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CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND THE SUPPLY CHAIN

CSR COLLABORATION WITH SUPPLIERS

Monika Jedynak

Corporate Social Responsibility and the Supply Chain

Due to the growing importance of global interdependencies, corporate social responsibility has become an important issue both for the business and the entire society. Customers expect corporate social responsibility, and if an organization is insensitive to these issues, it runs the risk of losing its key customers. The interaction and integration of corporate social responsibility and supply chain management have led to the emergence of sustainable supply chain management. This book is a comprehensive study that deals with the subject of collaboration with suppliers, considering the CSR guidelines. It presents new research about suppliers, their importance in supply chains, and in the context of social responsibility and acts as a new source of content that fills the gap in this area. It may be of interest to researchers interested in CSR as well as supply chains, business relations, and, broadly understood, collaboration. It provides knowledge to many recipients including scientists and researchers, advanced students, and graduates.

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Introduction

The demands of the marketplace mean that for many organizations, sharing resources and knowledge with partners has become essential in order to provide customers with the product or service of value they expect. Moreover, shortening product life cycles and increasing competition or unpredictable environmental changes also stimulate collaboration. Business objectives appear to be easier or achievable through collaboration across initiatives rather than the efforts of a single organization.

Interorganizational cooperation represents an important area of scientific research; however, it continues to capture the attention of researchers. The phenomenon of collaboration is analyzed through the lens of various approaches, theories, and concepts.

Collaboration with partners, in the light of management science, is considered, among other things, in relation to stakeholder relationships. Adopting such a perspective means that a company can be perceived as a set of interdependent relationships with stakeholders (Hillman & Keim, 2001), among which suppliers play a crucial role. Collaboration between a company and its suppliers can offer numerous opportunities.

Due to the growing importance of global interdependence, corporate social responsibility (CSR), incorporating environmental, social, and economic aspects into an organization's operations, has become an important issue for both the business world and society at large. Customers expect social responsibility from businesses, and if an organization is insensitive to CSR issues, it runs the risk of losing its key customers. CSR principles must be integrated with the company's goals and attempts to maximize profit and minimize risk and be factored into relationships with stakeholders, including suppliers. Potentially, socially or environmentally irresponsible actions by suppliers can negatively impact a company's success or image.

The interaction and integration of corporate social responsibility and supply chain management have led to the emergence of the concept of sustainable supply chain management. Anticipated factors such as the growing importance of climate change, the demand for transparency,

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increased environmental pollution, energy prices, geopolitical upheavals, and consumer awareness will undoubtedly contribute to strengthening the importance of such supply chains. Consequently, they will influence the collaboration undertaken with suppliers.

It is expected that businesses will be responsible members of their communities, as negative perceptions of business continue to intensify (Scandelius & Cohen, 2016). Irresponsible practices when working with suppliers have attracted considerable attention and are one of the dark spots in the literature on socially responsible supply chains. In this context, CSR practices have become an important component of supplier collaboration, necessitating the integration of the two areas.

This book provides a synthesis of issues related to interorganizational collaboration, with a particular focus on a specific type of stakeholders, namely suppliers. It consists of five parts, each divided into three chapters. The first and second parts address the theme of collaboration, including collaboration with suppliers based on various management theories and concepts. The third and fourth parts provide a synthesis of the development of the CSR concept to date and discuss theories and models related to CSR. The fifth part constitutes a synthesis and integration of CSR and collaboration with suppliers.

Part 1

Interorganizational collaboration

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1 The essence of collaboration in the enterprise

Introduction

Collaboration is a subject of interest for disciplines such as economics, management, sociology, anthropology, psychology, and political science, as well as organizational behavior, organizational theory, and strategic management. The challenges of market turbulence and increasing competition brought about by globalization are motivating companies to engage in collaborative processes, which are perceived as a way to achieve greater flexibility and resilience. This trend is accompanied by the emergence of new organizational structures, supporting technologies or forms of cooperation that provide environments conducive to interorganizational collaboration. In order to establish successful collaborative coalitions, a number of requirements need to be met, including sharing goals among members, gaining a certain level of mutual trust, creating some shared infrastructures, and agreeing, in whole or in part, on certain practices and values (Abreu et al., 2009; Krot & Lewicka, 2011).

Definition of collaboration

The issue of collaboration is deeply embedded in business management. It forms the basis of interorganizational relationships such as alliances, partnerships, buyer–supplier relationships, or cross-sector partnerships (Czakon, 2007; Lichtarski, 1992).[1] When describing relationships between economic entities, collaboration refers to the joint activities of partners to achieve common goals that would otherwise be unfeasible or costly (Maloni & Benton, 2000; Metcalf et al., 1992; Palmatier et al., 2006). Emphasizing the purposefulness of actions and specific behaviors is crucial in defining collaboration (Brito et al., 2014). The behaviors that define collaboration may reflect the ability to work together to achieve a common goal by sharing resources, skills and information (Belkadi et al., 2017). It is equally important to pay attention to the long-term nature of the relationship in which

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the parties share information and collaborate to plan or modify business practices to jointly improve efficiency (Nyaga et al., 2010).

The majority of definitions of cooperation focus on the process in which individuals, groups, and organizations come together, interact, and establish psychological relationships for mutual goals or benefits. A review of various ways of defining the concept of cooperation is provided in Table 1.1.

In the cited literature review on collaboration, it is possible to identify a rather distinctive approach to the concept and definition of collaboration. Collaboration is often identified as a social relationship based on joint action and assistance in achieving a common goal. In some definitions, in addition to indicating common goals pursued by entities, there is the aspect of overcoming the fear of opportunism (Das & Teng, 1998; Parkhe, 1993) and trust (Daudi et al., 2016; Hardy et al., 2005; Lewicka & Zakrzewska-Bielawska, 2020; Parkhe, 1993; Todeva & Knoke, 2005) as a result of collaboration.

Interorganizational relationships commonly emerge in the form of collaborative work (Hoetker & Mellewigt, 2009; Knoben & Oerlemans, 2006; Latusek-Jurczak, 2011; Salvato et al., 2017), engagement (Gray, 1989; Hardy & Phillips, 1998), and actions driven by the spirit of agreement and consensus on expected beneficial goals or creation of added value. While definitions of collaboration emphasize the joint pursuit of a common goal by businesses and other entities, these behaviors can also take the form of noncooperative behavior (Gulati et al., 2012).

Most definitions highlight that collaboration takes place between organizations and is an interorganizational phenomenon. The focus on interorganizational cooperation stems from researchers' interest in the relationship between cooperation and institutional processes and structures.[2] According to this approach, it is essential to answer the question of who? what entity is involved in the process of collaboration? In contrast to the interorganizational perspective, there are definitions that emphasize the role of individuals (Gazley, 2017; Ring & Van De Ven, 1994; Salvato et al., 2017; Smith et al., 1995) or groups (including stakeholders) (Gray, 1989; Smith et al., 1995).

Definitions restrict cooperative relationships to those that are not created through market mechanisms, thus serving as an alternative to the price mechanism (Beck & Plowman, 2014; Majchrzak et al., 2015; Phillips et al., 2000). Among the regulatory mechanisms mentioned are rules, norms and structures (Beck & Plowman, 2014; Gray, 1989), procedures (Todeva & Knoke, 2005), agreements, contracts, and social norms (Czakon, 2007). Definitions also exclude relationships that involve control of the process by authorized bodies, as collaboration is achieved through the negotiation of roles and responsibilities (Hardy et al., 2003; Ring & Van De Ven, 1994), voluntary participation (Hardy & Phillips, 1998), and is of a long-term and nonincidental nature (Klimas, 2014).

