

COOPERATION IN THE AREAS OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCHES

Summary

It is possible to say that company cooperation with other companies is a core distinctive competency for business success and has a very big influence on their activity. Thanks to them firms can optimize the resource usage and production capacity, improve the quality, shorten the production cycles as well as improve the profitability. Thus, it should be underlined that the cooperation and collaboration have a positive influence on many areas of the company's functionality. They improve its competitive position and allow creation of the adequate strategy enabling achievement of targets which would be difficult to achieve in autonomic activity. That's why the research concerning cooperation and collaboration impact on the chosen areas of company activity, is essential. The paper presents the empirical results with the reference to this issue.

The object and the aim of examinations

Empirical examinations, concerning the influence of industrial cooperation on functioning of the enterprise, were conducted as part of the broader observation concerning the character, the conditions, the state and the limitations of the cooperative relations in industrial enterprises in years 2008/2009. Choice of the subject for examinations was based on the method of the nonrandom, intentional selection of typical individuals. Thus 270 subjects took part in the examination. Among them for further analyses there were categorised 226 enterprises representing, according to EKD, one of groups of the industrial processing. These enterprises running business activity have to both use the cooperative supplies and actively seek the contractors to whom they can provide the produced products and service.

In the examined trial of the production companies constituted 62.8% (142 subjects) and 37.2% (84 subjects) were determined as production-service. Considering the criterion of the size, there were identified 94 small entities with the average employment of 10-49 persons which constitute the 41.6% of the attempt, 96 average subjects about the employment in the period of 50-249 persons, constituting the 42.5% of the attempt and 36 large subjects about the employment exceeding 250 persons, attempts constituting the 15.9%.

Considering the significance of the regions in which the analysed individuals are active, it should be underlined that in the moment of carrying out the research, the domestic market represented by 42.8% of the entire sample, was the market generating the biggest incomes. The international market constituted the 26.8% of the research sample i.e. 91 subjects. The fewest enterprises, as only less than the 3.3%, is acting on the global market.

Characterizing the examined group of enterprises the focus was placed to the kind of the applied base strategy assuming that it is fundamental in the process of cooperation. In the general sample there were dominating two strategies: quality strategy realized effectively by 153 subjects constituting the 67.7% and the pricing leadership strategy realized by 114 subjects constituting the 50.4% of the sample. Among other kinds of enterprises it is worthwhile to focus on the niche strategy which is understood as the service of the closely determined, selected and exactly specified market segment. Servicing of such market, especially on the market of industrial goods, is connected with close, long-lasting and based on the mutual confidence relations. This kind of the strategy is crystallised in 46 cases which constitute the 20.4% of index.

Influence of cooperation on activity of enterprise in the light of empirical examinations

Conducting examinations concerning the influence of collaboration and cooperating on the chosen areas of the enterprise activities, the respondents were asked for determining the poignancy in five degree Likert scale. It was agreed that 1 means the lack of income, 2 – slight influence, 3 – average influence, 4 – essential influence and 5 – very essential influence. Determining direction of the influence strength of cooperation on individual variables a balanced arithmetic mean was calculated and determined in this work as the rate of influence S. Analysis of results indicated that collaboration and cooperating in the essential way contribute to the improvement in functioning of the enterprise and they concern many levels and areas which were differently granted depending on the size of the enterprise, the domain of activity as well as the business. Generally the rate of the influence for the entire research sample ranged from 2.43 to 4.

Influence of cooperation on:	OW	ZN	OS
Increase in the size of incomes	96,02	4,00	1,07
Increase in the size of the profit of the enterprise	95,13	3,92	1,09
Improvement in the profitability of the sale	96,02	3,82	1,04
Improvement in ordering the quality in the enterprise	92,48	2,95	1,15
Improvement in products offered to the quality	94,25	3,69	1,01
Improvement in the competitive position	94,69	3,59	1,07
Rise in the amount of produced products	92,92	3,40	1,25
Quality of the service of contractors	93,36	3,46	1,19
Improvement in the quality of the provided work	93,91	3,20	1,18
Height of exploiting production capacities	91,59	3,40	1,31
Improvement in the image of the enterprise	94,69	3,40	1,18
Improvement in production processes	91,59	3,24	1,22
strategic managing in the scope of planning the production	92,04	3,22	1,30
System of administering funds	93,36	2,97	1,23
System of managing marketing and the sale	92,92	3,06	1,23
Increase in the bargaining strength towards recipients	93,36	3,22	1,16
Increase in the bargaining strength towards suppliers	93,81	3,18	1,13
Optimization of using means of production	91,59	3,17	1,20
Height of the assortment of produced products	91,59	3,15	1,26
Investments in machines, devices and the infrastructure	91,59	3,08	1,20
Investments in the network of the communication	92,92	2,53	1,20
Improvement in the internal communication	93,36	2,45	1,16
Improvement in the outside communication the	93,36	2,74	1,18
Education and abilities of workers	93,81	3,00	1,27
Improvement in conditions of the work (equipping offices, plumbings, canteens and the like)	93,81	2,43	1,12
Improvement in the organization of the work	93,36	2,98	1,12
Care of the natural environment	92,48	2,69	1,30
Improvement in the technical state of machines and devices	93,36	2,90	1,24
Optimization of using industrial product	89,82	2,81	1,12

OW – percentage of readings, ZN – meaning of the factor, OS – standard deviation

Source: own study on the basis of empirical research findings.

