities are described by the author as being a hindrance to the development of business relationships, as they favour a standardized over a more personalized approach to understanding the needs and problems of the customer, which may demonstrate a lack of interest or empathy from the seller.

The second category, *business fraternization*, can be defined as the way two or more parties develop a business relationship based on respect and understanding, in order to work towards the accomplishment of a mutual goal. Such relationship can either be internal, which means that all of the parties involved work within the same large organization, or external, which denotes that one or more of the parties involved do not work as part of the same organization as the seller or buyer. This step emphasizes the need for all parties to be working closely, to trust each other, to know as much as possible about each other's marketplace and industry, and to continuously learn from each other.

The third category, *personalization*, refers to all activities related to the attitudes and dispositions of the parties involved. More precisely, it encompasses aspects such as how personal relationships may affect the selling process, the seller's ability to change the buyer's perspective and attitude to its products and solutions, the level of trust between all parties, and the importance of salespeople to have *personal selling* skills along with an ability to carefully listen to all the needs of the buyer.

Finally, the last category of Åge's (2011) *B2B* selling conceptual model, *probationary business rationalization*, can be defined as the ability of all parties involved to optimally reduce the total cost, financial risk, and operational risk related to the ongoing transaction, both for the buyer and seller. It must also be mentioned that all of these mutually dependent and complimentary categories all held together by the concept of *business manoeuvring*, which can be defined as the seller's ability to manoeuvre differently throughout each of these categories every time they deal with a new buyer, in order to increase its chances of successfully closing the transaction by more accurately dealing with all of the transaction's details, and by offering the buyer a truly personalized purchasing experience. This proposed model also supports Dixon and Tanner's (2012) claim that *personal selling* should be perceived as a non-linear phenomenon.

Hartmann, Wieland and Fargo's (2018) research entitled *Converging on a New Theoretical Foundation for Selling* also brings forth several interesting aspects pertaining to *personal selling*, *high-involvement* products, and even *customer satisfaction*. Similarly to Dixon and Tanner's (2012) article, the authors also pointed out that increasing market complexity, technological advancements, a higher number of offerings, and customers' access to information, just to name a few, contribute to the need for a more robust theoretical selling foundation that better explains the role of sales in value co-creation, along with a more holistic approach in sales research and practise (Hughes, Le Bon and Malshe, 2012; Rapp et al., 2017). Relying on concepts from Baldwin's (2008), and Baldwin and Clark's (2000) research, Hartmann, Wieland and Fargo (2018) introduces the existence of "thin" and "thick" crossing points from a sales perspective. More precisely, *thin* crossing points refer to "a location at which a service can efficiently be exchanged for service" (p. 3) or at which an exchange of service can be done through simple interactions (Hartmann, Wieland and Fargo, 2018). Based on this definition, an example of a *thin*

crossing point could be the online purchase and home delivery of an item via a popular sales platform, such as Amazon or Ebay. On the other hand, the authors describe *thick* crossing points as requiring the formation of deeper and more complex interactions between all of the actors involved in a transaction, as common ground design rules may not yet have been established; such common ground design rules being the various norms, representations, and even rules that guide exchange practises related to a particular product (Kjellberg and Helgesson, 2006). *Thick* crossing points can also be associated with discontinuous solutions and emergent markets (Hartmann, Wieland and Fargo, 2018).

Based on these definitions, it could therefore be assumed that the selling process of *high-involvement* products, such as a business aircraft, can be associated with the concept of *thick* crossing points, due to the fact that such transactions consistently require the cooperation of many different actors and the implementation of many unique solutions. In this case, the authors refer to a service ecosystems perspective of sales, which is in fact an overlapping of different institutional arrangements, the involvement of a broad set of actors who communicate differently and use a various array of tools, a phenomenon of value co-creation, salespeople limited ability to change the way buyers act and think, and an exchange of information amongst all actors which results in the formation of mutually beneficial relationships (Hartmann, Wieland and Fargo, 2018).

In addition, the authors highlight the fact that *thick* crossing points consistently evolve to become *thin* crossing points over time, due to technological advancements and changes in the market place. Furthermore, a combination of *thick* and *thin* crossing points, as part of one sale offering, can also be considered a competitive advantage, as it can lead to a reduction of the total number of competitors. Finally, their research highlights the fact that it can sometimes be beneficial for salespeople to lose sales if their offering is not as good as the one of a competitor, in order to leave a good impression of their brand, which in turn affects customers' perception of the *thick* and *thin* crossing points their company has to offer (Hartmann, Wieland and Fargo, 2018).

The rise of the influence of social media also has an important role to play regarding customer satisfaction in *B2B personal selling*. As mentioned by Agnihotri et al. (2016), social media not only provides salespeople with a means to communicate more responsively with their customers, but also to provide them with a more positive experience

that meets their expectations; thus, leading to a higher level of *customer satisfaction* in a *B2B* context. This is especially important as the rising level of cooperation, knowledge and value co-creation between customers and manufacturers has placed customers on a similar footing with sellers (Greenberg, 2010). This statement is in line with Dixon and Tanner's (2012) research that puts forth the fact that value creation is a direct result of *personal selling*. Social media therefore represents a way for *B2B* firms and their sales force to adapt to customers' increasing expectations (Hibbert, Winklhofer and Temerak, 2012).

In conclusion, this research defines the concept of *personal selling* as a human-driven interaction within individuals and/or organizations, in order to create not only an economic exchange within a value co-creation context, but also *thin* crossing points through the alignment of organizational arrangements and the optimization of relationships (Dixon and Tanner, 2012; Hartmann, Wieland and Fargo, 2018). It was also possible to associate the selling process of *high-involvement* products to the concept of *thick* crossing points, which can be defined as exchange locations requiring the formation of deeper and more complex interactions between all of the actors implicated in the selling process.

In addition, a new *B2B* selling conceptual model conceived by Åge (2011) was described. This model encompasses four categories that could allow organizational salespeople to optimize their performance and adapt to today's complex and dynamic *B2B* selling processes. Finally, it was established that salespeople need to create and maintain strong relationships with all actors involved in the transaction, as today's sales environment can be described as a service ecosystem in which value co-creation is of the utmost importance for all organizations and/or institutions implicated (Hartmann, Wieland and Fargo, 2018).

1.5.6.2 Word-of-Mouth Satisfaction

The global business aircraft industry can also be defined as a niche market, where most key players and primary actors, such as top executives from each major manufacturer, usually know each other on a personal basis. Most secondary actors, such as external sales representatives, aviation consultants, brokers, and operators, also detain a certain level of notoriety in their respective field and often interact with each other. Therefore, *word-of-mouth (WOM)* plays a critical role in such type of close-knit business environment not only for primary and secondary actors, but also for current and potential buyers. Indeed,

referencing plays an important role for manufacturers' sales departments in their attempt to reach out to a greater number of potential customers. Furthermore, *WOM* may also have the influence to either positively or negatively impact overall *customer satisfaction* for *B2B high-involvement* products, such as business aircraft.

An in-depth look at the current *WOM* literature demonstrated that most of the current academic literature focused on retail sales, except some that examined the impact of *WOM* in the case of *high-involvement* products purchase, and how *customer satisfaction* may be positively or negatively influenced.

As defined earlier in this research, *WOM* refers to any opinions shared online or physically, between two or more consumers, regarding past user experiences and current or past product reviews (Gu, Park and Konana, 2012). According to Gu, Park and Konana (2012), two main types of *WOM* information exists, more precisely internal or external word-of-mouth. Internal *WOM* is hosted by retailers and usually originates from salespeople or sales-related information sources, such as a company's website, brochures or specification sheets. On the other hand, external *WOM* is hosted by third-party intermediaries, such as websites specialized in product reviews or independent consultants or experts.

Gu, Park and Konana (2012) mentioned that consumers' willingness to research pre-purchase information can suggest that external *WOM* may have a significant influence on sales of *high-involvement* products, which can be described as durable products with complex functionality, high price, and long life. Three reasons can explain why external *WOM* sources have a greater influence on sales than internal sources. First, Tedeschi (2006) demonstrated that such type of *WOM* source enjoys a better recognition and reputation as a product information source. Second, they are usually more specialized, offer greater depth, and more insights about complex products (Gu, Park and Konana, 2012). Finally, the authors also state that external *WOM* sources can not only provide regular product reviews from existing users/customers but also ones from professionals and experts, which are often perceived as more credible in the eyes of customers. Interestingly, the results from Gu, Park and Konana's (2012) research indicated that consumers have most often already made up their minds about the purchase of a *high-involvement* product, when they reach or

contact a retailer/manufacturer, which also indicates that the influence of internal *WOM* sources is limited when it comes to purchasing such type of product.

Bowman and Narayandas (2001) also claimed that *WOM* engagement is correlated with a firm's customers' loyalty and their level of satisfaction with its products. Indeed, the authors stated that loyal customers are more likely to engage in negative *WOM*, when they are dissatisfied with the company's products. However, this statement is far from being unanimous in the existing literature, as multiple other researchers claimed that loyal and satisfied customers will instead engage in positive *WOM* (Swan and Oliver, 1989; Westbrook, 1987). Several other authors also demonstrated that consumer satisfaction is expected to impact the likelihood to engage in *WOM* and the number of referrals given (Anderson, 1998; Wangenheim and Bayon, 2007). It can, therefore, be established that there exists a strong link between *consumer satisfaction* and consumers' likelihood to engage in *WOM*.

The concept of *product involvement*, which can be defined as the degree to which a person finds a product relevant, has also been proven to impact the probability to engage in *WOM* (Dichter, 1966; Richins and Bloch, 1986 and Westbrook, 1987). In addition, Wangenheim and Bayon (2007) also proved that newly acquired customers will be more likely to engage in positive *WOM* and provide referrals, as their average level of satisfaction was found to be greater than the one of medium and long-term customers. Finally, companies or manufacturers willing to invest in *buzz management*, which can be defined as the proactive creation of *WOM*, as part of their promotional and referral strategies should use a wide variety of sources, due to the fact that outreach efficiency increases proportionally to the number of sources used (Godes and Mayzlin, 2004).

As Herr, Kardes and Kim's (1991) research puts forth, *WOM* can exert a strong influence on customers' judgment of products. However, the authors also mentioned that vividly accessible product information has a greater influence on judgment than *WOM*, and the accessibility of printed negative diagnostic information will also critically reduce the influence of *WOM* on product judgment.

Academic literature also describes the concept of *electronic WOM (eWOM)* as having a strong influence on companies' sales performance. This concept can be defined as the communication of product information to customers via the Internet and becomes

increasingly important as *B2B* sales teams are increasing their social media usage, as mentioned in the previous subsection of this research (Rosario et al., 2016). Indeed, many authors proved that *eWOM* has a significant monetary effect on sales excluding other marketing mix effects (Chen, Wang and Xie, 2011; Chevalier and Mayzlin, 2006; Moe and Trusov, 2011). However, it must be noted that such research were done in a *B2C* context, and results may vary in *B2B* context. Nevertheless, Rosario et al. (2016) proved that for products with a higher financial risk, such as *high-involvement* ones exchanged in a *B2B* context, *eWOM* can have a strong positive impact on a company's sales performance when product reviews were prominently displayed on platforms imposing higher posting costs.

In conclusion, this research defines the concept of *word-of-mouth* as any opinions shared online or physically, between two or more consumers, regarding past user experiences and current or past product reviews. Two types of *WOM* were also described, more precisely internal and external *word-of-mouth*. The concept of *electronic word-of-mouth* is also defined as the communication of product information to customers via the Internet. According to the literature, the way customers engage in both of these concepts can be linked and thought to be influenced by the previously defined concept of *consumer satisfaction*, their level of loyalty towards a specific company, and their level of *product involvement*; defined as the degree to which a customer finds a product relevant. Both forms of *WOM* are also known to have an influence on a company's sales performance, its customer acquisition or referral process, and more generally on its customers' product judgment/evaluation.

1.5.6.3 External Experts' Involvement

As mentioned in the *personal selling* subsection, this research assumes that the sale of a *B2B high-involvement* product requires a process of value co-creation by both seller and buyer. This therefore implies that many actors may be involved simultaneously in the purchasing process of such type of product. As mentioned by Weitz and Bradford (1999), and Wotruba (1991), contemporary selling negotiations usually involve multiple actors, and "an increasing emphasis on collaborative relationships between sellers and buyers has complicated the traditional transaction-based selling process" (Åge, 2011; p. 1574). Often times, some of these actors happen to be assisting the buyer during the purchasing process,

as he may be a first-time buyer and requires guidance or might also necessitate different experts' opinions about the product and its competitors' offerings.

Some of the actors involved in the purchasing process on both the buyer or seller's side of the transaction are known as external experts. More precisely, these experts have no official affiliation with either the buyer or the seller and conduct their business independently from them. In the case of the purchasing process of a business aircraft, many external experts may be involved simultaneously, on both the buyer and the seller's side of the transaction. However, and for the purpose of this research, a particular emphasis will be placed on the experts involved exclusively on the buyer's side. A few examples of external experts evolving in the business aircraft industry include external sales representatives, aviation consultants, brokers, aircraft operators, specialized lawyers and chief pilots. Some of them may sometimes be involved on the seller's side of the transaction, but it is a much rarer occurrence as large organizations such as global business aircraft manufacturers usually have access to a plethora of resources internally. It is believed that these external actors could play a role in shaping overall *customer satisfaction* for *B2B high-involvement* products like business aircraft.

Indeed, such experts have the capability to positively or negatively influence a customer's expectations in regards to a product's performance and experience, its perceived value, and the quality of service offered by its manufacturer. As described earlier in this research, raising or lowering the buyer's expectations will also affect his *disconfirmation of expectations* process. More precisely, Patterson (1993) proved that a customer's satisfaction is directly linked to "the size and direction of the disconfirmation experience" (p. 451). He also claimed that disconfirmation can be related to the consumer's initial expectations about a specific product's performance or attributes (Patterson, 1993). Therefore, this research assumes that external experts could not only influence a customer's *information satisfaction* during the selling process, but also his overall satisfaction of a *B2B high-involvement* product.

Although current academic literature regarding the involvement and the impact of external experts on overall customer satisfaction is quite sparse, and almost nonexistent, some articles do mention the influence of external actors/experts during the selling process. This influence can then be implied to play an important role in shaping not only a

customer's *information satisfaction*, but also his *overall satisfaction*, due to the reasons described earlier in this subsection. Relying on research completed by Bolander et al. (2015) and Plouffe et al. (2016), Hartmann, Wieland and Fargo (2018) emphasize the importance of external actors to selling and sales processes, as they can either engage in institutional maintenance by promoting the benefits of a product or a solution to buyers or do the opposite and push the buyers towards a different product/solution. These authors also claim that the participation of these external actors/experts play a crucial role in various organizations' selling processes, and even propose that new platforms be created in order to amplify their influence on buyers (Hartmann, Wieland and Fargo, 2018).

In conclusion, this research assumes that external actors/experts play an important role in organizations' selling processes, and have the ability to either positively or negatively influence customers' information and overall satisfaction for *B2B high-involvement* products, by either raising or lowering their expectations towards a product's performance, experience, and value; thus, consequently affecting buyers' *disconfirmation of expectations* mental process, which has been proved to play a crucial role in determining their overall level of satisfaction.

1.6 Conclusion

This chapter and literature review introduced various concepts, definitions, theoretical components, and previous academic researches, along with their respective conceptual models, necessary to not only identify the gaps between previous academic studies and this research, but also help the reader understand the multitude of concepts that support and motivate the completion of such research. For clarification purposes, and in order to recap every concept definition examined during this chapter, the following table regroups all of such definitions together (*cf.* Table 1):

Table 1: Concept Definitions Recap Table

Concept Examined	Definition
Consumer Satisfaction	A summary affective response of varying intensity directed at specific moments of product acquisition and consumption.
High-Involvement Products	Products that have the capability to influence a consumer's emotions and desires, are more durable and complex, and involve a longer, riskier and intricate purchasing process in comparison to low-involvement products.
Negative Disconfirmation	Perceived product performance inferior or smaller than consumer expectations, which results in consumer dissatisfaction.
Positive Disconfirmation	Perceived product performance equal to or larger than consumer expectations, which results in consumer satisfaction.

Table 1: Concept Definitions Recap Table (Continued)

Concept Examined	Definition
Expectations	The probability of an event's occurrence, followed by its evaluation consisting of determining its associated level of "goodness" or "badness".
Desires	Stable and present-oriented product attributes or benefits that are either associated with specific higher-level values/needs or lead to their fulfillment.
Product Attributes' Satisfaction	A consumer's assessment of different services or product features that relate to the concept of attribute experience, in order to ultimately be capable of comparing their attribute performance using "satisfaction units", which results in a final satisfaction judgement.
Information Satisfaction	The satisfaction judgment of the information used, when choosing a specific product or service.
Expectations' Congruency	The consumer's subjective assessment of the comparison between his or her expectations and the performance received.
Desires' Congruency	The consumer's subjective assessment of the comparison between his or her desires and the performance received.
Social Status	The position of an individual or company in society or a specific group, awarded by others, according to its level of power and prestige engendered by a higher position compared to others on important cultural dimensions, such as wealth and success.
Prestige	Concept associated with high-involvement products exhibiting perceived conspicuous, unique, social, hedonic and quality values; thus, procuring its owners enhanced social approbation.
Convenience	A product attribute or characteristic that reduces its non-monetary cost by allowing its users to save on resources such as effort and opportunity, to buy time, and to benefit from added value by being more efficient, which consequently improves their overall quality of life.
Experience	A mix of sensory information originating from encounters with products or services that has an affective influence on a person's emotions and/or senses before, during, and after a transaction.
Experience Quality	An intangible concept, subjective in terms of measurement and evaluated holistically. Its evaluation is self-centric, as is based on personal past experiences and knowledge. Perceived benefits are affective, experiential and symbolic in nature, and may lead to an emotional impact that can ultimately cause various personal changes.
Service Quality	An intangible activity or series of activities produced and consumed simultaneously, in which the customer must participate or be involved to some extent in its production process; More objective than experience quality, and more focused on the external service environment.
Product Performance	Actions that can be quantifiable and accomplished by a specific product chosen following a thorough evaluation of its extrinsic and intrinsic cues, according to specific comparison norms, and that lead to enhanced effectiveness and efficiency capable of positively influencing customer satisfaction.
Perceived Value	A trade-off between benefits and perceived costs that is influenced by consumers' knowledge of its purchasing process and usage. Accurate indicator of repurchase intentions, acts as a precursor to customer satisfaction, and represents a determinant of customer loyalty
Premium	A rational investment based on criteria such as performance, price, economy of time and convenience.
Comfort & Luxury Attributes	Product features enhancing consumers' level of comfort and influencing their perception of luxury.

Table 1: Concept Definitions Recap Table (Continued)

Concept Examined	Definition
Performance Attribute	Product features directly influencing its performance.
Service-Related Attribute	Product features directly or indirectly capable of having an impact on perceived service quality.
Personal Selling	A human-driven interaction within individuals and/or organizations, in order to create not only an economic exchange within a value co-creation context, but also crossing points through the alignment of organizational arrangements and the optimization of relationships.
Word-of-Mouth	Any opinions shared online or physically, between two or more consumers, regarding past user experiences and current or past product reviews.
External Experts Involvement	External actors/experts that can either positively or negatively influence customers' information and overall satisfaction, by either raising or lowering their expectations towards a product's performance, experience, and value; thus, consequently affecting buyers' disconfirmation of expectations mental process.

The foundations of this research having been laid out, the next chapter shall introduce this research's conceptual model, main goal, primary and secondary objectives, along with its research hypotheses.

Chapter 2: The Conceptual Model and Research Hypotheses

The literature review described during the previous chapter served to define and elaborate on various concepts that will be studied and act as variables of this research's conceptual model. More precisely, consumer satisfaction, high-involvement products, the determinants of consumer satisfaction, the paradigm of expectations disconfirmation, perceived performance, product attributes, the effect of disconfirmation, price, quality, sales force satisfaction and price equity are all key concepts that will be explored during this research. On the other hand, the independent variables of this conceptual model were identified as expectations, desires, product attributes satisfaction, information satisfaction, expectations and desires congruency, social status, prestige, convenience, experience, experience and service quality, product performance, perceived value and premium, personal selling, word-of-mouth satisfaction, and external experts' involvement. Finally, the main dependent variable of this research's model was identified as consumer satisfaction for *B2B* high-involvement products, more precisely business aircraft.

The theoretical foundations of this research being laid out, the following lines will serve to describe and explain this research's conceptual model, along with the hypotheses that ensue from it. More precisely, the first section of this chapter will bring forth and thoroughly describe the main problematic, multiple objectives and theoretical framework of this research. Such section will then be followed by a second one that will meticulously outline its conceptual model and introduce the tested hypotheses.

In regards to the conceptual model, the direct relationships of both pre-purchase variable *desires* and *expectations* with both *desires congruency* and *expectations congruency* post-purchase variables will be analyzed, in order to identify any disconfirmation effect between a consumer's pre-purchase and post-purchase *desires* and *expectations*.

Furthermore, the direct effects of both *desires congruency* and *expectations congruency* constructs onto the *information satisfaction* construct, along with its subconstructs, will also be analyzed, in order to not only quantify the extent of such effect, but also identify its various consequences.

Finally, the direct effects of both *product attributes' satisfaction* and *information satisfaction* variables onto the dependant *overall consumer satisfaction for B2B high-*

involvement product variable will be analyzed, in order to determine which one of these two variables has a greater influence on a consumer's overall satisfaction of a *B2B* high-involvement product.

2.1 The Research's Problematic, Objectives, and Questions

This first section will not only define this research's problematic and objectives, but also thoroughly describe its theoretical framework, according to the literature review presented in the previous chapter.

2.1.1 The Research's Problematic

As mentioned in the first chapter, there is a need to deepen academic knowledge and create novel perspectives on various non-economic factors, such as feelings, emotions, trust, consumer satisfaction, and purchase motivations related to or involved in organizational purchasing (LaPlaca and da Silva, 2016). One of these factors being consumer satisfaction, it comes to be regarded as the foundation for many companies operating in various markets (Szymanski and Henard, 2001).

In a *B2B* context, such factor has the ability to influence customers repurchase decision, word-of-mouth behavioural intentions, quality of future business relationships, and the level of loyalty towards manufacturers (Molinari, Abratt and Dion, 2008; Gil-Saura, Frasquet-Deltoro and Cervera-Taulet, 2009). Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that research in *B2B* satisfaction is seriously lagging behind consumer marketing (Molinari, Abratt and Dion, 2008). Finally, after an extensive literature review, it is important to mention that academic research pertaining to both *B2B* consumer satisfaction and high-involvement products are very scarce, if not totally non-existent.

This research will not only attempt to develop a conceptual model that allows researchers to deepen their knowledge of consumer satisfaction in a *B2B* context and contribute to filling in an important gap of academic knowledge, but it will also attempt to solve the following problematic:

How can we explain consumer satisfaction for *B2B* high-involvement products, more precisely business aircraft?

Not only will solving this problematic help to determine the role and influence of specific determinants of consumer satisfaction onto the overall level of consumer satisfaction for *B2B* high-involvement products, more precisely business aircraft, but it shall also serve to assess the impact of desires and expectations congruency on post-purchase information satisfaction. Such process will also allow the influence analysis of both product attributes and information satisfaction variables in consumers' purchasing decision, in order to determine which one of them plays a more important role, during the purchasing process of a *B2B* high-involvement product.

2.1.2 The Research's Objectives

This research's objectives can be presented using two distinct sections. In the first one, the principal objective, which includes the main contribution this study wishes to make, shall be described. The second section will then introduce all of the operational objectives, steps, and activities required, in order to accomplish the principal objective.

This research's problematic being four parts, the principal objective can therefore be distinctly separated. It must also be mentioned that it is by accomplishing certain operational goals that this main objective will be achieved. Such goals are essential to properly explain the concrete operations necessary to this research's successful realization, and also to answer its problematic. In other words, the operational objectives shall serve to describe the practical task that will be achieved.

In this conventional *hypothetico-deductive* approach, the principal objective is to **generate managerial sales recommendations aimed at business aircraft manufacturers and operators, based on results obtained via a survey sent throughout the global industry. More precisely, such recommendations will be based on an analysis that aims to pin point the most influential satisfaction determinant in consumers' decision to purchase a business aircraft, and determine consumers' overall level of satisfaction. Such analysis will also aim to explore the role of each satisfaction determinant present in this research's conceptual model, and assess the possibility that desires and expectations congruency may affect information satisfaction.** From this principal objective stems five distinct operational objectives:

1. Explore the academic literature related to the main concepts of *consumer satisfaction* and *high-involvement* products, along with their respective

components, and attempt to deepen knowledge pertaining to several consumer satisfaction determinants.

2. Explore and describe some of the existing conceptual models used to explain the concepts of *consumer satisfaction* and *high-involvement* products, along with their various constructs and end effects, in order to apply such concepts to a *B2B* sales context.
3. Empirically test the retained variables, in order to understand the impact of desires and expectations congruency onto information satisfaction, and identify the most influential consumer satisfaction determinant in a consumer's decision to purchase a business aircraft, by consecutively identifying the role and influence of each consumer satisfaction determinant onto consumers' overall satisfaction level for *B2B* high-involvement products.
4. Determine consumers' overall satisfaction level.
5. Contribute from a managerial perspective by generating sales recommendations, discussing the principal limitations of this research, and describing some future research opportunities.

It must be mentioned that the first two operational objectives were achieved in the previous chapter, which pertained to the literature review, whereas the last three will be achieved in the following pages. In regards to this research's problematic, the conceived conceptual model will evaluate several independent and dependent variables, and shall be introduced in the next section of this chapter. Furthermore, it must be noted that the various concepts and theories related to this conceptual model's variables were defined and explained, during the previous chapter. More precisely, the independent and dependent variables retained are the following ones:

Independent variables:

- Pre-purchase desires
- Pre-purchase expectations
- Post-purchase desires congruency
- Post-purchase expectations congruency
- Post-purchase product attributes satisfaction
- Post-purchase information satisfaction

Dependent variable:

- Overall consumer satisfaction for *B2B* high-involvement products

2.1.3 The Research's Questions

The fact of knowing the role and influence of such consumer satisfaction determinants will allow our research team to determine customers' level of satisfaction for *B2B* high-involvement products, and generate effective managerial sales recommendations aimed at global business aircraft manufacturers and operators. This research's problematic focuses on the following four research questions:

1. What is the impact of desires and expectations congruency onto post-purchase information satisfaction?
2. What is the role and influence of post-purchase product attributes and information satisfaction onto consumers' overall level of satisfaction for *B2B* high-involvement products?
3. Which determinant of consumer satisfaction has the most influence in consumers' decision to purchase a business aircraft, and what is their overall level of satisfaction?
4. What are some effective managerial sales recommendations aimed at global business aircraft manufacturers and operators?

A *deductive* reasoning based on a *hypothetico-deductive* approach shall be used to answer the above-stated problematic. More precisely, this specific approach consists to use an academic literature review as a foundation on which to emit research hypotheses, in order to ultimately compare them to reality (Gavard-Perret, Gotteland, Haon & Jolibert, 2012). The use of this approach is motivated by the essence of our research objectives, which consist of exploring, describing, verifying, and mastering new expertise (Evrard, Pras & Roux, 2009).

The methodological approach used during this research follows a quite popular scientific marketing trend. Indeed, many authors were able to prove that the *hypothetico-deductive* approach is a well-established one in the field of marketing research. Hudson & Ozanne, 1988, along with Simonson, Carmon, Dhar & Drolet, 2001 proved that nearly eighty percent of all scientific articles published worldwide follow this trend.

This research proposes to increase the knowledge relative to the influence of consumer satisfaction determinants onto consumers' overall satisfaction level, in a *B2B* context, and regarding high-involvement products, more precisely business aircraft. Furthermore, it also aims to deepen knowledge relative to the impact of desires and expectations congruency onto information satisfaction. By doing so, sales people evolving in this field may be able to not only better understand the impact of some of their sales techniques onto consumers' overall level of satisfaction, but also allow them to pin point the most effective determinant of consumer satisfaction and consequently refine their strategy, in an effort to simultaneously increase both their deal closure rate and consumers' overall level of satisfaction.