Table 1.1 Selected approaches to collaboration

Author	*Definition*	*Theory*
(Gray, 1989)	Dynamic relationships involving coordinated actions based on shared goals. Collaboration occurs when a group of autonomous stakeholders within a problem domain engage in an interactive process, using common rules, norms, and structures to act or decide on issues related to the domain.	Strategic management
(Alter, 1990)	Dominant behavior of organizations in complex communities.	Strategic management
(Lichtarski, 1992)	Mutually consistent and complementary actions that have a positive impact on achieving organizational goals. It is a multistakeholder effort aimed at achieving mutually nonconflicting objectives.	General management
(Parkhe, 1993)	It is based on two fundamental elements: 1) initiating mutually beneficial relationships, catalyzed by favorable calculations of discounted future payoffs from collaboration and the commitment of certain credible, significant, irretrievable investments on both sides; and 2) the fading of fear of opportunism as partners build a shared history and mutual trust develops between them.	Strategic alliances, game theory, transaction cost theory
(Ring & Van De Ven, 1994)	The willingness of individuals to engage in collaboration. The relationships that form collaboration are socially contrived mechanisms of collective action that are constantly shaped and restructured by the actions and symbolic interpretations of the parties involved.	Strategic management
(Smith et al., 1995)	The process by which individuals, groups, and organizations come together, interact, and form psychological relationships for mutual gain or benefit.	Strategic management
(Das & Teng, 1998)	The willingness of a partnering organization to pursue mutually compatible interests in an alliance instead of engaging in opportunistic behavior.	Strategic alliances
(Gulati & Singh, 1998)	Collaboration involves the costs of coordination, understood as the anticipated organizational complexity of allocating task among partners, along with ongoing coordination of actions to be carried out jointly or individually across organizational boundaries. It also entails the associated scope of communication and decision-making that would be necessary.	Strategic alliances

(*Continued*)

Table 1.1 (Continued)

Author	*Definition*	*Theory*
(Hardy & Phillips, 1998)	A strategy of mutual engagement in which all partners participate voluntarily.	Strategic management
(Phillips et al., 2000)	A cooperative relationship between organizations that is based neither on the market nor on hierarchical control mechanisms.	Institutional theory
(Jagoda & Lichtarski, 2002)	Repetitive and relatively permanent ties between enterprises, manifested in various forms commonly referred to as forms of collaboration, legal and organizational forms of integration, or forms of corporate integration.	General management
(Hardy et al., 2003)	A cooperative, interorganizational relationship negotiated as part of an ongoing process of communication. Through collaboration, organizations pool resources and knowledge to address problems that would otherwise be unsolvable.	Strategic management, knowledge management
(Czakon, 2005)	Interaction between enterprises, involving the exchange of information, material, or energy, where the parties involved demonstrate commitment, and this attitude is mutual.	Network theory
(Hardy et al., 2005)	Cooperative, interorganizational action that generates innovative, synergistic solutions and balances divergent stakeholder concerns.	Strategic management
(Todeva & Knoke, 2005)	Normative reciprocity, trust and social capital. Includes capital, procedures and organizational practices.	Strategic alliances
(Knoben & Oerlemans, 2006)	Organizations working together. In interorganizational collaboration, three dimensions of proximity are significant: geographic proximity, organizational proximity, and technological proximity.	Proximity principle
(Parung & Bititci, 2006, 2008)	Working together for mutual benefit.	Network theory
(Czakon, 2007)	Collaboration is based on both formal commitments (agreements or contracts) and informal commitments based on social norms.	Strategic management
(Fiedler & Deegan, 2007)	A process in which parties recognize the diversity of problems and strive for constructive resolution of differences.	General management
(Hoetker & Mellewigt, 2009)	Pooling of resources, division of labor among partners, and then integration of distributed activities, all of which are key to generating value in the alliance.	Strategic alliances, relational management

(*Continued*)

Table 1.1 (Continued)

Author	*Definition*	*Theory*
(Ritala & Ellonen, 2010)	Strategic relationships between business organizations that go beyond long-distance transactions but fall short of a total consolidation of resources.	Strategic management, competitive advantage
(Strzyżewska, 2011)	Collaboratively performing activities aimed at implementing projects and achieving benefits for its participants.	General management
(Latusek-Jurczak, 2011)	Collaboration or interorganizational relationships are configurations in which the resources of two or more organizations are combined to collectively create added value.	General management
(Gulati et al., 2012)	The joint pursuit of (an) agreed-upon goal(s) in a manner that aligns with a shared understanding of inputs and benefits. Cooperation, in this perspective, is a behavioral outcome that can vary in quality; the relationship between organizations can range from highly cooperative to highly non-cooperative, depending on the partners' agreement on providing and allocating resources for joint efforts.	Strategic alliances
(Niemczyk et al., 2012)	Working with others when at least two entities have mutually complementary goals.	Network theory
(Beck & Plowman, 2014)	A cooperative, interactive process in which participants from different organizations, without relying on market mechanisms or legal frameworks, develop common rules, norms, and structures to act and make decisions on matters related to a common problem.	Complexity theory
(Klimas, 2014)	Long-term and nonincidental linkage (relationships) of autonomous entities.	Network theory
(Tsanos et al., 2014)	A process that people use to create, adapt, and recreate supply chain organizations.	Buyer–supplier relationships, supply chain
(Majchrzak et al., 2015)	A cooperative, interorganizational relationship negotiated through an ongoing communication process that is not based on either the market or hierarchical control mechanisms.	Strategic alliances, *joint ventures*, networks, buyer–seller relationship management
(Briscoe & Rogan, 2016)	The integration or bringing together of different parts of an organization to accomplish a collective set of tasks.	Human resource management, knowledge management, networks

(*Continued*)

Table 1.1 (Continued)

Author	*Definition*	*Theory*
(Durugbo, 2016)	Joint effort or collective actions that require sustained and pervasive relationships.	Network theory
(Daudi et al., 2016)	Trustworthy behaviors of partners, incorporating an understanding of the aspects that constitute behavioral uncertainty and the mechanisms through which such aspects affect partner trust.	Relationship management
(Lakshminarasimha, 2017)	Key to effective management to deliver the desired value to the customer, resulting in the sharing of information and common performance measures.	Logistics
(Salvato et al., 2017)	The act of collaborative work by two or more individuals to achieve something, carried out in an orderly, efficient, and effective manner toward the achievement of a shared goal, where the alignment of interests is crucial.	Strategic management, organizational theory, behavioral economics
(Gazley, 2017)	Dynamic relationships involving coordinated activities based on shared goals, representing human activity that unfolds at multiple levels.	General management

Source: own study based on the cited literature

To sum up, cooperation is characterized by the preservation of the autonomy of collaborating organizations, mutual alignment goals among partners, and joint implementation of activities. It is based on voluntary participation and is not subject to external control, although control mechanisms can be both formal and informal. The main premise is the achievement of common rather than individual goals through collective rather than individual actions. Through strategic alliances, networks, and other types of business partnerships, companies strive to improve their performance by sharing resources, skills, and risks.

Coopetition as a form of collaboration

In the context of explaining the process of collaboration, the perspective of coopetition allows for a broader understanding by considering the paradoxical nature of relationships, the acceptance of which is a necessary element for success. Coopetition refers to collaboration under specific conditions of partial compatibility and partial contradiction of goals. Therefore, collaboration is a component, although it cannot be unequivocally determined whether it is polar or orthogonal (Czakon, 2013), understood as collaboration with competitors, coopetition has gained importance, primarily due to the increasing pace of technological changes, scarcity of resources,

unstable economic development, and challenges associated with globalization (Bengtsson et al., 2010; Bouncken et al., 2016; Czakon & Dana, 2013; Gast et al., 2015; Grzybowska, 2016). Simultaneous collaboration and competition give rise to a contradictory and paradoxical relationship (Bengtsson & Kock, 2014; Bengtsson et al., 2016; Gorzelany-Dziadkowiec, 2018; Raza-Ullah, 2020; Stańczyk-Hugiet, 2011). When collaborating, organizations strive to create value and shared benefits, while competition requires opportunistic behavior and personal gains (Gnyawali et al., 2016; Khanna et al., 1998; Raza-Ullah et al., 2014).

Coopetition is a strategic and dynamic process in which entities collaboratively create value through cooperative interaction while simultaneously competing to capture a share of that value. Depending on the balance between collaboration and competition, coopetition can exhibit varying degrees of intensity (Bouncken et al., 2015). Collaboration combined with competition can generate added value by helping firms acquire new knowledge, maintain strategic flexibility, and expand markets (Bouncken et al., 2015; Gnyawali & Park, 2011; Ritala, 2012).

The strategy of coopetition allows for analyzing the process of collaboration between entities while taking into account competitive attitudes, which in turn helps explain the occurrence of opportunism and the pursuit of self-benefits, which should subside with the initiation of collaboration.[3] This approach emphasizes the existence of the synergy effect, which can be achieved through combining collaboration with competition. Through joint actions, firms can share costs, mitigate risks, and achieve economies of scale (Gnyawali & Park, 2011, 2009; Luo, 2007); pool their research and development activities (Walley, 2007); gain access to external knowledge and resources not available within their own organizations (Bengtsson & Kock, 2000; Zakrzewska-Bielawska, 2014); and enhance efficiency and productivity at lower total costs (Chin et al., 2008).

