

Various research possibilities arise from the four dimensions of buying: implementation, evaluation, reassessment, and confirmation. In particular, we need descriptive research to describe and understand the current state of buying, as summarized in the following potential research questions: & Are there circumstances in which the four buying processes are not contemporaneous? What subactivities and entities are involved in each process? & Are they decentralized physically but integrated virtually? & Will charting the cast of characters—animate and inanimate—involved in each buying process, across different contexts, reveal interesting differences or patterns? & Can developing visual representations of the buying elements' consistency or variation reveal prototypical configurations in which specific sets of elements tend to covary? & When and where do we find these modes of B2B buying? & What market, macro-environmental, selling firm, and buying firm factors are associated with each mode? & Are there other modes? & Can research offer support for the implicit conjectures and theorizing presented in Table 2, or will it uncover other ways in which the modes are similar or differ? Beyond descriptive assessments, B2B analytics research could model the performance implications of deploying different modes of buying and the associated types of relationships, of centralized versus decentralized buying decisions, and of centralized versus decentralized buying activities. Simulations might estimate the value-added contributions of different types of buying relationships, such as RERs or OBRs compared with TBOs. In addition, empirical modeling or survey research should consider whether unexamined contextual factors alter the effectiveness or efficiency exhibited by different buying participants and in different modes of B2B buying. For example, & What factors indicate that an automated RER will perform better than a human-implemented RER? & In which conditions does local buying outperform centralized buying activities? & What performance indicators should inform comparisons of the strengths and weaknesses of different buying modes? As the strategic importance of buying and buying relationships increase, research attention to these and many other issues will offer significant potential to inform practice. Because B2B buying is an inviting area, in need of theory development and creative research, we hope this discussion prompts moves toward either a BuyGrid 2.0 or some other relevant framework.