Therefore, four hypotheses involving independent variables from this model will be emitted. More precisely, two hypotheses will regard pre-purchase desires and expectations, and post-purchase desires and expectations congruency, in order to estimate the existing gap between pre-and post-purchase desires and expectations. Two other hypotheses regarding the relationship between desires and expectations congruency with information satisfaction shall also be emitted, in order to estimate the impact of these first two independent variables onto the last one mentioned. Lastly, two hypotheses involving this research's dependent variable will be emitted and attempt to examine the direct relationship between product attributes and information satisfaction with consumers' overall level of satisfaction, in an effort to determine which one of these two independent variables has a greater influence on the dependent variable. Every single one of this research's hypotheses will be clearly stated, and further described in the following pages.

2.2 The Research's Conceptual Model and Hypotheses

This second section aims to present this research's conceptual model, along with the hypotheses that ensue from it. The problematic, main and operational objectives, along with the dependent and independent variables retained shall serve to formulate specific research hypotheses that will eventually be tested.

This research's main objective being to generate managerial sales recommendations for global business aircraft manufacturers and operators, it is crucial to better understand how overall consumer satisfaction for *B2B* high-involvement products may be affected by various customer satisfaction determinants. Such knowledge shall also

serve to establish which one of them has the most influence in a consumer's decision to purchase a business aircraft. This said, the thorough literature review completed in chapter 1 focused on such above-mentioned concepts and allowed the creation of a conceptual model from which various hypotheses ensued.

First, this conceptual model will be presented, in order to provide a visual representation of the hypotheses, and the organization of its research constructs. Second, the research hypotheses will be introduced, by beginning with the ones related to desires and expectations congruency, then followed by the ones related to product attributes and information satisfaction, and finally with the ones directly related to overall customer satisfaction for *B2B* high-involvement products.

2.2.1 The Research's Conceptual Model

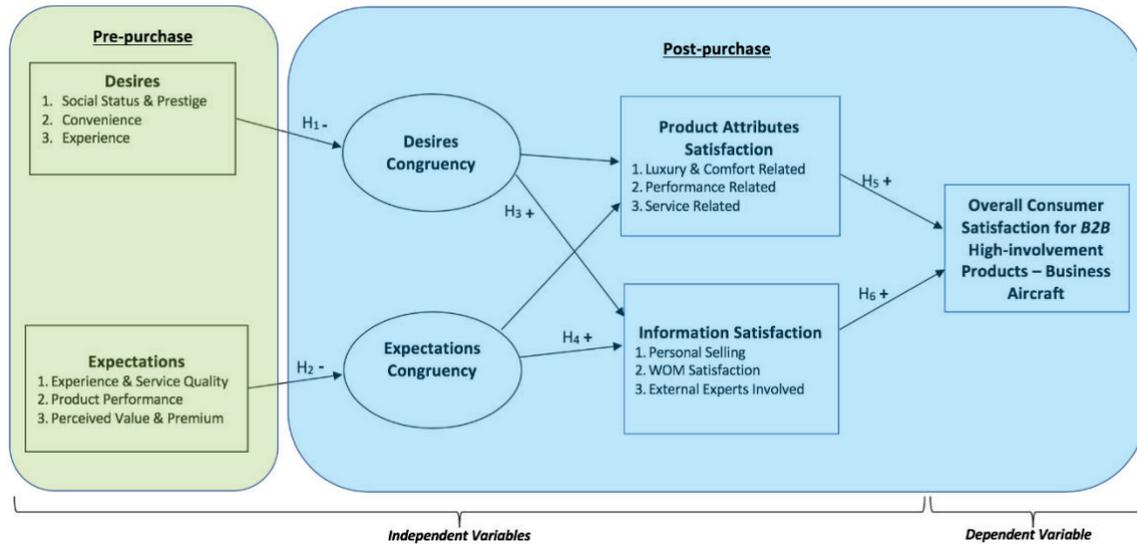
According to many authors, such as Gavard-Perret et al. (2012), conceptual models can be described as simplified miniature representations of reality. In other words, they can be portrayed as quite useful representations of reality, which can sometimes be too complex to be described using solely words. In this line of thought, the following conceptual model will encompass only the most important elements necessary to provide an accurate representation of reality.

This research's conceptual model is depicted on the following page (*cf.* figure 7) and will allow the following variables and concepts to be accurately tested and analyzed:

1. The direct relationship between pre-purchase desires and post-purchase desires congruency.
2. The direct relationship between pre-purchase expectations and post-purchase expectations congruency.
3. The direct effect of desires congruency onto information satisfaction.
4. The direct effect of expectations congruency onto information satisfaction.
5. The direct effect of product attributes' and information satisfaction onto the overall level of consumer satisfaction for *B2B* high-involvement products.
6. The role and influence of each consumer satisfaction determinant retained onto the overall level of consumer satisfaction for *B2B* high-involvement products, along with measuring consumers' overall level of satisfaction.

The methodology used to measure such direct effects and relationships involving the independent and dependent variables will be thoroughly explained in the next chapter of this research.

Figure 7: The Research’s Conceptual Model



This conceptual model (*cf.* figure 7) is inspired from the one conceived by Spreng, Mackenzie & Olshavsky (1996) and introduced in their article entitled “A Reexamination of the Determinants of Consumer Satisfaction.” The decision was made to use this specific model, due to its relative simplicity, the coherent organization of all its constructs, and the fact that its dependent variable already assessed the concept of consumer satisfaction. Both desires and expectations congruency constructs also contributed to make it more original and help it stand out from the various other ones examined. It was then simplified and modified, based on a clear organization of the concepts and elements retained, following the completion of the literature review. More precisely, it was adapted to depict not only the process leading to overall consumer satisfaction, according to a variety of studies achieved by academicians and field experts, but also to incorporate several concepts related to the sale of high-involvement products in a *B2B* context. Thus, making it a fairly accurate and simplified representation of how consumers’ overall satisfaction is formed, following their purchase and usage of a business aircraft. Furthermore, the evaluation of both desires and expectations congruency, along with their respective influence onto information satisfaction, makes it an original model from a sales perspective.

This model will be tested using six main hypotheses. All of them will be used to measure the direct effects and relationships between the existing pre-purchase and post-purchase variables. In the first place, the relationships between pre-purchase desires & expectations, and post-purchase desires & expectations congruency will be assessed, respectively represented by H1 and H2. In the second place, the direct effects of desires and expectations congruency onto information satisfaction will be measured, respectively represented by H3 and H4. Lastly, the direct effects of product attributes and information satisfaction onto the overall level of consumer satisfaction for *B2B* high-involvement products will be assessed, respectively represented by H5 and H6. The following section shall distinctly introduce each one of the hypotheses mentioned above, while supporting them with elements previously covered in the literature review completed in chapter 1.

2.2.2 The Research's Hypotheses

The problematic, main and operational objectives, along with the independent and dependent variables retained allowed the formulation of six research hypotheses. Based on the main concepts and elements reviewed during the literature review, and then retained in this research's conceptual model, the following lines will introduce and describe each one of these main six hypotheses.

The relationship between pre-purchase desires and post-purchase desires Congruency

The first hypothesis of this research involves the disconfirmation paradigm. This concept is described in the previous chapter as the consumer's comparison of the degree of fulfilment of his post-purchase desires to a previously established frame of reference, which in this case can be identified as his original pre-purchase desires (Churchill & Surprenant, 1982; Patterson, 1993). This said, Yi (1990) pointed out that even though raising desires and/or expectations about a product can enhance perceived product performance, it can also increase the magnitude of disconfirmation. In this line of thought, Spreng, Mackenzie & Olshavsky (1996) claimed that the higher and more stringent a consumer's pre-purchase expectations and/or desires are, the less likely that the product will meet those expectations and/or desires, the lower the scores on a disconfirmation measure, and the lower the resulting satisfaction level.

Such findings lead the way to the formulation of the following first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1	The more stringent pre-purchase desires are, the lesser post-purchase desires congruency will be.
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The relationship between pre-purchase expectations and post-purchase expectations congruency

Due to the fact that this research hypothesizes that the relationship between pre-purchase expectations and post-purchase expectations congruency is similar to the one between desires and desires congruency explained previously, and that it also involves the disconfirmation paradigm, the following hypothesis may be emitted:

Hypothesis 2	The higher pre-purchase expectations are, the lower post-purchase expectations congruency will be.
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The direct effect of desires congruency onto information satisfaction

As stated by Spreng, Mackenzie & Olshavsky (1996), consumers will invest a considerable amount of time and efforts in selecting and purchasing products they expect will fulfill their desires. This is also especially true for the purchase of a high-involvement product, as this specific type of product was defined earlier as one requiring consumers to invest a considerable amount of time looking for product information, in order to ultimately make a wise purchase decision and reduce the affective and financial risks associated with it (Clark and Belly, 1978; Gu, Park and Konana, 2012). This said, it could therefore be inferred that there exists a positive effect and relationship between desires congruency and information satisfaction. To be put in simpler terms, if the product's post-purchase performance is close to the consumer's pre-purchase desires, then it is highly probable that the consumer will be satisfied with the information used in making the choice. It must also be mentioned that for the purpose of this research, three specific sources of information satisfaction will be assessed; more precisely, personal selling, word-of-mouth (*WOM*) and external experts' involvement. This assumption leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3	The higher post-purchase desires congruency is, the higher post-purchase information satisfaction will be.
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The direct effect of expectations congruency onto information satisfaction

Similarly to desires, consumers usually have specific expectations in regards to the products they purchase, especially in the case of *B2B* high-involvement ones, where their performance may not only impact their level of satisfaction, but also directly or indirectly affect the business entity that purchased them (Kapferer and Laurent, 1985). Expectations congruency being defined as: “the consumer’s subjective assessment between his expectations and the performance received,” it may also directly and positively influence information satisfaction, as consumers are likely to be dissatisfied if the product does not meet the specific performance and requirements given by the information they received prior to its purchase (pp. 18, Spreng, Mackenzie & Olshavsky, 1996). Once again, it must be noted that the disconfirmation paradigm plays a crucial role in the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4	The higher post-purchase expectations congruency is, the higher post-purchase information satisfaction will be.
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The direct effect of product attributes’ satisfaction onto overall consumer satisfaction for B2B high-involvement products

As demonstrated in the chapter 1, many authors such as Martin (1998), Oliver (1993), Sheth et al. (1988), Spreng, Mackenzie & Olshavsky, (1996) and Vickers and Renand (2003) claimed that product attributes do not only play an influential role in consumers’ purchase decision, but also in their overall level of satisfaction. Spreng, Mackenzie & Olshavsky, (1996) also indicates that a clear distinction between individual product attributes’ satisfaction and overall satisfaction must be maintained, due to the fact that product attributes’ satisfaction is not its only antecedent.

More precisely, the authors claim that overall satisfaction is in fact based on overall experience and a variety of different consumer satisfaction determinants, as indicated earlier in this research. Nevertheless, it can be inferred that while being distinct, product attributes’ satisfaction and overall satisfaction are positively correlated constructs, because individual product attributes’ performance will directly, and either positively or negatively, affect overall consumer satisfaction. In other words, if product attributes’ satisfaction is

positive, so will be consumers' overall level of satisfaction. This assumption, therefore, leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 5	The higher post-purchase product attributes' satisfaction is, the higher overall consumer satisfaction will be.
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The direct effect of information satisfaction onto overall consumer satisfaction for B2B high-involvement products

Many different sources of information exist; however, this research focuses on three specific sales-related ones. More precisely, the emphasis is placed onto personal selling, word-of-mouth (*WOM*), and external experts' involvement. Together, these three sources of information designate what this research refers to as information satisfaction. This said, many authors described these sources as persuasion-based promises or expectations (Gardial et al., 1994; Spreng and Dixon, 1992; Spreng, Mackenzie & Olshavsky, 1996; Woodruff et al., 1991). Interestingly, these authors also mentioned that they could be perceived by customers as proclaiming performance standards that could either be achieved or disconfirmed, following product purchase. Similarly to product attributes' satisfaction, information satisfaction is a determinant that has a lot of influence onto overall consumer satisfaction, due to the fact that it can directly, either positively or negatively, affects overall experience, which in turn directly impacts overall consumer satisfaction. It can, therefore, be claimed that information satisfaction and overall consumer satisfaction are positively correlated constructs. This assumption leads to the last hypothesis this research will test:

Hypothesis 6	The higher post-purchase information satisfaction is, the higher overall consumer satisfaction will be.
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Overview of the research's hypotheses

As a final overview of this research's hypotheses, the following table (*cf.* Table 2) will recap all of the main hypotheses previously explained and emitted.

Table 2: Recap Table of the Research's Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1	The more stringent pre-purchase desires are, the lesser post-purchase desires congruency will be.
Hypothesis 2	The higher pre-purchase expectations are, the lower post-purchase expectations congruency will be.
Hypothesis 3	The higher post-purchase desires congruency is, the higher post-purchase information satisfaction will be.
Hypothesis 4	The higher post-purchase expectations congruency is, the higher post-purchase information satisfaction will be.
Hypothesis 5	The higher post-purchase product attributes' satisfaction is, the higher overall consumer satisfaction will be.
Hypothesis 6	The higher post-purchase information satisfaction is, the higher overall consumer satisfaction will be.

2.3 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the research problematic, the principal and operational objectives, the concepts retained and incorporated in this research's conceptual model, the conceptual model itself, along with the main hypotheses that ensued from it. Many elements from the literature review were also used to explain and support the emitted hypotheses.

As a summary, the problematic this research will attempt to solve is the following: **How can we explain consumer satisfaction for B2B high-involvement products, more precisely business aircraft?**

The principal objective is to **generate managerial sales recommendations aimed at business aircraft manufacturers and operators, based on results obtained via a survey sent throughout the global industry. More precisely, such recommendations will be based on an analysis that aims to pin point the most influential satisfaction determinant in consumers' decision to purchase a business aircraft, and determine consumers' overall level of satisfaction. Such analysis will also aim to explore the role**

of each satisfaction determinant present in this research's conceptual model, and assess the possibility that desires and expectations congruency may affect information satisfaction. All of the retained concepts present in this conceptual model were supported by the literature review of chapter 1. Finally, this research problematic focuses on the following four research questions:

1. What is the impact of desires and expectations congruency onto post-purchase information satisfaction?
2. What is the role and influence of post-purchase product attributes and information satisfaction onto consumers' overall level of satisfaction for *B2B* high-involvement products?
3. Which determinant of consumer satisfaction has the most influence in consumers' decision to purchase a business aircraft, and what is their overall level of satisfaction?
4. What are some effective managerial sales recommendations aimed at global business aircraft manufacturers and operators?

The proposed conceptual model incorporates diverse consumer satisfaction determinants acting as independent variables, such as pre-purchase desires, expectations, post-purchase desires and expectations congruency, product attributes' satisfaction and information satisfaction; All of them leading to the evaluation of consumers' overall satisfaction for *B2B* high-involvement products, which represents the dependent variable.

This model was adapted to depict not only the process leading to overall consumer satisfaction, according to a variety of studies completed by academicians and field experts, but also to incorporate several concepts related to the sale of high-involvement products in a *B2B* context. By doing so, a fairly accurate and simplified representation of consumers' overall level of satisfaction for business aircraft was created. Furthermore, the evaluation of both desires and expectations congruency, along with their respective influence onto information satisfaction, makes it an unprecedented model from a sales perspective. Six main hypotheses ensued from this model and will be tested to allow the generation of managerial sales recommendations aimed at global business aircraft manufacturers and operators. The following chapter will introduce the chosen research methodology and all of the steps that ensue from it.

Chapter 3: The Research's Methodology

The main objective of this chapter is to introduce the methodology that was used in this research. In order to test the research hypotheses emitted in the previous chapter, a survey was built with an intent to test each construct from the conceived conceptual model, by sending it to several business aircraft industry professionals across the world. Such type of data collection will allow the acquisition of *cross-sectional* data, a relatively accurate measurement of all variables pertaining to the stakeholders involved on the customers' side of the selling process of a business aircraft, and will also prove to be useful in determining the overall level of satisfaction for business aircraft owners.

As a reminder, this research's principal objective is to **generate managerial sales recommendations aimed at business aircraft manufacturers and operators, based on results obtained via a survey sent throughout the global industry. More precisely, such recommendations will be based on an analysis that aims to pin point the most influential satisfaction determinant in consumers' decision to purchase a business aircraft, and determine consumers' overall level of satisfaction. Such analysis will also aim to explore the role of each satisfaction determinant present in this research's conceptual model, and assess the possibility that desires and expectations congruency may affect information satisfaction.** In order to accomplish such objective, the selected approach regroups all of the elements above in one single study.

The first section of this chapter will introduce in detail the method used to collect the data. First, every step of the data collection process will be described, along with the conditions in which the research was executed. Finally, all of the independent and dependent variables' measurement instruments shall be described in the second section.

3.1 The Data Collection Method

This first section will introduce the data collection method used to accomplish this research's principal objective. After having defined what a *cross-sectional* data collection consists of, the selected investigation field will be described, along with the examined population, the steps leading to the development of the questionnaire, the distribution method, and finally the chosen analytical and modelling methods.

3.1.1 The Cross-Sectional Data Collection Method Defined

A *cross-sectional* data collection can be defined as the examination of a phenomenon or an event at a specific moment in time. In other words, such data collection method focuses on a very specific period of time called a *cross-section* or *transverse section*. This type of method, along with the observation of a specific population at a precise moment in time, is widely used in the fields of marketing and sales research (Steenkamp and Baumgartner, 2000). It must also be mentioned that if the same individuals are being studied or observed multiple times during a period of time, such type of method is then called a *longitudinal* research. The data collection method selected for this research, more precisely the *cross-sectional* method, will allow the acquisition of *cross-sectional* data that will be used to create and carry out statistical models and analyses, such as an analysis of variance (ANOVA) and/or a regression analysis.

In this case, a survey will be sent out to various business aircraft industry professionals, in order to acquire *cross-sectional* data that will then be used to perform such types of analyses.

3.1.1.1 The Population and Sample

Global business aircraft manufacturers and operators are consistently looking for ways to improve their sales performance. Consumer satisfaction being closely related to consumers repurchase decision and word-of-mouth behavioural intentions, this research field appeared to be closely related to the objective of such high-involvement products' manufacturers. Also, many of their customers evolve within a *B2B* context, which represents a particularly interesting opportunity to deepen academic knowledge pertaining to *B2B* personal selling.

The selected population for this research is global, and comprises stakeholders from all around the world that currently are or have been involved in the purchasing process of a business aircraft on the customer's side. Current and past business aircraft owners are also comprised in this research's population. For clarification purposes, business aircraft manufacturers' executives or employees are not part of the examined population. It is important to mention that a few of them were inadvertently invited to respond to the questionnaire, but their responses were then removed from the final and exploitable sample of respondents, in order to avoid skewing the dataset with responses originating from

elsewhere than from the customer's perspective. Furthermore, all stakeholders and business aircraft owners aimed by this research are either evolving within the global business aircraft/aerospace industry or not. In fact, they may be working in several different fields such as legal, finance, consultancy, flight operations, aircraft maintenance, engineering, external sales representatives, and various other ones.

3.1.1.2 Qualitative Pre-Survey Sample

Prior to beginning the data collection process, seven informal interviews with Sales Directors, sales support employees and executives from a global business aircraft manufacturer were completed, along with multiple meetings involving many of its Vice-Presidents. These informal interviews and meetings took place over a few weeks and were quite useful in improving and refining the first version of this research's conceptual model. Indeed, they helped identify the higher order constructs that should be included, along with the appropriate measurement tools that should be used. Lastly, such interviews and meetings did not only end up being very useful in the identification and selection of the conceptual model's items, but also in determining the most accurate level of complexity and overall length of the questionnaire. Once all of these meetings and discussions were completed, along with this research's literature review, a questionnaire was fully developed.

3.1.1.3 Quantitative Data Collection Sample

The data collection process was completed relatively quickly, more precisely within a period of ten days. Using the *Qualtrics* survey platform, the final questionnaire was globally sent via email to a sample of 14,279 people identified as potential stakeholders currently playing or having played an active role in the purchasing process of a business aircraft on the customer's side, or as current/past business aircraft owners. It must be mentioned that such sample was obtained using the specialized **JETNET.com aviation database**, which consists of a private database specializing in information and intelligence gathering on business and commercial aircraft operating worldwide. More details on how our research team was granted access to this private database, the creation of the sample population, and the distribution process of the questionnaire will be provided further in this chapter. During the ten days of the data collection process, two email reminders were sent at an interval of three days to the participants who had not either started or finished the

questionnaire. Out of the 14,279 email addresses used in the distribution process, 1787 bounced or turned out to be invalid, which means that the questionnaire was successfully distributed to a total of 12,492 participants worldwide. Out of the 12,492 participants reached, 200 accepted the invitation and responded to the entire questionnaire, and 187 accepted the invitation but did not completely finish the questionnaire. Therefore, those numbers represent a 3.05% response rate, and a 51% completion rate amongst a total of 387 responses. After a thorough cleaning of the dataset, only those respondents who completed 50% or more of the questionnaire were retained. As a result, a final and exploitable sample of $n = 244$ respondents was obtained. Out of this final number of respondents, 43% were identified as current or past business aircraft owners, and 57% as stakeholders who currently are or have been involved in the purchasing process of a business aircraft on the customer's side. The majority of the respondents, more precisely 76.5% were based in North America, followed by 17.9% based in Europe, and roughly 5.6% scattered across six other geographical locations. It must be noted that all percentages have been rounded to the nearest decimal and/or round number, for reasons of conciseness.

3.1.2 The Questionnaire

For communication purposes and due to the fact that the global aerospace industry uses English as its primary language, the questionnaire was solely conceived in English. Furthermore, using such language greatly facilitated its creation. Indeed, the questionnaire did not only attempt to measure various preferences and opinions of industry professionals, but also complex psychological concepts such as *desires* and *expectations congruency*, along with *customer satisfaction*. This said, such concepts were originally explained and discussed in depth throughout various scientific articles written in English. Therefore, using such language greatly contributed to minimize the risk of misinterpreting several key concepts and constructs, by attempting to translate them in French, along with some of their respective measurement tools/instruments.

All measurement instruments used in this questionnaire were selected according to their psychometric qualities and this research's objectives. Following Hambleton's (2001) recommendation, a particular emphasis was also placed on the task of formulating questions and concepts' definitions using common business-related terms and vocabulary. Gavard-Perret et al.'s (2012) recommendations were also useful to avoid biasing the

questions. More precisely, important efforts were made to use a familiar and precise vocabulary, avoid redundancy and doubling questions, avoid questions inciting a specific response, and also avoid long questions. Once all of them were formulated, they were then regrouped not only by concept, but also by higher order construct represented in this research's conceptual model. Overall, the final version of the questionnaire (*cf.* Annex 1) was composed of nineteen different subgroups, each assessing a different higher order construct, and requiring approximately 20 minutes to complete. This relatively long duration can be explained by the fact that each section contained one or two concepts' definitions, which respondents were required to read, in order to properly understand the exact meaning of all following questions. This said, the final questionnaire's subgroups were organized as follows:

- General introduction
- General questions **(6 questions)**
- Section 1 – Consumers' desires **(11 questions)**
- Section 1.1 – Social status & prestige (5 questions)
- Section 1.2 – Convenience (3 questions)
- Section 1.3 – Experience (3 questions)
- Section 2 – Consumers' expectations **(13 questions)**
- Section 2.1 – Experience & service quality (5 questions)
- Section 2.2 – Product performance (3 questions)
- Section 2.3 – Perceived value & premium (5 questions)
- Section 3 – Product attributes' satisfaction **(12 questions)**
- Section 3.1 – Luxury & comfort attributes (4 questions)
- Section 3.2 – Performance attributes (4 questions)
- Section 3.3 – Service-related product attributes (4 questions)
- Section 4 – Information satisfaction **(13 questions)**
- Section 4.1 – Personal selling satisfaction (4 questions)
- Section 4.2 – Word-of-mouth satisfaction (5 questions)
- Section 4.3 – External experts' satisfaction (4 questions)
- Section 5 – Desires' congruency **(4 questions)**

- Section 6 – Expectations’ congruency (4 questions)
- Section 7 – Overall consumer satisfaction (6 questions)
- Closing statement

While the “general questions” section was composed of open-ended, dichotomous, and multiple-choice questions, questions from section one to six were measured using a seven-point Likert scale (*cf.* figure 8).

Figure 8: The seven-point Likert scale



The main reason why seven-point scales were chosen over five-point scales is that the latter ones offer less variance and may lead to substantially less accurate results (Evrard, Pras & Roux, 2009). Additionally, such type of measurement tool offers a neutral response option to the respondent (the value #4), by equitably splitting the positive and negative response options around one central point. As demonstrated by Oliver (1980, 1993), one of the main advantages regarding such neutral response option is the avoidance of positively skewed responses by respondents suffering from a self-serving bias. The seven points of the Likert scales were also clearly labelled above each option, in an attempt to not only facilitate the reading of the questionnaire, but also mitigate any stress or anxiety for the respondents who had never used such type of measurement tool before.

In regards to section seven, rank order, dichotomous and open-ended questions were selected. It must also be mentioned that comparatively to the questions of sections one to six, the ones from section seven were not mandatory and could be omitted by the respondent. The reasons behind this decision being that the most crucial questions for this research were part of the previous six sections, and had already required a considerable amount of time from the respondents. Consequently, making those last questions optional allowed respondents to finish the questionnaire more quickly. Furthermore, initial measures of consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction were already obtained from both desires’ and expectations’ congruency higher order constructs, which acted as partial

measures of this research's dependent variable. Nevertheless, the fact that questions from section seven were mostly subjective and relied on the respondents sharing their views, opinions and recommendations based on their extensive field experience regarding possible consumer satisfaction and/or dissatisfaction occurrences allowed the acquisition of very interesting data that proved to be quite useful in measuring the dependent variable of this research. Such manifestation is also in line with Geer (1988) and Reja et al.'s (2003) findings which demonstrated that open-ended questions have the ability to provide richer and more insightful responses than close-ended questions, while still accurately representing respondents' underlying attitudes in regards to specific subjects. The strategy of including open-ended questions to a quantitative questionnaire is also proven to add significant value and depth to both results and underlying conclusions (Harland and Holey, 2011). Lastly, it was assumed, prior to the conception of this research's questionnaire, that the majority of its respondents would not be identified as current or past business aircraft owners. Therefore, it was thought somewhat illogical to ask participants to evaluate consumers' level of satisfaction using a Likert scale, if most of them would in fact be identified as stakeholders involved in the purchasing process of a business aircraft, and not as current or past owners. In the end, this assumption proved to be right, due to the fact that the majority of the retained respondents, more precisely 57%, were identified as stakeholders who currently are or have been involved in the purchasing process of a business aircraft on the customer's side. This said, the specific methods used to acquire data related to the dependent variable will be thoroughly explained further in this chapter.

Obtaining the final version of this questionnaire required the submission of four different drafts to specific members of HEC Montreal's marketing faculty. It is important to mention that the earlier versions were judged to be too long and complex. Indeed, five different variants of Likert scales were originally used, but had to be reduced to solely one common form throughout the different sections. A substantial amount of time and effort was therefore invested, in order to shorten and simplify those previous versions and ultimately obtain the final one. The following section will explain the method that was used to pretest the final questionnaire.

3.1.3 The Questionnaire's Pretest

According to Jolibert and Jourdan (2006), the process of pretesting a questionnaire consists to interrogate a small sample of individuals selected within the reference population of the study, in order to identify any mistakes, and make sure questions are well formulated and understood by respondents. The pretest of this research's questionnaire was completed in two successive steps. First of all, and as mentioned earlier, four different drafts were submitted to two different members of HEC Montreal's marketing faculty. Such drafts were deemed too long and complex to be submitted to participants. Therefore, they were shortened by deleting questions judged unnecessary, and using only one form of Likert scale. More precisely, scales ranging from "Totally Disagree" to "Totally Agree" were ultimately selected. Once the final draft obtained and deemed satisfactory, according to both marketing experts, the second step was undertaken.

First, a randomly selected sample of 100 participants was formed from the bigger 14,379 participants' research sample. The final draft was then distributed electronically via email, using the *Qualtrics* survey platform. Every email invitation was personalized to include both the proper salutation and last name of each participant contacted. As a result, and out of the 100 randomly selected email addresses, six of them bounced and did not reach the intended industry professionals. In total, ninety-four participants were reached, nine surveys were started, and five full responses were recorded, which corresponds to an approximate 9,57% response rate and 56% completion rate. The five responses were then carefully analyzed, in order to identify any sections of the questionnaire that could be deemed problematic. With an average recorded duration of 46 minutes amongst all respondents, the ninety-five questions draft was again deemed to be too long and had to be shortened even more. Many of the optional multiple-choice and rank-order questions of section seven were also left blank, which indicated an acute fatigue of the respondents. Interestingly, however, four out of five respondents had responded to the open-ended questions, in order to share their opinions and recommendations. As a result of these observations, twenty-two questions among sections one to six were deleted, and four out of ten multiple-choice and rank order questions from section seven were also removed. However, all three open-ended questions were retained. It must also be noted that none of

the respondents complained about the length or complexity of the final draft pretested, which confirmed the questions' clarity and adequate flow.

