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## The mechanism of building competitiveness through strategic partnering

### 1. Introduction

In recent years, the birth of “the new normalcy”, characterised by permanently growing uncertainty and complexity of the business environment as well as increasingly dynamic development of organisations, can be seen in the global economy. The results of the literature review also indicate not only the dysfunctionality of business models appreciated hitherto due to their effectiveness, but also a continuous variation of roles of individual market participants, as well as the phenomenon of blurring organisational boundaries (Karpacz 2012, p.103; Sopińska, Gregorczyk 2014). More frequent changes in the configuration of partner network mean that formally defined boundaries of the organisation become less relevant from the point of view of pursuing business objectives, and the real boundaries expand (Santos, Eisenhardt 2005; Stańczyk-Hugiet 2011), enhancing the flexibility of operations. A systematic increase in the role of selection of forms of inter-organisational cooperation, in areas relevant to individual needs, with specific, deliberately-selected partners is also evident. As a result, the

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efficiency of organisations managed in a modern manner is determined by the quality of the entire network of connections and shaped in the course of historical development of dependencies to third parties. The way they interact and their attitudes towards the environment are the key distinguishing features of individual enterprises, reflections of their identity, and not, as previously, minor features (Hakanson, Snehota 2006). Moreover, the survival and long-term development, as well as market competitiveness, which forms the basis of existence of any organisation, depend increasingly on the characteristics and maturity of the cooperation pursued (Lechner et al. 2006; Strategor 2009; Adamik 2009a, 2009b, Dyer 1997). As a result, competition for values gained from relations created in the market is increasingly being treated as the third pillar of the modern theory of strategy, preceded by competition for products and markets as well as resources and competences. Thus, a revision of the essence and a change in the perception of the current methods of generating competitiveness become a prerequisite for the success of modern enterprises. Therefore, finding strategic and operational solutions that are the most adequate to modern market conditions, as well as supporting the creation of competitiveness, seem to be priority tasks for the researchers of this issue.

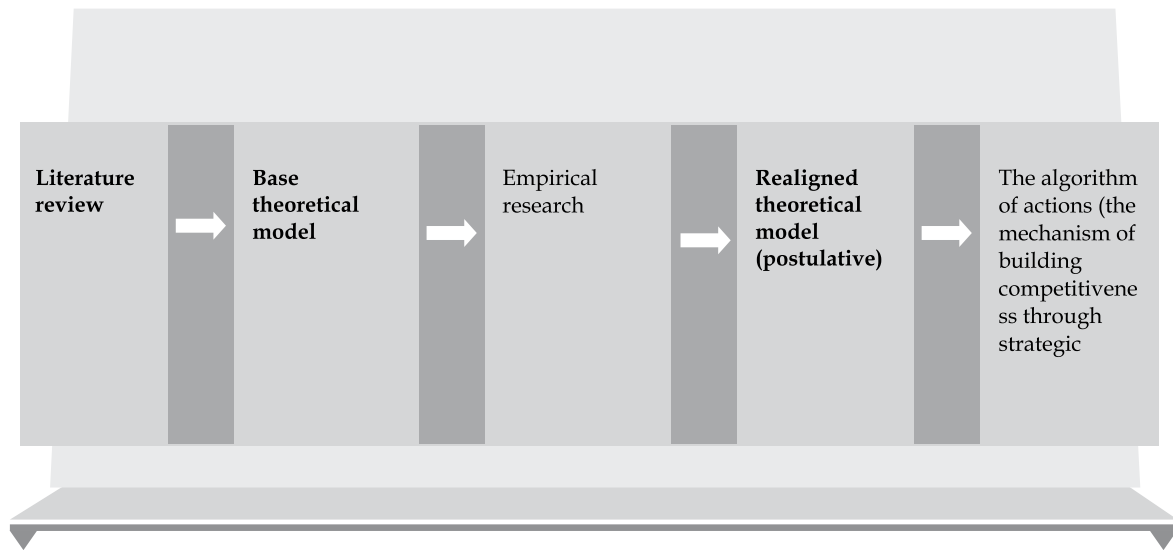
The challenge has been taken on in this paper and the use of strategic partnering in the processes aimed at increasing competitiveness has been proposed, in the light of the fact that strategic partnering, as one of the more mature forms of inter-organisational cooperation, is nowadays also the most effective method to support strategic activities of enterprises. The aim of analyses is to identify and systematise the key actions in the mechanism of building competitiveness through **strategic partnering of enterprises**. It seems that it might provide an interesting form of support for operational activities of many organisations, i.e. real decision-making processes undertaken when planning relations, investments, transformations, changes, or any other type of activity within the framework of the proposed strategy to build or improve market competitiveness. For this purpose, a literature review in the field of theory of organisation, theory of cooperation, theory of partnering and theory of competitiveness was carried out. Empirical research designed to verify preliminary theoretical assumptions was also completed. Quantitative research (surveys) as well as qualitative research (extended case studies) was conducted. The study was based on the research procedure modelled on forecasting methods of searching for solutions to organisational problems, i.e. on creative (lateral) thinking.