Adopting a coopetition strategy can also result in negative relationship outcomes and lead to a lose-lose situation (Park & Ungson, 2001), which may arise from the inherent contradiction between collaboration and competition within coopetition, and the pursuit of individual benefits is inevitable (Das & Teng, 2000). Therefore, coopetition can be both mutually beneficial (*win–win*) and asymmetrically beneficial (*win-lose*), and its success depends on management (Le Roy & Czakon, 2016; Le Roy et al., 2018). Unlike other forms of collaboration, such as alliances or partnerships, coopetition refers to the mutual relationship of collaboration and competition without prioritizing either of them (Czakon & Dana, 2013). Relationship management should focus on accepting rather than denying or suppressing the conflicting nature of the paradox and striving to create synergy between the paradoxical elements of collaboration and competition (Wilhelm & Sydow, 2018).

Conclusions

The essence of interorganizational collaboration lies in an organization's ability to form strategic partnerships with other organizations to achieve common goals. Interorganizational collaboration enables organizations to attain benefits that they would not be able to achieve on their own. First and foremost, it allows for an increase in the scale of production and distribution, resulting in improved efficiency and effectiveness. Furthermore, interorganizational collaboration facilitates the sharing of knowledge, experience, and resources, which in turn leads to innovation and the development of new solutions. Another significant aspect of interorganizational collaboration is the opportunity to gain a competitive advantage in the market by synergistically leveraging the competence, knowledge, and resources of partners. This collaboration empowers organizations to achieve greater flexibility and responsiveness to market changes, which can bring benefits in the form of market growth and improved competitive position.

Coopetition is a complex form of collaboration that requires commitment and openness from organizations. It also necessitates clear and transparent communication between partners, as well as the ability to manage competition and collaboration in a balanced manner. While coopetition can be challenging to implement, its benefits can bring significant gains and a competitive advantage to organizations in the market.

Notes

1 In English-language literature, three terms related to the category of cooperation are commonly used: *cooperation*, *collaboration*, and *coordination*. They form the basis of interorganizational relationships. *Collaboration* is an umbrella term that is generally used to refer to the act of working together by two or more people to achieve something. This term usually does not provide further specifications regarding the goal and effectiveness of the joint work. *Coordination* typically refers to joint work that is performed in an orderly, efficient, and effective manner, regardless of the level of alignment in the goals between the collaborating parties. *Cooperation* is commonly used to refer to the joint work performed by individuals who have a shared goal, where the common interest plays a crucial role in qualifying the act of working together. The focus is on the individuals working together and the extent to which their individual motivations for working together are aligned, rather than the effectiveness of the joint work, although it is generally assumed that goal sharing is a precursor to more effective joint work. It is worth noting that these three terms, although defined differently, are often used as synonyms or closely related words. The broader issue of defining these interorganizational relationships is discussed in more detail in: (Castañer & Oliveira, 2020; Gulati et al., 2012; Hardy et al., 2005; Lindenberg & Foss, 2011).

2 Cf. (Koźmiński & Latusek-Jurczak, 2011).

3 Among the definitions of collaboration cited in the previous section, there was an argument that undertaking collaboration aims to prevent opportunism and self-interest, q.v. (Das & Teng, 1998; Parkhe, 1993).

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2 Theories and concepts of interorganizational collaboration

Introduction

Many theories and concepts address the essence of collaboration. They approach issues related to the role of collaboration, its causes, and the entities involved in it in diverse ways. The most widely used theories and concepts pertaining to collaboration are listed in Figure 2.1.

Transaction cost theory

Deciding on the form of collaboration depends on the level of transaction costs associated with the chosen form of collaboration. The overriding goal is to minimize the cost of running the business while considering the accompanying uncertainty. Transaction cost theory[1] has become one of the dominant theoretical paradigms in the study of interorganizational exchange processes (Geyskens et al., 2006; Macher & Richman, 2008; Parkhe, 1993; Rindfleisch et al., 2010; Rindfleisch & Heide, 1997). It interprets the issue of economic organization as a problem of contracting, and contracts concluded in the transaction process constitute the basic subject of research (Williamson, 1985). It is based on two opposing structures: the market and the hierarchy (the performance of tasks within a hierarchical organization). According to this assumption, in certain situations, it is necessary to exclude transactions from the market and coordinate them within the company, based on power and hierarchy. Buy–sell transactions can be replaced by administrative (hierarchical) transactions that occur within the same company (e.g., mergers or acquisitions) or mixed forms (e.g., strategic alliances, partnerships), which represent forms of collaboration between entities that remain independent.

In the literature, three main categories of transaction costs are mentioned (North & Thomas, 1973; Wu et al., 2014): 1) *Search costs*: These are the costs associated with acquiring information about profit opportunities. They include the costs of gathering market information, conducting market research, seeking offers, analyzing supply and demand. 2) *Negotiation*

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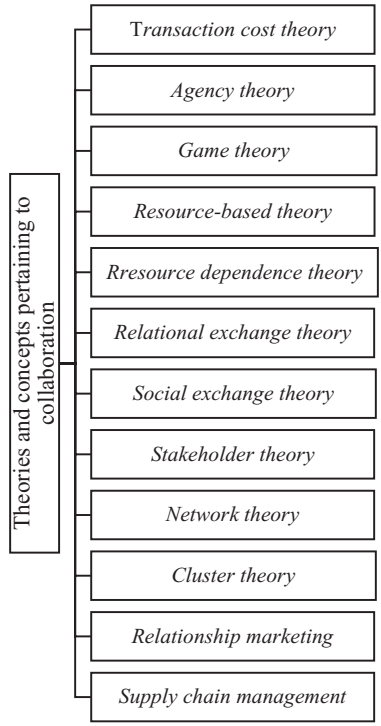

Figure 2.1 Theories and concepts of collaboration.
Source: own study

costs: These are the costs related to managing and entering into contracts. They encompass negotiation costs, procedural costs, contract creation costs, and the costs of creating reserves. 3) *Enforcement costs*: These are the costs associated with overseeing and enforcing contracts. They include monitoring and enforcing contract compliance, losses incurred from unsuccessful transactions, and missed opportunities.

The analysis of transaction costs is based on two behavioral assumptions: 1) the recognition that individuals are subject to bounded rationality, and 2) the acknowledgment that at least some agents succumb to opportunism (Williamson, 1981). Bounded rationality of individual agents means that they are capable of rational behavior, but only within certain limits, which hampers their decision-making ability (Simon, 1961). Opportunism, on the other hand, refers to the pursuit of self-interest and deviates from the assumptions of cooperation (Williamson, 2005). Explanations of opportunistic behavior (both in favor and against) typically focus on the tendency of partners to adopt deceitful and self-serving attitudes (Hill, 1990;

John, 1984; Williamson, 1985), However, further research indicates that the context in which the exchange takes place significantly influences the occurrence of opportunism (Gundlach et al., 1995; Rokkan et al., 2003). The type of transaction also affects the level of transaction costs and is characterized by three attributes: uncertainty, frequency of transactions, and asset specificity (Anderson, 2008; Heide & John, 1990; Williamson, 1985).

In summary, due to the uncertainty and risk associated with the opportunistic behavior of partners in the exchange process, some market transactions are quite costly and may be cheaper to manage in alternative business entities (e.g., hierarchical relationships or long-term buyer–seller relationships). Business entities choose the management method that minimizes transaction costs related to opportunism. This perspective implies that the theory of transaction costs can explain the mechanisms of cooperation, where transaction costs and factors affecting transactions, such as uncertainty, transaction frequency, and asset specificity, influence the actions of partners. Enterprises and markets represent alternative governance structures with differing transaction costs, and cooperation can be seen as an organizational "hybrid" form between the market and the enterprise (Williamson, 1981, 1985). Engaging in collaborative actions can also be used to eliminate opportunism (Das & Teng, 1998; Parkhe, 1993).

Agency theory

Another theory that relates to collaboration is the agency theory. The agency theory is one of the oldest and most commonly standardized social interactions (Ross, 1973). Examples of agency relationships are ubiquitous. Essentially, all contractual agreements, such as those between employers and employees or the state and government, an organization and other market entities, are examples of relationships that can be analyzed from the perspective of mechanisms that define collaboration.

The agency theory addresses the issue of the relationship between the owners of a business and the management hired to act on their behalf.[2] An agency relationship is defined as a contract in which one or more persons (the principal) engage(s) another person (the agent) to perform certain services on their behalf, including the authority to make decisions (Jensen & Meckling, 1976). The theory is based on the belief that individual business entities choose actions that maximize their personal utility (Denis et al., 1999). In organizations, there is often a separation between corporate decision-makers (managers) and those who bear the financial consequences of those decisions (shareholders). This raises the possibility of conflicts of interest between managers and shareholders. Although at first the agency theory referred to the relationship between managers and shareholders, later

it was also applied to the relationship between lower-level executives and their subordinates.