As a result of this pretest, the final version of the questionnaire included six optional general questions, fifty-seven mandatory seven-point Likert scale questions, along with six optional open-ended, rank order and dichotomous questions. This sixty-nine questions' final questionnaire was also conceived to have a maximum duration of approximately 20 to 25 minutes.

3.1.4 The Questionnaire's Distribution

This subsection will explain the method used to distribute the final questionnaire to all selected participants. First and foremost, it must be noted that this research and its final questionnaire received the approval from HEC Montreal Research Ethics Board (REB), prior to beginning the data collection process; Such approval was obtained by timely completing the appropriate electronic documents, and exposing the intended methodology of this research to the board. As a result, all of the necessary approbations from the REB and one participating company (whose identity will remain anonymous) were received on time, and allowed the data collection process to take place as initially planned.

As mentioned earlier, our research team was fortunate enough to be granted access to the JETNET.com specialized aviation database for the duration of our research. More precisely, this database specializes in listing most of all business aircraft transactions occurring globally. Owners, operators, sellers, buyers, home bases, recent flight activities, registration numbers, but most importantly, contact information are all listed and frequently updated on their online platform. It must also be noted that the price to access this type of database can sometimes be upwards of tens of thousands of dollars. Therefore, both the Vice-President and Director of Marketing and Strategy of a global business aircraft manufacturer were approached, in order to obtain such exclusive access without having to pay such an exorbitant amount of money. After meeting with them, and explaining the ultimate objective of this research, they kindly accepted to allow our research team to access the JETNET.com database, by using their department's login credentials.

However, such access was granted only for a limited period of time, during which it was possible to extract the contact information of multiple current and/or past business aircraft owners, along with the one of potential stakeholders currently or previously

involved in the purchasing process of a business aircraft on the customer's side. The database's powerful filtering and reporting tools proved to be quite useful in identifying these two specific types of individuals amongst millions of listed participants. It was also agreed that this contact information would have to not only be totally deleted once completion of this research, in order to fully safeguard the anonymity and confidentiality of this research's participants, but also fulfill academic purposes only. As a result, 14,379 names and email addresses were extracted from the database. The dataset was then manually verified and properly formatted, as a Microsoft Excel document, in order to be uploaded onto the *Qualtrics* survey platform.

In regards to the possible distribution methods of a questionnaire, they are quite various, ranging from postal mail, telephone, electronically via the Internet and/or in person/face-to-face. For this research's questionnaire, the electronic distribution method was selected, more precisely via email using the *Qualtrics* survey platform. This particular method is advantageous because it allows participants to take their time to respond to the questions, and also guarantees their anonymity. Furthermore, it is probably the simplest method to use if the questionnaire is to be sent to worldwide participants, as it is the case with this research. Indeed, the selected participants were based either in North America, Central America, South America, Europe, Scandinavia, Asia-Pacific, the Middle East, Russia or Africa. This method also allowed the acquisition of partially completed questionnaires, which eliminated the risk of losing data.

The final questionnaire was therefore sent to all participants via a personalized email using the *Qualtrics* survey platform. Indeed, each email included the proper salutation and last name of each participant, according to the dataset previously extracted from the JETNET.com database. These emails were also linked to the main investigator's HEC Montreal email address, in order to facilitate exchanges. Following Schneider & Johnson's (1995) recommendation, HEC Montreal's name and logo was strategically displayed in the invitation email, survey's introduction, and at the top of each survey page, in order to significantly increase the response and participation rate of industry professionals. The participants were also invited to reply to the invitation email if they wished to receive a summary of the research's results. This tactic was used as an incentive to increase the response and participation rate of the targeted professionals. In total, two

reminders were sent at an interval of three days, which significantly contributed to increase the total number of responses received. In total, the data collection process lasted ten days, and allowed the collection of 387 responses.

Interestingly, many industry professionals also replied to the invitation email to ask for a results' summary, upon completion of the study. Furthermore, a surprisingly high number of them expressed an interest in this research, and wished to contribute by sharing either insights or some of their professional experiences/observations related to the business aircraft industry by sending a private email to the research team.

3.1.5 Cleaning and Validating the Dataset

3.1.5.1 Cleaning the Dataset

Once the acquired dataset was extracted from the *Qualtrics* survey platform, and uploaded into the SPSS statistical analysis software, the first step was to clean it. In order to do so, all responses were filtered in ascending order, according to their recorded progress rate. As a result, many responses were identified as partially incomplete. The option to impute missing data was considered, however, the questionnaire had been built in such a way to consecutively investigate each construct and sub-construct of this research's conceptual model individually. Furthermore, participants had no choice but to finish an already begun section, prior to recording their responses and moving onto the next one, as all questions from sections one to six were made mandatory. Due to this reason, all participants who did not fully complete the questionnaire were not able to access different sections, as they could not skip one that was already begun but incomplete. This said, the option to impute missing items necessitate at least one recorded response from each section. In this case, many sections were left incomplete. Consequently, it was deemed impossible to rely on any imputation methods.

Due to this situation, a decision was made to delete any responses with a recorded progress rate smaller than fifty-one percent. As explained earlier, the questionnaire was built to still be analyzable even though participants may not have fully completed it, which also allowed the retention of an optimal number of responses. A fifty-one percent progress rate corresponded to a participant having responded to all questions up to the product attributes' satisfaction section of the questionnaire. Therefore, this threshold allowed us to analyze these participants' responses to both consumer's desires and expectations sections.

The fact that they had completed at least two sections also allowed the execution of certain statistical analyses that would have been impossible to carry out with solely one completed section. As a result, 143 responses were discarded, and a total of 244 were retained. Out of these 244 responses, 218 of them corresponded to a hundred percent progress rate, five of them to a ninety-one percent progress rate, another five of them to an eighty-six percent progress rate, four of them to an eighty percent progress rate, two of them to a seventy-five percent progress rate, another four of them to a sixty-three percent progress rate, three of them to a fifty-six percent progress rate, and another three of them to the minimal requirement of a fifty-one percent progress rate.

All variables were then appropriately labelled and renamed, if necessary, in order to facilitate their identification and interpretation in the various statistical analyses.

Table 3: Questionnaire Distribution Recap Table

Total Emails Sent	14,279	Completion Rate	51%
Invalid Emails	1,787	Discarded Responses	143
Full Responses	200	Final Exploitable Sample	244
Partial Responses	187	Business Aircraft Owners in Sample	43%
Total Responses	387	Stakeholders in Sample	57%
Response Rate	3,05%	Average Response Time	24 minutes

3.1.5.2 Validating the Dataset

Once the cleaning completed, the validity and reliability of all obtained results were verified, using two consecutive statistical analyses. Indeed, the results' sturdiness highly depended on the quality of the chosen measurement instruments. As such, one statistical procedure, more precisely the *dimension reduction*, and one statistical test examining the *Cronbach Alpha's* coefficient of each construct respectively provided crucial information about the convergent validity and internal reliability of these measurement instruments. Both statistical tests were executed by using IBM's statistical analysis software SPSS.

Following Jolibert & Jourdan's (2006) recommendation, the first step undertaken was to execute an exploratory factor analysis, in order to not only identify each scale's

dimensions, but also its constituting items. Indeed, analyzing the correlation of each item with the total score of each scale does not allow the detection of many dimensions within it, therefore, Jolibert & Jourdan (2006) suggest executing this particular analysis prior to determining the internal reliability of the research's constructs and subconstructs. To do so, the *dimension reduction* analysis method provided by SPSS was utilized. This method allowed a close examination of the existing correlations between each item and factor, also called *loadings*. For the purpose of this research, all items with a *loading* greater or equal to 0,5 were conserved, whereas each one demonstrating a *loading* inferior to 0,5 were deleted. This decision is in line with Jolibert & Jourdan (2006) and Kaiser & Rice's (1976) recommendations to delete all items with a *loading* inferior to 0,5, as they do not appropriately represent the factors retained. In other words, all *loadings* greater than 0,5 indicate that each related item is strongly correlated with one particular dimension. Finally, an orthogonal rotation method was also used, more precisely the *Varimax* rotation, in order to conserve independent factors, which can facilitate the creation of graphical representations and the execution of other statistical analyses such as regressions, due to the fact that it eliminates the phenomenon of multicollinearity between variables (Jolibert & Jourdan, 2006). The following table illustrates the results of this *dimension reduction* analysis (*cf.* Table 4). Please note that this table is a personal creation, and screenshots from SPSS related to each construct and subconstruct's analysis can be found in the annex section (*cf.* Annex 2).

Table 4: Dimension Reduction Analysis Results

Construct Subconstruct	Items	Loadings
Desires Social Status & Prestige	SocialStatus1	0,860
	SocialStatus2	0,891
	SocialStatus3	0,928
	SocialStatus4	0,917
	SocialStatus5	0,850
Desires Convenience	Convenience1	0,901
	Convenience2	0,896
	Convenience3	0,872
Desires Experience	Experience1	0,857
	Experience2	0,897
	Experience3	0,833

Table 4: Dimension Reduction Analysis Results (Continued)

Construct Subconstruct	Items	Loadings
Expectations <i>Experience & Service Quality</i>	ExperienceQual1	0,753
	ExperienceQual2	0,877
	ExperienceQual3	0,793
	ExperienceQual4	0,852
	ExperienceQual5	0,840
Expectations <i>Product Performance</i>	ProdPerf1	0,884
	ProdPerf2	0,877
	ProdPerf3	0,831
Expectations <i>Perceived Value & Premium</i>	PerceivedValue1	0,817
	PerceivedValue2	0,859
	PerceivedValue3	0,848
	PerceivedValue4	0,849
	PerceivedValue5	0,885
Desires Congruency	DesiresCong1	0,765
	DesiresCong2	0,794
	DesiresCong3	0,754
	DesiresCong4	0,819
Expectations Congruency	ExpectCong1	0,763
	ExpectCong2	0,834
	ExpectCong3	0,720
	ExpectCong4	0,796
Product Attributes Satisfaction <i>Luxury & Comfort Related</i>	LuxuryComfort1	0,924
	LuxuryComfort2	0,915
	LuxuryComfort3	0,893
	LuxuryComfort4	0,625
Product Attributes Satisfaction <i>Performance Related</i>	PerfoAtt1	0,901
	PerfoAtt2	0,896
	PerfoAtt3	0,839
	PerfoAtt4	0,735
Product Attributes Satisfaction <i>Service Related</i>	ServiceAtt1	0,913
	ServiceAtt2	0,900
	ServiceAtt3	0,862
	ServiceAtt4	0,560
Information Satisfaction <i>Personal Selling</i>	PersonalSelling1	0,859
	PersonalSelling2	0,855
	PersonalSelling3	0,238
	PersonalSelling4	0,844
Information Satisfaction <i>WOM Satisfaction</i>	WOM1	0,875
	WOM2	0,873
	WOM3	0,862
	WOM4	0,811
	WOM5	0,775
Information Satisfaction <i>External Experts Involved</i>	ExternalExp1	0,904
	ExternalExp2	0,898
	ExternalExp3	0,877
	ExternalExp4	0,853

Regarding the previous table (*cf.* Table 4), and more precisely the *loadings* pertaining to both desires and expectations congruency constructs, the rotated component matrix from the *dimension reduction* analysis demonstrated that both constructs contained not solely one, but two distinct dimensions: a positive and a negative one. Keeping in mind that both constructs play crucial roles in this research, the deletion of two out of four original items in each scale, due to poor *loadings*, would have caused both scales to lose a considerable degree of integrity, and would have rendered the data pertaining to both constructs useless. Therefore, a decision was made to retain both positive and negative dimensions in each construct, which led to the appropriate modification of this research's conceptual model, by adding two subconstructs representing a positive and negative dimension to each desires and expectations congruency constructs. For sake of clarification, the positive dimension was found to measure consumers' satisfaction level, whereas the negative dimension measured consumers' dissatisfaction level. The adapted conceptual model will be presented in the following chapter.

Furthermore, another decision was made to retain the third item of the personal selling subconstruct, despite its poor *loading* (PersonalSelling3: 0,238), due to the fact that this specific item is required not only to assess customers' degree of satisfaction regarding personal selling, but also in determining customers' overall satisfaction level for *B2B* high-involvement products. One reason why this item *loaded* poorly is that it required participants to share their degree of dissatisfaction, and not satisfaction, about the quality of personal selling encountered during the purchasing process of a business aircraft. As such, this cause the presence of one negative-dimension item amongst positive ones. Nevertheless, the decision to retain this specific item, despite its poor *loading*, did not drastically deteriorate the internal reliability of the personal selling subconstruct. Indeed, the value of this subconstruct's *Cronbach Alpha* coefficient, when keeping all four original items, was of 0,805, compared to 0,909 when the third item was removed (*cf.* Annex 3). Consequently, this specific subconstruct was deemed reliable in both cases.

The second step was to insure the internal reliability of all subconstructs. As mentioned by Jolibert & Jourdan (2006), *Cronbach's Alpha* is one of the most frequently used statistical tests to accomplish such task. This coefficient indicates the degree of measurement of multiple items supposed to collectively measure a single construct or

subconstruct (Jolibert & Jourdan, 2006). For the purpose of this research, a coefficient greater or equal to 0,6 was deemed to be satisfactory, as consumer satisfaction for *B2B* high-involvement products, more precisely business aircraft, is a fairly new research topic and was never explored before. This decision is in line with Joseph F. Hair et al.'s (2016) statement that a coefficient located between 0,6 and 0,7 is acceptable for an exploratory research, and one greater than 0,7 is recommended for a more advanced research. However, the same authors also warned researchers to be careful in presence of coefficients greater than 0,90, and even more so when their values exceed 0,95, due to the fact that they usually signify that the variables' indicators are measuring the same phenomenon and that the construct or subconstruct's measurement is invalid (Joseph F. Hair et al., 2016). To verify the internal reliability of this research's subconstructs, the SPSS *reliability analysis* function was used. Due to the fact that all *Cronbach Alpha* coefficients were greater or very close to 0,6, all measurement instruments used in this research were deemed reliable. The following table illustrates the results of this internal reliability analysis (*cf.* Table 5).

Table 5: Internal Reliability Analysis Results

Construct Subconstruct	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>
Desires <i>Social Status & Prestige</i>	0,943
Desires <i>Convenience</i>	0,932
Desires <i>Experience</i>	0,910
Expectations <i>Experience & Service Quality</i>	0,923
Expectations <i>Product Performance</i>	0,917
Expectations <i>Perceived Value & Premium</i>	0,922
Desires Congruency <i>Positive Dimension</i>	0,570
Desires Congruency <i>Negative Dimension</i>	0,705
Expectations Congruency <i>Positive Dimension</i>	0,548
Expectations Congruency <i>Negative Dimension</i>	0,709

Table 5: Internal Reliability Analysis Results (Continued)

Construct Subconstruct	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>
Product Attributes Satisfaction <i>Luxury & Comfort Related</i>	0,895
Product Attributes Satisfaction <i>Performance Related</i>	0,910
Product Attributes Satisfaction <i>Service Related</i>	0,882
Information Satisfaction <i>Personal Selling</i>	0,805
Information Satisfaction <i>WOM Satisfaction</i>	0,909
Information Satisfaction <i>External Experts Involved</i>	0,926

Please note that the previous table is a personal creation, and screenshots from SPSS related to each subconstruct's analysis can be found in the annex section (*cf.* Annex 4).

It is important to mention that some of the subconstructs' coefficients were greater than 0,9: social status & prestige (0,943), convenience (0,932), experience (0,910), experience & service quality (0,923), product performance (0,917), perceived value & premium (0,922), performance related attributes (0,910), *WOM* satisfaction (0,909), and external experts' involvement (0,926). Nevertheless, none of them were above the critical value of 0,95, and due to their close proximity to 0,9, along with the uniqueness of this data collection process, a decision was made to retain all of them. Furthermore, both coefficients pertaining to the positive dimension of desires congruency (0,570) and expectations congruency (0,548) came out to be smaller than 0,6. However, due to their close proximity to the minimal acceptable threshold of 0,6, along with their crucial importance in the achievement of this research, a decision was made to retain both of them.

The following lines will now describe which modelling methods were considered, along with the ones that were ultimately retained for the successful completion of this research.

3.1.6 Selecting the Appropriate Modelling Methods

3.1.6.1 Measuring the Dependent Variable

Our calculation of a global satisfaction measure utilized not only Likert scales assessing customers' level of satisfaction for specific subconstructs, but also their level of importance in deciding whether or not to purchase a business aircraft. Consequently, the resulting method allowed our research team to determine customers' overall level of satisfaction while accounting for the importance of specific product attributes involved in their decision-making process. The fact of accounting for the level of importance provides a more precise measure of overall satisfaction.

To obtain a general satisfaction score, we used the following procedure. First, the satisfaction score of the following three product attributes, along with this specific subconstruct of information satisfaction was measured using seven-points Likert scales: luxury & comfort attributes, performance attributes, service-related attributes, and personal selling satisfaction. The first three attributes relate to the product of interest, whereas personal selling satisfaction can be associated with the quality of information received prior to the purchase. For each product attribute, along with the information satisfaction subconstruct, the participant had to indicate its level of importance in a consumer's decision to purchase a business aircraft, using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (little importance) to 7 (most important). Each of these four satisfaction determinants was then multiplied by its respective importance coefficient. Such four multiplication scores (level of satisfaction * level of importance) were then added, and lastly divided by a theoretically perfect score of 196 ($7*7 = 49 * 4 = 196$). This manipulation allowed us to obtain an overall score measured in percentage. Therefore, the overall satisfaction score can range from 0% (completely dissatisfied) to 100% (completely satisfied).

This new SPSS variable was also renamed OverallSatisfaction in the database. All four components of overall satisfaction were also computed individually, using SPSS's *compute variable* function, in order to obtain further information about the degree of satisfaction and importance related to each one of them. Further details regarding participants' overall degree of satisfaction, and each of the four individual components will be provided in the upcoming chapter. Another advantage of this method is that it allowed the execution of regression analyses with all subconstructs from both product attributes

and information satisfaction constructs. Finally, a more thorough examination of these regressions will also be made in the upcoming chapter. It must be noted that various measurement alternatives for the dependent variable of this model were also considered. To obtain more information about them, please refer to the annex section (*cf.* Annex 18). Please note that the correlation matrix involving all the final constructs and their corresponding descriptive statistics are presented in the annex section (*cf.* Annex 19).

3.1.6.2 Testing the Research Hypotheses

All six main hypotheses of this research will be tested in the upcoming chapter, using linear regression analyses. To do so, SPSS's *linear regression* function was used. In order to validate each main hypothesis, the direction, value and degree of signification of all causal coefficients, also known as *Beta* coefficients (β), was examined. Such coefficients will be presented and regrouped in one table, and then interpreted, according to each hypothesis examined. It must be noted that although six main hypotheses were previously emitted, each one was tested individually for each subconstruct involved, which generated a grand total of thirty sub-hypotheses. The significance of all obtained results was verified, by examining both the *p-value* and *T-statistic* associated with each regression. This is in line with Urbach & Ahlemann's (2010) statement that *T-statistics* and the *T-student* test allow researchers to test the significance of causal relationships. The R^2 of each sub-hypothesis will also be examined. As mentioned earlier, each sub-hypothesis along with its results will be examined and interpreted individually in the upcoming chapter.

3.1.6.3 Analyzing Section Seven Measurement Instruments

All additional results originating from section seven's measurement instruments will be examined and interpreted using relatively simple statistical analyses, such as frequency and descriptive analyses. It must be noted that such results aimed to provide additional background information regarding customers' overall level of satisfaction for *B2B* high-involvement products. They provided complementary insights and also offered a different perspective than the sole examination of the satisfaction scores provided by the earlier-described method to analyze this research's dependent variable. In other words, the optional questions and measurement instruments from section seven ultimately proved to be useful not only in the generation of managerial sales recommendations, but also in accomplishing this research's secondary objectives.

3.2 The Selected Measurement Instruments

This second section will introduce the measurement instruments used to measure the higher order constructs of this research's conceptual model, along with their respective first-order constructs. It must be noted that all of these constructs' measurement tools are based on either existing instrument from the current academic literature, and/or some adaptations or combinations of them.

Each higher order construct from section one to six, along with its respective subconstructs, were measured using seven-point Likert scales. This specific measurement instrument was selected not only due to its overall psychometric quality, according to the current academic literature, but also its high degree of reliability, validity, and this research's objectives. On the other hand, the dependent variable of this research, more precisely the overall consumer satisfaction for *B2B* high-involvement products, was not only measured using the specific method described in the previous subsection, but also with the support of dichotomous, rank order, and open-ended questions. The following lines will explain in detail the choice of such measurement tools for each retained higher order constructs.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, this research's conceptual model includes six different higher order constructs that act as independent variables, and one acting as the dependent variable. Four of them contain three subconstructs each, and two of them are originally exempt from any. Whereas the pre-purchase desires & expectations, and post-purchase product attributes' & information satisfaction constructs respectively include three subconstructs. The conceived measurement Likert scales were inspired in part by Spreng, MacKenzie and Olshavsky's (1996) research and methodology. These authors did not actually use a questionnaire and Likert scales as part of their data collection process, but instead a series of personal semi-guided interviews. Therefore, the Likert scales conceived to measure the desires, expectations, and desires' & expectations' congruency constructs were inspired from the described interview process. In regards to the measurement instruments of both product attributes' and information satisfaction constructs, they had to be built from scratch, as no other previous academic research could be identified measuring such types of constructs.

3.2.1 Pre-Purchase Desires' Measurement Instruments

Inspired by Spreng, MacKenzie and Olshavsky's (1996) research and methodology, the three Likert scales depicted on the following page (*cf.* Table 6) were conceived to measure not only the influence and importance of each three subconstructs, more precisely social status & prestige, convenience and experience, in consumers' decision to purchase a business aircraft, but also their importance as key drivers of overall customer satisfaction:

Table 6: Pre-Purchase Desires' Likert Scales

	Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:	1 = Totally Disagree				7 = Totally Agree		
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	[Item 1/2/3] enhancement for the company or individual represents a <u>significant driver</u> of purchasing a business aircraft.							
2	[Item 1/2/3] is <u>important</u> in a consumer's final decision to purchase a business aircraft.							
3	[Item 1/2/3] enhancement is among the most important key drivers of <u>satisfaction</u> after purchasing a business aircraft.							

As demonstrated in the table above, each subconstruct was measured using all three items. Thus, measuring this construct, along with its three subconstructs, required a total of nine seven-point Likert scales divided in three subsections.

3.2.2 Pre-Purchase Expectations' Measurement Instruments

The measurement instruments used for assessing pre-purchase expectations and its subconstructs were also inspired by Spreng, MacKenzie and Olshavsky's (1996) research and methodology. In fact, they are the same as the ones depicted in table 6 above (*cf.* Table 6). For clarification purposes, the instruments depicted in the table on the following page (*cf.* Table 7) were used to assess this research's second higher order construct and its subconstructs, more precisely experience & service quality, perceived value & premium, and product performance:

Table 7: Pre-Purchase Expectations’ Likert Scales

	Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:	1 = Totally Disagree				7 = Totally Agree		
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	[Item 1/2/3] for the company or individual represents a <u>significant driver</u> of purchasing a business aircraft.							
2	[Item 1/2/3] is <u>important in a consumer’s final decision</u> to purchase a business aircraft.							
3	[Item 1/2/3] is among the most important key drivers of <u>satisfaction after purchasing</u> a business aircraft.							

3.2.3 Post-Purchase Product Attributes’ Satisfaction Measurement Instruments

As mentioned earlier in this subsection, the measurement instruments used to assess post-purchase product attributes’ satisfaction and its subconstructs had to be built from scratch, as no previous academic research could be identified measuring such higher and first-order constructs. Nevertheless, Spreng, MacKenzie and Olshavsky’s (1996) research and methodology acted as a source of inspiration, due to the fact that they attempted to measure a similar higher order construct entitled “attribute satisfaction”, however, they did so by relying on semi-guided interviews. As such, no previous Likert scales were available to act a source of inspiration for the measurement of this research’s construct and of its subconstructs, more precisely luxury & comfort attributes, performance attributes, and service attributes. As a result, the same three measurement instruments depicted in tables two and three were utilized, along with the addition of one other item attempting to measure customers’ satisfaction for each subconstruct. For clarification purposes, the items on the following page (*cf.* Table 8) were conceived to assess this research’s third higher order construct and its subconstructs:

Table 8: Post-Purchase Product Attributes' Satisfaction Likert Scales

	Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:	1 = Totally Disagree				7 = Totally Agree		
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Consumers are usually <u>satisfied</u> with the [Item 1/2/3] related attributes of their business aircraft.							
2	[Item 1/2/3] attributes for the company or individual represent a <u>significant driver</u> of purchasing a business aircraft.							
3	[Item 1/2/3] attributes are <u>important in a consumer's final decision</u> to purchase a business aircraft.							
4	[Item 1/2/3] attributes are among the most important key drivers of <u>satisfaction after purchasing</u> a business aircraft.							

3.2.4 Post-Purchase Information Satisfaction Measurement Instruments

The measurement instruments used to assess this construct and its subconstructs also had to be conceived from scratch, but some assistance was once again provided by Spreng, MacKenzie and Olshavsky's (1996) research and methodology, as the authors also assessed a higher order construct called "information satisfaction." However, very little assistance was provided by this article, as they also assessed this specific construct using semi-guided interviews, and very little information was provided regarding which questions were asked during such interviews. As a result, a combination of the Likert scales used to assess the previous constructs and their subconstructs were used to measure these specific ones, more precisely personal selling, word-of-mouth (*WOM*), and external experts' satisfaction. Even though changes made to the three items used in the measurement of all previous constructs are insignificant, one or two items were added for each subconstruct of this specific construct, in order to truly adapt and improve the accuracy of their assessment. Therefore, the instruments on the following pages were conceived (*cf.* Tables 9,10,11) according to the specific subconstruct of information satisfaction measured:

Table 9: Personal Selling Satisfaction Likert Scales

	Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:	1 = Totally Disagree				7 = Totally Agree		
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Consumers are usually <u>dissatisfied</u> with the personal selling quality experienced, during the purchasing process of their business aircraft.							
2	Personal selling quality represents a <u>significant driver</u> in the purchase of a business aircraft.							
3	Personal selling quality is <u>important in a consumer's final decision</u> to purchase a business aircraft.							
4	Personal selling quality is among the most important key drivers of <u>satisfaction after purchasing</u> a business aircraft.							

In the case of the personal selling subconstruct, the first item (*cf.* Table 9) was modified to express a sentiment of dissatisfaction instead of satisfaction, as Bowman and Narayandas's (2001) research proved that people have a greater propensity to share their degree of dissatisfaction than satisfaction. Consequently, by inciting more participants to accurately reflect their level of agreement about this statement, this slight modification will prove to be quite important in the accomplishment of this research's main objective, more precisely the generation of managerial sales recommendations.

In regards to the *WOM* subconstruct, two measurement instruments were added to the three items utilized in the assessment of all previous higher and first-order constructs. More precisely, the customer's likeliness to purchase a business aircraft from one specific manufacturer, according to his exposure to both positive and negative WOM, was measured using the first two Likert scales depicted in the table on the following page (*cf.* Table 10). The creation of these two items is mostly based on Herr, Kardes and Kim's (1991) research that puts forth the fact that positive and negative word-of-mouth do not only exert a strong influence on customers' judgment of products, but also on their purchase intention.

Table 10: Word-of-Mouth Satisfaction Likert Scales

	Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:	1 = Totally Disagree 7 = Totally Agree						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	A consumer is <u>more likely to purchase</u> a business aircraft from <u>one specific manufacturer</u> if he was exposed to <u>positive word-of-mouth</u> about that specific manufacturer.							
2	A consumer is <u>less likely to purchase</u> a business aircraft from <u>one specific manufacturer</u> if he was exposed to <u>negative word-of-mouth</u> about that specific manufacturer.							
3	Word-of-mouth represents a <u>significant driver</u> in the purchase of a business aircraft.							
4	Word-of-mouth is <u>important in a consumer's final decision</u> to purchase a business aircraft.							
5	Word-of-mouth is among the most important key drivers of <u>satisfaction after purchasing</u> a business aircraft.							