## 2. Research procedure

Taking the view that, in accordance with the interpretative and symbolic paradigm of management sciences, there are different types of interdependences in complex social and organisational systems that enterprises are and that their recognition, understanding and description is the key to improving the efficiency of the organisation, multi-faceted characterisation and analyses of interdependences concerning strategic partnering were undertaken. Significant support in the study was provided by the perspective of the cognitive theory of organisation (Eden, Spender 1998) which, being a part of the interpretative and symbolic vision of the organisation as a social field where interests of various groups and social actors clash, leads to the conclusion that owners and managers in the course of their managerial activities and strategic decision-making (including decisions related to partnering) shape the conditions of organisational "game", involving various social and market groups (employees, suppliers, customers, competitors and other stakeholders). Strategic partnering is an element of this game. This game takes the form of various investments that generate a return over time of financial, cultural or social capital invested and result in **competitiveness of the organisation**.

Due to the fact that, in the course of considerations, attempts were made to find new opportunities and solutions in the area concerning the still quite poorly recognised issue of the mechanism of building strategic partnering for the purpose of deliberate strengthening of business competitiveness, the study was based on the research procedure modelled on forecasting methodology of searching for solutions to organisational problems. A. Strauss and J.M. Corbin (1990) recommend that such studies should begin with the analysis of literature to identify all, even non-linear and iterative, categories related to the issue. This procedure was also applied in the undertaken **research process** (see figure 1).

In the course of the **literature review**, the analysis and critique of publications, theoretical foundations of the issue were systematised and the author familiarised herself with the work of other researchers. Thus, fundamental relationships and interdependences between competitiveness and strategic partnering of enterprises were established. The key was the fact that although the maturity of strategic partnering is currently a poorly examined and undervalued phenomenon (Adamik 2013, pp. 13-25), it is still an important determinant of effectiveness of the processes shaping competitiveness of enterprises. This diagnosis led to the formulation of a proposal regarding a new approach to



**Figure 1. The steps in the procedure for the identification of the mechanism of building competitiveness through strategic partnering of enterprises**

Source: own study

define competitiveness, as well as strategic partnering, and the creation of a framework of the concept of shaping competitiveness through building mature strategic partnering (Adamik 2015). On their basis, a **theoretical model for the mechanism generating competitiveness through mature strategic partnering of enterprises** was formulated. Empirical research was another step in the research procedure adopted. A survey<sup>1</sup>, providing an overall view of the respondents' approach to the process of building competitiveness through