Two main problems are emphasized in the agency theory (Eisenhardt, 1989): 1) the conflicting goals of the principal and the agent, where monitoring the agent's actions is difficult or costly, and the principal is unable to fully verify whether the agent is behaving correctly (according to the contract between them); 2) the issue of risk allocation, which arises when the two parties in the relationship have different attitudes toward risk and, consequently, prefer different ways of operating the organization. In agency relationships, the principal seeks to minimize agency costs, while the agent aims to maximize rewards and limit control by the principal (Fleisher, 1991). Effective management of agency problems, such as information acquisition (or communication), preference mismatch (or conflict of interests), and effort (or temptation for abuse), is crucial in principal–agent relationships (Fayezi et al., 2012).

Indeed, a significant difference between the parties involved in the relationship lies in the asymmetry of information (Saam, 2007). This asymmetry arises because the principal is unable to monitor the competence, intentions, knowledge, and actions of the agent or can only do so at a substantial cost. Additionally, the principal requires information about the state of the environment and processes that affect the agent's performance.

The agency theory has a broad application in management, and its development has progressed in two directions: the study of the principal–agent relationship and the positive agency theory (Eisenhardt, 1989). In the principal–agent relationship, a key issue is the belief that both parties will attempt to maximize their positions through individual interpretations of the contract. In subsequent research, the agent's self-interest, bounded rationality, and risk aversion were used as the primary determinants for mathematical modeling of relationship building (Eisenhardt, 1989). These studies influenced the development of the normative accounting of agency theory, which involves designing optimal incentives based on contracts to align the interests of principals and agents (Fayezi et al., 2012). This latter approach led to the emergence of the so-called positive agency theory, which provides a framework for explaining issues related to the separation of ownership and control in terms of principals and agents (Jensen & Meckling, 1976).

In conclusion, the agency theory is an important contribution to the study of relationship formation. Its popularity stems from several reasons. First, it is a relatively straightforward theory as it reduces the complexities of large corporations to two parties "distrustful" of each other who have their own distinct goals and expectations. Second, it treats people in a general sense as individuals striving to pursue their own interests and being reluctant to sacrifice for others, which is rooted in the assumptions of classical economics. Third, it is based on the belief that managers have an advantage over other stakeholder groups, including owners.

When applying the assumptions of the theory to the process of collaboration, it is important to emphasize the role of relationships undertaken and discussed in the agency theory, which is central to defining collaboration. Furthermore, the agency theory presents the organization as a network of contracts, known as agency relationships, concluded between separate participants, with the contract as a formalized form of collaboration. In the context of collaboration, the unequal distribution of information and power, as well as the nature of interactions between collaborating organizations, can also be subjects of consideration.

Game theory

Cooperative relationships are a central part of game theory, which describes the behavior of so-called market players in different types of games.[3] Game theory is the science of strategic decision-making, under conditions of conflict and cooperation, with its origins primarily in economics (Barough et al., 2012; Fudenberg & Levine, 1998; Kasthurirathna & Piraveenan, 2014; Osborne, 2003; Sosnowska et al., 2006; von Neumann & Morgenstern, 1944). Later, the principles of game theory were applied in fields of biology, sociology, psychology, and computer science (Kabalak et al., 2015; Mouw, 2013; Petersen, 1994; Rasmusen, 2006; Ross, 2007; Schram et al., 2015; Shoham, 2008; Smith, 1984; Swedberg, 2001; Van Lange & Gallucci, 2003). Evolutionary game theory was initially proposed by Hamilton (1967), Trivers (1971), and Smith and Price (1973) as an important extension of classical game theory. It focuses on the properties of populations of organisms and ecosystems, with strategies to improve fitness maintained by evolutionary forces.

Game theory can be divided into two broad areas: noncooperative game theory and cooperative game theory (Nash, 1951). Most games are played with the aim of achieving the players' own interests, even if the players cooperate with each other. Cooperation turns out to be the best strategy for maximizing individual players' payoffs. Cooperative behavior is driven by selfish goals and is transient. Games of this type can be described as "noncooperative games. In a cooperative game, players form coalitions or groups, often as a result of respecting external rules of cooperation, but there are also competitive relationships among them (Branzei et al., 2008; Cygler, 2009; Fiestras-Janeiro et al., 2011; Watson, 2013).

Game theory is used to study a wide range of phenomena and patterns of human behavior in society and socioeconomic systems, such as collaborations (Bendor & Swistak, 1995; Meng et al., 2019; Perc et al., 2017), modeling of unethical or criminal behavior (Capraro et al., 2019; Helbing et al., 2015), or decision-making processes related to vaccination against epidemics (Chang et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2016).

Game theory enjoys such wide application due to strategic decision-making scenarios in various disciplines. A typical game defined in game theory involves two or more players, a set of strategies available to those players, and a corresponding set of payoff values (sometimes referred to as utility values) for each player (which, in the case of a two-player game, is often represented as a payoff matrix). A game consists of three basic elements: the number of players, the strategies they employ, and the benefits (payoffs) they obtain from their chosen strategies (Nash, 1951; Sulejewicz, 1994). Information structure is also considered an essential element of games because players in games may not have sufficient information to react. Furthermore, even if players are able to obtain complete information, they may not know the beliefs of their opponents, leading to "imperfect play" (Ji & Levinson, 2020).

Over its course of several decades of development, game theory has been verified and tested in various cases. Its fundamental assumptions relate to the resolution of conflict or cooperation situations where the final outcome depends on decisions made by other entities. The theory does not investigate the causes or genesis of conflicts or cooperation; it merely offers mechanisms for their optimal resolution. The reference to the process of cooperation is based on the assumption that the formation of coalitions of cooperating players can optimize the benefits obtained, which in turn implies added value resulting from the cooperation process. The theory also emphasizes the importance of predicting the behavior of other players – to maximize benefits, it is essential to consider how an entity's actions will impact the effectiveness of cooperation.[4] Game theory can also be helpful in studying optimal behavior in the event of conflicting interests during cooperation. Game theory can also be applied to forms of cooperation between organizations – an example being strategic alliances where the cooperation of partners with complementary resources does not exclude competition among them.

Considering that game theory is rooted in mathematical frameworks that enable the analysis of interactions among multiple players, whose decisions affect each other, from this perspective, cooperative processes occur when the total usefulness of cooperation is greater than the sum of usefulness for each participant considered individually.

Resource-based theory

The resource-based theory of the firm[5] is a widely recognized theoretical approach to research in strategic management and marketing, increasingly applied in subdisciplines such as operations management, human resource management, and entrepreneurship (Antonio & Gattermann Perin, 2020; Czakon, 2010; Gao et al., 2018; Hitt et al., 2016; Kozlenkova et al., 2014; Krupski, 2019). It is based on the paradigm that a firm is a collection of

resources that determine its ability to design, produce, commercialize, and distribute products and services, and competitive advantage arises from a combination of resources that are valuable, rare, irreplaceable, and difficult to replicate by competing organizations (Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984). The resource-based approach views the organization through the lens of diverse resources and capabilities that set it apart from competitors and serve as a source of competitive advantage (Flaszewska & Zakrzewska-Bielawska, 2013; Hitt et al., 2016). The resource-based approach has become the foundation for the development of the resource-based theory of the organization (Krupski, 2012).

The process of cooperation, viewed in the context of resource-based theory, can be analyzed from various perspectives. Cooperation can serve the function of securing benefits by mitigating transactional risks, as well as the function of creating value by sharing beneficial resources. The decision to engage in cooperation may be driven by the desire to gain access to strategic resources held by other organizations. Manifestations of cooperation can include exchanging and sharing resources, carrying out joint projects, forming alliances or capital groups. Specialized knowledge, know-how, organizational capabilities, technology, combined with other resources, can provide grounds for engaging in cooperation.

The foundations of the resource-based theory of the firm are based on two assumptions: 1) organizations possess different bundles of resources, which explain why some organizations are able to achieve a competitive advantage while others cannot, under the same market conditions as their competitors; 2) different bundles of resources are difficult to acquire through the process of trade or transfer between firms and therefore are likely to remain a source of sustained competitive advantage over time (Barney & Hesterly, 2015; Peteraf & Barney, 2003; Suszyński, 2011).

The term "resources" refers to both tangible and intangible components – assets and organizational capabilities necessary for organizations to achieve their goals effectively and efficiently, which form the basis for creating resource-based competitive advantage (Brilman, 2002; Dierickx & Cool, 1989; Pietruszka-Ortyl, 2017) and achieving above-average performance (Urbanowska-Sojkin, 2013). According to Barney (1991), organizations need resources that are valuable and rare to attain competitive advantage, but to sustain this advantage over time, these resources must also be difficult to imitate and well-organized. In the literature, the set of resource characteristics is supplemented by two additional ones: flexibility and nonappropriability (Flaszewska & Zakrzewska-Bielawska, 2013). No company can possess all the necessary resources, so each one is imperfect in terms of resources.