Finally, the last subconstruct of this construct, more precisely external experts was measured using the same three similar items used to assess all of the previously examined higher and first-order constructs. However, an additional item was used to measure the influence of external experts on customers' purchase decision. Indeed, according to Gu, Park and Konana's (2012) research, external *WOM* hosted by independent experts may have a significant influence on sales of high-involvement products, such as business aircraft. These authors' findings demonstrated that consumers have most often already made up their minds about the purchase of a high-involvement product, when they reach out to or contact a retailer/manufacturer. Therefore, the items depicted on the following page (*cf.* Table 11) were conceived in order to assess the external experts' subconstruct.

Table 11: External Experts’ Satisfaction Likert Scales

	Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:	1 = Totally Disagree				7 = Totally Agree		
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	A consumer is <u>more likely</u> to purchase a business aircraft from one <u>specific manufacturer</u> if one or multiple external experts specifically <u>recommended</u> that manufacturer.							
2	External experts represent a <u>significant driver</u> in the purchase of a business aircraft.							
3	External experts are <u>important in a consumer’s final decision</u> to purchase a business aircraft.							
4	External experts are among the most important key drivers of <u>satisfaction after purchasing</u> a business aircraft.							

3.2.5 Desires’ and Expectations’ Congruency Measurement Instruments

Similarly to the measurement instruments used to assess both product attributes’ and information satisfaction’s higher order constructs and their subconstructs, the items used to measure desires and expectations congruency had to be conceived from scratch. Some insights could be derived from Spreng, MacKenzie and Olshavsky’s (1996) research and methodology, as both higher order constructs also played a key role in their conceptual model, however, much of the information provided did not prove to be useful for this particular research. As a result, four seven-point Likert scales were conceived for each higher order construct, in order to not only measure consumers’ pre-purchase desires’ and expectations’ degree of fulfillment, following the purchase of their business aircraft, but also their related degree of dissatisfaction and the impact of the two congruency constructs on both product attributes’ and information satisfaction constructs. For clarification purposes, the measurement instruments depicted on the following page (*cf.* Table 12) were conceived to assess both of this research’s essential constructs.

Table 12: Desires’ and Expectations’ Congruency Likert Scales

	Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:	1 = Totally Disagree				7 = Totally Agree		
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Consumers’ pre-purchase desires/expectations are usually <u>fulfilled</u> , <u>following the acquisition</u> of their business aircraft.							
2	<u>After purchasing</u> a business aircraft, a consumer is likely to express <u>dissatisfaction</u> about the <u>degree of fulfillment</u> of his pre-purchase desires/expectations .							
3	Desires/expectations congruency is likely to <u>positively affect</u> consumers’ level of information satisfaction .							
4	Desires/expectations congruency is likely to <u>negatively affect</u> consumers’ level of information satisfaction .							

3.2.6 Section Seven Measurement Instruments

As mentioned earlier, a combination of dichotomous, rank order and open-ended questions from section seven were used to provide additional information and results about this research’s dependent variable. It must be noted that such results were complementary to the method described earlier, in order to measure customers’ overall satisfaction. In regards to the sole dichotomous question of section seven, the following query was asked to the participants:

“Which variable between **product attributes satisfaction** and **information satisfaction** has the most influence on a consumer’s **overall business aircraft satisfaction**?”

Two choices were then given to respondents, more precisely “product attributes satisfaction” and “information satisfaction.” The reason why this question was included in the questionnaire being that it was deemed useful to know which of the two higher order constructs has the most influence onto overall consumer satisfaction, according to respondents. Indeed, such question allowed them to directly identify the most influential component of overall consumer satisfaction, according to their extensive field experience. However, it is understood that this first question will only play a supportive role in the generation of managerial sales recommendations, due to the fact that its results will not allow the execution of elaborate statistical analyses. More details and results related to this measurement instrument will be provided in the next chapter.

Two rank order questions were also included in section seven, in order to measure the influence of each subconstructs constituting both product attributes' and information satisfaction constructs, onto consumers' overall business aircraft level of satisfaction. More precisely, the following statement was presented twice to the participants:

“Place the concepts listed below in ascending order of influence on the **overall satisfaction** of a business aircraft consumer.”

The participants were then asked to rank the three different subconstructs pertaining to the product attributes' satisfaction construct on a scale of one to three, and then repeat the same task for all three subconstructs of the information satisfaction construct. For clarification purposes, the presented product attributes' satisfaction subconstructs were luxury & comfort attributes, performance attributes and service-related attributes. On the other hand, the ones for information satisfaction were personal selling, word-of-mouth and external experts' involvement. A statistical analysis was then performed to determine the weighted influence of each above-mentioned subconstructs onto the overall satisfaction of business aircraft consumers. This analysis was performed by multiplying the respective degree of influence of both product attributes satisfaction and information satisfaction constructs, obtained from a frequency analysis of the above dichotomous question, with the frequency of their three respective subconstructs. Consequently, the resulting values represented the weighted influence of all six subconstructs onto consumers' overall satisfaction. Such information proved to be useful in identifying the most important subconstructs to include in the final managerial sales recommendations. These results, along with the calculation used to obtain them, will be examined more in-depth in the upcoming chapter.

Finally, three open-ended questions were included in the last segment of section seven. These questions were conceived in order to obtain more depth, and richer insights than with only quantitative methods in regards to three specific topics. More precisely, consumer dissatisfaction related to the purchasing process and any physical and/or performance aspects of a business aircraft, consumer dissatisfaction related to manufacturers' sales department and/or salespeople, and possible improvements for manufacturers' sales department and/or salespeople. For clarification purposes, the

participants were asked to provide any opinion and/or insights, after being presented with the following three queries:

1. “What are some aspects related to their business aircraft that consumers are least satisfied with? This may include any product attributes, functionalities or aspects/steps of the purchasing process.”
2. “What are some aspects that consumers are least satisfied with, in regards to business aircraft manufacturers’ **sales department** and/or **salespeople**?”
3. “What are some aspects that business aircraft manufacturers’ **sales department** and/or **salespeople** should **improve**? Please provide any recommendations you may have.”

Following Bowman and Narayandas’s (2001) recommendations, all queries required participants to express a sentiment of dissatisfaction, due to the fact that people tend to have a greater propensity to share their degree of dissatisfaction than satisfaction. Such strategy was, therefore, used to incite a maximum of participants to share their opinion and/or insights about the above-mentioned topics. The responses to the first two open-ended questions were then coded and analyzed, in order to obtain quantitative data that will provide further support to generate insightful managerial sales recommendations. More precisely, all responses to the first query were coded using product attributes and information satisfaction subconstructs, whereas the responses pertaining to the second query were coded using three identified categories: salespeople transparency/honesty, salespeople overall knowledge and salespeople timeliness of follow-up. For clarification purposes, if a response to the first query was deemed to be demonstrating a certain degree of dissatisfaction regarding one or many subconstructs from both product attributes and information satisfaction constructs, these specific subconstructs were identified. The same task was then executed for all responses to the second query, however, the three above-mentioned categories replaced the six subconstructs from both product attribute and information satisfaction constructs.

The responses to the last open question were not coded, due to the high subjectivity of their contents. Indeed, the recommendations obtained varied significantly from one participant to another, and it was very difficult to identify redundant themes, words or

topics that could ultimately be coded and quantitatively analyzed. Furthermore, even if all responses would have been coded and analyzed, the statistical outcomes would not have revealed samples of different categories large enough to be deemed either reliable and/or significant. It must also be mentioned that this research aimed to generate its own managerial sales recommendations based on factual scientific data acquired through of a rigorous and methodical process, without being biased by previously emitted personal opinions or judgments. Nevertheless, all recommendations were still examined, and some did offer interesting insights and/or general ideas that could be objectively harvested for the purposes of this research. Further details regarding the most interesting responses to this last query, along with frequency analyses of the codification of the first two open-ended questions will be provided in the following chapter.

3.3 Conclusion

The objective of this third chapter was to disclose the selected methodology of this research. As a result, the first section of this chapter introduced not only the preferred data collection process, more precisely the *cross-sectional* method, but also the selected population and sample comprised of global current or past business aircraft owners, along with global stakeholders that currently are or have been involved in the purchasing process of a business aircraft on the customer's side.

The selection of this population and sample can be explained by the fact that academic research pertaining to the business aircraft industry, especially regarding sales and marketing is quite scarce, if not inexistent. This can be explained by the fact that such industry professionals or salespeople have a very limited amount of time to answer surveys or grant interviews to interested researchers, being consistently involved in time-consuming projects or travelling from one location to another. Furthermore, the confidentiality aspect is quite important in the aerospace industry, not only due to the fact that extensive sums of money are often invested in the development of new products, technologies or projects, but also that the level of industrial competitiveness is amongst one of the highest of all industries combined. Therefore, many business aircraft professionals or salespeople tend to avoid or turn down any invitations to participate in academic researches requiring them to share relatively sensitive information or data.

The development of the final questionnaire, its pretest, its distribution using the *Qualtrics* survey platform, and the key role played by the specialized **aviation database JETNET.com** were also explained. The selected modelling methods used to not only measure the dependent variable of this research, but also test and verify the research hypotheses emitted in the previous chapter were then presented. Then followed the second section of this chapter, in which the chosen measurement instruments were introduced. Three to five seven-point Likert scales were either adapted from the existing academic literature, conceived from scratch or resulted from a combination of both to measure the six independent higher order constructs of this research, along with their subconstructs. On the other hand, a combination of dichotomous, rank order and open-ended questions were used to provide additional insights regarding consumers' overall satisfaction for *B2B* high-involvement products. Now that the preliminary steps of this research have been explained, its awaited results and their interpretation will be unveiled in the upcoming chapter.

Chapter 4: The Results

The main objective of this chapter is to present the results generated by this research. More precisely, the first section will introduce the adapted conceptual model, resulting from the validation of the dataset explained in the previous chapter.

The second section will then bring forth the results stemming from the test of all six previously emitted main research hypotheses, including the examination of the direction, value and degree of signification of their causal coefficients, also known as *Beta* coefficients (β). These coefficients will also be individually interpreted, along with their respective significance. This section will also provide statistical information regarding not only the measurement of this conceptual model's dependent variable, but also each of the four individual components that compose it. Such information aims to provide some insights regarding the average overall satisfaction of all participants, and the degree of satisfaction and importance related to each individual component. This shall also allow all four components to be compared against each other.

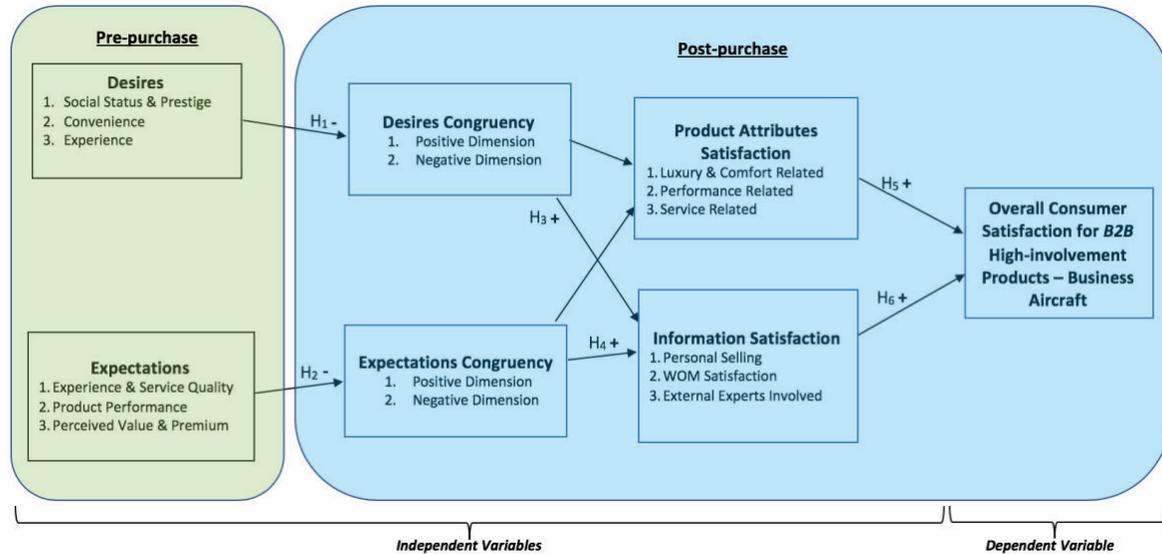
Finally, the third section will introduce all results originating from any one of section seven measurement instruments, which include the sole dichotomous question of this research, the weighted influence of both product attributes and information satisfaction subconstructs onto consumers' overall satisfaction, the frequency analysis of both coded open-ended questions, and the most interesting insights that can be gained from some of the responses to the third open-ended question.

4.1 The Adapted Research Conceptual Model

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the original conceptual model of this research had to be adapted, following the dataset validation process, as two dimensions were actually present in both expectations and desires congruency constructs. More precisely, a positive and negative dimension were found to be present, which led to the appropriate modification of this research's conceptual model, by adding two subconstructs representing a positive and negative dimension to each desires and expectations congruency constructs. For sake of clarification, the positive dimension is found to measure consumers' satisfaction level, whereas the negative dimension is measuring consumers' dissatisfaction level. This aspect must be taken into consideration, when interpreting the

results from the hypotheses' test in the next subsection. As a result, the following figure (cf. Figure 9) represents the adapted conceptual model obtained:

Figure 9: The Adapted Research Conceptual Model



4.2 Hypotheses' Tests and Dependent Variable Analysis

4.2.1 Testing the Research Hypotheses

In this second section, results stemming from linear regression analyses used to test all six research hypotheses previously emitted in chapter 2 will be presented. As mentioned earlier, the direction, value and degree of signification of all causal coefficients, also known as *Beta* coefficients (β), will be examined, in order to validate each hypothesis. Such coefficients will also be presented and regrouped in one table, and then interpreted, according to each hypothesis examined. The significance of all obtained results will be verified, by examining both the *p-value* and *T-statistic* associated with each regression. Finally, it must be noted that each research hypothesis and its results will be examined and interpreted individually.

As a reminder, six main research hypotheses were emitted in the third chapter of this research. First, the relationship between pre-purchase desires and post-purchase desires congruency is examined. It is hypothesized that the more stringent pre-purchase desires are, the lesser post-purchase desires congruency will be. Second, the relationship between pre-purchase expectations and post-purchase expectations congruency is examined. A similar hypothesis is emitted, more precisely that the higher pre-purchase expectations are,

the lower post-purchase expectations congruency will be. Third, the direct effect of desires congruency onto information satisfaction is observed, which leads to the hypothesis that the higher post-purchase desires congruency is, the higher post-purchase information satisfaction will be. Fourth, the direct effect of expectations congruency onto information satisfaction is then scrutinized. Similarly, it is hypothesized that the higher post-purchase expectations congruency is, the higher post-purchase information satisfaction will be. It must be noted that these last four hypotheses will be individually tested for each of the two distinct dimensions that were recently added to both desires and expectations congruency constructs. Fifth, the direct effect of product attributes satisfaction onto overall consumer satisfaction for *B2B* high-involvement products will be examined. In this case, it is hypothesized that the higher post-purchase product attributes' satisfaction is, the higher overall consumer satisfaction will be. Finally, the direct effect of information satisfaction onto overall consumer satisfaction for *B2B* high-involvement products will also be investigated. This observation leads to the sixth and last main research hypothesis being that the higher post-purchase information satisfaction is, the higher overall consumer satisfaction will be.

The table on the following page (*cf.* Table 13) provides the *Beta* coefficient (β), *p-value*, *T-statistic*, R^2 , and adjusted R^2 related to each one of the six main hypotheses mentioned above. Although six main hypotheses were previously emitted, each one will be tested individually for each subconstruct involved, which will generate a grand total of thirty sub-hypotheses. Each one of them will then be interpreted and examined individually, further in this section. Screenshots of each test can be found in the annex section (*cf.* Annex 8).

Table 13: Research Hypotheses Test Results

Hypothesis Observed Relationship/Effect	Beta (β)	P-value	T-statistic	Validated
Hypothesis 1.1a <i>Social Status & Prestige → Desires Congruency (Positive Dimension)</i>	-0,030	0,653	-0,450	NO
Hypothesis 1.2a <i>Convenience → Desires Congruency (Positive Dimension)</i>	0,245	0,000	3,796	NO, significant but in opposite direction
Hypothesis 1.3a <i>Experience → Desires Congruency (Positive Dimension)</i>	0,160	0,020	2,345	NO, significant but in opposite direction
R² (R² adjusted)	0,097 (0,085)			
Hypothesis 1.1b <i>Social Status & Prestige → Desires Congruency (Negative Dimension)</i>	0,163	0,020	2,346	YES
Hypothesis 1.2b <i>Convenience → Desires Congruency (Negative Dimension)</i>	0,022	0,741	0,331	NO
Hypothesis 1.3b <i>Experience → Desires Congruency (Negative Dimension)</i>	0,049	0,485	0,699	NO
R² (R² adjusted)	0,036 (0,023)			
Hypothesis 2.1a <i>Experience & Service Quality → Expectations Congruency (Positive Dimension)</i>	0,043	0,543	0,609	NO
Hypothesis 2.2a <i>Product Performance → Expectations Congruency (Positive Dimension)</i>	0,125	0,106	1,624	NO
Hypothesis 2.3a <i>Perceived Value & Premium → Expectations Congruency (Positive Dimension)</i>	0,145	0,052	1,958	NO, significant but in opposite direction
R² (R² adjusted)	0,062 (0,049)			

Table 13: Research Hypotheses Test Results (Continued)

Hypothesis Observed Relationship/Effect	Beta (β)	P-value	T-statistic	Validated
Hypothesis 2.1b <i>Experience & Service Quality → Expectations Congruency (Negative Dimension)</i>	0,075	0,303	1,033	NO
Hypothesis 2.2b <i>Product Performance → Expectations Congruency (Negative Dimension)</i>	-0,084	0,287	-1,068	NO
Hypothesis 2.3b <i>Perceived Value & Premium → Expectations Congruency (Negative Dimension)</i>	0,083	0,275	1,094	NO
R² (R² adjusted)	0,012 (0,002)			
Hypothesis 3.1a <i>Desires Congruency (Positive Dimension) → Personal Selling</i>	0,242	0,000	3,745	YES
Hypothesis 3.2a <i>Desires Congruency (Positive Dimension) → WOM Satisfaction</i>	0,161	0,015	2,455	YES
Hypothesis 3.3a <i>Desires Congruency (Positive Dimension) → External Experts Involved</i>	0,341	0,000	5,461	YES
R² (R² adjusted)	0,058 (0,054)			
Hypothesis 3.1b <i>Desires Congruency (Negative Dimension) → Personal Selling</i>	0,102	0,126	1,535	NO
Hypothesis 3.2b <i>Desires Congruency (Negative Dimension) → WOM Satisfaction</i>	0,225	0,001	3,473	NO, significant but not as expected
Hypothesis 3.3b <i>Desires Congruency (Negative Dimension) → External Experts Involved</i>	0,225	0,001	3,467	NO, significant but not as expected
R² (R² adjusted)	0,010 (0,006)			

Table 13: Research Hypotheses Test Results (Continued)

Hypothesis Observed Relationship/Effect	Beta (β)	P-value	T-statistic	Validated
Hypothesis 4.1a <i>Expectations Congruency (Positive Dimension) → Personal Selling</i>	0,178	0,008	2,682	YES
Hypothesis 4.2a <i>Expectations Congruency (Positive Dimension) → WOM Satisfaction</i>	0,184	0,006	2,778	YES
Hypothesis 4.3a <i>Expectations Congruency (Positive Dimension) → External Experts Involved</i>	0,208	0,002	3,155	YES
R² (R² adjusted)	0,032 (0,027)			
Hypothesis 4.1b <i>Expectations Congruency (Negative Dimension) → Personal Selling</i>	0,131	0,050	1,971	NO, significant but not as expected
Hypothesis 4.2b <i>Expectations Congruency (Negative Dimension) → WOM Satisfaction</i>	0,205	0,002	3,113	NO, significant but not as expected
Hypothesis 4.3b <i>Expectations Congruency (Negative Dimension) → External Experts Involved</i>	0,184	0,006	2,781	NO, significant but not as expected
R² (R² adjusted)	0,017 (0,013)			
Hypothesis 5.1 <i>Luxury & Comfort Attributes → Overall Satisfaction</i>	0,363	0,000	9,658	YES
Hypothesis 5.2 <i>Performance Attributes → Overall Satisfaction</i>	0,423	0,000	10,299	YES
Hypothesis 5.3 <i>Service Attributes → Overall Satisfaction</i>	0,353	0,000	8,798	YES
R² (R² adjusted)	0,019 (0,003)			

Table 13: Research Hypotheses Test Results (Continued)

Hypothesis Observed Relationship/Effect	Beta (β)	P-value	T-statistic	Validated
Hypothesis 6.1 Personal Selling \rightarrow Overall Satisfaction	0,442	0,000	6,908	YES
Hypothesis 6.2 WOM Satisfaction \rightarrow Overall Satisfaction	0,034	0,587	0,545	NO
Hypothesis 6.3 External Experts Involved \rightarrow Overall Satisfaction	0,072	0,245	1,166	NO
R² (R² adjusted)	0,015 (0,001)			

Prior to beginning the interpretation of the above results, it is imperative to further clarify the meaning of both desires and expectations congruency constructs' positive and negative dimensions. As stated earlier, the positive dimension measures consumers' satisfaction level and indicates a positive relationship between both subconstructs. On the other hand, the negative dimension measures consumers' dissatisfaction level and indicates a negative relationship between both observed subconstructs. Readers must keep this aspect in mind, during the following interpretations.

The first main hypothesis emitted in chapter 3 was the following:

Hypothesis 1	The more stringent pre-purchase desires are, the lesser post-purchase desires congruency will be.
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This hypothesis predicts a negative relationship between pre-purchase desires and post-purchase desires congruency. Sub-hypotheses 1.1a, 1.2b and 1.3b were all found to be insignificant, each one exhibiting a *p-value* greater than 0,05. However, sub-hypotheses 1.2a, 1.3a and 1.1b were all significant with *p-values* above 0,05 and respective *beta coefficients* of 0,245, 0,160, and 0,163. Nevertheless, both sub-hypotheses 1.2a and 1.3a were not validated, as they predicted a positive relationship between both convenience and experience subconstructs and the positive dimension of desires congruency. Indeed, and as stated before, main hypothesis 1 predicted a negative relationship between both constructs involved. Such relationship is, however, predicted by sub-hypothesis 1.1b, as it relates the social status & prestige subconstruct to the negative dimension of desires congruency, and demonstrates a *p-value* of 0,020, and a *beta* of 0,163. In this context, this specific sub-

hypothesis is validated, as it depicts a negative relationship between consumers pre-purchase desire for social status & prestige, and their post-purchase degree of social status & prestige fulfilment. In other words, the higher the pre-purchase desire for social status & prestige, the lesser the degree of fulfilment for this specific desire.

Interestingly, the fact that both sub-hypotheses 1.2a and 1.3a were significant but not validated, and sub-hypothesis 1.1b was significant and validated, demonstrates that this first main hypothesis is ambivalent. This term can be described, according to the Cambridge English Dictionary (2019), as: “having two opposite feelings at the same time”. Indeed, the results demonstrate the presence of not only a positive relationship between both desires for convenience and experience, and their degree of post-purchase fulfilment, but also a negative relationship between consumers’ pre-purchase desire for social status & prestige, and their degree of post-purchase fulfilment. In other words, the higher the desire for convenience and experience prior to purchasing a business aircraft, the higher the degree of fulfilment for both of these specific desires is after purchasing it. It could also be interpreted in the sense that purchasing a business aircraft confers enhanced level of convenience and experience to their owners. However, the higher consumers’ desire for social status & prestige is, prior to purchasing a business aircraft, the lesser their post-purchase degree of fulfilment will be. In other words, the results seem to indicate that purchasing a business aircraft does not necessarily confer any social status & prestige to their owners. It is important to note that this research being exploratory in nature, it would be important to double-verify such conclusions with a different conceptual model specifically adapted to *B2B* high-involvement products.

The second main hypothesis was the following:

Hypothesis 2	The higher pre-purchase expectations are, the lower post-purchase expectations congruency will be.
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This hypothesis predicts a negative relationship between pre-purchase expectations and post-purchase expectations congruency. In this case, only one of the six sub-hypotheses was found to be significant, more precisely 2.3a exhibited a *p-value* of 0,052 and a *beta* of 0,145. As such, it was not found to be statistically significant, as it indicates a positive relationship between pre-purchase perceived value & premium and the positive dimension of the expectations congruency construct, which corresponds to the opposite of what the

second main hypothesis, stated above, was supposed to predict. In other words, the higher the pre-purchase expectations are regarding perceived value & premium, the higher the post-purchase degree of fulfilment for this specific consumer expectation. This can also be interpreted in the sense that consumers appear to be satisfied with not only the perceived value of their business aircraft, but also the degree of premium it confers upon them, after purchasing it. One explanation for this result could be that the model used, which was originally conceived for *B2C* products, is not the right fit for the test of a *B2B* hypothesis, such as this second one.

The third main hypothesis was the following:

Hypothesis 3	The higher post-purchase desires congruency is, the higher post-purchase information satisfaction will be.
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In this case, a positive relationship/effect is predicted between both desires' congruency and information satisfaction constructs. The results indicate that five out of six sub-hypotheses were found to be significant with *p-values* smaller than 0,05, more precisely 3.1a, 3.2a, 3.3a, 3.2b and 3.3b. This said, only three exhibited the relationship predicted by the third main hypothesis stated earlier, and were thus validated. Such three sub-hypotheses (3.1a, 3.2a and 3.3a) demonstrated *beta* coefficients of 0,242, 0,161 and 0,341 respectively. All three of them can be interpreted in the sense that consumers who fulfilled their pre-purchase desires such as social status & prestige, experience and convenience following the acquisition of their business aircraft should also demonstrate a high level of satisfaction pertaining to the information received by means of personal selling, word-of-mouth, and external experts during the purchasing process.

Similarly to the first research hypothesis, this third one is also ambivalent as sub-hypotheses 3.2b and 3.3b were found to be significant, but demonstrate an opposite effect than what this third main hypothesis originally predicted. Indeed, these two sub-hypotheses demonstrate that customers who did not fulfill their pre-purchase desires, after purchasing their business aircraft, could nevertheless demonstrate a high level of satisfaction pertaining to the information received by means of word-of-mouth and external experts involved during the purchasing process. The fact that the sub-hypothesis pertaining to the personal selling subconstruct (3.1b) was not found to be significant depicts a one-way positive relationship between consumers' desires congruency and personal selling

satisfaction. In other words, this indicates that a good salesperson will play a key role in helping consumers fulfill their pre-purchase desires, which will also result in a high level of personal selling satisfaction. However, the results indicate that the opposite cannot be true; consumers who did not fulfill their pre-purchase desires will tend to be dissatisfied regarding the information received by means of personal selling, along with its quality.

Such finding allows us to emit that consumers may perceive salespeople as guides. More precisely, the ones who truly help consumers select the right product for their needs and desires, which consequently increases such consumers' likelihood to fulfill their pre-purchase desires, will be perceived as having provided good product information. As a result, such consumers will also be satisfied regarding the overall personal selling quality experienced during the purchasing process. However, consumers who were not guided in the right direction by salespeople are likely to be dissatisfied regarding the information received by means of personal selling, along with its quality, which shall also cause their pre-purchase desires to be left unfulfilled after the acquisition of their business aircraft. This one-way relationship can also infer that consumers perceive personal selling has having more importance than *WOM* and insights given by external experts, when purchasing a business aircraft.

The fourth main hypothesis was the following:

Hypothesis 4	The higher post-purchase expectations congruency is, the higher post-purchase information satisfaction will be.
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This hypothesis predicts a positive relationship/effect between the expectations' congruency and information satisfaction constructs. All six sub-hypotheses 4.1a, 4.2a, 4.3a, 4.1b, 4.2b and 4.3b were all found to be significant with *p-values* smaller than 0,05 and demonstrated *beta* coefficients of 0,178, 0,184, 0,208, 0,131, 0,205 and 0,184 respectively. Therefore, these results indicate that sub-hypotheses 4.1a, 4.2a and 4.3a were all validated, as they also represented a positive relationship between the positive dimension of the expectations congruency constructs and all three subconstructs of the information satisfaction construct, more precisely personal selling, *WOM* satisfaction and external experts involved. However, this fourth main hypothesis is also ambivalent, as sub-hypotheses 4.1b, 4.2b and 4.3b were also found to be significant, but demonstrate an opposite relationship to what was originally predicted by this fourth main hypothesis. In

other words, these last three sub-hypotheses indicate that even though customers may not have fulfilled their expectations after the acquisition of their business aircraft, they may nevertheless express satisfaction regarding the information received by means of personal selling, word-of-mouth and the external experts involved in the transaction. This could be interpreted in the sense that, in both case scenarios, the fact of receiving information provides satisfaction to consumers. Once again, it would be crucial to verify such aforementioned conclusions using a different research model specifically adapted to *B2B* high-involvement products.