1 In the years 2008-2014, 251 SMEs operating in Poland were examined by means of primary indirect survey with the use of a handed-out questionnaire. An original, extensive questionnaire was the measuring tool. It contained questions concerning the respondents' partnering behaviour. The study encompassed enterprises included in the group of small and medium-sized enterprises, i.e. employing up to 249 people, operating in Poland. Micro-enterprises were the dominant group of respondents as they accounted for 67.7% of the research sample, small enterprises ranked second (23.9%) and medium-sized ones ranked third (8.4%). Trade and services enterprises were the largest group of respondents (31.9%), followed by manufacturing, trade and services enterprises (22.3%), services (18.3%), retail trade (16.7%), and wholesale trade (10%.) Analysing the scope of cooperative activities, it was established that 48% of the respondents cooperated at the regional and national level, 37% pursued such activities only at the regional level and 14% at the regional, national and international level.

strategic partnering was conducted. The next step involved enhanced case studies of selected enterprises<sup>2</sup> aimed at gaining not only a comprehensive description of the processes of their maturing in terms of strategic partnering, but also in the context of competition in which they occur. After processing and systematising the collected primary data as well as conducting the necessary analyses and induction operations, the usefulness of the theoretical model was verified and a **model adapted to the conditions in which the respondents operate, i.e. a practical, realigned and at the same postulative model**, was constructed. Its basis is formed by a specific **algorithm of building competitiveness through mature strategic partnering**. The algorithm encompasses individual modules of the postulative model and the related activities, their objective, duration and pointers concerning the implementation. It seems that it is the most realistic **reflection of the mechanisms that shape competitiveness of enterprises through strategic partnering**.

### 3. Research assumptions

Based on the literature review as well as the long-term and multi-faceted analyses of the issue conducted by the author, the following assumptions were made in the study:

1. **Competitiveness of the enterprise** is its ability to conduct a multi-level market game to gain a dynamic balance in terms of shaping favourable relations with the wider business environment and business environment institutions. It is governed by specific game rules and requires not only an adequate level of maturity, but also preparation and support on the part of the participating players (mature teamwork) (Adamik 2015, p. 44).
2. The use of the concept of the inter-organisational game with the environment to describe the process of shaping business competitiveness increases the understanding not only of the specifics of organisational operations, but also reduces the uncertainty related to the behaviour of elements of the environment in relation to the enterprise and paves the way for a new philosophy of management of competitiveness - dynamic and open management directed outside the organisation, based on its conscious cooperation and partnering with the environment (Adamik 2015, p. 56).

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2 Thus, the case study of 3 SMEs of various sizes - micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises - was conducted.

3. **Strategic partnering** should be treated as a close, multi-faceted (subject-based, functional, attribute-based, systemic and situational) integration with the market environment, which not only strengthens enterprises (e.g. in terms of the necessary contributions, building public trust, supporting marketability of their products and processes , building their image and reputation), but also strongly embeds these entities in the given market environment and generates increasingly new ways of playing the game of competitiveness in other arenas (building their market position, enhancing competitiveness of market activities, their flexibility, efficiency, etc.). The maturity of these actions is today one of the most important elements on the road to long-term business competitiveness (Adamik 2015, p. 348).
4. The organisation's maturity in terms of the given phenomenon is the degree of its preparation to perform the related tasks and achieve its objectives in a comprehensive manner (Skrzypek 2013, pp. 11-26). It is also an attribute of the functioning of people, as well as the organisation, hence the typical way to define maturity is to describe it as a normatively postulated and socially respected manner of behaviour (Mellibruda 1980). Thus the **maturity of strategic partnering of enterprises concerns their behaviour in internal relations** (between the owners, between the owners and employees, between employees) and **external relations** (with suppliers, customers, competitors, social and public organisations), hence with **different types of stakeholders. It can also be seen from different perspectives.**
5. Each enterprise in the course of its operations and relationships with the environment shapes strategic partnering in its own specific way in the following five key areas: subject-related, functional, attribute-related, systemic and situational (Adamik 2015, p.157).
6. Partnering in the subject-related area illustrates the climate of confidence in its activities generated by the enterprise, partnering in the functional area demonstrates the enterprise's experience in developing cooperative relations, partnering in the attribute-related area points to the ability to select partners characterised by the parameters that are crucial for partnering, partnering in the systemic area reveals the extent of support of individual functional areas of the enterprise by partnering actions and partnering in the situational area indicates the level of integration of planes of partnering cooperation with different stakeholders of the organisation into a mature system – see table 1 (Adamik 2014, pp. 71-83).



