

ABSTRACT

Goal Interdependencies and Opportunism for Supply Chain Partnerships

in China

by

Wu Lanjun

Master of Philosophy

The possibility of opportunistic behavior is an important barrier to the collaboration between partners in the supply chain as partners pursue their self-interests with guile. Opportunistic behavior threatens the partners' relationships, influences their work accomplishment and prevents future collaboration. This study hypothesizes that opportunism is not just the result of people's self-interests pursuit but depends on how they think their self-interests are related. Opportunism in organizational partnerships could be understood in terms of how partners perceive their goals are related to each other. When partners believe that their goals are competitively or dependently rather than cooperatively related, they are more likely to pursue their self-interests opportunistically.

Altogether 86 face-to-face interviews were carried out in Beijing, Nanchang and Guangzhou, China to explore the links and relations among goal interdependencies, opportunism and the outcomes. Participants who work in a supply chain partnership were asked to describe an incident regarding their collaboration with their partners. It included the people involved, the reasons, what occurred, and the consequences. Structural equation modeling explored the proposed model that goal interdependencies could affect the levels of opportunism and thus influence the partnerships. Results suggest that cooperative goals are important foundations for effective organizational partnerships.

Keywords: Supply chain partnerships, goal interdependence, opportunism