The fifth main hypothesis was the following:

Hypothesis 5	The higher post-purchase product attributes' satisfaction is, the higher overall consumer satisfaction will be.
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This hypothesis predicts a positive relationship between the product attributes' satisfaction construct and the dependent variable of this research, the overall consumer satisfaction for *B2B* high-involvement products. The results indicate that all three sub-hypotheses 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 were all significant with *p-values* smaller than 0,05 and *beta* coefficients of 0,363, 0,423 and 0,353 respectively. These results indicate that the higher consumers' level of satisfaction is regarding the luxury & comfort, performance, and service attributes of their business aircraft, the higher will also be their overall level of satisfaction. It is also possible to claim that performance attributes have the most importance in determining consumers' business aircraft overall satisfaction, due to the fact that the *beta* coefficient associated with this specific subconstruct is the highest one of all. Luxury & comfort attributes then rank second in terms of importance, followed by service-related attributes, when determining consumers' overall satisfaction level. This can also be interpreted as consumers perceiving performance attributes as the most important type of product attributes, when purchasing a business aircraft, respectively followed by luxury & comfort, and service-related attributes.

The sixth and last main research hypothesis was the following:

Hypothesis 6	The higher post-purchase information satisfaction is, the higher overall consumer satisfaction will be.
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This hypothesis predicts a positive relationship between the information satisfaction and overall consumer satisfaction constructs. According to the results obtained, only one sub-

hypothesis (6.1) out of three was found to be significant. The relationship between the personal selling subconstruct and this research's dependent variable exhibited a *p-value* of 0,000 and a *beta* coefficient of 0,442. This sub-hypothesis is therefore validated. It demonstrates that the more consumers are satisfied regarding the information received by means of personal selling, along with the quality of personal selling experienced during the purchasing process, the higher will be their level of overall satisfaction. The fact that both sub-hypotheses pertaining to the word-of-mouth and external experts subconstructs were not found significant also means that they do not seem to have any influence onto consumers' level of overall satisfaction. Therefore, it can be interpreted that salespeople play a key role in shaping consumers' overall level of satisfaction.

In conclusion, nineteen sub-hypotheses out of thirty were found to be significant, and eleven were validated. The first main hypothesis was partly validated, the second one remains invalidated, the third, fourth and fifth ones were fully validated, and the sixth one was partly validated. It must also be noted that the first, third and fourth main hypotheses were found to be ambivalent. Nevertheless, the test of specific hypotheses, such as the second and fourth ones that demonstrated opposite relationships, could have been omitted, due to the fact that the conceptual model on which they are based was originally conceived for *B2C* products. Therefore, and as mentioned before, it would be crucial to double-verify the outcome of such hypotheses in a future research on the matter, using a novel and fully adapted conceptual model for *B2B* high-involvement products.

4.2.2 Dependent Variable Analysis

This subsection will take closer a look at the results from this research's dependent variable, more precisely overall satisfaction for *B2B* high-involvement. Indeed, the method and formula presented in the previous chapter allowed the calculation of the participants' level of business aircraft overall satisfaction in percentages. As a reminder, the level of overall satisfaction was calculated according to the level of importance of each satisfaction subconstruct measured, more precisely luxury & comfort, performance, service-related attributes, and personal selling. The fact of accounting for the level of importance provides a more precise measure of overall satisfaction, as it prevents the final result from being biased by individual measures of satisfaction deemed less important by participants. All four individual components were then combined to determine participants' overall level of

satisfaction. The following table (*cf.* Table 14) presents the obtained results. This table is a personal creation, and the screenshot from SPSS can be found in the annex section (*cf.* Annex 9):

Table 14: Overall Satisfaction Results

	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev</i>
Participants' Overall Satisfaction Level	0,097	0,898	0,563	0,128

As represented above, the participants expressed an average overall satisfaction level of approximately 56,3%. The most satisfied participant expressed a satisfaction level of 89,8% and the least one 9,7%. A standard deviation of 12,8% is present amongst the obtained results. These results seem to indicate that there is a lot of room left for improvement, when it comes to consumers' overall level of satisfaction regarding their business aircraft. Indeed, none expressed being completely satisfied and very few being highly satisfied.

As mentioned earlier, two categories of respondent answered this research's questionnaire, more precisely present and past business aircraft owners, along with stakeholders who currently are or have been involved in the purchasing process of a business aircraft on the customer's end. This said, the following table (*cf.* Table 15) provides the satisfaction level of each category of respondent. This table is a personal creation, and the screenshot from SPSS can be found in the annex section (*cf.* Annex 10):

Table 15: Overall Satisfaction per Category of Respondent

	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev</i>
Business Aircraft Owners' Overall Satisfaction	0,2857	0,7704	0,5494	0,1125
Stakeholders' Overall Satisfaction	0,0969	0,8980	0,5692	0,1347

As represented above, present and past business aircraft owners expressed an average overall satisfaction level of approximately 54,9%, compared to 56, 9% for stakeholders. These results also indicate that stakeholders seem to be more extreme in their way of expressing their overall satisfaction, due to the fact that the minimum and maximum satisfaction level reported are respectively lower and higher than the ones corresponding to business aircraft owners. Nevertheless, the average satisfaction level for both category

of respondent is very similar, as only a 2% difference exists. As such, stakeholders seem to be slightly more satisfied in average than business aircraft owners. The following subsection shall attempt to provide clarifications regarding these results.

4.2.3 Individual Satisfaction Components Analysis

This subsection will provide an analysis of the results pertaining to each individual component composing participants' overall level of satisfaction. As stated earlier, each component attempts to measure a particular subconstruct's level of satisfaction, according to its perceived level of importance by participants. Four satisfaction subconstructs were individually examined, more precisely luxury & comfort attributes, performance attributes, service-related attributes, and personal selling. The following table (*cf.* Table 16) presents the results obtained in percentage. A screenshot of the descriptive analysis from SPSS may be found in the annex section (*cf.* Annex 11):

Table 16: Individual Components Satisfaction/Importance Results

Satisfaction Component Examined	<i>Satisfaction Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev</i>
Luxury & Comfort Attributes	0,628	0,201
Performance Attributes	0,663	0,214
Service-Related Attributes	0,534	0,214
Personal Selling	0,424	0,209

The above results indicate that participants expressed an average overall satisfaction level of 66,3% in regards to business aircraft performance attributes and the relative importance it has in shaping their level of overall satisfaction. Luxury & comfort product attributes, service-related product attributes and personal selling were respectively ranked second, third and fourth in terms of satisfaction, and according to their level of importance. Such results indicate that consumers are least satisfied with the personal selling aspect of purchasing a business aircraft, along with its service-related product attributes. Indeed, participants indicated being satisfied at only 42,4% in regards to personal selling, compared to 53,4% in regards to business aircraft service-related product attributes.

It was also considered important to examine individually the level of satisfaction, along with the level of importance of each subconstruct, in order to provide additional background information. Therefore, the following results were obtained using SPSS's

descriptive analysis function, and each subconstruct’s Likert scale assessing its level of importance in a consumer’s decision to purchase a business aircraft. Each result was then manually converted from a seven-point Likert scale score to a percentage (each score was divided by 7), in order to make its interpretation easier. The following table (*cf.* Table 17) regroups such results. A screenshot of the descriptive analysis may be found in the annex section (*cf.* Annex 12).

Table 17: Subconstructs’ Satisfaction and Importance Results

Subconstruct Examined	Rank	Satisfaction Mean	Rank	Importance Mean
Luxury & Comfort Attributes	1	0,783	2	0,785
Performance Attributes	2	0,780	1	0,830
Service-Related Attributes	3	0,682	3	0,762
Personal Selling	4	0,609	6	0,714
Word-of-mouth	N/A	N/A	5	0,733
External Experts	N/A	N/A	4	0,756

The results obtained indicate that participants are most satisfied about the luxury & comfort attributes of their business aircraft, but they consider performance attributes as the most important aspect when purchasing an aircraft. Furthermore, it suggests that participants are least satisfied in regards to the personal selling encountered during the purchasing process, and that it is also the least important aspect to consider, when deciding whether or not to purchase a business aircraft.

4.3 Section Seven Measurement Instruments’ Results

This section will introduce the results obtained by each one of section seven optional measurement instruments. More precisely, the frequency analysis of the dichotomous question, the weighted influence of both product attributes and information satisfaction subconstructs onto consumers overall satisfaction, the frequency analysis of both coded open-ended questions, and the most interesting insights that can be gained from some of the responses to the third open-ended question. As a reminder, these results aim to provide additional background information pertaining to customers’ overall level of satisfaction for *B2B* high-involvement products. They are thought to provide

complementary insights and also offer a different perspective than the sole examination of the satisfaction scores addressed earlier in this chapter.

4.3.1 Frequency Analysis of the Dichotomous Question

This subsection will provide the results from the frequency analysis of this research’s sole dichotomous question. As a reminder, this optional question was the following:

“Which variable between **product attributes satisfaction** and **information satisfaction** has the most influence on a consumer’s **overall** business aircraft **satisfaction**?”

A frequency analysis of the results was then performed, using SPSS. It must be noted that in total, 218 participants answered this question. The following table (*cf.* Table 18) summarizes this frequency analysis. A screenshot of this SPSS analysis can be found in the annex section (*cf.* Annex 13):

Table 18: Dichotomous Question Frequency Analysis’ Results

Variable	Rank	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Product Attributes Satisfaction	1	180	82,6
Information Satisfaction	2	38	17,4

According to the results, a vast majority of the participants selected the product attributes’ satisfaction variable as having the most influence on consumers’ overall level of satisfaction. Indeed, this variable was selected by 82,6% of all participants, compared to 17,4% regarding the information satisfaction variable.

Interestingly, these results are in line with not only the results from the test of the fifth main hypothesis, which confirmed the existence of a strong positive relationship between the product attributes’ satisfaction construct and consumers’ overall satisfaction level, but also the results from the descriptive analysis of the individual components of the dependent variable, which demonstrated a high level of satisfaction according to their level of importance for each of the product attributes’ satisfaction subconstructs.

4.3.2 Satisfaction Subconstructs’ Weighted Influence

First, this subsection will provide more details regarding the methodology used to measure the weighted influence of all product attributes and information satisfaction

subconstructs onto consumers' overall satisfaction. The obtained results shall then be examined and interpreted accordingly.

This analysis was performed by multiplying the respective degree of influence of both product attributes satisfaction and information satisfaction constructs, obtained from a frequency analysis of the dichotomous question, with the frequency of their three respective subconstructs, which was obtained by executing a frequency analysis of both rank-order questions. Consequently, the resulting values represented the weighted influence of all six subconstructs onto consumers' overall satisfaction. As a reminder, both rank-order questions were the following:

“Place the concepts listed below in ascending order of influence on the **overall satisfaction** of a business aircraft consumer.”

The participants were then asked to rank the three different subconstructs pertaining to the product attributes' satisfaction construct on a scale of one to three, and then repeat the same task for all three subconstructs of the information satisfaction construct. The results from the dichotomous question's frequency analysis having been already examined, the table (*cf.* Table 19) below provides the results from both rank-order questions' frequency analyses. It must be noted that a total of 203 participants responded to the first rank-order question, and 195 to the second one. A screenshot of this specific SPSS analysis can be found in the annex section (*cf.* Annex 14):

Table 19: Rank-order Questions' Frequency Analyses' Results

Satisfaction Subconstruct	Rank	Mean	Mode	Maximum	Minimum
Luxury & Comfort Attributes	2	2,25	3	3	1
Performance Attributes	1	1,49	1	3	1
Service-Related Attributes	3	2,27	2	3	1
Personal Selling	3	2,09	2	3	1
Word-of-mouth	2	2,03	3	3	1
External Experts	1	1,88	1	3	1

For clarification purposes, a mean value closer to 1 indicates that most participants ranked that particular satisfaction subconstruct first, which also indicates that they perceive

it as having the most influence on consumers' overall satisfaction. On the other hand, a mean value closer to 3 represents a satisfaction subconstruct having the least influence on consumers' overall satisfaction. As a result, it was possible to rank each subconstruct from the product attributes' and information satisfaction constructs, in ascending order of influence onto consumers' overall satisfaction. In regards to the product attributes' satisfaction construct, the results indicate that the most influential subconstruct is a business aircraft performance attributes, followed by its luxury & comfort attributes, and lastly its service-related attributes. For the information satisfaction construct, the most influential subconstruct was found to be the information received by means of external experts involved in the transaction, followed by word-of-mouth, and lastly personal selling.

Now that each subconstruct and its respective construct were assigned scores and rankings, the table below (*cf.* Table 20) will provide the weighted influence of all product attributes and information satisfaction subconstructs onto consumers' overall satisfaction, using the methodology described earlier. More precisely, each subconstruct's mean will be multiplied by its respective construct frequency expressed in percentage. A resulting score will then serve to rank all six satisfaction subconstructs, in ascending order of influence.

Table 20: Subconstructs' Weighted Influence onto Overall Satisfaction

Satisfaction Subconstruct	<i>Final Rank</i>	<i>Construct Frequency</i>	<i>Subconstruct Mean</i>	<i>Total Score</i>
Luxury & Comfort Attributes	2	0,826	2,25	$0,826 * 2,25 = \mathbf{1,859}$
Performance Attributes	1	0,826	1,49	$0,826 * 1,49 = \mathbf{1,231}$
Service-Related Attributes	3	0,826	2,27	$0,826 * 2,27 = \mathbf{1,875}$
Personal Selling	6	0,174	2,09	$0,174 * 2,09 = \mathbf{0,364}$
Word-of-mouth	5	0,174	2,03	$0,174 * 2,03 = \mathbf{0,353}$
External Experts	4	0,174	1,88	$0,174 * 1,88 = \mathbf{0,327}$

The final results obtained are not surprising, as they reflect the ones obtained from both constructs and satisfaction subconstructs' frequency analyses. It is important to remember that a mean value closer to 1 signifies a high level of influence, and a mean value closer to 3 a low level of influence. Therefore, the lowest score of each construct represents its most influential subconstruct; the overall most influential construct being product attributes' satisfaction. Consequently, this analysis identifies performance attributes as the

satisfaction subconstruct having the most influence onto consumers' level of overall satisfaction, respectively followed by luxury & comfort attributes, service-related attributes, external experts involved, word-of-mouth, and lastly personal selling.

These results are congruent with the ones obtained from the testing of the main research hypotheses. More precisely, the highest *beta* coefficient obtained (0,463), during the test of the fifth main hypothesis, was the one depicting the relationship between the performance attributes' subconstruct and the overall consumer satisfaction. The second and third highest ones (0,363 and 0,353) were respectively related to the relationships between the luxury & comfort attributes, and the service-related attributes to the dependent variable of this research. As such, both analyses reflect the same results in regards to the product attributes' satisfaction construct.

However, there are notable differences when it comes to the information satisfaction construct. Indeed, results obtained during the testing of the sixth main hypothesis indicated that the relationship between the personal selling subconstruct and this research's dependent variable was the strongest one, with a *beta* coefficient of 0,442. In other words, personal selling satisfaction was depicted as the most influential subconstruct of all three, both sub-hypotheses pertaining to *WOM* satisfaction and external experts (6.2 and 6.3) having been found insignificant. However, this analysis identified the external experts and *WOM* satisfaction subconstructs as having more influence onto consumers' overall satisfaction than the personal selling subconstruct.

As mentioned earlier, results from section seven optional measurement instruments are only examined and interpreted in order to provide additional background information to the testing of the main research hypotheses, and analyses of the dependent variable and its individual components. Such results shall be prioritized over the ones described in this section.

4.3.3 Open-ended Questions' Analysis and Results

This last subsection will present the results obtained from the frequency analysis of both coded open-ended questions, along with the most interesting insights gained from some of the responses to the third open-ended question.

The two optional open-ended questions that were coded are the following:

1. "What are some aspects related to their business aircraft that consumers are least satisfied with? This may include any product attributes, functionalities or aspects/steps of the purchasing process."
2. "What are some aspects that consumers are least satisfied with, in regards to business aircraft manufacturers' **sales department** and/or **salespeople**?"

As a reminder, the six terms used for the coding of the first question were also the subconstructs of both product attributes and information satisfaction constructs. Indeed, every aspect of dissatisfaction mentioned by the participants was matched to one or more of this research's six satisfaction subconstructs. The codification of each response was then manually inputted into SPSS' database. A value of "1" was used to express a feeling of dissatisfaction pertaining to either one of the six subconstructs, whereas a value of "0" was used if the participant did not express any dissatisfaction. The table below (*cf.* Table 21) provides the results of the codification frequency analysis of this first open-ended question. It is important to note that a total of 141 participants answered this first open-ended question. SPSS screenshots of this frequency analysis can be found in the annex section (*cf.* Annex 15):

Table 21: Open-ended #1 – Codification Frequency Analysis' Results

Aspect of Dissatisfaction	Rank	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Luxury & Comfort Attributes	4	19	0,104
Performance Attributes	2	51	0,280
Service-Related Attributes	1	61	0,335
Personal Selling	3	50	0,275
Word-of-mouth	6	0	0,000
External Experts	5	1	0,005

As a result, most participants express dissatisfaction regarding business aircraft service-related attributes, respectively followed by performance attributes, the quality of personal selling experienced, luxury & comfort attributes, external experts' involvement, and lastly word-of-mouth.

The majority of dissatisfaction aspects related to business aircraft service attributes mentioned included: the cost of planned and unscheduled maintenance, parts, labour, mandatory services, such as annual inspections, mandatory and optional technological updates, along with the overall quality of after-sales service and follow-up, the long-time intervals required to complete inspections and repairs, the lack of interim lift options and flexibility, and the overall level of availability and serviceability at manufacturers' service centres.

In regards to performance attributes, most participants mentioned: higher than planned costs of operation, lower than advertised real-life performances, mostly pertaining to aircraft range, speed, payload, airport accessibility, fuel consumption, along with poor aircraft functionalities and reliability.

A lot of dissatisfaction was also expressed about the quality of personal selling experienced during the transaction process. The aspects mentioned by participants included: overselling, overpromising, products' false representation, the lack of follow-up from sales after the transaction, misleading information and presentations, deceptive product comparisons, the purchasing process' length and complexity, low level of communication, and overly pushy salespeople.

A few responses included dissatisfaction aspects pertaining to luxury & comfort product attributes, such as: poor quality of the cabin's interior and systems, available cabin configuration, high option prices, such as for coffee makers, wireless internet and microwave ovens, cabin size, seat comfort, high customization costs, cabin noise, and poor training related to the cabin's equipment.

Finally, one response expressed dissatisfaction regarding external experts, by mentioning inaccurate costs forecasts prepared by external consultants or sales representatives.

Three codification terms were used for the coding of the second open-ended questions, more precisely dissatisfaction pertaining to salespeople's transparency/honesty,

overall knowledge, and timeliness of follow-up. The same methodology as question one was used. The following table (*cf.* Table 22) will provide the results of the codification frequency analysis of this second question. It must be noted that a total of 135 participants answered it. SPSS screenshots of this frequency analysis can be found in the annex section (*cf.* Annex 16):

Table 22: Open-ended #2 – Codification Frequency Analysis’ Results

Aspect of Dissatisfaction	Rank	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Salespeople’s Transparency/Honesty	1	58	0,487
Salespeople’s Overall Knowledge	2	39	0,328
Salespeople’s Timeliness of Follow-up	3	22	0,185

As a result, a majority of participants expressed dissatisfaction regarding salespeople’s transparency and honesty during the purchasing process, respectively followed by a lack of overall knowledge, and a poor timeliness of follow-up after the transaction.

The majority of dissatisfaction aspects associated with salespeople’s transparency and honesty mentioned by participants included: being too pushy, not fairly mentioning the negative aspects related to the aircraft, not being truthful, providing misrepresentative data, lying, providing unreliable information, not following through with promises, overstating performance, downgrading and badmouthing competitors, limiting given information, being arrogant and using hard sales tactics, and pushing consumers towards an aircraft that is not suited for their needs.

Participants also mentioned several dissatisfaction aspects related to salespeople’s overall product knowledge. Such aspects included: lack of hands-on knowledge, preferring to deal with pilots than salespeople, lacking experience about the products, exhibiting indifference about the products, not being knowledgeable about competitors’ products, not being competent, and not being able to properly guide customers through the complex purchasing process.

Finally, a few comments were made regarding salespeople’s timeliness of follow-up. Such comments include: a too lengthy purchasing process combined with a slow response rate from salespeople, a poorly personalized approach by sales, inability to pursue

business relationships after sales are concluded, the need to build long-term relationships before initiating the purchasing process, the lack of timely feedback, and poor communication skills.

The last open-ended question that was examined but not coded is the following:

“What are some aspects that business aircraft manufacturers’ **sales department** and/or **salespeople** should **improve**? Please provide any recommendations you may have.”

A total of 109 participants provided recommendations of all types. For the many reasons mentioned in the previous chapter, such responses were not coded. However, some of them provided interesting insights that were used towards the formulation of managerial sales recommendations. The following lines will regroup six of the most compelling responses.

The most interesting ones addressed aspects such as the importance of salespeople to attend any kind of networking events that high net worth individuals may also attend. Indeed, this particular participant suggested that salespeople and sales department should diversify their field activities and involvement outside of the aerospace industry, and provided examples with events such as NFL’s Super Bowl, Hollywood’s Oscars celebration and Monaco’s Formula One Grand Prix. The importance of obtaining previous customers’ referrals was also mentioned in this specific response.

Another participant suggested that salespeople should be more respectful to customers by being more patient, better listeners and constantly having a positive attitude. According to this participant, many salespeople are often pushy and arrogant, which causes customers to avoid them and contact a different manufacturer.

The importance for salespeople to appropriately manage customers’ expectations by involving more stakeholders with hands-on expertise during the purchasing process was also mentioned. According to this participant, demonstration pilots, ground technicians, and the usage of demonstrator aircraft should be involved in the transaction process more often, in order to provide accurate and trustworthy product information to customers.

Another participant indicated that too much sales data and information is coming from the United States, which does not appropriately reflect reality for foreign customers facing much different economic and geopolitical situations. He claimed that sales information should be adapted to the consumer’s geographical location. He then supported this statement with an example involving Indian consumers.

A fifth participant stood out from the lot by suggesting that manufacturers should adopt a different compensation structure for their sales force, in order to prioritize quality over quantity. This comment was most likely referring to the fact that most manufacturers prefer using a commission structure to remunerate their salespeople, rather than solely paying fix salaries.

Finally, a sixth participant suggested that manufacturers should implement specifically designed webpages or online accounts for customers. Such webpages would provide up-to-date information regarding the manufacturing progress of their aircraft. This response can be related to the large number of references about manufacturers' lengthy purchasing process and salespeople poor communication/follow-up habits.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter introduced this research's adapted conceptual model and the results stemming from the test of all six previously emitted main research hypotheses. Statistical information regarding the measurement of this conceptual model's dependent variable and each of the four individual components that compose it was also provided. Finally, the results from any one of section seven measurement instruments were then examined and interpreted.

Chapter 5: Managerial Recommendations, Discussion, Limitations & Future Research Perspectives

This last chapter shall introduce the managerial sales recommendations based on the results presented in chapter 4, along with a discussion, this research's limitations, and some potential future research perspectives. The discussion shall be divided in two subsections. The first subsection will attempt to provide answers to the research objectives and questions brought forth in chapter 2, using the results and hypotheses' tests from the previous chapter. The second subsection will include a reminder of this research's problematic and the theoretical framework on which its conceptual model is based. The conceived conceptual model, along with its overall fit will also be discussed. Lastly, certain limitations of this study and future research perspectives shall be presented.

5.1 Managerial Sales Recommendations

This first section will introduce the sales recommendations this research aimed to generate, since its beginning. Such recommendations intend to improve business aircraft manufacturers and operators' sales performance, along with their customers' overall level of satisfaction. Each one of them is based on the results examined in the previous chapter, along with the analysis of the three open-ended questions. As such, this research brings forth the following ten managerial sales recommendations for business aircraft manufacturers and operators. Please note, the reference pages are indicated in parentheses:

1. Salespeople should act as guides or consultants to customers. They should strive to help them select the type of aircraft most suited to their needs by being respectful, active listeners and continuously demonstrating a positive attitude. Arrogant and snobbish behaviours need to be avoided at all costs (see pages 111 & 123-124).
2. Salespeople should cultivate business relationships in a similar fashion to friendships. Such relationships shall have existed long enough prior to the beginning of the purchasing process, and be judiciously maintained after the close of the transaction. Salespeople shall avoid exhibiting a "sell and forget" attitude (see page 124).
3. Salespeople should appropriately manage customers' expectations, by being fully transparent and honest in regards to the product information provided. Such information should also include the product's limitations and actual costs of ownership. It is critical that salespeople avoid overselling, being pushy, and making false promises (see pages 123-124).

4. Salespeople should accordingly personalize the manner by which they approach customers. This personalization shall take into consideration various factors, such as customers' geographical location and cultural settings. Sales presentations and any other supportive data shall also be appropriately adjusted (see pages 123-124).
5. Salespeople should involve experienced stakeholders into the purchasing process more often, such as pilots and ground technicians. It must be noted that these stakeholders shall have a considerate amount of "hands-on" expertise with the product sold. Sales department should also make better use of their demo aircraft, in order to more often provide customers with a glimpse of the real-life experience associated with the usage of a business aircraft (see page 124).
6. Sales department should invest time and energy into properly educating salespeople about the technical and operational aspects of their products. If this approach is not possible, sales department should hire salespeople possessing considerable knowledge and "hands-on" expertise of their products. Such knowledge is to include a high level of familiarity with other key players of the industry and their respective products. Salespeople should never disparage competitors (see page 123).
7. Salespeople should not only respond faster to customers' requests, but also improve their overall communication skills. If possible, phone or video conversations, along with face-to-face meetings should have precedence over more conventional electronic communications, such as emails and text messages (see page 124).
8. Salespeople should not only be more present for customers after the close of a transaction, but also offer better support during the course of the purchasing process (see page 123).
9. Sales department should consider the option of paying their sales force with fixed salaries, rather than commissions, in order to promote the quality of business relationships over quantity, and also prevent salespeople from adopting a "sell and forget" attitude. Sales quotas should be maintained (see page 125).
10. When interacting with customers, salespeople should bring forth the fact that business aircraft confer their owners with an enhanced level of convenience and a better flight experience. Performance attributes, along with the aircraft's value, ability to buy time and save money shall constitute the basis of the offer (see pages 115-125 and 133).

Many of these recommendations may seem simple and logical, but they are in fact based on the many previous results examined during chapter 4. Furthermore, and as mentioned by Åge's (2011), personal selling need not to be complicated, as it relies on all the parties involved to work together, trust each other, and continuously learn from each other to

eventually create a business relationship based on respect and understanding, in order to work towards the accomplishment of a mutual goal. This, in essence, is what these recommendations strive to accomplish.

5.2 The Discussion

As stated earlier, this second section shall be divided in two subsections. The first one will attempt to provide answers to the research objectives and questions brought forth in chapter 2, using the results and hypotheses' tests from the previous chapter. On the other hand, the second subsection will include a reminder of this research's problematic, the theoretical framework on which its conceptual model is based, along with a discussion of the conceived conceptual model and its overall fit in this particular research.

5.2.1 Answers to the Research's Objectives and Questions

As stated in chapter 2, the problematic focuses on four research questions, which also include different objectives. Certain questions and objectives may have been already answered previously, however, they shall be reiterated for clarification purposes. The first research question aimed to understand the impact of both desires and expectations congruency onto information satisfaction.