**Table 1. Perspectives of the perception of strategic partnering in modern organisations**

Attitude	The nature of the approach/the perspective of the perception of partnering	The method of partnering assessment
Subject-related	It is a specific, isolated from the environment, autonomous entity - a partner (e.g.: through its name, logo, placement in space - location, address - organisational and legal form, etc.) characterised by unique formal parameters (e.g.: limited liability partnership or joint venture) and relationship structure (defining the scope of subordination, its impact in relations with the market environment, etc.).	We assess the identity of the given organisation, its organisational and legal form, the structure of its economic ties, their relevance to the requirements of cooperation and on their basis the enterprise's openness to close inter-organisational cooperation and the level of trust generated in the environment.
Functional	It is a system of actions, activities and processes performed to bring about partnering cooperation, processes to develop long-term, strategically important, close relationships between the organisation and its partners based on best business practices.	We evaluate a set of tasks (processes) that occur, or should occur, in order for the organisation to effectively pursue its objectives through partnering cooperation e.g.: the nature and quality of the process of resource sharing, the quality of communication, the effectiveness of the processes of knowledge and information sharing with selected cooperation partners, etc.
Attribute-related	It is a system of features that are gained (or not) in the course of creating such partnering cooperation relations, e.g.: openness to cooperation and collaboration, commitment, convergence of resources with partners, ethics, tolerance, social responsibility.	We estimate parameters of the organisation in the context of relations with partners (its „partnering capability“), e.g.: complementarity of resources and skills of partners, cultural and organisational compatibility, commitment symmetry e.g.: in terms of investment, durability of relationships, co-specialisation of resources, etc.
Systemic	It is coordination of functional, operational areas of the organisation and its partners; their interaction generates partnering of the organisation as a whole and its partnering with the environment; similarly to the organisational system, it includes social, technological, structural or cultural partnering.	We assess the quality and outcomes of partnering in various subsystems of the organisation (area partnering) and at the level of the organisation as a whole (systemic partnering).

<b>Situational</b>	<p>It is a system of relationships that are built in connection with the creation, operation and development of partnering; it is embedding the organisation's activities in planes of partnering relations that expand along with its partnering maturity, ranging from the internal plane (the system of internal organisational contacts), through the inter-organisational plane (in vertical as well as horizontal systems) to the inter-sectoral plane. Adapting the organisation to the environment (partnering with the environment) depends on the ability on the part of its management to identify emerging conditions and know how to respond to them.</p>	<p>We assess, among others: partnering with employees, with the supply chain, partnering with customers, competitors, local communities, as well as public-private partnering, etc.</p>
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**Source:** based on A. Adamik, Przesuwanie granic wiedzy o organizacji poprzez pryzmat partnerstwa [in:] A. Sopińska, S. Gregorczyk (ed.) Granice strukturalnej złożoności organizacji, Oficyna Wydawnicza Szkoła Główna Handlowa w Warszawie, 2014, pp. 76-77

7. Each of the areas of partnering determines the overall maturity level of strategic partnering, affecting the level of competitiveness of the enterprise; according to D. Fisher, the diagnosed greater maturity of the given process generally reflects its higher efficiency, lower costs, greater satisfaction of its customers, and building on this basis a more sustainable competitive advantage of the enterprise (Fisher 2004).
8. Manifestations of synergistic effect derived from the developed partnering relations (in the form of e.g.: raising the level of market competitiveness, effectiveness of the competitiveness strategy and attractiveness of products and processes, flexibility of operation, effectiveness of building a competitive advantage, as well as the overall operational efficiency) felt by the enterprise are the indicators showing the impact of strategic partnering on business competitiveness (Adamik 2015, p.183).
9. In individual areas one can identify partnering activities that most effectively strengthen the maturity of strategic partnering and, therefore, support competitiveness of enterprises in the best manner; enterprises with consciously planned, multi-faceted partnering thanks to the support of partners - appropriate at the given moment - are better able to cope in the market and generate more dynamic long-term growth (Kotzab, Teller 2003, pp.268-281).



