

Cooperation among Airlines

A Transaction Cost Economic Perspective

Bearbeitet von
Caroline Merk

1. Auflage 2008. Taschenbuch. XXVIII, 250 S. Paperback

ISBN 978 3 89936 692 1

Format (B x L): 14,8 x 21 cm

Gewicht: 384 g

[Wirtschaft > Management > Unternehmensorganisation & Entwicklungsstrategien](#)

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Caroline Merk

Cooperation among Airlines

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Reihe „**Planung, Organisation und Unternehmensführung**“,
Band 121

Herausgegeben von Prof. Dr. Dr. h. c. Norbert Szyperski, Köln, Prof.
Dr. Winfried Matthes, Wuppertal, Prof. Dr. Udo Winand, Kassel,
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Kortzfleisch, Koblenz, Prof. Dr. Ludwig Theuvsen, Göttingen, und
Prof. Dr. Andreas Al-Laham, Stuttgart

Lohmar – Köln 2008, 278 Seiten

ISBN 978-3-89936-692-1

€ 48,- (D) ♦ € 49,40 (A) ♦ sFr 79,50

This thesis investigates the explanatory power of Transaction Cost Economics concerning hybrid governance types in transportation. Therefore, an empirical case study has been conducted, examining airline cooperations of the German airline Lufthansa between 1995 and 2005. In order to test the TCE theory, a model of cooperation types is being presented which entails five different types of cooperation. These align on a continuum from loose to tighter cooperative arrangements. Under what circumstances, which cooperation types are most transaction cost economizing is being described and hypotheses are derived accordingly. The cooperation types are discussed in more detail as the rank ordered dependent variable. Types of uncertainty and asset specificity, as well as, the concept of brand name capital serve as the independent variables. The performed ordinal regression reveals that external uncertainty and dedicated assets, particularly have a positive relationship with cooperation types. All other hypotheses had to be rejected or could not be corroborated.

The author finds, that overall, TCE can only very limitedly explain cooperation types in the airline industry. She identifies several other factors, such as the membership in the Star Alliance, and past experience that act as relational safeguards in hybrid relationships. Furthermore, market power is being discussed as a possible moderator of transaction costs. Several managerial implications are being drawn from these findings.

Caroline Merk was born on the 25th of February 1980 in Baden-Baden, Germany. She completed her Business Administration studies at the European Business School (EBS), Schloß Reichartshausen in Oestrich-Winkel and graduated as Dipl.-Kffr. in 2003. During her studies she spent two semesters abroad in Stellenbosch (South Africa) and Melbourne (Australia). After completing her studies she worked as a research assistant at the Chair of Management and Consulting headed by Professor Ansgar Richter, PhD. She received her doctoral degree in December 2007, and is now working in the purchasing department at Hugo Boss AG.

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