In regards to the impact of desires congruency onto information satisfaction, the test of the third research hypothesis demonstrated that consumers who fulfilled their pre-purchase desires are likely to be satisfied in regards to the information they received by means of personal selling, word-of-mouth and external experts during the purchasing process. However, the interesting part is that consumers who did not fulfill their pre-purchase desires could also be satisfied about the information received through *WOM* and external experts, but not the one received by means of personal selling. Indeed, the relationship between desires congruency and personal selling is unidirectional and indicates that a good salesperson will play a key role in helping consumers fulfill their pre-purchase desires, which shall also result in a high level of personal selling satisfaction. In other words, salespeople can be compared to guides helping consumers select the right product for their needs. This one-way relationship also implies that consumers perceive personal selling has having more importance than *WOM* and insights given by external experts when purchasing a business aircraft.

The impact of desires congruency onto information can therefore be described as ambivalent, when it comes *WOM* and external experts' satisfaction, but solely positive in regards to personal selling. The significant and mutually beneficial relationship existing between desires congruency and personal selling may not be understated, and definitely plays a crucial role in shaping consumers' overall level of satisfaction.

On the other hand, the impact of expectations congruency onto information satisfaction is much different. More precisely, the results obtained from the testing of the fourth main research hypothesis revealed that it is fully ambivalent. This means that whether or not consumers' pre-purchase expectations are fulfilled, they may nevertheless express satisfaction regarding the information received by means of personal selling, word-of-mouth and the external experts involved in the transaction. In other words, this indicates that consumers are, in both case scenarios, satisfied about receiving information. Therefore, it can be claimed that expectations congruency has a constant positive impact onto information satisfaction.

The second research question aspired to determine the role and influence of both product attributes and information satisfaction constructs onto consumers' overall level of satisfaction. This can be answered by re-examining the results obtained from the testing of both main hypotheses five and six.

Such results indicate that each product attributes satisfaction's subconstructs has a different degree of positive influence onto this research's dependent variable. The most influential one being performance attributes with a *beta* coefficient of 0,423, and then respectively followed by luxury & comfort attributes ($\beta = 0,363$), and lastly service-related attributes ($\beta = 0,353$). These findings are corroborated by section seven subconstructs' weighted influence analysis, which also ranks all product attributes satisfaction's subconstructs in the same order. The fact that all three sub-hypotheses 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3 were found to be significant, compared to only one (6.1) related to the information satisfaction construct, indicate that as a whole product attributes satisfaction exerts more influence onto consumers' overall satisfaction than information satisfaction.

Indeed, the testing of the sixth hypothesis demonstrated that personal selling ($\beta = 0,442$) is the only subconstruct from information satisfaction that exerts positive influence onto customers' overall level of satisfaction; both *WOM* and external experts subconstructs

having been found insignificant. However, it must be noted that personal selling has a greater *beta* coefficient than performance attributes, which indicates that it is the most influential subconstruct out of both product attributes and information satisfaction constructs. Furthermore, results obtained from section seven's dichotomous question corroborate such conclusions, by indicating that approximately 82,6% of all respondents selected product attributes satisfaction as having the most influence on consumers' overall level of satisfaction. On the other hand, only 17,4% of them selected information satisfaction as the most influential of both satisfaction determinants. In short, product attribute satisfaction can be claimed as the construct having the most influence onto consumers' overall level of satisfaction, whereas personal selling is the subconstruct with the most influence onto consumers' overall satisfaction level.

The third research question aimed at determining the most influential satisfaction determinant in consumers' decision to purchase a business aircraft. The fact that this research's conceptual model contains six different satisfaction determinants, which consists of each construct, means that each subconstruct's level of importance in consumers' decision to purchase a business aircraft must be examined. The importance level of all product attributes and information satisfaction subconstructs was already determined in subsection 4.2.3. The table (*cf.* Table 23) on the following page shall therefore provide not only the level of importance of all desires and expectations subconstructs, but also reiterate the one of each product attributes and information satisfaction subconstruct. As mentioned earlier, this score of importance was obtained by analyzing each subconstruct's Likert scale assessing its level of importance in a consumer's decision to purchase a business aircraft. Each result was then manually converted from a seven-point Likert scale score to a percentage, in order to make its interpretation easier. A screenshot of the descriptive analysis from SPSS used to populate such table can be found in the annex section (*cf.* Annex 17):

Table 23: Satisfaction Determinants' Level of Influence

Subconstruct Examined	Rank	Importance Mean
Luxury & Comfort Attributes	6	0,785
Performance Attributes	3	0,830
Service-Related Attributes	9	0,762
Personal Selling	12	0,714
Word-of-mouth	11	0,733
External Experts	10	0,756
Social Status	15	0,483
Prestige	14	0,508
Convenience	2	0,858
Experience	13	0,683
Experience Quality	8	0,771
Service Quality	5	0,802
Product Performance	1	0,893
Perceived Value	4	0,820
Premium	7	0,782

As a result, participants indicated that the three most influential satisfaction determinant in their decision to purchase a business aircraft are product performance (0,893), convenience (0,852), and its performance attributes (0,830). The most important concept of product performance was defined in chapter 2 as: quantifiable actions that can be accomplished by a product, which has been chosen following a thorough evaluation of its extrinsic and intrinsic cues according to specific comparison norms, and that led to enhanced *effectiveness* and *efficiency* capable of positively influencing customer satisfaction. Extrinsic cues can be exemplified by physical aspects of the product, such as an aircraft wing span and cabin size, whereas intrinsic ones cannot be seen from a physical standpoint, but may be calculated or determined, such as a business aircraft long-term impact on a company's profitability and productivity. It is logical that the concept of performance attributes was ranked third in terms of importance, as it complements product

performance. Indeed, it relates to specific performance aspects, such as an aircraft range, speed, fuel consumption, passenger seats, etc. Finally, participants also pointed out to the crucial importance of convenience, a concept previously defined as: a product attribute or characteristic that reduces its non-monetary cost, by allowing its users to save on resources such as effort and opportunity, to buy time, and to benefit from added value by being more efficient, which consequently also improves their overall quality of life.

In short, the sole most influential satisfaction determinant is product performance, but it can be claimed that a product's performance, time-saving, and money-making abilities constitute the most influential aspects that customers consider when purchasing a *B2B* high-involvement product, such as a business aircraft.

The second part of the third research question, which also consisted of an objective, planned to comment participants' global level of satisfaction. As seen in subsections 5.2.2 and 5.2.3, participants expressed an average satisfaction level of 56,3%. The most satisfied participant demonstrated a satisfaction level of 89,8%, and the least one a level of 9,7%. Those results indicate that on average there is a lot of room left for improvement, in terms of consumers' overall satisfaction. None of the participants expressed being completely satisfied and very few being highly satisfied. Furthermore, the results from the individual satisfaction components' analysis demonstrated that, relatively to their level of importance, most participants are satisfied at 66,3% when it comes to business aircraft performance attributes, then respectively followed by luxury & comfort attributes (62,8%), service-related attributes (53,4%), and personal selling (42,4%). Therefore, it can be claimed that business aircraft manufacturers and operators should make it a priority to improve their personal selling quality. Finally, they should also attempt to improve the overall quality of their after-sale products and services.

In regards to the fourth research question, it was previously answered in the first section of this chapter, by generating ten managerial sales recommendations for business aircraft manufacturers and operators. This also caused our research team to successfully accomplish our main research objective.

5.2.2 Discussion of the Problematic, Theoretical Framework and Conceptual Model

This research is based around the idea that there exists an important gap between business-to-business (*B2B*) theory and practice (Gummesson, 2013; Ruiz, Kowalkowski, 2014; LaPlaca, da Silva, 2016). Thus, there is a need to deepen academic knowledge and create novel perspectives on various non-economic factors, such as feelings, emotions, trust, consumer satisfaction, and purchase motivations related to or involved in organizational purchasing (LaPlaca and da Silva, 2016). Furthermore, consumer satisfaction is not only regarded as the ultimate objective a company aims for when designing and selling a product, but also as a key element when it comes to consumers repurchase decision, word-of-mouth behavioural intentions, quality of future business relationships, and the level of loyalty towards manufacturers (Molinari, Abratt and Dion, 2008; Gil-Saura, Frasquet-Deltoro and Cervera-Taulet, 2009).

Business aircraft manufacturers and operators evolve in very uncertain markets, and are facing increasing global competitiveness (Hickie, 2006). Consequently, their operational objectives include looking for ways to continuously improve their sales performance and rentability. Consumer satisfaction being closely related to consumers repurchase decision and word-of-mouth behavioural intentions, this research field is closely related to this objective of business aircraft manufacturers. Also, the fact that most of their customers evolve within a *B2B* context represent a particularly interesting opportunity to deepen academic knowledge pertaining to *B2B* personal selling.

Furthermore, Rackham (2011) demonstrated that even though the sale of simple products does not require salespeople anymore as technology can easily replace them, selling complex products, such as business aircraft, requires the involvement of experienced salespeople, along with a co-creation process within the different actors involved in the transactional process. Åge (2011) also pushed this reasoning further by emphasizing the need for organizational salespeople to adapt to new technologies and more frequent team-based approaches to selling, the strategic role of selling within organizations, increased buyer knowledge, and increased emphasis on long-term relationships with customers. Indeed, increasing market complexity, technological advancements, a higher number of offerings, and customers' access to information are all elements that contribute to the need for a more robust theoretical selling foundation that better explains the role of

sales in value co-creation, along with a more holistic approach in sales research and practise (Hughes, Le Bon and Malshe, 2012; Rapp et al., 2017).

Therefore, and in response to these authors, the main objective of this research became the formulation of managerial sales recommendations for business aircraft manufacturers and operators, by adapting Spreng, MacKenzie & Olshavsky's (1996) conceptual model with satisfaction determinants thought to be involved in business aircraft customers' purchase decision. Specific relationships and effects contained within such conceptual framework were then analyzed, in order to better understand the satisfaction determinants that influence customers' overall level of satisfaction, and decision to purchase such complex *B2B* high-involvement products. Obtained results were then interpreted, in order to accomplish this research's main objective and potentially improve business aircraft manufacturers' sales performance, along with their customers' overall level of satisfaction. More precisely, the examination of the effects of desires and expectations congruency onto information satisfaction, and the influence of product attributes and information satisfaction onto consumers' overall level of satisfaction allowed the identification of the most influential satisfaction determinants in customers' purchasing decision, a better comprehension of what business aircraft confer to their owners, which pre-purchase desires or expectations may be fulfilled by their purchase, along with the most important extrinsic and intrinsic cues sought by customers.

Such results were obtained by relying on a thorough literature review, some of our personal beliefs and knowledge of the industry, and by formulating six main research hypotheses which were ultimately subdivided into thirty sub-hypotheses for precision purposes. An in-depth questionnaire was then sent to 14,279 worldwide stakeholders identified as currently playing or having played an active role in the purchasing process of a business aircraft on the customer's side, or as current/past business aircraft owners. As a result, 387 participants accepted to either fully or partially complete the questionnaire. This data collection process allowed all research hypotheses to be tested, the problematic to be resolved, and all objectives to be accomplished, using a mix of quantitative and qualitative analytical methods described in the two previous chapters.

The conceived conceptual model turned out to be appropriate for the testing of several hypotheses, but not all of them. More precisely, the second hypothesis regarding

the direct relationship between pre-purchase expectations and post-purchase expectations congruency remains invalidated. The fact that such model was inspired from one originally used in a business-to-consumer (*B2C*) environment may partly explain this occurrence. Indeed, most concepts retained and incorporated into such model had been predominantly used in *B2C* researches, but not in a *B2B* context. However, the literature indicated that the concept of expectations, which relates to the second and still invalidated hypothesis, also applied to a *B2B* environment. Therefore, this occurrence incited its inclusion in this research's conceptual model. Perhaps the obtained results would have been different, if our research team would have selected different expectations' subconstructs, but this event indicates that the conceived conceptual model would require several adjustments, prior to being used again in future *B2B* researches.

Nevertheless, our research team is satisfied with its overall fit and the results it allowed us to gather. Indeed, the fact that no other academic research was previously done within the global business aircraft industry explains the exploratory nature of this specific study, along with all the challenges encountered and overcame along the way pertaining to the overall fit of this model. From a step back, it allowed us to successfully solve this research's problematic, which aimed at better understanding customer satisfaction for *B2B* high-involvement products, accomplish the principal objective of generating managerial sales recommendations for business aircraft manufacturers and operators, and lastly provide an answer to all four research questions previously brought forth.

5.3 The Limitations

Just like any other academic research, our results are not exempt of weaknesses. Indeed, this research has a certain amount of limitations, which will be explained in the following lines.

The first limitation regards fact that the questionnaire was sent to not only current or past business aircraft owners, but also stakeholders currently playing or having played an active role in the purchasing process of a business aircraft on the customer's side. More precisely, it was assumed by our research team that such stakeholders possessed considerable knowledge of the business aircraft industry and of owners' satisfaction level, but it is impossible to exclude the probability that some of these stakeholders may not have been as knowledgeable as we thought, or simply decided to share their personal opinions

rather than genuine information. Consequently, this could have biased the collected data and results obtained. It would be pertinent to achieve a similar study by collecting data solely from present or past business aircraft owners. By doing so, researchers would most likely acquire higher quality information and insights related to the satisfaction concepts examined.

The questionnaire used during the data collection process can also be perceived as another limitation, due to its extensive length and complexity. Indeed, the targeted investigation field was composed of very busy stakeholders and present or past business aircraft owners that did not have a lot of free time on their hands. Therefore, the length of the questionnaire, along with its many often complicated conceptual definitions might have dissuaded many participants from either fully completing it, or simply attempting it; thus, limiting the amount of responses obtained. It would be pertinent to attempt a similar research, but by using either a shorter questionnaire, two complementary ones, and/or semi-guided interviews with specifically targeted present or past business aircraft owners. Indeed, the fact of using one shorter questionnaire or two complementary ones could help researchers obtain a greater number of participants and data. On the other hand, including interviews in the data collection process, or solely using them like Spreng, MacKenzie & Olshavsky (1996) did in their research, could lead to the acquisition of much different insights and results pertaining to the different concepts examined. It could also make it easier for researchers to verbally explain the concepts studied, rather than doing so in writing, which can lead to long definitions that may either be difficult to understand or simply misunderstood.

Finally, one last limitation can be found in the fact that no Likert scales were included in the questionnaire to measure the dependent variable, more precisely business aircraft customers' overall satisfaction. Consequently, this forced us to explore various alternate measurement methods. As a result, a combination of Likert scales used to measure different aspects of subconstructs was turned into a formula, which provided customers' overall level of satisfaction relatively to specific subconstructs and their respective degree importance in customers' decision to purchase a business aircraft. Nevertheless, the questions from section seven used to measure this research's dependent variable were mostly qualitative, and did not allow the execution of more elaborate statistical analyses

than basic descriptive or frequency analyses. The use of Likert scales could have allowed the execution of regression analyses between some independent variables and the dependant one, which could have provided different results and outcomes than the ones obtained.

5.4 Future Research Perspectives

As demonstrated in chapter 1, academic studies pertaining specifically to the aerospace industry and the business aircraft industry are quite rare, if not inexistent. Therefore, many different research perspectives exist and are simply awaiting to be contemplated. This said, the following lines will bring forth several research perspectives related to this study.

This research was built around a conceptual model comprising many different types of satisfaction determinants. As a result, this allowed the collection of a few insights for each one of these satisfaction determinants, and their respective subconstructs. However, a similar research could be planned to examine solely one type of satisfaction determinant, such as business aircraft after-sale services or product attributes satisfaction. Consequently, all of the results obtained would pertain to that specific type of satisfaction determinant and generate much more in-depth insights. It would allow researchers to not only scratch the surface of many, like what this research did, but actually dive into one specific business aircraft satisfaction determinant's dimension.

A similar research could also be attempted, but instead of interrogating business aircraft customers, salespeople would be questioned. This would allow the comparison of customers and salespeople's standpoint regarding business aircraft overall satisfaction. It would also facilitate the identification of gaps between manufacturers and customers' satisfaction perspectives. Interesting managerial recommendations could then be drafted and presented to business aircraft manufacturers and operators.

Finally, this research examined the various existing relationships and effects of satisfaction determinants onto overall customer satisfaction for *B2B* high-involvement products, the case of business aircraft. However, it would be quite interesting to either reproduce this research or attempt a similar one for another type of *B2B* high-involvement product, such as luxury yachts, automobiles, and/or helicopters. By doing so, comparisons could be established between these various types of products and customers, which could

result in quite interesting insights. Afterward, these insights or results could then be used by such product manufacturers for various reasons or goals, like this research's primary objective to help business aircraft manufacturers and operators boost their sales performance, and customers' overall level of satisfaction.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter exposed ten managerial sales recommendations aimed at business aircraft manufacturers and operators, a discussion of this research's objectives, questions, problematic, theoretical framework, conceptual model, and motivations. Some of its limitations were then examined and discussed, along with future research perspectives either directly related to the business aircraft industry or not, in order to enhance academic knowledge pertaining to both personal selling and satisfaction for *B2B* high-involvement and luxury products. The future research perspectives introduced also brought forth either new or complementary methodologies to this research.

General Conclusion

To conclude, this research attempted to respond to the need to deepen academic knowledge pertaining to customer satisfaction and personal selling in *B2B* environments. As mentioned several times, multiple researchers have argued, in the last few years, that there exists an important gap between business-to-business (*B2B*) theory and practice (Gummeson, 2013; Ruiz, Kowalkowski, 2014; LaPlaca, da Silva, 2016). In order to do, this research focused on customers' overall satisfaction for *B2B* high-involvement products, more precisely business aircraft.

The problematic it attempted to solve was the following: **How can we explain consumer satisfaction for *B2B* high-involvement products, more precisely business aircraft?**

Its principal objective was to **generate managerial sales recommendations aimed at business aircraft manufacturers and operators, based on results obtained via a survey sent throughout the global industry. More precisely, such recommendations will be based on an analysis that aims to pin point the most influential satisfaction determinant in consumers' decision to purchase a business aircraft, and determine consumers' overall level of satisfaction. Such analysis will also aim to explore the role of each satisfaction determinant present in this research's conceptual model, and assess the possibility that desires and expectations congruency may affect information satisfaction.** Finally, this research problematic focused on the following four research questions:

1. What is the impact of desires and expectations congruency onto post-purchase information satisfaction?
2. What is the role and influence of post-purchase product attributes and information satisfaction onto consumers' overall level of satisfaction for *B2B* high-involvement products?
3. Which determinant of consumer satisfaction has the most influence in consumers' decision to purchase a business aircraft, and what is their overall level of satisfaction?
4. What are some effective managerial sales recommendations aimed at global business aircraft manufacturers and operators?

The test of all six research hypotheses and thirty sub-hypotheses, the measurement instruments of the questionnaire's last section, and the analysis of the dependent variable allowed the collection of insightful results related to many of this research's objectives. Only the second main research hypothesis remains invalidated, and three were found to be ambivalent. Furthermore, such results allowed us to confirm that business aircraft do confer an enhanced level of convenience and flight experience to their owners. However, it does not confer any social status or prestige. Product attributes satisfaction was also found to have the most influence onto consumers' overall level of satisfaction, compared to information satisfaction, and personal selling has a beneficial impact customers' pre-purchase desires degree of fulfilment. In other words, a good salesperson will play a key role in helping consumers fulfill their pre-purchase desires, but the opposite will be damaging. It was also demonstrated that participants expressed an average overall satisfaction level of approximately 56,3% and are particularly dissatisfied regarding service-related attributes and personal selling. The most influential satisfaction determinants in customers' decision to purchase a business aircraft were also determined as product performance, convenience, and performance attributes. Therefore, an aircraft's performance, ability to buy time and save money constitute the most important aspects that customers consider, when acquiring a business aircraft.

All of the obtained results allowed the accomplishment of this research's primary objective, which consisted to generate managerial sales recommendations aimed at business aircraft manufacturers and operators. Indeed, ten managerial recommendations aimed at improving such manufacturers' sales performance and customers' overall satisfaction were brought forth at the end of chapter 5.

Lastly, some of this research's limitations were then examined and discussed, along with future research perspectives either directly related to the business aircraft industry or not, in order to enhance academic knowledge pertaining to both personal selling and satisfaction for *B2B* high-involvement and luxury products. Such future research perspectives brought forth either new or complementary methodologies to this research.

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Retrait d'une ou des pages pouvant contenir des renseignements personnels

Did you ever personally purchase a business aircraft?

- Yes
- No

Question 5.

Have you ever flown or traveled aboard a business aircraft?

- Yes
- No

Question 6.

In which of the following geographical location are you currently based?

- Africa
- Asia & Middle East
- Central America
- Europe
- North America
- Oceania
- Russia & CIS
- South America
- Scandinavia

Section 1.

Consumers' Desires

This first section aims to evaluate specific desires consumers may have and wish to fulfill, by purchasing a business aircraft. In order to avoid any misinterpretation, a short definition will be provided for each concept examined. It must be noted that all provided definitions originate from the current academic literature.

Section 1.1.

Social Status & Prestige

Social status is defined as the position of an individual or a company in society or a specific group, awarded by others, according to its level of power and prestige engendered by a higher position compared to others on important cultural dimensions, such as wealth and success.

Prestige is defined as an individual or a company occupying a commanding position in people's mind.

Please respond to the following questions, by using the provided scales:

Question 1.

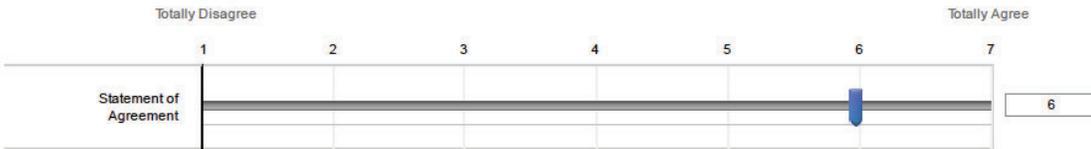
Social Status improvement for the company or individual represents a significant driver of purchasing a business aircraft.





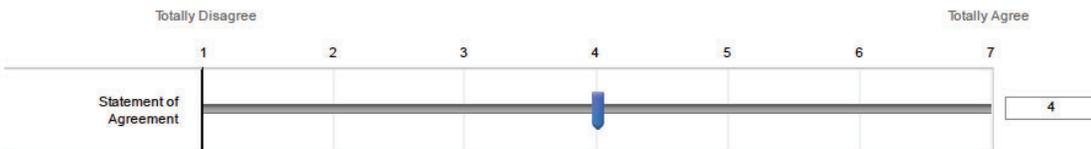
Question 2.

Prestige enhancement for the company or individual represents a significant driver of purchasing a business aircraft.



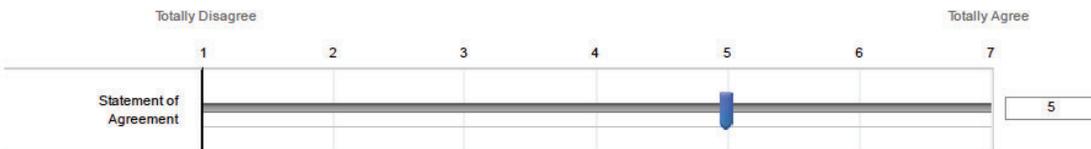
Question 3.

Social Status is important in a consumer's final decision to purchase a business aircraft.



Question 4.

Prestige is important in a consumer's final decision to purchase a business aircraft.



Question 5.

Social Status & Prestige enhancement are among the most important key drivers of satisfaction after purchasing a business aircraft.



Section 1.2.

Convenience

Convenience is defined as a product attribute or characteristic that reduces its non-monetary cost by allowing its users to save on resources such as effort and opportunity, to buy time, and to benefit from the added value by being more efficient, which also improves their overall quality of life.

Please respond to the following questions, by using the provided scales:

Question 6.

Convenience enhancement for the company or individual represents a significant driver of purchasing a business aircraft.



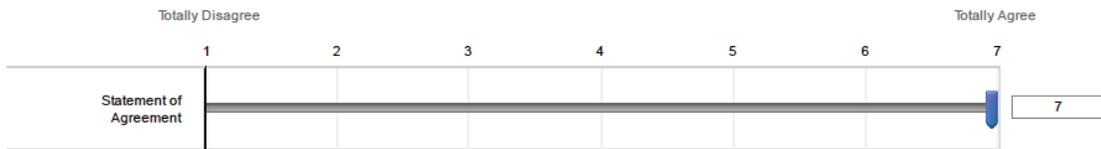
Question 7.

Convenience is important in a consumer's final decision to purchase a business aircraft.



Question 8.

Convenience enhancement is among the most important key drivers of satisfaction after purchasing a business aircraft.



Section 1.3.

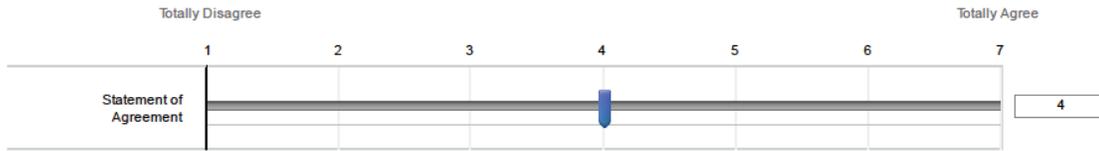
Experience

Experience is defined as a mix of sensory information, originating from encounters with products and/or services, which has an affective influence on a person's emotions and/or senses before, during, and after a transaction. This concept refers strictly to the overall purchasing process and product usage experience.

Please respond to the following questions, by using the provided scales:

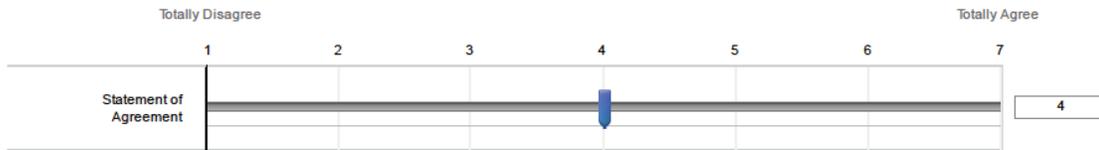
Question 9.

Experience enhancement is a significant driver in the purchase of a business aircraft.



Question 10.

Experience is important in a consumer's final decision to purchase a business aircraft.



Question 11.

Experience enhancement is among the most important key drivers of satisfaction after purchasing a business aircraft.



Section 2.

Consumers' Expectations

This second section aims to evaluate specific expectations consumers may have, prior to purchasing a business aircraft. In order to avoid any misinterpretation, a short definition will be provided for each concept examined. It must be noted that all provided definitions originate from the current academic literature.

Section 2.1.

Experience & Service Quality

Experience quality is evaluated holistically. Its evaluation is self-centric, as it is based on personal experiences and knowledge. Perceived benefits are affective, experiential and symbolic in nature. These benefits may lead to an emotional impact that can ultimately cause various personal changes. This concept refers strictly to the product usage experience quality.

Examples of business aircraft functionalities that can positively or negatively influence experience quality are flight smoothness, perceived level of cabin luxury, and the perceived level of noise in the cabin.

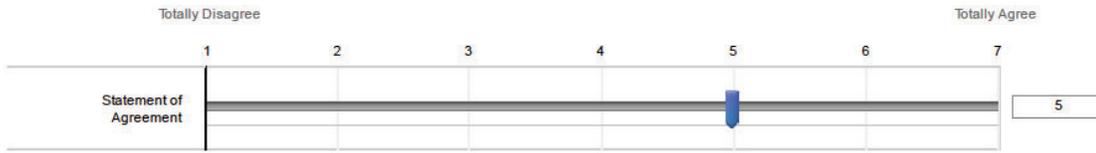
Service quality is a lot more attribute-based and focused on the external service environment. It is an intangible activity or series of activities produced and consumed simultaneously, in which the customer must participate or be involved to some extent in its production process. Service quality is part of the more holistic experience quality concept. This concept refers strictly to product services quality.

Examples of business aircraft customer/product services that can positively or negatively influence service quality include business planning solutions, ever-ready after-sales support, and access to an extensive worldwide network of pilots and crew members.

Please respond to the following questions, by using the provided scales:

Question 12.

Experience Quality represents a significant driver in the purchase of a business aircraft.



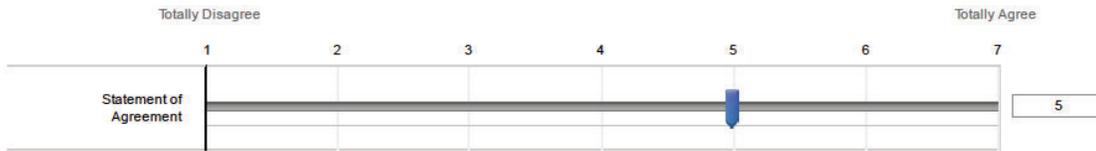
Question 13.

Service Quality represents a significant driver in the purchase of a business aircraft.