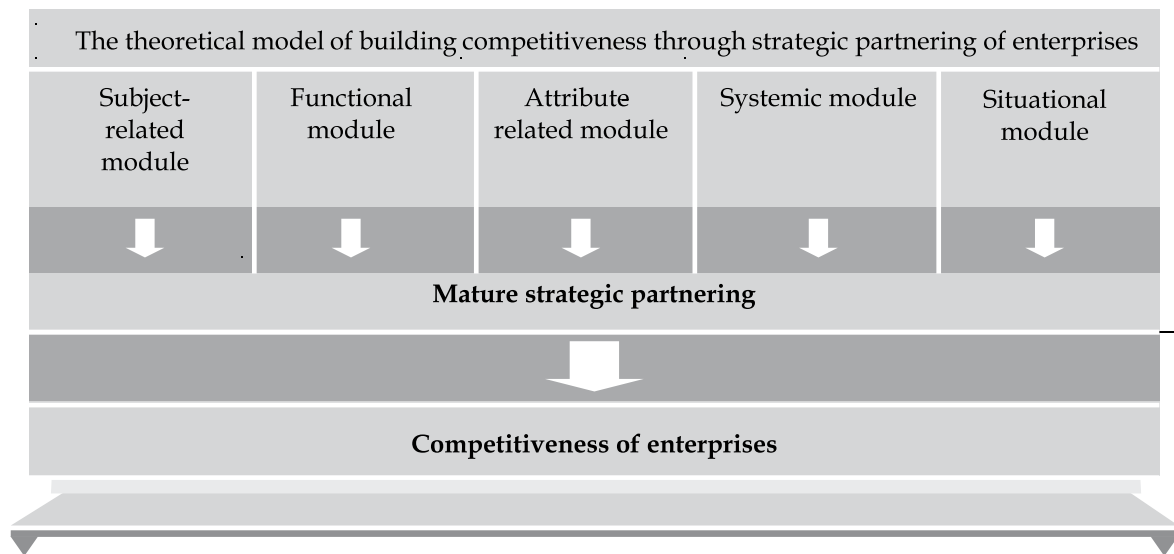
10. A combination of knowledge about the most effective partnering actions and the accompanying synergetic effects in terms of competitiveness can result in a list of factors generating business competitiveness of enterprises through strategic partnering, which will help to identify the mechanism of creating their competitiveness by building the maturity of strategic partnering (Adamik 2015, p.184).

#### 4. The mechanism of building competitiveness through strategic partnering of enterprises - modelling of the algorithm of activities

The initially proposed, and later realigned (postulative) theoretical model ultimately formulated in the form of the algorithm of the mechanism generating competitiveness through mature strategic partnering of enterprises is a five-module construct. It is based on knowledge about strategic partnering of enterprises in five areas: subject-related, functional, attribute-related, systemic and situational. For its construction and clarity, simplifications, abstractions and generalisations necessary for modelling processes were used.

The base model (depicted in figure 2) assumes that **each of the modules influences the maturity growth of partnering in equal measure**, yet each one generates specific strengths to support the quality and efficiency of partnering activities conducted by the enterprise. The efficiency of the entire system depends on the efficiency of its individual modules. To ensure the survival, development and raising competitiveness of the enterprise, each of the modules should be optimally used by the organisation. The level of their exploitation testifies to the area maturity of strategic partnering and affects the overall assessment of the entire system. The **modules**, as well as the individual perspectives of the perception of partnering, **complement each other** to form together a full, clear, multi-faceted, comprehensive picture of the maturity of the given organisation's strategic partnering. **All of the modules should be** socially recognised and empirically **exploited** by enterprises **to comprehensively and maturely build their competitiveness**.