Currently, it is more likely that intangible resources will become a source of competitive advantage, as they are difficult to imitate (due to

an ambiguous cause-and-effect relationship) and their function(s) harder to replace (Hitt et al., 2001, 2006; Mikuła & Pietruszka-Ortyl, 2010; Zakrzewska-Bielawska, 2013). Warnier et al. (2013) propose a typology of resources that includes "strategic, "ordinary, and "negatively perceived" resources (so-called "junk resources"), emphasizing that a creative entrepreneur can identify new applications by valorizing an undervalued resource in the market.

The resource-based theory of the firm has become a popular model used in strategic management research, but it has also faced criticism (Priem & Butler, 2001). Some of the criticism relates to the omission of the influence of the external environment, as well as the lack of any clear differentiation between resources and capabilities (Leiblein, 2011; Makadok, 2001). Despite the critical voices, the theory provides a valuable contribution by the way it defines an organization as an entity composed of diverse resources and capabilities that distinguish it from its competitors, thus serving as a source of competitive advantage.

Another rationale for collaboration can be the desire to retain resources within the organization, despite the lack of capacity to utilize them. In such cases, collaboration allows for the preservation of resources that are not currently being used or are underutilized by temporarily making them available to an external partner. Another motive for collaboration can be the inability to accomplish certain tasks internally or their low effectiveness. In such situations, the implementation of tasks can be facilitated through collaboration, leveraging the resources of other organizations.

Furthermore, collaboration itself can be considered a strategic resource or capability that is unique, valuable, and difficult to replicate, thereby providing a competitive advantage (Fawcett et al., 2011; Gold et al., 2010; Hartmann & De Grahl, 2011). Additionally, on theoretical grounds, interorganizational relationships are a source of competitive advantage (Dyer & Singh, 1998), while Zacharia et al. (2011) emphasize that relational rents are profits created jointly through collaboration by combining the assets, knowledge, and capabilities of organizations.

Resource dependence theory

Resource dependence theory[6] emphasizes the importance and consequences of various types of interorganizational partnerships. It is based on the fundamental concept of power in relationships, understood as the ability to get others to do something they would not otherwise do (Dahl, 1957). Thus, if an organization needs resources to survive and pursue its goals, it becomes necessary to acquire them from the environment – other organizations. Power and its reverse – dependence – play a crucial role in understanding interorganizational relationships, including cooperative relationships.

This means that the balance of power usually favors the organization that possesses what other organizations need. With this approach, it becomes possible to compare different strategies, emphasizing short-term coordination costs as well as the long-term prospects for survival and growth of the organization (Hillman et al., 2009; Malatesta & Smith, 2014).

There are three main ideas in this theory: 1) social context matters; 2) organizations have strategies to increase their autonomy and pursue their interests; and 3) power (not just rationality or efficiency) is important for understanding the internal and external actions of organizations (Davis & Cobb, 2010). Power is based on control over resources considered strategic within an organization (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1977; Ulrich & Barney, 1984) and unveils the possibilities that allow organizations to reduce or avoid being vulnerable to resources in their environment (Stańczyk-Hugiet, 2017).

Reducing interdependence and environmental uncertainty is possible by considering the following assumptions: 1) Organizations are the primary units in which relationships between businesses and society occur; 2) these organizations are not autonomous but rather constrained by a network of interdependencies with other organizations; 3) interdependence, combined with uncertainty about the actions of the organizations they are interdependent with, leads to a situation where survival and continued success are uncertain; therefore, 4) organizations take actions to manage external interdependencies, although such actions inevitably never fully succeed and create new patterns of dependence and interdependence; and 5) these patterns of dependence create interorganizational as well as intraorganizational power, where this power has some influence on organizational behavior (Pfeffer, 1987).

The resource dependence theory emphasizes that the environment is a source of various constraints imposed on organizations. When resources are lacking, organizations seek to establish relationships with other entities, creating relationships of dependence in order to acquire those resources. At the same time, organizations strive to minimize their own dependence by increasing the dependence of other organizations on their resources. This creates a kind of coalition that changes its structure and behavioral patterns to enable access, acquisition, and maintenance of external resources (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). Such an approach means that organizations, in their pursuit of reducing interdependence and uncertainty, may engage in collaboration aimed at acquiring resources from other organizations. This can be achieved through establishing contacts and undertaking joint initiatives, which involve putting some of their resources at the disposal of other organizations. From this theoretical perspective, collaboration is seen as an attempt by businesses to adapt to their environment in order to facilitate the acquisition of necessary resources while maintaining an acceptable ratio of power and dependency. Examples of actions in this

regard may include strategic alliances, mergers, vertical integration, or joint ventures.

Relational exchange theory

The relational exchange theory introduces the concept of relational norms, which makes an interesting contribution to understanding the mechanisms shaping cooperation, where trust based on goodwill plays a significant role as a regulator. Such behavior, according to the theory, helps reduce opportunistic behavior and increases the flexibility of the relationships built. At the core of the relational exchange theory[7] is the belief that relational norms are a kind of governance mechanism used to assign and prohibit certain behaviors in exchange relationships (Macneil, 1980; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). A specific feature of relational norms as a governance mechanism is their endogenous nature. Behaviors based on relational norms are not controlled by incentives (as in market-based behaviors) or by directives and guidelines (as in hierarchy-based management) but through recognized values, norms, and beliefs (Kelman, 1958) as well as moral control (Larson, 1992). Behaviors are therefore regulated through a system of mutual self-regulation (Gundlach et al., 1995).

The literature distinguishes three variants of the relationship life cycle, which range from three to five phases.[8] Regardless of the number of phases, the first one is the search for a partner; the second phase refers to searching for and attempting relational exchange; the third phase pertains to the continuous increase in the benefits obtained by the exchange partners and their growing interdependence; the next phase can refer to the implicit or explicit commitment to relational continuity between exchange partners; while the last phase relates to the withdrawal or termination of the relationship (Czakon, 2007). Relational norms begin to develop in the second phase, in which interorganizational ties are formed.

Relating the relationship life cycle to the phases of cooperation, the first phase would correspond to identifying the need for cooperation, the second phase to searching for a potential partner with whom the organization intends to collaborate, the third phase to commitment in the cooperation, the fourth phase to a long-term cooperative relationship, and the final phase may involve either returning to the first phase or continuing in a beneficial cooperative relationship from the fourth phase. In the context of the undertaken cooperation, the theory can be helpful in conflict situations by suggesting appropriate relationships that have been previously established, which can be important in the cooperation process (Dwyer et al., 1987; Franceschini et al., 2003; Joshi & Stump, 1999).

Relational exchange theory also emphasizes the role of trust and other relational means to avoid opportunism in relationships, which in turn can

contribute to achieving greater value in exchange (Lado et al., 2008). The theory places emphasis on trust between partners and the role of beneficial cooperative relationships (Muthusamy & White, 2005). Trust and beneficial cooperative relationships are essential for increasing the value of collaboration (Dyer & Singh, 1998; Koza & Dant, 2007).

Trust between organizations is an important intangible resource that helps maintain stability in cooperation (Das & Teng, 2001). Trust in the process of cooperation can be interpreted as a partner's willingness to take the risk that the other party may exploit vulnerabilities or act to the detriment of the partner, assuming that the partner's action is necessary (Mayer et al., 1995). Trust can be based on two main aspects: trust in competence and trust based on goodwill (Das & Teng, 2001; Seppänen et al., 2007). Trust based on goodwill can be associated with existing relational norms between partners – companies with a high level of trust in goodwill are less likely to negatively interpret unexpected behavior by partners, thus providing greater flexibility to partners in the process of collaboration (Bugdol, 2010; Young-Ybarra & Wiersema, 1999). Therefore, trust between partners stimulates cooperation, which strengthens the relationship between them (Artz & Brush, 2000; Czernek et al., 2018; Krot & Lewicka, 2014). As the three relational norms – cooperation, continuity expectations, and communication strategies become more prevalent; beneficial behaviors for the cooperation process can be observed: cooperation replaces competition, opportunistic behaviors are reduced, and the ability to adapt relationships increases (Heide & John, 1992; Krot & Lewicka, 2016; Noordewier et al., 1990; Walker & Poppo, 1991).

Social exchange theory

Social exchange theory can be helpful in understanding and explaining the course of the cooperation process because part of value creation is noncontractual, and maximizing benefits is a feature of such a relationship (Aminoff & Tanskanen, 2013). Social exchange theory describes relationships that are perceived as transactions – the social world is a system in which there is an exchange of goods, both tangible and intangible between individuals and social groups.[9] The fundamental assumption of social exchange theory is the belief that the more frequently a particular action is rewarded, the more likely it is that the exchange partner will perform the action again (Blau, 1964). For example, the development and maintenance of relationships in the process of cooperation between partners occurs because they expect mutual benefits over time (Kwon & Suh, 2005; Wei et al., 2012).