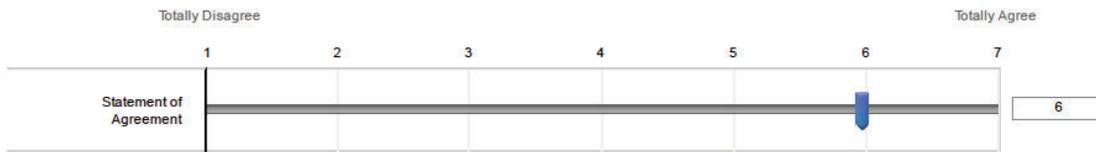
Question 14.

Experience Quality is important in a consumer's final decision to purchase a business aircraft.



Question 15.

Service Quality is important in a consumer's final decision to purchase a business aircraft.



Question 16.

Experience Quality & Service Quality are among the most important key drivers of satisfaction after purchasing a business aircraft.



Section 2.2.

Product Performance

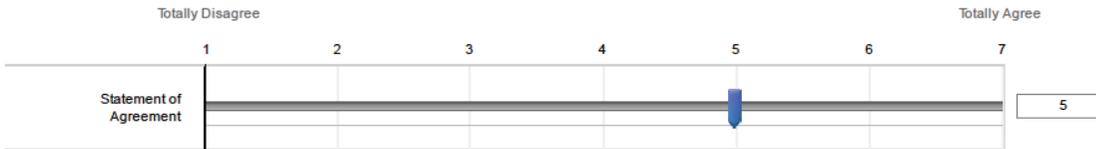
Product performance is defined as actions that can be quantified and accomplished by a product chosen, following a thorough evaluation of its extrinsic and intrinsic cues, which leads to enhanced effectiveness and efficiency, capable of positively influencing customer satisfaction.

Examples of business aircraft product performance include maximum range, takeoff weight, landing and takeoff distance, fuel efficiency, included avionics suite, maximum speed, cruising speed, and maximum operational ceiling.

Please respond to the following questions, by using the provided scales:

Question 17.

Product Performance represents a significant driver in the purchase of a business aircraft.



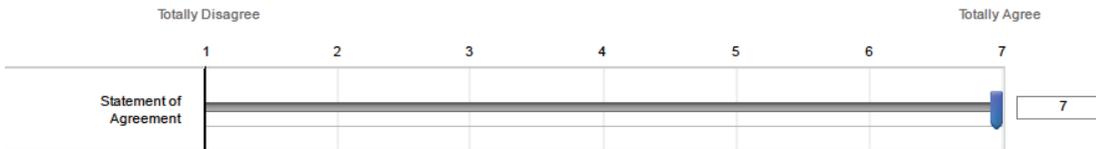
Question 18.

Product Performance is important in a consumer's final decision to purchase a business aircraft.



Question 19.

Product Performance is among the most important key drivers of satisfaction after purchasing a business aircraft.



Section 2.3.

Perceived Value & Premium

Perceived value is a trade-off between benefits and perceived costs, which is influenced by consumers' knowledge of its purchasing process and usage. It is an indicator of repurchase intentions, acts as a precursor to customer satisfaction, and represents a determinant of customer loyalty.

Premium is a rational and pragmatic investment based on criteria such as performance, price, and an economy of time and convenience. It provides companies with the ability to add value at a minimized level of corporate risk; thus, allowing them to gain a medium to long-term competitive advantage over their close competitors.

Please respond to the following questions, by using the provided scales:

Question 20.

Perceived Value represents a significant driver in the purchase of a business aircraft.



Question 21.

Premium represents a significant driver in the purchase of a business aircraft.



Question 22.

Perceived Value is important in a consumer's final decision to purchase a business aircraft.



Question 23.

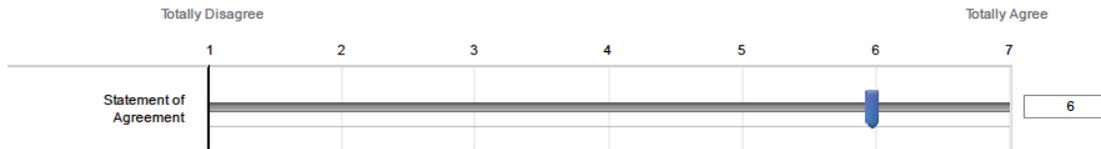
Premium is important in a consumer's final decision to purchase a business aircraft.





Question 24.

Perceived Value & Premium are among the most important key drivers of satisfaction after purchasing a business aircraft.



Section 3.

Product Attributes' Satisfaction

This fifth section aims to evaluate consumers' product attributes' satisfaction and its impact on overall satisfaction. In order to avoid any misinterpretation, a short definition will be provided for each concept examined. It must be noted that all provided definitions originate from the current academic literature.

Section 3.1.

Luxury & Comfort Attributes

Luxury & comfort attributes are defined as product features enhancing consumers' level of comfort and influencing their perception of luxury.

Examples of such type of product attributes include exclusive types of leather, veneer and carpeting, extensive porcelain ensembles, multiple screen displays, entertainment systems, wider seats, increased legroom, and high-speed wireless internet accessibility.

Please respond to the following questions, by using the provided scales:

Question 25.

Consumers are usually satisfied with the Luxury & Comfort Attributes of their business aircraft.



Question 26.

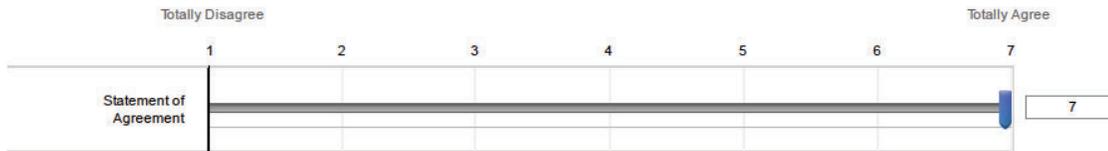
Luxury & Comfort Attributes are important in a consumer's final decision to purchase a business aircraft.





Question 27.

Luxury & Comfort Attributes represent significant drivers in the purchase of a business aircraft.



Question 28.

Luxury & Comfort Attributes are among the most important key drivers of satisfaction after purchasing a business aircraft.



Section 3.2.

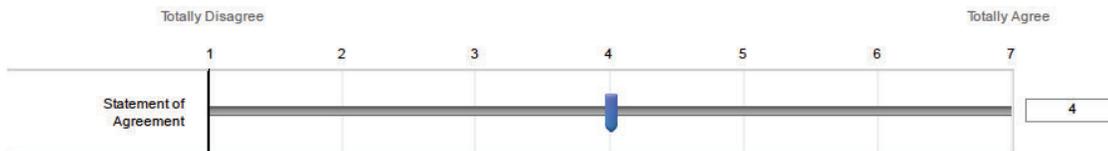
Performance Attributes

Performance attributes are product features directly influencing the aircraft performance, such as increased engine thrust, state of the art avionics equipment, enhanced wing flexibility, steep approach capability, and available head-up display. Product attributes also lead to enhanced effectiveness and efficiency.

Please respond to the following questions, by using the provided scales:

Question 29.

Consumers are usually satisfied with the Performance Attributes of their business aircraft.



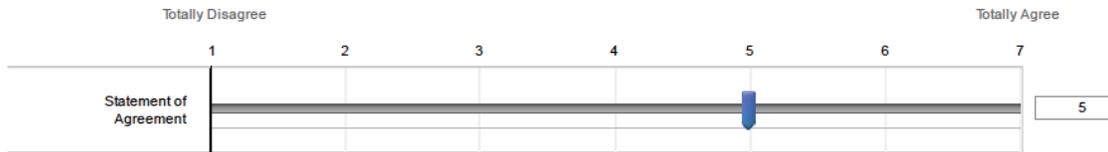
Question 30.

Performance Attributes are important in a consumer's final decision to purchase a business aircraft.



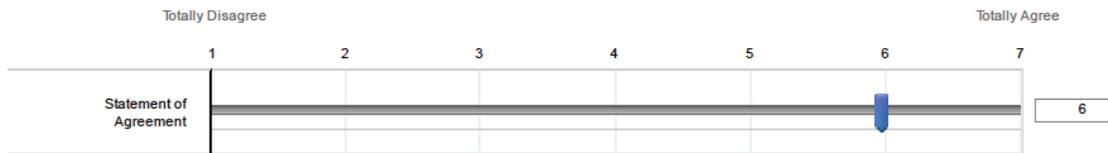
Question 31.

Performance Attributes represent a significant driver in the purchase of a business aircraft.



Question 32.

Performance Attributes are among the most important key drivers of satisfaction after purchasing a business aircraft.



Section 3.3.

Service-Related Product Attributes

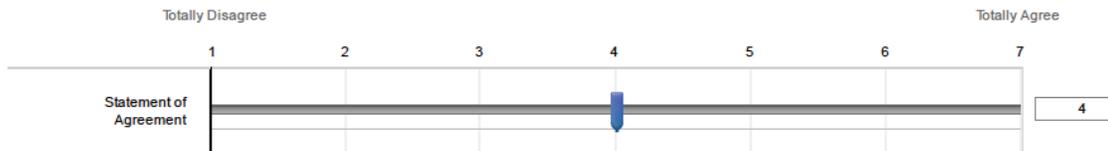
Service-Related product attributes are features directly or indirectly capable of having an impact on the perceived service quality, associated with the purchase of a business aircraft.

Examples of Service-Related product attributes include an efficient and courteous after-sales support, a personalized approach during the purchasing process, enhanced service quality and rapidity at service centres, and a favoured treatment at certain airports in regards to parking and fuelling priority.

Please respond to the following questions, by using the provided scales:

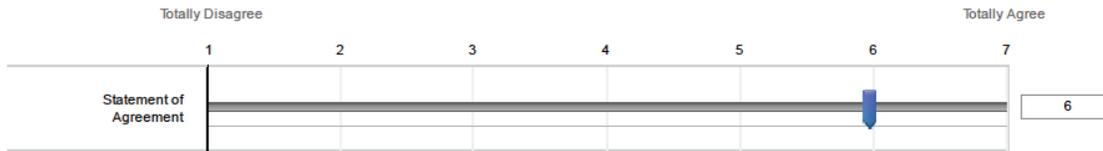
Question 33.

Consumers are usually satisfied with the **Service-Related Attributes** of their business aircraft?



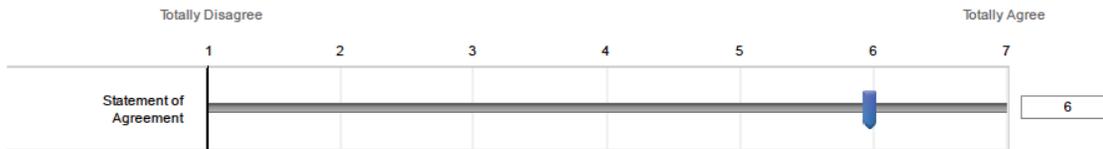
Question 34.

Service-Related Attributes are important in a consumer's final decision to purchase a business aircraft.



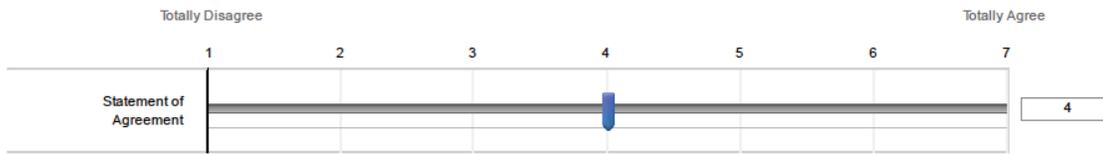
Question 35.

Service-Related Attributes represent a significant driver in the purchase of a business aircraft.



Question 36.

Service-Related Attributes are among the most important key drivers of satisfaction after purchasing a business aircraft.



Section 4.

Information Satisfaction

This sixth section aims to evaluate consumers' information satisfaction and its impact on overall satisfaction. In order to avoid any misinterpretation, a short definition will be provided for each concept examined. It must be noted that all provided definitions originate from the current academic literature.

Section 4.1.

Personal Selling Satisfaction

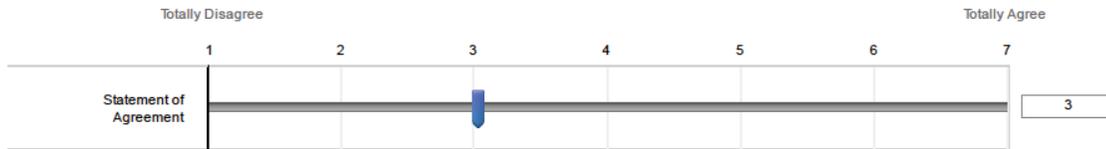
Personal selling is a human-driven interaction within individuals and/or organizations to create not only an economic exchange within a value co-creation context but also facilitate an exchange of information through the alignment of organizational arrangements and the optimization of relationships.

Personal selling quality is a buyer's subjective perception of a salesperson's behavior, during a sale's encounter.

Please respond to the following questions, by using the provided scales:

Question 37.

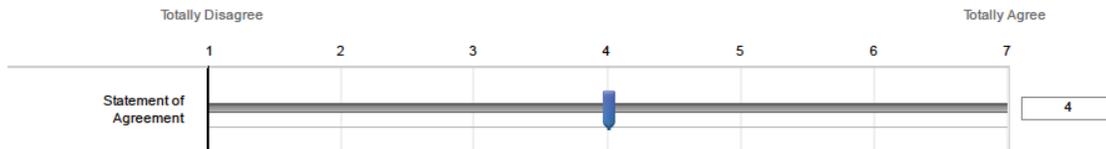
Personal Selling Quality is important in a consumer's final decision to purchase a business aircraft.



Question 38.
Personal Selling Quality represents a significant driver in the purchase of a business aircraft.



Question 39.
 Consumers are usually dissatisfied with the **Personal Selling Quality** experienced, during the purchasing process of their business aircraft.



Question 40.
Personal Selling Quality is among the most important key drivers of satisfaction after purchasing a business aircraft.



Section 4.2.

Word-of-Mouth Satisfaction

Word-of-Mouth is defined as any opinions shared online or physically, between two or more consumers, regarding past user experiences and current or past product reviews.

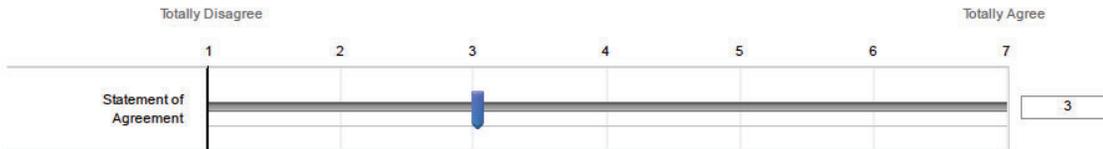
Please respond to the following questions, by using the provided scales:

Question 41.
Word-of-Mouth is important in a consumer's final decision to purchase a business aircraft.



Question 42.

Word-of-Mouth represents a significant driver in the purchase of a business aircraft.



Question 43.

Word-of-Mouth is among the most important key drivers of satisfaction after purchasing a business aircraft.



Question 44.

A consumer is more likely to purchase a business aircraft from one specific manufacturer if he was exposed to positive Word-of-Mouth about that specific manufacturer.



Question 45.

A consumer is less likely to purchase a business aircraft from one specific manufacturer if he was exposed to negative Word-of-Mouth about that specific manufacturer.



Section 4.3.

External Experts Satisfaction

An External Expert is any actor/expert who plays an important role in organizations' selling processes, and have the ability to either positively or negatively influence customers' information and overall product satisfaction, by either raising or lowering their expectations towards a product's performance, experience, and value.

Examples include external sales representatives, aviation consultants, brokers, aircraft operators, specialized lawyers, and chief pilots.

Please respond to the following questions, by using the provided scales:

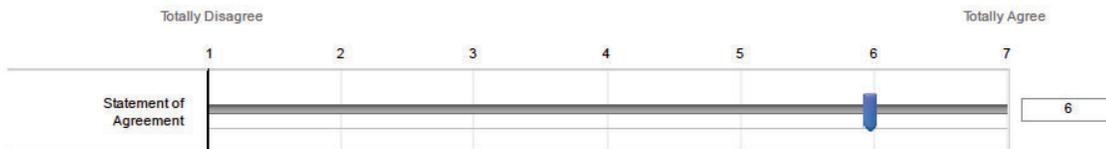
Question 46.

External Experts are important in a consumer's final decision to purchase a business aircraft.



Question 47.

External Experts represent a significant driver in the purchase of a business aircraft.



Question 48.

External Experts are among the most important key drivers of satisfaction after purchasing a business aircraft.

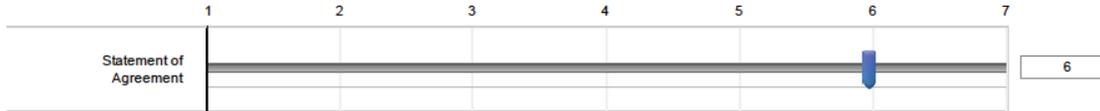


Question 49.

A consumer is more likely to purchase a business aircraft from one specific manufacturer if one or multiple External Experts specifically recommended that manufacturer.

Totally Disagree

Totally Agree



Section 5.

Desires' Congruency.

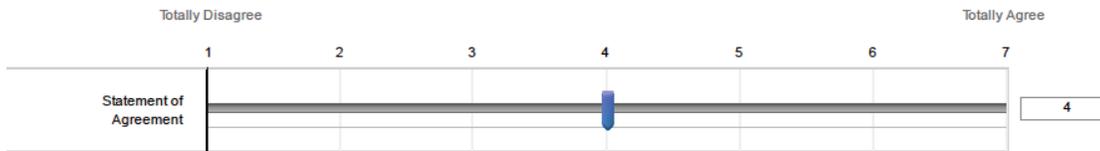
This third section aims to evaluate consumers' Desires' Congruency, before and after their business aircraft purchase.

Desire Congruency is the consumer's subjective assessment of the comparison between his desires and the product's performance received.

Please respond to the following questions, by using the provided scales:

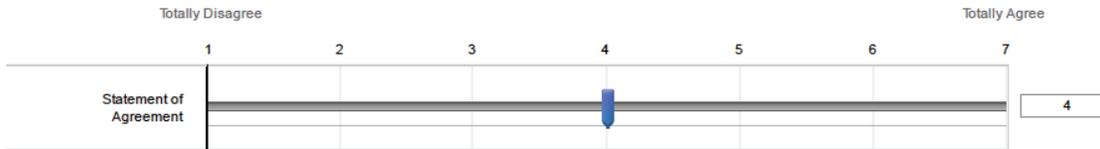
Question 50.

Consumers' pre-purchase Desires are usually fulfilled, following the acquisition of their business aircraft.



Question 51.

After purchasing a business aircraft, a consumer is likely to express dissatisfaction about the degree of fulfillment of his pre-purchase Desires.



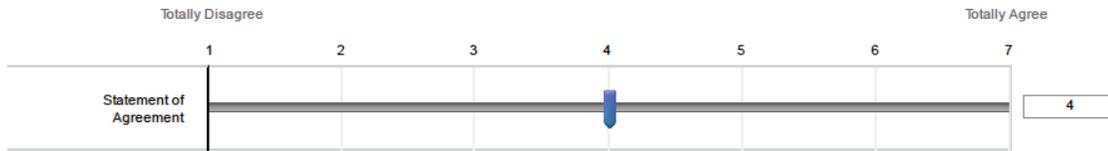
Question 52.

Desires Congruency is likely to positively affect consumers' level of Information Satisfaction.



Question 53.

Desires Congruency is likely to negatively affect consumers' level of Information Satisfaction.



Section 6.

Expectations' Congruency.

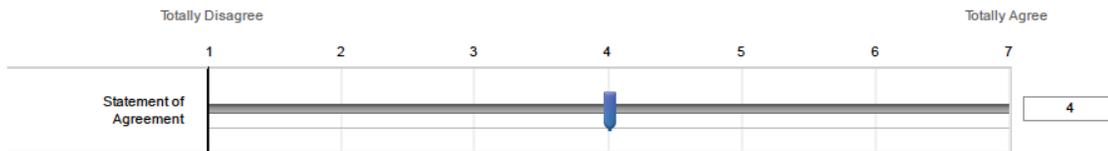
This fourth section aims to evaluate consumers' Expectations' Congruency, before and after their business aircraft purchase.

Expectation Congruency is the consumer's subjective assessment of the comparison between his expectations and the product's performance received.

Please respond to the following questions, by using the provided scales:

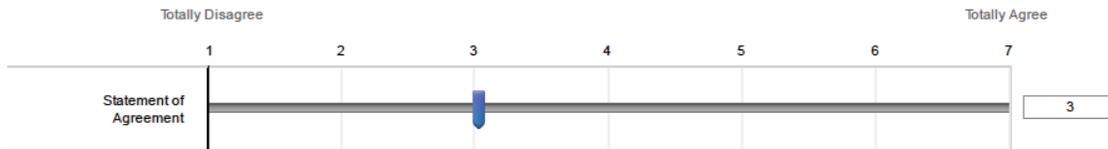
Question 54.

Consumers' pre-purchase Expectations are usually fulfilled, following the acquisition of their business aircraft.



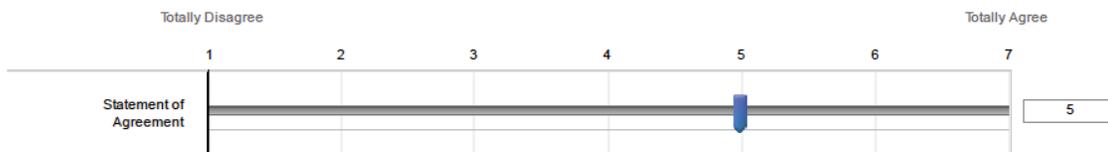
Question 55.

After purchasing a business aircraft, a consumer is likely to express dissatisfaction about the degree of fulfillment of his pre-purchase Expectations.



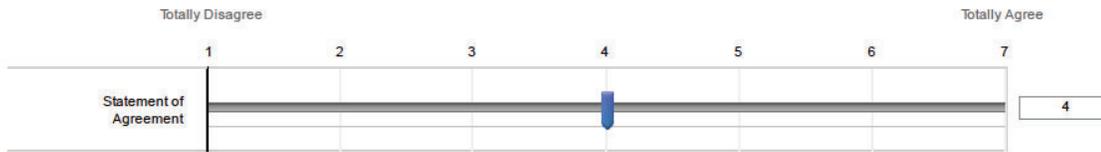
Question 56.

Expectations Congruency is likely to positively affect consumers' level of Information Satisfaction.



Question 57.

Expectations Congruency is likely to negatively affect consumers' level of Information Satisfaction.



Section 7.

Overall Consumer Satisfaction

This last section aims to evaluate business aircraft consumers' Overall Satisfaction, according to the various concepts examined in the previous sections.

Please respond to the following questions:

Question 58.

Which variable between Product Attributes' Satisfaction and Information Satisfaction has the most influence on a consumer's Overall business aircraft Satisfaction?

- Information Satisfaction
- Product Attributes' Satisfaction

Question 59.

Place the concepts listed below in ascending order of influence on the Overall Satisfaction of a business aircraft consumer.

Performance Product Attributes	1
Luxury & Comfort Product Attributes	2
Service-Related Product Attributes	3

Question 60.

Place the concepts listed below in ascending order of influence on the Overall Satisfaction of a business aircraft consumer.

External Experts' Involvement	1
Personal Selling	2
Word-of-Mouth	3

Question 61.

What are some aspects related to their business aircraft that consumers are least satisfied with? This may include any product attributes, functionalities or aspects/steps of the purchasing process.

Retrait d'une ou des pages pouvant contenir des renseignements personnels

Annex 2 – Screenshots of the SPSS Dimension Reduction Analysis’ Results

1. Desires; Social Status & Prestige

Rotated Component Matrix^a

	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Social Status improvement for the company or individual represents a significant driver of purchasing a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	,860	,043	,056	,046	,113	-,089
Prestige enhancement for the company or individual represents a significant driver of purchasing a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	,891	,020	,060	,051	,152	-,042
Social Status is important in a consumer’s final decision to purchase a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	,928	-,035	,088	,009	,027	-,056
Prestige is important in a consumer’s final decision to purchase a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	,917	-,015	,092	-,014	,107	,009
Social Status & Prestige enhancement are among the most important key drivers of satisfaction after purchasing a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	,850	-,005	,060	,006	,212	-,075

2. Desires; Convenience

Convenience enhancement for the company or individual represents a significant driver of purchasing a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	,061	,155	,175	,901	,029	,167
Convenience is important in a consumer’s final decision to purchase a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	,030	,179	,206	,896	,051	,124
Convenience enhancement is among the most important key drivers of satisfaction after purchasing a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	-,001	,148	,199	,872	,110	,141

3. Desires; Experience

Experience enhancement is a significant driver in the purchase of a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	,215	,050	,220	,080	,857	,054
Experience is important in a consumer's final decision to purchase a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	,207	,066	,219	-,002	,897	,080
Experience enhancement is among the most important key drivers of satisfaction after purchasing a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	,155	,029	,256	,107	,833	,023

4. Expectations; Experience & Service Quality

Experience Quality represents a significant driver in the purchase of a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	,171	,144	,753	,134	,299	,103
Service Quality represents a significant driver in the purchase of a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	,016	,092	,877	,112	,078	,060
Experience Quality is important in a consumer's final decision to purchase a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	,171	,139	,793	,138	,275	,150
Service Quality is important in a consumer's final decision to purchase a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	,039	,080	,852	,147	,059	,162
Experience Quality & Service Quality are among the most important key drivers of satisfaction after purchasing a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	,046	,069	,840	,160	,198	,125

5. Expectations; Product Performance

Product Performance represents a significant driver in the purchase of a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	-,117	,219	,136	,138	-,004	,884
Product Performance is important in a consumer's final decision to purchase a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	-,134	,234	,185	,131	,076	,877
Product Performance is among the most important key drivers of satisfaction after purchasing a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	-,015	,217	,195	,182	,095	,831

6. Expectations; Perceived Value & Premium

Perceived Value represents a significant driver in the purchase of a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	,032	,817	,084	,103	-,003	,103
Premium represents a significant driver in the purchase of a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	,021	,859	,113	,099	-,010	,144
Perceived Value is important in a consumer's final decision to purchase a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	-,002	,848	,054	,086	,067	,129
Premium is important in a consumer's final decision to purchase a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	,003	,849	,116	,116	,058	,170
Perceived Value & Premium are among the most important key drivers of satisfaction after purchasing a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	-,044	,885	,087	,107	,066	,121

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

7. Desires Congruency

Consumers' pre-purchase Desires are usually fulfilled, following the acquisition of their business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	-,056	,765
After purchasing a business aircraft, a consumer is likely to express dissatisfaction about the degree of fulfillment of his pre-purchase Desires. – Statement of Agreement	,794	,122
Desires Congruency is likely to positively affect consumers' level of Information Satisfaction. – Statement of Agreement	,197	,754
Desires Congruency is likely to negatively affect consumers' level of Information Satisfaction. – Statement of Agreement	,819	,086

8. Expectations Congruency

Consumers' pre-purchase Expectations are usually fulfilled, following the acquisition of their business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	-,085	,763
After purchasing a business aircraft, a consumer is likely to express dissatisfaction about the degree of fulfillment of his pre-purchase Expectations. – Statement of Agreement	,834	-,078
Expectations Congruency is likely to positively affect consumers' level of Information Satisfaction. – Statement of Agreement	,118	,720
Expectations Congruency is likely to negatively affect consumers' level of Information Satisfaction. – Statement of Agreement	,796	,031

9. Product Attributes Satisfaction; Luxury & Comfort Related

Luxury & Comfort Attributes represent significant drivers in the purchase of a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	,076	,128	,085	,102	,924	,034
Luxury & Comfort Attributes are important in a consumer’s final decision to purchase a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	,100	,122	,102	,099	,915	,022
Luxury & Comfort Attributes are among the most important key drivers of satisfaction after purchasing a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	,037	,102	,108	,026	,893	,090
Consumers are usually satisfied with the Luxury & Comfort Attributes of their business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	,110	,045	,204	,029	,625	,272

10. Product Attributes Satisfaction; Performance Related

Performance Attributes are important in a consumer’s final decision to purchase a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	,105	,065	,901	,246	,099	,009
Performance Attributes represent a significant driver in the purchase of a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	,019	,098	,896	,241	,141	,069
Performance Attributes are among the most important key drivers of satisfaction after purchasing a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	,127	,067	,839	,265	,161	,062
Consumers are usually satisfied with the Performance Attributes of their business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	,023	,029	,735	,047	,096	,151

11. Product Attributes Satisfaction; Service Related

Service-Related Attributes represent a significant driver in the purchase of a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	,071	,010	,218	,913	,066	,104
Service-Related Attributes are important in a consumer's final decision to purchase a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	,022	,012	,212	,900	,068	,053
Service-Related Attributes are among the most important key drivers of satisfaction after purchasing a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	,093	-,035	,191	,862	,051	,071
Consumers are usually satisfied with the Service-Related Attributes of their business aircraft? – Statement of Agreement	-,005	-,039	,180	,560	,032	,304

12. Information Satisfaction; Personal Selling

Personal Selling Quality represents a significant driver in the purchase of a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	,146	,150	,113	,189	,137	,859
Personal Selling Quality is important in a consumer's final decision to purchase a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	,145	,167	,111	,124	,124	,855
Personal Selling Quality is among the most important key drivers of satisfaction after purchasing a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	,210	,160	,075	,161	,078	,844
Are you Dissatisfied regarding Personal Selling	,265	,067	-,067	,307	,111	,238

13. Information Satisfaction; WOM Satisfaction

Word-of-Mouth represents a significant driver in the purchase of a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	,875	,166	,115	,087	,063	,158
Word-of-Mouth is important in a consumer's final decision to purchase a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	,873	,111	,154	,058	,075	,149
A consumer is more likely to purchase a business aircraft from one specific manufacturer if he was exposed to positive Word-of-Mouth about that specific manufacturer. – Statement of Agreement	,862	,070	,009	,019	,127	,070
Word-of-Mouth is among the most important key drivers of satisfaction after purchasing a business aircraft. – Statement of Importance	,811	,129	,026	,097	,113	,179
A consumer is less likely to purchase a business aircraft from one specific manufacturer if he was exposed to negative Word-of-Mouth about that specific manufacturer. – Statement of Agreement	,775	,009	,013	-,001	-,036	,001

14. Information Satisfaction; External Experts Involved

External Experts are important in a consumer's final decision to purchase a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	,124	,904	,083	-,006	,163	,071
External Experts represent a significant driver in the purchase of a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	,088	,898	,115	,082	,100	,091
A consumer is more likely to purchase a business aircraft from one specific manufacturer if one or multiple External Experts specifically recommended that manufacturer. – Statement of Agreement	,127	,877	,046	-,079	,049	,123
External Experts are among the most important key drivers of satisfaction after purchasing a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	,097	,853	-,003	-,011	,088	,173

Annex 3 – Internal Reliability of the Personal Selling Subconstruct

1. Screenshot of SPSS' internal reliability analysis **without deleting** item PersonalSelling3

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,805	4

1. Screenshot of SPSS' internal reliability analysis **with the deletion** of item PersonalSelling3

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,909	3

Annex 4 – Screenshots of the SPSS Reliability Analysis' Results

1. Desires; Social Status & Prestige

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,943	5

2. Desires; Convenience

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,932	3

3. Desires; Experience

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,910	3

4. Expectations; Experience & Service Quality

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,923	5

5. Expectations; Product Performance

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,917	3

6. Expectations; Perceived Value & Premium

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,922	5

7. Desires Congruency; Positive Dimension

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,570	2

8. Desires Congruency; Negative Dimension

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,705	2

9. Expectations Congruency; Positive Dimension

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,548	2

10. Expectations Congruency; Negative Dimension

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,709	2

11. Product Attributes Satisfaction; Luxury & Comfort Related

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,895	4

12. Product Attributes Satisfaction; Performance Related

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,910	4

13. Product Attributes Satisfaction; Service Related

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,882	4

14. Information Satisfaction; Personal Selling

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,805	4

15. Information Satisfaction; WOM Satisfaction

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,909	5

16. Information Satisfaction; External Experts Involved

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,926	4

Annex 5 – Screenshot of Responses’ Codification from Open-Ended Question #1

Please note that this screenshot represents only a fragment of the entire database.