For the purpose of the preliminary modelling of the process of maturing of strategic partnering, equal treatment of the partnering modules seemed to be sufficient. For the operationalisation of the activities, the modules and the related pointers required, however, some organisation and systematisation. The pointers how to do it were provided by empirical research conducted for this purpose. They revealed important details and the role of individual partnering



**Figure 2. The theoretical model of building competitiveness through strategic partnering of enterprises**

Source: own study

activities. Comparing partnering parameters with the corresponding parameters of competitiveness proved to be particularly relevant in this context. Thus, the base model of the process of maturing partnering became more detailed. The modules and the related activities became associated with their implementers, objective, duration, manner and place of execution. It is illustrated by the **algorithm of building competitiveness through mature strategic partnering** presented in table 2.

Its five steps designate the main partnering activities detailing who, when, what, how, where, and why should pursue them for the sake of the maturity of strategic partnering. It suggests that **in the first stage** of activities, primarily the owners, and then the managers, are responsible for initiating and implementing the process of building mature partnering (Lichtarski 2012, p. 65 onwards).

Relationships within and between these groups form the basis for the smooth implementation of partnering between employees, and then between the organisation and its partners, first contractual ones such as suppliers, customers and even competitors, and subsequently contextual partners, i.e. public and social organisations, as it is more difficult to develop stable and sustainable relations with them (Frąckiewicz-Wronka, Bratnicki 2012, pp. 343-381; Frąckiewicz-Wronka 2012).

They should design such mechanisms of the organisation's operations to create the climate of partnering, first in internal relations and then in external ones. Thus, they are responsible for designing and implementing sustainable development and growth open to the environment, taking into account the principles of comprehensive management (Suszyński 2012, p.15 onwards). Its direct implementers, i.e. employees of the particular organisation, and then its partner companies, become responsible for the effectiveness of partnering at the stage of implementing these plans (Wu, McMullen, Neubert, Yi 2008, pp. 587-602).

**The second step** of the algorithm dictates that it is best to begin activities by building the identity and autonomy (Karpacz 2012; Stańczyk-Hugiet 2012; Lumpkin, Cogliser, Schneider 2009), as well as close relations and trust - first by initiating by the enterprise the process of building internal strategic partnering (building the subjectivity in the owner-employees relations), and then in relations with external partners (building relational experience) (Niemczyk, Stańczyk-Hugiet, Jasiński 2012). In continuing and deepening the organisation's experience in partnering cooperation, it is advisable to use all the methods and tools strengthening the efficiency of harmonious, sustainable and frequent activities based on a mutual commitment of partners. This is the stage in which the role of knowledge, skills, and, above all, understanding as well as activity on the part of all employees involved in building strategic partnering of enterprises grows.

**Table 2. The algorithm of building competitiveness through mature strategic partnering**

Building mature strategic partnering for the purpose of increasing competitiveness of enterprises
<i>1. Who? What? When? (situational diagnosis)</i>
<b>Procedure:</b>
<b>Step 1:</b> building and strengthening the base potential of internal partnering (between consubstantial stakeholders - owners, employees, owners and employees)
<b>Step 2:</b> building and strengthening contractual partnering in relations with suppliers and customers
<b>Step 3:</b> building and strengthening contextual partnering with public organisations
<b>Step 4:</b> building and strengthening partnering relationships with competitors - partners in the sectoral environment
<b>Step 5:</b> building and strengthening contextual partnering with social organisations and partners from the environment outside the sector

