

**Contents**

**Geleitwort** ..... V

**Vorwort**..... VII

**Contents** .....IX

**Tables** .....XIII

**Figures**..... XVII

**A Introduction** ..... 1

    1. Research Topic and Objectives..... 1

    2. Plan of the Study ..... 6

**B Cognitive Theory – The Theoretical Foundation of Strategic Sensemaking...** 9

    1. Content and Process School – Two Approaches to Strategic Decision-Making... 9

    2. An Economic Perspective on Strategic Decision-Making..... 11

    3. A Behavioral Perspective on Strategic Decision-Making ..... 12

    4. A Cognitive Perspective on Strategic Decision-Making ..... 17

        4.1 Important Assumptions of Cognitive Theory – Laying out the Theoretical Foundations of this Study ..... 17

            4.1.1 Individual Managers from a Cognitive Perspective..... 18

            4.1.2 Organizational Context from a Cognitive Perspective ..... 22

            4.1.3 Environmental Context from a Cognitive Perspective ..... 24

        4.2 Research Streams of Cognitive Theory..... 26

            4.2.1 Decision-Making and Choice..... 26

            4.2.2 Culture..... 27

            4.2.3 Knowledge Acquisition and Use ..... 28

            4.2.4 Change ..... 31

            4.2.5 Sensemaking ..... 32

        4.3 Limitations of Cognitive Theory ..... 32

**C Strategic Sensemaking Theory** ..... 35

    1. Strategic Sensemaking as a Multi-Level Activity..... 35

    2. The Individual Process of Strategic Sensemaking..... 37

3. The Team Process of Strategic Sensemaking .....	41
4. Environment as an Influencing Factor of Strategic Sensemaking .....	49
4.1 General Industry Effects .....	49
4.2 Strategic Uncertainty .....	50
5. Organizational Context as an Influencing Factor of Strategic Sensemaking .....	51
5.1 Organizational Processes .....	52
5.2 Organizational Structure .....	53
5.3 Organizational Past Success and Ownership .....	55
6. Top Management Team Thinking and Acting as an Influencing Factor of Strategic Sensemaking .....	57
6.1 Managers as Influencing Factors of Individuals' Strategic Sensemaking .....	57
6.1.1 Knowledge Base .....	57
6.1.2 World View and Personality .....	62
6.2 Managers as Influencing Factors of Strategic Sensemaking in Teams .....	63
6.2.1 Knowledge Base .....	64
6.2.2 Interaction of Managers .....	68
7. Summary: Shortcomings of Previous Research on Strategic Sensemaking and Resulting Research Questions for this Study .....	73
<b>D Research Design .....</b>	<b>77</b>
1. Case Studies as Selected Research Methodology .....	78
1.1 Comparison of Case Studies to Other Research Strategies .....	78
1.2 Selection of Case Studies to Answer the Present Research Objectives .....	80
1.3 Literature Review as a Basis for the Case Study Field Work .....	82
1.4 Multiple Case Study Design to Increase the Explanatory Value .....	83
2. Definition and Selection of Units of Analysis .....	84
3. Data Collection .....	87
3.1 Data Triangulation .....	87
3.2 Description of Selected Data Sources .....	88
3.2.1 Secondary Sources .....	88
3.2.2 Semi-Structured Interviews .....	89
3.2.3 Questionnaire .....	90
4. Data Analysis .....	91
4.1 Preparing the Interview Data for Further Analysis .....	91

4.2	Preparing the Questionnaire Data for Further Analysis .....	93
4.3	Analyzing the Data: Within- and Cross-Case Analysis as a Basis for Explanation-Building.....	96
5.	Quality-Ensuring Measures.....	98
5.1	Quality-Ensuring Measures in the Research Design Phase.....	99
5.2	Quality-Ensuring Measures during Data Collection .....	100
5.3	Quality-Ensuring Measures during Data Analysis .....	102
<b>E</b>	<b>Results: Experience as an Influencing Factor of Strategic Sensemaking ....</b>	<b>107</b>
1.	Eight Top Management Team Profiles .....	107
1.1	Team M1: Strategy as a Directors' Game .....	107
1.2	Team M2: A Team of Specialists in a Consensus-Oriented Company .....	110
1.3	Team M3: A Traditional Metal-Working Company Facing Speed Challenges from High-Tech Industry .....	114
1.4	Team M4: A Diverse Team of Friends without Clear Strategic Goals .....	117
1.5	Team M5: Problems of a Heterogeneous Team Succeeding a Patriarchal Leader.....	120
1.6	Team F1: The Challenge of Changing a Long-Established Way of Interaction.....	124
1.7	Team F2: A Homogeneous Team with Highly Formalized Processes .....	127
1.8	Team F3: A Heterogeneous Team Referring to Functional and Organizational Experiences.....	130
2.	Exploration of the Effects of Managerial Experience on Individual Sensemaking .....	133
2.1	Effects of Functional Experience on Individual Sensemaking .....	134
2.1.1	Breadth of Functional Experience .....	134
2.1.2	Depth of Functional Experience .....	137
2.2	Effects of Organizational Experience on Individual Sensemaking.....	141
2.2.1	Breadth of Organizational Experience.....	141
2.2.2	Depth of Organizational Experience.....	143
2.3	Summary of Propositions: Experience and Individual Sensemaking .....	146
3.	Exploration of the Effects of Managerial Experience on Sensemaking in Teams.....	149
3.1	Effects of Intrapersonal Functional Experience on Strategic Sensemaking in Teams .....	149
3.1.1	Intrapersonal Breadth of Functional Experience .....	149

3.1.2	Depth of Functional Experience .....	154
3.2	Effects of Organizational Experience on Sensemaking in Teams .....	160
3.2.1	Intrapersonal Breadth of Organizational Experience.....	160
3.2.2	Depth of Organizational Experience.....	164
3.3	Summary of Propositions: Experience and Strategic Sensemaking in Teams .....	169
4.	Exploration of the Effects of Interaction on Sensemaking in Teams .....	172
4.1	Effects of Openness on Sensemaking in Teams.....	172
4.2	Effects of Political Behavior on Sensemaking in Teams .....	175
4.3	Effects of Task Conflict on Sensemaking in Teams .....	177
4.4	Effects of Relationship Conflict on Sensemaking in Teams.....	180
4.5	Summary of Propositions: Team Interaction and Strategic Sensemaking in Teams .....	182
5.	Control Factors.....	185
5.1	Derivation of Propositions for Control Factors.....	185
5.2	Summary of Propositions: Control Factors .....	192
<b>F</b>	<b>Implications and Outlook .....</b>	<b>197</b>
1.	Theoretical Implications.....	197
2.	Managerial Implications.....	205
3.	Limitations and Outlook .....	207
	<b>Appendix I Interview Guidelines.....</b>	<b>211</b>
	<b>Appendix II Coding Tree .....</b>	<b>223</b>
	<b>References .....</b>	<b>227</b>