Table: Assessment of the influence of the cooperation on chosen areas of activity of enterprise

According to respondents' the cooperation, in the very essential way, contributes to the increase in size of incomes of the enterprises which establish appropriate relations and affairs with different actors of the market. The greatest weight was assigned to this variable $S = 4.0$. Peculiarly the essential influence of the cooperation on the increase in size of incomes takes place in the medium-size enterprises. The obtained assessment is in accordance with the adopted assumptions, according to which the cooperation contributes to the increase in scale of activities.

Two next factors are connected with an above variable: the increase in the size of profit of the enterprise and the improvement in the profitability of the sale. Respondents appraise the influence of cooperation on the increase in profit size. It ranks in the entire research sample on the level $S=3.92$.

The effectiveness of the enterprise activities is also reflected through the influence of cooperation on the profitability of activities. Examined subjects show that thanks to the cooperation they reach the higher return from invested capital in comparison to the periods in which they didn't conduct activities on the base of the formalised agreements with different participants of the market. Such agreements guarantee the sale of the produced products or provided services on the certain level determined in the agreement what contributes to the reduction in costs and optimization of stores. The rate of the gravity for the entire sample amounts to the S equal 3.82 but the biggest influence of the cooperation on the improvement in profitability is in medium-size enterprises.

In the presented ranking the influence of cooperation on the improvement in produced qualities and/or provided services, is also very important and it gained the score $S=3,69$. It should be underlined that within the networks of cooperating enterprises which relations are based on trusting and engagement, the problem of the quality is picking up a new meaning. Every participant of the agreement must put the great significance to the quality problems because it is a guarantor of the long-standing and stable cooperation. Not obeying procedures, any drifts from adopted norms or not respecting the conditions of a contract can contribute to the disintegration of the arrangement and place the enterprise in not very comfortable situation.

On the next place in the presented balance sheet there is an improvement in the competitive position of the cooperating enterprises, which rate of the significance for the entire sample amounts to $S=3.59$. Analysing the obtained scores it should be underlined that both in literature as well as in the economic practice, collaboration and cooperation have important position in the process of a company competitiveness improvement. The special significance is put to the cooperation with enterprises with good image and reputation, consolidated renown and the stable economic situation. Such cooperation reduces the risk, stabilizes the activity as well as it ensures the security in the long perspective.

From different variables which stay under the influence of the collaboration and cooperation it is worthwhile pointing at the increase in the exploiting of the production capacities ($S=3.40$) and improvement in the image of the enterprise ($S=3.40$). First of them is peculiarly essential in big-size and production enterprises which thanks to exploiting the outside cooperators can optimize the usage of the possessed park of machines. These enterprises concentrate on these areas of the activities which constitute for them the crucial competence and which are devoted to all resources both material, financial and personal ones. Remaining functions, with lower priority or, in the scope of which enterprises don't specialize, are extracted and allocated to partners for their realization. They carry them out better, more cheap and more quickly. Taking into consideration the second variable,

according to respondents' the cooperation, in the greatest scope, allows to improve the PR of small enterprises and then the medium-size ones which can use the renown and the position of often bigger partners. Subject of the image is appreciated above all by enterprises providing production services.

The essential problem for the majority of enterprises acting in Poland, is the correct and optimal usage of means of production. Misaimed investments, incorrect estimating of demand or mistakes of technical departments amount to unnecessary and increase in useless materials. However examinations indicate that the cooperation between enterprises contributes to the considerable reduction in unnecessary materials what results in the savings of costs, time and place. This problem is noticed above all in medium-size and big-size enterprises dealing with the production.

Among other factors shaped under the influence of cooperation it is worthwhile to point at the abilities and the improvement in education of workers. Particularly big influence in this aspect cooperation has in the group of small-size enterprises acting with a use of Polish capital, providing diversified production services (3.16). The presented result shows that small businessmen appreciate the significance of knowledge in the process of cooperation and actively use all forms of workshops and trainings.

Conclusions

Presented results explicitly underline a positive effect of the collaboration and cooperation among enterprises on their correct functioning and possibility of achieving the benefits which could not be gained on their own. This influence may concern different areas of activity of the enterprise. It starts from the improvement in the profitability through the organization of the production and logistic action and finishing on internal conditions for running a business. Additionally through joint undertakings, combining resources and shared risk the cooperation contributes to the improvement in the competitive position and increase in company value of for both the owners and shareholders as well as workers, contractors and local communities. In spite of positive assumptions the cooperation not always will bring the anticipated effects. Essential problems are connected with a lack of coordination and synchronization of activities, and a lack of the resources compatibility, a contradiction of purposes, a cultural incongruity, a lack of trust and engagement. These negatives are results of bad management as the created relations should be properly managed. Managing should have permanent and dynamic character and concern the examined arrangement as a whole rather than the set of two or large amounts of subjects. The cooperation between enterprises usually has long-term character what means that concluded contracts must have an open character to some extent, enabling their correction following the coming changes. Changes can have different character starting from small alterations, and finishing with the revision of the entire agreement. Thus the preferred management mechanisms are based on the mutual sympathy, understanding and approval.