2. How? (identification of activities and methods of operation)	
2a (on the plane of building subjectivity)	2b (on the plane of building relational experience)
<b>Procedure:</b> <b>Step 1.</b> building identity and autonomy <b>Step 2.</b> building close relations <b>Step 3.</b> building trust	<b>Procedure:</b> <b>Step 1:</b> building harmonious cooperation with partners <b>Step 2:</b> developing durable relations of cooperation <b>Step 3:</b> focus on the frequency of joint actions <b>Step 4:</b> expanding the involvement of partners in the joint actions
3. Where? (identification and systematisation of areas of operation)	
<b>Procedure:</b> <b>Step 1 identifying</b> the basic (operational) <b>activities</b> crucial for the organisation <b>Step 2: building</b> a strong <b>internal potential of partnering relations (intra-organisational)</b> in the framework of the key <b>basic activities</b> (in the area of marketing, production, logistics) <b>Step 3: complementing/strengthening</b> the internal potential with the <b>external potential</b> of partnering relations in the area of <b>basic activities</b> (in the area of marketing, production, logistics) <b>Step 4: complementing/strengthening</b> the internal potential with the strong <b>external potential</b> derived from partnering in the <b>areas of ancillary activities</b> (infrastructure, supply, technology, personnel) <b>Step 5: developing/ complementing networks of partnering relations</b> with subsequent <b>ancillary areas</b>	
4. Why? (identification of developed attributes/outcomes of strategic partnering)	
<b>Procedure:</b> <b>Step 1</b> building the strength of partnering based on the tradition of cooperation <b>Step 2:</b> building the strength of strategic partnering <b>Step 3:</b> building the strength of market partnering <b>Step 4:</b> building the strength of partnering of organisational activities <b>Step 5:</b> building the strength of resource partnering <b>Step 6:</b> building the strength of partnering of managers <b>Step 7:</b> building the strength of partnering of organisational culture	
5. Result/Target outcome: Increasing competitiveness of enterprises through mature strategic partnering	

Source: own study

The **third stage** indicates that persons associated with the creation of the quality of cooperation, both internal and inter-organisational, within the

framework of basic activities essential to the value added chain of the organisation (i.e. in the area of marketing, production, or logistics) are particularly responsible for the effectiveness of strategic partnering. With the growth and development of the enterprise, they should be increasingly supported by external partners with a strong potential in this area, as well as a growing network of partners supporting the organisation in the areas of ancillary activities, such as infrastructure, supply, technology, or personnel. Partnering should therefore be first developed in the areas of basic activities, and soon after activities ancillary for the value chain of the enterprise (Fjeldstad, Snow et al. 2012).

**The fourth stage** of the algorithm helps to realise what the above-described steps are for. This can be achieved as a result of the activities described implemented in relations with well-chosen partners. Through good practices in the area of the tradition of inter-organisational cooperation, effective strategies of cooperation and mutually beneficial market behaviour, as well as the efficiency of organisational activities developed as a result of joint efforts of partners and complementary resources, it is possible to strengthen the knowledge potential and expand experience of managers as well as to create with partners a unique culture of partnering cooperation (Krupski 2012, p. 4). Thus, the value for the organisation in the form of increased market competitiveness based on the maturity of strategic partnering will be developed (the fifth stage).

## 5. Conclusions

It seems that the proposed algorithm allows to quite well understand and support the mechanism of building competitiveness through strategic partnering. The skilful addition of operationalisation tools, e.g.: in the form of a set of checklists or other diagnostic tools, can help to identify the level of maturity and critical areas in building partnering in the case of individual organisations as well as larger populations. Comparing information on the maturity of strategic partnering of several individual organisations, one can also make an attempt at their positioning or creating their ranking, identifying differences in the approaches to strategic partnering among the analysed entities - strategies of building partnering relations, or establishing a list of the most popular activities - a list of the so-called good partnering practices. The data can be helpful in re-organisational or restructuring activities of the studied enterprises, for example, by constituting a basis for benchmarking or providing an inspiration to establish strategic partnering

in specific forms and areas (e.g.: by increasing outsourcing of transportation or warehousing activity, deepening cooperation with competitors or environmental organisations).