Another aspect that can be analyzed from the perspective of social exchange theory in the context of cooperation is the orientation of

cooperating partners toward building trust and commitment in the relationship (Kingshott, 2006). Both trust and commitment result in a high level of mutual dependence between partners, which, in turn, can contribute to the sustainability of cooperation. On the other hand, recognizing the effects of interdependence between business partners (enterprises, organizations), or mutual dependence in this sense, is crucial for maintaining good social exchange relationships (Lambe et al., 2001), which are a part of the cooperation process.

Initially, the theory addresses the issue of costs and benefits perceived by individuals. Later on, it also applies to the exchange process between entities, organizations, or groups, in the context of motivation to engage in interactions with others (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Emerson, 1976; Lambe et al., 2001; Lee & Cadogan, 2009). Attitudes and behaviors that can lead to exchange are determined by the benefits of interaction minus the costs of that interaction (Kale & Singh, 2009; Luna-Reyes et al., 2005).

Social exchange theory consists of a set of psychological and economic reinforcement principles that define the social exchange system through the analysis of behaviors of participating entities. These principles include trust, commitment, reciprocity, fairness, relative dependence, and power (Bock & Kim, 2002). Trust is an integral part of the commitment between exchange partners, both in interorganizational relationships and in relationships with customers (Anderson & Narus, 1990; Doney & Cannon, 1997; Dwyer et al., 1987).

Social exchange involves a series of interdependent interactions or transactions that impose on the other party the obligation of complementary actions (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Emerson, 1976). A specific transaction or behavior of one party creates a reciprocal obligation on the other party in the exchange process (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Emerson, 1976; Homans, 1958) and the action of one party is contingent on the satisfactory response of the other party involved in the particular exchange or transactional relationship (Blau, 1964).

In the context of business relationships, four fundamental premises are cited (Lambe et al., 2001) that can explain the mechanisms of exchange and cooperation: 1) Exchange interactions result in economic or social outcomes; 2) these outcomes are compared over time with alternatives to determine the dependence on the exchange relationship; 3) positive outcomes over time increase trust and commitment; and 4) positive exchange interactions over time create relational norms of exchange that govern the relationships. The outcomes of exchange are central for the cooperative process – both economic benefits (e.g., price reduction) and social benefits (e.g., emotional satisfaction, sharing of ethical norms) are important elements that cement cooperation. Additional elements of attitudes and behaviors pertaining to social exchange include a sense of fairness (Molm et al., 2006), negotiated

rules (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), and reciprocal actions (Molm et al., 2006), which are also essential in shaping cooperative relationships.

Unlike economic exchange theory, which focuses on external benefits and involves transactions, social exchange theory emphasizes intrinsic rewards and requires trust (Gefen & Ridings, 2002; Liao, 2008), which can be enhanced through the exchange of positive financial and social outcomes between partners over time, generated through the process of cooperation (Lambe et al., 2001). Trust and commitment are key indicators of the strength of the relationship and are driven by measurements of past performance (Autry & Golicic, 2010). Even though building mutual trust and commitment may require investing time and money, if an organization takes a long-term view of its cooperative relationships, aiming to strike a balance between self-interest and relationships with others, it is likely that the benefits will outweigh the costs over time. In this way, businesses can develop and strengthen their long-term relationships if they are willing to forego short-term relationships (Luo & Donthu, 2007).

Stakeholder theory

The issue of collaboration analyzed from the perspective of stakeholder theory also refers to the fundamental assumption of the theory that the survival of an enterprise depends on effective management of relationships between stakeholders, which in turn constitutes one dimension of collaboration.

Stakeholder theory[10] (Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Freeman, 1984; Mitchell et al., 1997) presents a different way of understanding the responsibility of businesses toward society as well as the nature of the organization itself, focusing on the key element of the relationship with the environment. According to stakeholder theory, stakeholders, characterized by their power, legitimacy, or urgency of expectations, are defined as any group or individual who can influence the achievement of a company's goals or is influenced by the company (Freeman, 1984; Freeman et al., 2004; Mitchell et al., 1997; Strand & Freeman, 2015). The theory proposes enterprise management that takes into account the interests of various entities, and the goal of the company becomes creating value for all stakeholders (Freeman et al., 2004; Strand & Freeman, 2015). The key assumption is that an enterprise can be perceived as a collection of interdependent relationships between key stakeholders (Hillman & Keim, 2001). This implies a shift from traditional bilateral relationships to multilateral relationships between the organization and its environment (Barrena Martínez et al., 2016), with the organization being at the center of the connections between them (Bridoux & Stoelhorst, 2014).

The stakeholder-based approach to the functioning of an organization focuses on three interconnected issues: 1) The problem of understanding

how value is created and how it is distributed; 2) the problem of integrating ethics and capitalism; and 3) the problem of assisting managers in thinking about management in a way that addresses the first two issues (Parmar et al., 2010). Therefore, if the goal of a company is to create and distribute value among stakeholders, achieving this goal depends on the cooperation and support of the stakeholders themselves, making the perspective of cooperation a significant element of the theory (Minoja, 2012).

Donaldson and Preston (1995) formulate stakeholder theory according to three different approaches: descriptive, instrumental, and normative. The descriptive approach aims to determine whether and how organizations take into account the actual needs of stakeholders (Brenner & Cochran, 1991). The instrumental approach requires considering the demands of stakeholders for the sake of strategic opportunities. Strategic considerations can be found in recognizing the criticality of the consensus of the social environment, in business management, and in finding the significance of stakeholders' contribution to the organization's survival and growth (Freeman, 1984). As a result, companies develop best practices in managing stakeholder relationships (Bendheim et al., 1998), identified according to their importance (Mitchell et al., 1997) and impact. Therefore, from an instrumental perspective, strategic management of social relationships ultimately depends on the ability to balance the interests and perspectives of different categories of stakeholders to gain legitimacy in the reference environment (Ogden & Watson, 1999). The normative approach establishes ethical principles for the functioning and management of the company. In this perspective, stakeholders are treated as moral entities with autonomous rights.

Stakeholder theory promotes a practical, effective, efficient, and ethical way of managing organizations in a highly complex and turbulent environment (Freeman, 1984; Harrison et al., 2015; Parmar et al., 2010; Phillips, 2004). The pragmatism of the theory stems from the simple assumption that all organizations must manage stakeholders, which partially may imply the need for cooperation. The theory is effective because stakeholders who are treated well tend to reciprocate with positive attitudes and behaviors toward the organization, such as sharing valuable information (all stakeholders), purchasing more products or services (customers), providing tax benefits or other incentives (communities), ensuring better financial conditions (financiers), buying more shares (shareholders), or working effectively and remaining loyal to the organization even in difficult times (employees) (Harrison et al., 2015).

The ethical management approach promoted in stakeholder theory is emphasized in the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR).[11] By implementing CSR activities, according to which the organization assumes responsibility not only economically but also morally toward all its stakeholders, the organization gains acceptance and support from these entities,

allowing it to continue its operations and generate added value (Jedynak & Kuźniarska, 2019; Ogden & Watson, 1999). Thus, stakeholder theory becomes a reference for socially responsible enterprises that, in their activities, take into account relations with stakeholders and their role in shaping the common good (Basu & Palazzo, 2008; Matten et al., 2003).

In conclusion, stakeholder theory can be helpful in understanding the dynamics of interactions between an organization and its stakeholders during cooperative activities. The concept provides a framework for analyzing stakeholder management strategies, of which cooperation is one (Bunn et al., 2002; Co & Barro, 2009; Harrison & St. John, 1996; Polonsky & Ottman, 1998; Savage et al., 1991). The examples cited confirm that a cooperative strategy is a commonly employed stakeholder management strategy, and the sense of interdependence, the belief that partners share the need for cooperation, and the awareness that collaboration brings benefits to all are the main factors influencing the choice of this strategy.

Network theory

Social ties are an important component through which organizations manage their interdependencies (Granovetter, 1985a). Powell (1990) and Nohria and Eccles (1992) developed the concept of a network form of organization, in which collaboration between organizations occurs through alliances, joint ventures, or buyer–supplier relationships, creating a system of incentives for reciprocity, mutual learning, and information sharing. These factors hinder opportunism and create value through cooperation.

Network theory in science is undertaken in various fields, perspectives and at multiple levels of analysis: social networks for individuals, supply chains for organizations or interdependencies in business ecosystems (Czakon, 2012, 2017). The concept of a network originates from the social sciences[12] and is defined as a finite set or sets of actors and the relationships between them (Borgatti & Foster, 2003; Wasserman & Faust, 1994).

