



**Value Co-Creating Processes
in International Business Relationships**
Three empirical stories of co-operation between
Chinese customers and Swedish suppliers

av

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Abstract

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This thesis focuses on value co-creating processes in international business relationships, where customers and suppliers have different frames of reference that create a distance, often expressed in terms of uncertainty between the customer and the supplier. This tension between developing cooperative business relationships in order to co-create value versus handling uncertainty, misunderstandings and conflicts based on perceived distance, makes an interesting arena for exploring how the value co-creating process is formed in international business relationships.

In this thesis, a customer-supplier perspective is used. The thesis rests on reasoning and concepts discussed in the field of marketing, where literature on value co-creation forms the theoretical foundation of the thesis. Three case studies of co-operation between Chinese customers and Swedish suppliers operating in the Chinese automotive industry have been carried out so as to obtain an in-depth picture of the value co-creating processes in international business relationships.

The main contribution of the thesis is a nuanced phraseology which should prove fruitful when discussing value co-creating processes in international business relationships. The notion of value co-creation in interactive processes is further developed by discussing value through a business relationship and value in a business relationship, where value co-creation includes both individual value for customers and suppliers respectively and common value for both parties to share. The concepts of conversation, coordination, collaboration and co-generation capture the process of co-creating value between international customers and suppliers with different frames of reference. The concepts constituting the phraseology can be seen as generally applicable, but the content of the different concepts discussed varies between business actors, across cultures and over time. By discussing the temporal dimension of past, present and future in this thesis, the developed phraseology infer the notion of continuity instead of short term interaction episodes often discussed in other types of value co-creation frameworks.

Keywords: Value, co-creation, perceptions, interaction, co-operation, process, international business relationships, China.

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