It seems that using accumulated in the various modules of the described system **knowledge** bases about the processes shaping strategic partnering of the organisations surveyed and their supporting tools, it is also possible to successfully create an expert system supporting decision-making processes in the area of inter-organisational cooperation<sup>3</sup>. Such a system would facilitate the integration of independent decision-making modules into a single, logically coherent whole. Applying the principle of concurrency, i.e., parallel processing of information about the analysed areas, would result in shortening the overall processing time and its more speedy functioning. This kind of tool could provide valuable support for knowledge management, i.e. a set of processes that allow to transform tacit knowledge held by employees of the organisation and its environment into explicit knowledge valuable for the organisation in order to obtain a competitive advantage, implemented by modern enterprises (Polanyi, Sen 2009). Studies show that the role of this type of information and knowledge management tools increases along with globalisation processes and the strengthening of ties of cooperation between enterprises. According to L. Kiełtyka, without the ability to quickly acquire and disseminate information, as well as the skilful use of the knowledge accumulated in the enterprise, one can neither effectively manage, make decisions or create effective strategies (Kiełtyka 2013, p .121) (including also cooperation strategies).

## Summary

### **The mechanism of building competitiveness through strategic partnering**

The paper assumes that strategic partnering, as one of the more mature forms of inter-organisational cooperation, is also an effective method of support for strategic activities of enterprises. In the light of the above, the use of strategic partnering in processes aimed at enhancing their competitiveness was proposed. The aim of the analyses is to identify and systematise the key actions in

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3 The expert system is a set of computer programmes that use databases, models of knowledge and procedures (rules of inference) to solve problems. It is a tool of organisational knowledge management.



the mechanism of building competitiveness through strategic partnering of enterprises. For its implementation, a review of literature in the field of theory of organisation, theory of cooperation and partnering as well as theory of competitiveness was carried out. Empirical research to verify the initial theoretical assumptions was also conducted. Quantitative research (surveys) and qualitative research (extended case studies) was carried out. The study was based on the research procedure modelled on forecasting methods of searching for solutions to organisational problems, i.e. on creative (lateral) thinking. As a result, the algorithm of building competitiveness through mature strategic partnering was formulated and recommendations were made as to the possibility of its practical use.

**Keywords:** *competitiveness of enterprises, strategic partnering, perspectives of strategic partnering perception, maturity of strategic partnering, algorithm of building competitiveness through strategic partnering.*

#### **Streszczenie**

##### **Mechanizm budowy konkurencyjności przedsiębiorstw poprzez partnerstwo strategiczne**

W opracowaniu przyjęto, że partnerstwo strategiczne, będąc jedną z bardziej dojrzałych form współpracy międzyorganizacyjnej, jest też skuteczną metodą wsparcia działań strategicznych przedsiębiorstw. Zaproponowano w związku z powyższym wykorzystanie go do procesów podnoszenia ich konkurencyjności. Jako cel analiz postawiono zidentyfikowanie i usystematyzowanie kluczowych działań mechanizmu kształtowania konkurencyjności poprzez partnerstwo strategiczne przedsiębiorstw. Dla jego realizacji przeprowadzono przegląd literatury z zakresu teorii organizacji, teorii współpracy, teorii partnerstwa oraz teorii konkurencyjności. Zrealizowano także badania empiryczne mające na celu zweryfikowanie wstępnych założeń teoretycznych. Przeprowadzono zarówno badania ilościowe (ankietowe), jak i jakościowe (rozszerzone studia przypadków). Badania osadzono na procedurze badawczej wzorowanej na prognostycznej metodyce poszukiwania rozwiązań problemu organizatorskiego, a więc myśleniu twórczym (lateralnym). W ich wyniku sformułowano

algorytm budowy konkurencyjności poprzez dojrzałe partnerstwo strategiczne oraz rekomendacje co do możliwości jego praktycznego wykorzystania.

### Słowa

**kluczowe:** konkurencyjność przedsiębiorstw, partnerstwo strategiczne, perspektywy postrzegania partnerstwa strategicznego, dojrzewanie partnerstwa strategicznego, algorytm budowy konkurencyjności poprzez partnerstwo strategiczne.

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