 LuxuryCom fortAttDiss atisfaction	 Performance AttDissatisfa ction	 ServiceRelat edAttDissati sfaction	 PersonalSel lingDissatis faction	 WOMDiss atisfactio n	 ExtExperts Dissatisfac tion
,00	,00	1,00	1,00	,00	,00
,00	1,00	,00	1,00	,00	,00
,00	1,00	,00	,00	,00	,00
1,00	,00	,00	,00	,00	,00
,00	1,00	1,00	,00	,00	,00
,00	,00	1,00	,00	,00	,00
1,00	,00	,00	1,00	,00	,00
,00	,00	,00	1,00	,00	,00
,00	,00	1,00	,00	,00	,00
,00	,00	1,00	1,00	,00	,00
,00	,00	,00	,00	,00	,00
,00	1,00	,00	,00	,00	,00
1,00	,00	,00	1,00	,00	,00
,00	,00	,00	1,00	,00	,00
,00	,00	1,00	,00	,00	,00
,00	1,00	,00	1,00	,00	,00
,00	,00	,00	,00	,00	,00
,00	,00	1,00	1,00	,00	,00
,00	,00	1,00	1,00	,00	,00
,00	1,00	,00	1,00	,00	,00
,00	,00	1,00	1,00	,00	,00

Annex 6 – Screenshots of the SPSS Logistic Regression Analysis’ Results

1. Dependent Variable: Luxury & Comfort Attributes Dissatisfaction

Variables in the Equation

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1 ^a	LuxuryComfortAttributes	,236	,270	,766	1	,381	1,266
	PerformanceAttributes	-,444	,281	2,507	1	,113	,641
	ServiceRelatedAttributes	,339	,277	1,496	1	,221	1,404
	PersonalSellingSatisfaction	-,150	,205	,539	1	,463	,861
	WOMSatisfaction	-,376	,227	2,738	1	,098	,687
	ExtExpertsSatisfaction	,239	,224	1,137	1	,286	1,269
	Constant	-1,634	1,732	,890	1	,346	,195

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: LuxuryComfortAttributes, PerformanceAttributes, ServiceRelatedAttributes, PersonalSellingSatisfaction, WOMSatisfaction, ExtExpertsSatisfaction.

2. Dependent Variable: Performance Attributes Dissatisfaction

Variables in the Equation

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1 ^a	LuxuryComfortAttributes	-,145	,175	,684	1	,408	,865
	PerformanceAttributes	,192	,192	1,002	1	,317	1,212
	ServiceRelatedAttributes	-,085	,166	,261	1	,610	,919
	PersonalSellingSatisfaction	-,048	,136	,124	1	,724	,953
	WOMSatisfaction	,108	,143	,575	1	,448	1,114
	ExtExpertsSatisfaction	-,049	,131	,139	1	,710	,953
	Constant	-1,145	1,261	,825	1	,364	,318

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: LuxuryComfortAttributes, PerformanceAttributes, ServiceRelatedAttributes, PersonalSellingSatisfaction, WOMSatisfaction, ExtExpertsSatisfaction.

3. Dependent Variable: Service-Related Attributes Dissatisfaction

Variables in the Equation

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1 ^a	LuxuryComfortAttributes	-,271	,169	2,557	1	,110	,763
	PerformanceAttributes	,100	,188	,284	1	,594	1,105
	ServiceRelatedAttributes	,243	,165	2,175	1	,140	1,275
	PersonalSellingSatisfaction	-,163	,130	1,583	1	,208	,849
	WOMSatisfaction	,157	,138	1,285	1	,257	1,170
	ExtExpertsSatisfaction	,070	,129	,298	1	,585	1,073
	Constant	-1,716	1,211	2,009	1	,156	,180

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: LuxuryComfortAttributes, PerformanceAttributes, ServiceRelatedAttributes, PersonalSellingSatisfaction, WOMSatisfaction, ExtExpertsSatisfaction.

4. Dependent Variable: Personal Selling Dissatisfaction

Variables in the Equation

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1 ^a	LuxuryComfortAttributes	-,025	,175	,020	1	,888	,976
	PerformanceAttributes	-,086	,186	,211	1	,646	,918
	ServiceRelatedAttributes	,046	,168	,074	1	,786	1,047
	PersonalSellingSatisfaction	-,197	,135	2,125	1	,145	,822
	WOMSatisfaction	,087	,144	,368	1	,544	1,091
	ExtExpertsSatisfaction	,065	,136	,229	1	,632	1,067
	Constant	-,675	1,221	,306	1	,580	,509

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: LuxuryComfortAttributes, PerformanceAttributes, ServiceRelatedAttributes, PersonalSellingSatisfaction, WOMSatisfaction, ExtExpertsSatisfaction.

5. Dependent Variable: WOM Dissatisfaction

None of the participants expressed dissatisfaction in regards to the WOM subconstruct. Therefore, the following error message appeared

Warnings

The dependent variable has less than two non-missing values. For logistic regression, the dependent value must assume exactly two values on the cases being processed.

Execution of this command stops.

6. Dependent Variable: External Experts Dissatisfaction

Variables in the Equation

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1 ^a	LuxuryComfortAttributes	-,372	1,821	,042	1	,838	,689
	PerformanceAttributes	2,661	3,890	,468	1	,494	14,313
	ServiceRelatedAttributes	1,304	1,790	,530	1	,466	3,682
	PersonalSellingSatisfaction	-1,491	1,714	,757	1	,384	,225
	WOMSatisfaction	,565	1,710	,109	1	,741	1,760
	ExtExpertsSatisfaction	3,473	3,795	,837	1	,360	32,228
	Constant	-45,859	44,696	1,053	1	,305	,000

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: LuxuryComfortAttributes, PerformanceAttributes, ServiceRelatedAttributes, PersonalSellingSatisfaction, WOMSatisfaction, ExtExpertsSatisfaction.

Annex 7 – Screenshot of the SPSS Linear Regression Analysis' Results

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95,0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	-,196	,034		-5,694	,000	-,264	-,128
	LuxuryComfortAttributes	,043	,005	,331	8,771	,000	,033	,052
	PerformanceAttributes	,049	,005	,401	9,940	,000	,040	,059
	ServiceRelatedAttributes	,036	,005	,312	7,729	,000	,027	,045
	PersonalSellingSatisfaction	,017	,004	,189	4,676	,000	,010	,025
	WOMsatisfaction	-,006	,004	-,058	-1,550	,123	-,014	,002
	ExtExpertsSatisfaction	,002	,004	,016	,420	,675	-,006	,009

a. Dependent Variable: OverallSatisfaction

Annex 8 – Screenshots of the SPSS Research Hypotheses Test Results

1. Hypothesis 1a: Desires → Desires Congruency (Positive Dimension)

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3,475	,348		9,975	,000
	SocialStatusPremium – Desires	-,017	,037	-,030	-,450	,653
	Convenience – Desires	,199	,052	,245	3,796	,000
	Experience – Desires	,102	,043	,160	2,345	,020

a. Dependent Variable: DesiresCongruencyPositive

2. Hypothesis 1b: Desires → Desires Congruency (Negative Dimension)

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3,201	,545		5,878	,000
	SocialStatusPremium – Desires	,135	,058	,163	2,346	,020
	Convenience – Desires	,027	,082	,022	,331	,741
	Experience – Desires	,047	,068	,049	,699	,485

a. Dependent Variable: DesiresCongruencyNegative

3. Hypothesis 2a: Expectations → Expectations Congruency (Positive Dimension)

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3,601	,420		8,579	,000
	ExperienceServiceQuality – Expect.	,032	,053	,043	,609	,543
	ProductPerformace – Expect.	,113	,070	,125	1,624	,106
	PerceivedValuePremium – Expect.	,117	,060	,145	1,958	,052

a. Dependent Variable: ExpectCongruencyPositive

4. Hypothesis 2b: Expectations → Expectations Congruency (Negative Dimension)

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3,658	,658		5,555	,000
	ExperienceServiceQuality – Expect.	,086	,083	,075	1,033	,303
	ProductPerformance – Expect.	-,117	,109	-,084	-1,068	,287
	PerceivedValuePremium – Expect.	,102	,094	,083	1,094	,275

a. Dependent Variable: ExpectCongruencyNegative

5. Hypothesis 3.1a: Desires Congruency (Positive Dimension) → Personal Selling

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2,753	,547		5,029	,000
	DesiresCongruencyPositive	,397	,106	,242	3,745	,000

a. Dependent Variable: PersonalSellingSatisfaction

6. Hypothesis 3.2a: Desires Congruency (Positive Dimension) → WOM Satisfaction

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3,801	,492		7,728	,000
	DesiresCongruencyPositive	,234	,095	,161	2,455	,015

a. Dependent Variable: WOMSatisfaction

7. Hypothesis 3.3a: Desires Congruency (Positive Dimension) → External Experts

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2,395	,501		4,783	,000
	DesiresCongruencyPositive	,530	,097	,341	5,461	,000

a. Dependent Variable: ExtExpertsSatisfaction

8. Hypothesis 3.1b: Desires Congruency (Negative Dimension) → Personal Selling

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4,326	,307		14,092	,000
	DesiresCongruencyNegative	,110	,072	,102	1,535	,126

a. Dependent Variable: PersonalSellingSatisfaction

9. Hypothesis 3.2b: Desires Congruency (Negative Dimension) → WOM Satisfaction

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4,112	,266		15,482	,000
	DesiresCongruencyNegative	,216	,062	,225	3,473	,001

a. Dependent Variable: WOMSatisfaction

10. Hypothesis 3.3b: Desires Congruency (Negative Dimension) → External Experts

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4,153	,284		14,627	,000
	DesiresCongruencyNegative	,231	,067	,225	3,467	,001

a. Dependent Variable: ExtExpertsSatisfaction

11. Hypothesis 4.1a: Expectations Congruency (Positive Dimension) → Personal Selling

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3,215	,578		5,560	,000
	ExpectCongruencyPositive	,298	,111	,178	2,682	,008

a. Dependent Variable: PersonalSellingSatisfaction

12. Hypothesis 4.2a: Expectations Congruency (Positive Dimension) → WOM Satisfaction

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3,586	,514		6,974	,000
	ExpectCongruencyPositive	,274	,099	,184	2,778	,006

a. Dependent Variable: WOMSatisfaction

13. Hypothesis 4.3a: Expectations Congruency (Positive Dimension) → External Experts

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3,366	,547		6,154	,000
	ExpectCongruencyPositive	,331	,105	,208	3,155	,002

a. Dependent Variable: ExtExpertsSatisfaction

14. Hypothesis 4.1b: Expectations Congruency (Negative Dimension) → Personal Selling

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4,173	,305		13,674	,000
	ExpectCongruencyNegative	,144	,073	,131	1,971	,050

a. Dependent Variable: PersonalSellingSatisfaction

15. Hypothesis 4.2b: Expectations Congruency (Negative Dimension) → WOM Satisfaction

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4,201	,268		15,657	,000
	ExpectCongruencyNegative	,200	,064	,205	3,113	,002

a. Dependent Variable: WOMSatisfaction

16. Hypothesis 4.3b: Expectations Congruency (Negative Dimension) → External Experts

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4,307	,288		14,955	,000
	ExpectCongruencyNegative	,192	,069	,184	2,781	,006

a. Dependent Variable: ExtExpertsSatisfaction

17. Hypothesis 5: Product Attributes Satisfaction → Overall Satisfaction

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-,193	,033		-5,832	,000
	LuxuryComfortAttributes	,046	,005	,363	9,658	,000
	PerformanceAttributes	,051	,005	,423	10,299	,000
	ServiceRelatedAttributes	,041	,005	,352	8,798	,000

a. Dependent Variable: OverallSatisfaction

18. Hypothesis 6: Information Satisfaction → Overall Satisfaction

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	,317	,039		8,063	,000
	PersonalSellingSatisfaction	,040	,006	,442	6,908	,000
	WOMSatisfaction	,004	,007	,034	,545	,587
	ExtExpertsSatisfaction	,007	,006	,072	1,166	,245

a. Dependent Variable: OverallSatisfaction

Annex 9 – Screenshot of the SPSS Overall Satisfaction Results Analysis

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
OverallSatisfaction	234	,097	,898	,56332	,127850
Valid N (listwise)	234				

Annex 10 – SPSS Screenshot Satisfaction Results per Category of Respondent

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
OverallSatOwners	105	,2857	,7704	,549466	,1125703
OverallSatStakeholders	139	,0969	,8980	,569226	,1347496
Valid N (listwise)	105				

Annex 11 – SPSS Screenshots Individual Components Satisfaction Results Analysis

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
LuxurySatImportance	244	,020	1,000	,62789	,200590
PerformanceSatImportance	241	,020	1,000	,66305	,213889
ServiceSatImportance	238	,020	1,000	,53430	,213513
SellingSatImportance	234	,020	1,000	,42395	,209378
Valid N (listwise)	234				

Annex 12 – SPSS Screenshot Satisfaction & Importance Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Consumers are usually satisfied with the Luxury & Comfort Attributes of their business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	244	1,00	7,00	5,4795	1,03219
Luxury & Comfort Attributes are important in a consumer's final decision to purchase a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	244	1,00	7,00	5,4959	1,14575
Consumers are usually satisfied with the Performance Attributes of their business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	241	1,00	7,00	5,4606	1,08757
Performance Attributes are important in a consumer's final decision to purchase a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	241	1,00	7,00	5,8091	1,18887
Consumers are usually satisfied with the Service-Related Attributes of their business aircraft? – Statement of Agreement	238	1,00	7,00	4,7731	1,21480
Service-Related Attributes are important in a consumer's final decision to purchase a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	238	1,00	7,00	5,3319	1,24741
Personal Selling Quality is important in a consumer's final decision to purchase a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	234	1,00	7,00	4,9957	1,45460
perssel3recod	234	1,00	7,00	4,2650	1,68759
Word-of-Mouth is important in a consumer's final decision to purchase a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	234	1,00	7,00	5,1325	1,34722
External Experts are important in a consumer's final decision to purchase a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	232	1,00	7,00	5,2888	1,39208
Valid N (listwise)	232				

Annex 13 – SPSS Screenshot of the Dichotomous Question Frequency Analysis

Which variable between Product Attributes' Satisfaction and Information Satisfaction has the most influence on a consumer's Overall business aircraft Satisfaction?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Information Satisfaction	38	15,6	17,4	17,4
	Product Attributes' Satisfaction	180	73,8	82,6	100,0
	Total	218	89,3	100,0	
Missing	System	26	10,7		
Total		244	100,0		

Annex 14 – SPSS Screenshot of the Rank-order Questions' Frequency Analysis

		Statistics					
		Ascending order of influence Prod.Att. Satisfaction – Luxury&Comfort prod. att	Ascending order of influence Prod.Att. Satisfaction – Performance Product Attributes	Ascending order of influence Prod.Att. Satisfaction – Service-Related Product Attributes	Ascending order of influence Information Satisfaction – Personal Selling	Ascending order of influence Information Satisfaction – Word-of-Mouth	Ascending order of influence Information Satisfaction – External Experts' Involvement
N	Valid	203	203	203	195	195	195
	Missing	41	41	41	49	49	49
Mean		2,25	1,49	2,27	2,09	2,03	1,88
Std. Error of Mean		,053	,054	,047	,055	,062	,057
Mode		3	1	2	2	3	1
Minimum		1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum		3	3	3	3	3	3

Annex 15 – SPSS Screenshots of the Codification Frequency Analysis (1st Question)

1. Luxury & Comfort Attributes Dissatisfaction

LuxuryComfortAttDissatisfaction

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	,00	122	50,0	86,5	86,5
	1,00	19	7,8	13,5	100,0
	Total	141	57,8	100,0	
Missing	System	103	42,2		
Total		244	100,0		

2. Performance Attributes Dissatisfaction

PerformanceAttDissatisfaction

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	,00	90	36,9	63,8	63,8
	1,00	51	20,9	36,2	100,0
	Total	141	57,8	100,0	
Missing	System	103	42,2		
Total		244	100,0		

3. Service-related Attributes Dissatisfaction

ServiceRelatedAttDissatisfaction

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	,00	80	32,8	56,7	56,7
	1,00	61	25,0	43,3	100,0
	Total	141	57,8	100,0	
Missing	System	103	42,2		
Total		244	100,0		

4. Personal Selling Dissatisfaction

PersonalSellingDissatisfaction

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	,00	91	37,3	64,5	64,5
	1,00	50	20,5	35,5	100,0
	Total	141	57,8	100,0	
Missing	System	103	42,2		
Total		244	100,0		

5. WOM Dissatisfaction

WOMDissatisfaction

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	,00	141	57,8	100,0	100,0
Missing	System	103	42,2		
Total		244	100,0		

6. External Experts Dissatisfaction

ExtExpertsDissatisfaction

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	,00	140	57,4	99,3	99,3
	1,00	1	,4	,7	100,0
	Total	141	57,8	100,0	
Missing	System	103	42,2		
Total		244	100,0		

Annex 16 – SPSS Screenshots of the Codification Frequency Analysis (2nd Question)

1. Salespeople's transparency and honesty

TransparencyHonesty

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	,00	77	31,6	57,0	57,0
	1,00	58	23,8	43,0	100,0
	Total	135	55,3	100,0	
Missing	System	109	44,7		
Total		244	100,0		

2. Salespeople's Overall Knowledge

OverallKnowledge

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	,00	96	39,3	71,1	71,1
	1,00	39	16,0	28,9	100,0
	Total	135	55,3	100,0	
Missing	System	109	44,7		
Total		244	100,0		

3. Salespeople's timeliness of follow-up

TimelinessFollowUp

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	,00	113	46,3	83,7	83,7
	1,00	22	9,0	16,3	100,0
	Total	135	55,3	100,0	
Missing	System	109	44,7		
Total		244	100,0		

Annex 17 – SPSS Screenshot Subconstructs’ Importance Level Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Social Status is important in a consumer’s final decision to purchase a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	244	1,00	7,00	3,3811	1,71840
Prestige is important in a consumer’s final decision to purchase a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	244	1,00	7,00	3,5574	1,76872
Convenience is important in a consumer’s final decision to purchase a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	244	1,00	7,00	6,0041	1,08676
Experience is important in a consumer’s final decision to purchase a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	244	1,00	7,00	4,7828	1,46212
Experience Quality is important in a consumer’s final decision to purchase a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	244	1,00	7,00	5,3975	1,32472
Service Quality is important in a consumer’s final decision to purchase a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	244	1,00	7,00	5,6107	1,20700
Product Performance is important in a consumer’s final decision to purchase a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	244	1,00	7,00	6,2500	,92907
Perceived Value is important in a consumer’s final decision to purchase a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	244	1,00	7,00	5,7418	1,17367
Premium is important in a consumer’s final decision to purchase a business aircraft. – Statement of Agreement	244	1,00	7,00	5,4754	1,29712
Valid N (listwise)	244				

Annex 18 – Alternate Methods Considered to Measure the Dependent Variable

Various alternate methods were considered to measure the dependent variable of this research, more precisely customers' overall satisfaction for *B2B* high-involvement products. The first one aimed to combine frequency analyses of both rank-order questions from section seven with the results obtained from the codification of both first and second open-ended questions. More precisely, results from both distinct analyses would have been multiplied by each other, and this method would have provided a certain scale of influence and importance regarding all six subconstructs from both product attributes and information satisfaction constructs. By doing so, the subconstructs with the most influence onto customers' overall satisfaction could have been identified. However, this method would not have provided a specific degree of customer satisfaction, which is what this research's dependent variable aims for. The fact that questions from section seven were not mandatory could have also caused a problem of sample size and significance, if not enough participants would have answered them.

The option to utilize a logistic regression was then contemplated. In this case, all responses from the first open-ended question were interpreted in such a way as to determine if participants were satisfied or not, regarding several categories linked to the purchasing process of a business aircraft. The dependent variable in this instance being dichotomous (satisfied or not satisfied), this type of analysis would have fitted perfectly. Indeed, as mentioned by Peng, Lee and Ingersoll (2002), this type of regression is usually well suited for describing and testing hypotheses about relationships between a categorical/binary outcome variable, and one or more categorical/continuous predictor variables.

As such, results originating from the codification of section seven's first open-ended question were manually entered in SPSS's database, using a binary method. More precisely, the first step was to codify all responses using six distinct categories corresponding to all six subconstructs from both product attributes and information satisfaction constructs. For example, if a participant's response would express dissatisfaction regarding a business aircraft performance attributes, this specific subconstruct would be identified/coded. The second step was to input all six different categories used during the previous step into the SPSS database; as such, six new columns were then created. These categories were: luxury & comfort attributes' dissatisfaction,

performance attributes' dissatisfaction, service-related attributes' dissatisfaction, personal selling dissatisfaction, WOM dissatisfaction and external experts' dissatisfaction. These new columns allowed our research team to flag the categories identified in each of the 141 responses obtained. To do so, a binary codification method was used. For example, if two categories were identified in the first response, such as one and three, a "1" would be entered in the columns corresponding to categories one and three. The remaining categories would be populated with "0". In other words, this would indicate that this particular participant expressed dissatisfaction regarding a business aircraft luxury & comfort, and service-related attributes. However, this participant could be deemed satisfied regarding the remaining categories populated by "0", which in this specific instance would be the second, fourth, fifth and sixth ones. A screenshot from SPSS exemplifying this specific task can be found in the annex section (*cf.* Annex 5).

Once all results were appropriately codified in SPSS, the *binary logistic* function of the software was used to execute the logistic regression analyses. Six logistic regressions were executed, because six possible outcomes of dissatisfaction were possible. Each possible outcome represented the dependent variable, in every single analysis. However, the independent variables for each one of these six analyses were always the same ones, more precisely the six different subconstructs/categories used to codify the responses. Unfortunately, this method was ultimately not retained, because results from all six logistic regressions were insignificant. Indeed, the p-value related to each one of the six categories used to codify the responses of the first open-ended question turned out to be greater than 0,05. Screenshots of the results from this logistic regression can be found in the annex section (*cf.* Annex 6). The insignificance of such results, and the inability to use this particular type of regression analysis, can be explained by the relatively small sample size of participants who answered to the first open-ended question on which it was based, more precisely 141 participants, and its small variance. The fact that all questions from section seven were not made mandatory also contributed to this outcome.

Annex 19 – Correlation Matrix and Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Stand. Dev.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
1. Social Status & Premium	3.533	1.559	1.000																	
2. Convenience	6.012	1.031	0.068	1.000																
3. Experience	4.727	1.345	.351**	.203**	1.000															
4. Experience & Service Quality	5.501	1.107	.199**	.403**	.476**	1.000														
5. Product Performance	6.247	0.897	-0.117	.377**	.160*	.360**	1.000													
6. Perceived Value & Premium	5.619	1.062	0.012	.326**	.134*	.264**	.418**	1.000												
7. Desires Congruency - Pos. Dim.	5.090	0.850	0.036	.273**	.195**	0.118	.157*	.246**	1.000											
8. Desires Congruency - Neg. Dim.	4.072	1.285	.181**	0.040	0.107	0.047	-0.002	0.068	.186**	1.000										
9. Expectations Congruency - Pos. Dim.	5.141	0.830	0.026	.264**	0.123	0.129	.206**	.213**	.624**	0.092	1.000									
10. Expectations Congruency - Neg. Dim.	3.973	1.268	.232**	-0.025	0.124	0.066	-0.018	0.065	0.039	.714**	0.033	1.000								
11. Luxury & Comfort Attributes	5.429	1.001	.413**	.269**	.331**	.383**	.309**	.236**	.174**	.196**	0.123	1.000								
12. Performance Attributes	5.714	1.045	-0.090	.378**	.233**	.233**	.525**	.399**	.332**	0.070	.297**	0.057	1.000							
13. Service-related Attributes	5.173	1.106	-0.071	.307**	.255**	.486**	.371**	.448**	.156*	-0.040	.157*	0.008	.207**	1.000						
14. Personal Selling	4.766	1.401	.307**	.154*	.367**	.370**	.202**	.241**	.242**	0.102	.178**	.131*	.287**	.438**	1.000					
15. Word-of-mouth	4.997	1.222	.139*	.205**	.186**	.209**	.129*	.164*	.161*	.225**	.184**	.205**	.208**	.192**	.157*	1.000				
16. External Experts Involved	5.083	1.312	.180**	.206**	.164*	.138*	0.078	0.127	.341**	.225**	.208**	.184**	.255**	.168*	0.035	.325**	1.000			
17. Overall Consumer Satisfaction	0.563	0.128	0.042	.369**	.287**	.381**	.467**	.437**	.321**	-0.045	.301**	-0.003	.554**	.682**	.608**	.478**	.208**	1.000		

Note

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).