The network perspective is flexible in its application to various types of actors and different types of relationships. Actors can be individuals, collective entities, organizations, and departments within organizations, as well as entities that are not natural persons (Borgatti & Li, 2009; Contractor et al., 2006; Contractor & Monge, 2002; Światowiec-Szczepańska & Kawa, 2018). Relationships can encompass various types of connections between actors, including formal role relationships, affective expressions (friendship, respect), social interactions, work flows, transfers of material resources (money, goods), publication and retrieval of knowledge, flows of intangible resources (information, advice), and business alliances (Contractor et al., 2006).

Thus, social network theory describes the patterns and structure of social relationships from the perspective of interpersonal relationships in society, which in turn can be helpful in understanding mutual ties and social behaviors (Wellman, 1982), and the network itself represents a form of social capital in which individuals or social entities can obtain resources, information, and social support (Burt, 1997; Granovetter, 1985b; Lachiewicz & Zakrzewska-Bielawska, 2012).

In an interorganizational context, from a network management perspective, a network can be perceived as a form of organizing understood as a distinct form of coordination and exchange among autonomous enterprises or organizations (Jones et al., 1997; Powell, 1990; Provan et al., 2007). The term network management refers to a form of coordination between firms or organizations that is characterized to a greater extent by informal social systems than by bureaucratic structures within organizations, as well as formal contractual relationships between them (Jones et al., 1997). This type of relationship means that the coordination of an interorganizational network is based more on social engagement than on formalized rules. On the other hand, networks can also be viewed as formal and enduring interorganizational relationships that have strategic significance for their members, which means that a certain level of formalization is necessary (Gulati et al., 2000). Network participants can be linked by many types of connections and exchange flows, both intangible and tangible in nature, including information, services, materials, or social support (Jones et al., 1997; Powell, 1990; Provan et al., 2007).

Connections and exchange flows in the network are oriented toward achieving both operational and strategic goals. Linking business relationships leads to the formation of a business network. The literature defines a business network as "a set of two or more related business relationships in which each exchange relationship occurs between business entities that are viewed as collective entities" (Anderson et al., 1994). In this approach, the interconnection of business relationships is understood as exchange relationships between mutually dependent enterprises pursuing mutual interests (Johanson & Vahlne, 2011). In business networks, relationships are most often nonhierarchical in nature, which can make them difficult to manage (Jagdev & Thoben, 2001; Möller & Rajala, 2007; Provan et al., 2007). One of the basic mechanisms governing the complex interactions between participants in business networks is the concept of resource bundling, which refers to the access or transfer of resources between organizations in the network (Olkkonen, 2001).

The network approach emphasizes the interdependence of organizations as a determinant of their behavior, which is why the research approach of business networks can be an alternative to research approaches based on market mechanisms in explaining business behavior (Möller & Rajala,

2007) and helps explain the influence of relationships between entities on shaping cooperation (Fonfara et al., 2018). Therefore, a key challenge for network management becomes identifying the principles based on which collaboration within the network will be implemented. According to Ospina and Saz-Carranza (2010), the role of a leader in facilitating the collaborative process within the network is crucial, as well as creating practices that manage unity and diversity internally and confrontation and dialogue externally (Ospina & Saz-Carranza, 2010; Vangen & Huxham, 2003).

The issue of collaboration within networks is also reflected in the concept of *collaborative networks*, defined as a network consisting of diverse entities that are largely autonomous, geographically dispersed, and heterogeneous in terms of operational environment, culture, social capital, and goals but collaborate to better achieve common or compatible objectives, with their interactions supported by computer networks (Camarinha-Matos & Afsarmanesh, 2014). Furthermore, the rapid development of information and communication technologies (ICT) enables the development of advanced collaboration platforms, such as the digital business ecosystem, which aims to enhance competitiveness and increase the productivity of enterprises through the implementation of ICT (Graça & Camarinha-Matos, 2017; Razavi et al., 2010). Such networks require a self-organizing network infrastructure that provides support for loosely connected business interactions among network participants while maintaining the stability and durability of the digital environment (Aulkemeier et al., 2019). In summary, collaboration in network theory is perceived as links between partners that facilitate information exchange and mutual utilization of competencies and resources, and by eliminating typical hierarchical dependencies, it also promotes flexibility in the scope of the collaboration undertaken.

Cluster theory

The concept of clusters[13] is rooted in the theory of national and regional competitiveness, which is influenced by factors related to the geographical location of sectors and enterprises.[14] Clusters can be defined as geographic concentrations of companies in the same or related industries that collaborate and compete in strategic and operational matters (Graça & Camarinha-Matos, 2017; Hervás-Oliver & Albors-Garrigós, 2007; Hervas-Oliver et al., 2015; O'Dwyer et al., 2015). They are characterized by network relationships among the cluster members, and participation in a cluster can impact their competitiveness (Grycuk, 2003, 2017). Clusters can also be seen as social communities specializing in the creation and transfer of knowledge (Morosini, 2004). Both meanings emphasize the importance of cooperation between organizations and their dynamic nature.

The nature of clusters promotes mutual learning and commonality, as a result of the flow of knowledge and exchange of information between entities such as companies, customers, universities, professional associations, and standardization bodies (Connell et al., 2014). The expectation of improving competitiveness, in turn, leads to the establishment of relationships that form the basis of cooperation, enabling the attainment of mutual benefits (Albino et al., 2007; Cao et al., 2010; Cao & Zhang, 2011; Rosas & Camarinha-Matos, 2009; Simatupang & Sridharan, 2008).

According to Soosay and Hyland (2015), collaboration involves autonomous organizations that, by operating within clusters, achieve benefits and better outcomes through established relationships. Therefore, the relationships generated through collaboration can be a source of added value (Cao et al., 2010; Connell et al., 2014). Collaboration between companies in a cluster is easier to implement because geographical proximity can generate advantages stemming from regular face-to-face contacts and the utilization of different resources and competencies possessed by each organization (Bathelt et al., 2004). The sum of the components has a greater value, creating a synergy effect (Lublinski, 2003; S. Zhang & Li, 2008). Building relationships between enterprises is a strategy that strengthens competitive advantage by enabling them to focus on core competencies and combining collaboration and competitive relationships within business networks (Cao & Zhang, 2011; Chen et al., 2017; Niu, 2010; Niu et al., 2008).

Cluster theory, when referring to the creation of competitiveness, heavily relies on stimulating cooperation. Geographic proximity not only facilitates communication but also increases the likelihood that organizations will have diverse connections that facilitate relationship building. The key advantage usually attributed to clusters is the ability of companies to share knowledge and information, thereby facilitating competitive development and innovation through collaboration.

Relationship marketing

Traditional marketing involved only two parties – the seller and the buyer, whose mutual relationships ended with the completion of the transaction. A different approach, expressed by the transition from transactional marketing to relationship marketing, reflects the importance of value cocreation and the widespread recognition of the significance of cooperative networks and relationships in many transactions (Dwyer et al., 1987; Lin et al., 2003; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Palmer, 2002).

Relationship marketing[15] emphasizes mutually beneficial exchanges and the building of long-term relationships and cooperation with customers based on their satisfaction and loyalty (Berry, 1983; Grönroos, 1994; Gupta & Sahu, 2012; Otto, 2004). The essence of the relational approach lies in moving from attracting new customers to taking care of existing customers

by providing relational benefits (Berry, 1983; Mitręga, 2018; Theron & Terblanche, 2011). Instead of viewing exchange transactions as isolated episodes, each transaction is influenced by the history of past exchanges, with the expectation that future exchanges will occur (Gummesson, 1994; Sheth & Parvatlyar, 1995; Światowiec-Szczepańska, 2006).

Grönroos (1994, s. 9) defined relationship marketing as "the process aimed at establishing, maintaining, and strengthening relationships with customers and other stakeholders in order to gain benefits that result in satisfaction for all parties involved". This is made possible through mutual exchange and keeping promises. Agariya and Singh (2011), on the other hand, reviewed definitions of relationship marketing, and according to the authors, although they differ slightly, the essence of all definitions revolves around acquisition, retention, improving profitability, long-term orientation, and the presence of a favorable situation for all stakeholders of the company. This approach is closely related to the understanding of collaborative relationships, as they are linked by the recognition of the relationship as a process, long-term relationship, shared goals, and mutual benefits resulting from collaborative relationships.

The scope of relationship marketing should therefore not be limited to maintaining relationships between the company and its customers but should also include relationships between the organization and other stakeholders. There are two main reasons why proper management of the organization's relationships with other stakeholders is essential for its economic viability (Hennig-Thurau & Hansen, 2000). First, customer satisfaction does not occur in isolation but depends on the satisfaction of other stakeholders of the company, such as its employees. Second, the literature acknowledges that the organization has a responsibility toward various stakeholder groups that are affected by its decisions, and in turn, influence the organization's actions.

Building more sustainable, long-lasting, and mutually beneficial relationships forms the basis for developing a strategy for creating value for the customer (Chlipała, 2014). It enables the creation of sustainable competitive advantage, which in turn leads to improved financial performance. Such interaction entails relationships between different entities in the distribution channel – enterprises or intermediaries, and relationship marketing itself is a strategy that integrates internal processes and functions with external networks. The relationship can also involve asymmetric engagement of partners, which can lead to opportunism and instability of the relationship (Eisingerich & Bell, 2007; Liang et al., 2009; Xu et al., 2007).

Relationship marketing has vertical and horizontal dimensions (Palmer, 2000). The vertical relationship refers to the attempt to integrate supply chains through component suppliers, manufacturers, and intermediaries. The horizontal relationship represents organizations that are located

in the same place in the distribution channel and seek to collaborate for mutual benefits. Network organizations, on the other hand, can combine both vertical and horizontal dimensions, creating virtual trade organizations (Achrol, 1991; Cook & Emerson, 1978; Janeczek, 2014). Regardless of the dimension, each of these is characterized by the presence of collaboration between entities involved in the relationships.

Success in sales, from the perspective of relationship marketing, depends on the strength of the distribution channels, in which participating organizations must collaborate on a long-term basis (Naili et al., 2017). Such collaboration focuses on business relationships between enterprises and customers (*business-to-consumer*), as well as relationships between different enterprises (*business-to-business*). Thus, if relationship marketing focuses on business-to-consumer (B2C) or business-to-business or, as previously mentioned, stakeholder relationships, trust and commitment become crucial in every exchange between parties (Doney & Cannon, 1997; Morgan & Hunt, 1994), and these can be achieved through collaboration.

Thus, if relationship marketing refers to all activities aimed at establishing, developing, and maintaining effective relational exchanges (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), it can also be a paradigm for analyzing cooperative relationships between organizations, since the goal of its application is to establish stable, long-term relationships that generate benefits for their partners (Ravald & Grönroos, 1996).

Supply chain management

Collaboration in the supply chain is often defined as the cooperation between two or more enterprises to gain a competitive advantage and achieve higher profits than would be possible individually (Simatupang & Sridharan, 2002). Supply chain management involves the design and coordination of networks through which organizations and individuals acquire, use, deliver, and dispose of physical goods; acquire and distribute services; and make their offerings available in the market, with the aim of improving the long-term performance of individual organizations and the entire chain (LeMay et al., 2017; Mentzer, DeWitt, et al., 2001), utilizing new digital technologies that enhance value for customers (Kawa, 2012; Min, Zacharia, & Smith, 2019).

The supply chain[16] is a set of two or more entities (organizations or individuals) directly involved in the flow of products, services, finances, and/or information from the source of supply to the customer (Mentzer, DeWitt, et al., 2001; Ratajczak-Mrozek & Małys, 2012). Material flows between entities are related to a single product or a group of products and also involve deliveries to the end consumer (Kawa, 2011; Kawa & Fuks, 2009). The supply chain may include all flows from the beginning of value creation

to the end user, but it can also have a narrower scope, such as the flow from one entity to another (Kawa, 2011).

Olorunniwo and Li (2010) define supply chain collaboration as a relationship between independent enterprises, characterized by openness and trust, in which the parties share risks, profits, and costs. Singh and Power (2009) consider supply chain collaboration to be: two or more members of a chain working together to create a competitive advantage by sharing information, making joint decisions, and sharing the benefits that come from being more cost-effective in meeting the needs of the end consumer than acting alone.

Fawcett et al. (2008) defines supply chain collaboration as the ability to work across organizational boundaries to create unique value-added processes and manage them to better meet customer needs. Collaboration involves sharing resources, information, people, and technology among chain members to create synergy for competitive advantage. Collaboration goes beyond managing transactions for efficiency, to managing relationships for creativity and continuous improvement.

Additionally, views regarding supply chain collaboration emphasize the following aspects: responsibility for exchanging information related to planning, management, execution, and performance measurement (Daugherty, 2011); culture (Kim & Lee, 2010); and interdependence between entities (Simatupang & Sridharan, 2005); customer-oriented business relationships (Walters, 2008); motivation based on shared goals (Skipper et al., 2008); sharing of responsibilities, decision-making, and consequences resulting from the relationship (Stank et al., 2001). Ryciuk (2016) identifies the main determinants of the development of cooperation in the supply chain as: 1) trust, 2) commitment, 3) communication/information exchange, 4) collaboration in pursuit of common goals, 5) satisfaction with the relationship, 6) dependence/interdependence, 7) adaptation, 8) social ties and interpersonal relationships.

To summarize the various ways of defining collaborative relationship within the supply chain, it can be observed that it is characterized by the presence of certain features: It involves multiple enterprises or independent business entities that establish relationships; the aim is to share better outcomes and benefits. To achieve the goal, collaborating entities must establish an appropriate level of trust, share critical information, make joint decisions, and, if necessary, integrate supply chain processes.

Conclusions

Interorganizational collaboration can be analyzed from various perspectives, such as process architecture, the behavior of participating entities, or the mode of their operation. Given the complex nature of the phenomenon, the

concepts and theories discussed belong to different research streams: from economics – such as transaction cost theory, agency theory, or game theory – to strategic management or organizational theory – such as resource theory, resource dependence theory – and to network theory or relational exchange theory.

Analyses of the goals pursued in collaboration predominantly revolve around two perspectives: achieving goals individually or collectively (e.g., agency theory or game theory) or at the organizational level (e.g., transaction cost theory or cluster theory). The vast majority of theories emphasize long-term collaboration, where resource sharing is a significant motive for undertaking it. Trust, in most cases, serves as a stabilizing factor in collaboration and is an expression of commitment to the relationship. The issue of risk is raised in the context of risk sharing and is related to the level of trust between partners and the sharing of resources, which can help mitigate risks. The context of opportunism is raised due to the actions that are supposed to limit it. These include, inter alia, interdependence, pursuit of common goals or satisfaction with relationships. Participation in collaboration can take both formal and informal forms based on norms or interpersonal relations. The added value resulting from the undertaken cooperation results from: better meeting customer needs, long-term relationships, direct relationships, stakeholder support, common goals, increased trust, or based on resources and competences.

The ability to establish cooperation between enterprises can lead to certain expected benefits. Typically, the motives for entering into cooperation align with the anticipated benefits. Cooperation should be beneficial for the cooperating partners, as confirmed by the relevant literature. Among the benefits of cooperation are the following (Daudi et al., 2016; Daugherty, 2011; Fink et al., 2010; Gorynia & Jankowska, 2008; Hardy & Phillips, 1998; Mishra & Shah, 2009; Ratajczak-Mrozek, 2010; Strzyżewska, 2008; Tsanos et al., 2014; Zhang & Li, 2010): cost reduction; pursuit of increased profitability of operations; transfer of knowledge, technology, resources and production capacity; access to diverse resources; boosting sales; increasing innovation; increase in bargaining power against other entities; risk mitigation; reaping the benefits of specialization; achieving economies of scale; achieving the synergy effect; expanded market reach; improving customer service; enhancing competitive advantage; shortening product development time and market entry time; opportunity to gain access to new sources of supply and markets; improving communication and information flow; and positively affecting the partner's image.

Despite the benefits of engaging in cooperation between entities, there can be barriers that arise among participating partners. There may be frequent misunderstandings, conflicts, or antagonisms between partners, and opportunism or unethical practices can occur (Hoang & Rothaermel, 2005;

Leonidou et al., 2006; Oliveira & Lumineau, 2019). Mentzer et al., (2000) also point out obstacles that hinder effective cooperation, including inadequate communication, the time and cost involved, and "betrayals" by partners.

Another challenge in cooperation can be interference and unwarranted involvement in a partner's affairs, as well as actions taken to influence or disrupt the functioning of a partner (Nowak, 2015). Incompatibility of goals and differing perceptions of each other's roles, environment, or modus operandi should also be considered as barriers to cooperation (Leonidou et al., 2006; Lugo-Santiago, 2018).

The analysis of the perception of cooperation conducted through the prism of theory and concepts reveals that cooperation is commonly perceived as a means to improve organizational performance, as a safety mechanism aimed at reducing risk and mitigating external threats. Cooperation enables access to resources of other organizations and the achievement of goals that would be much more challenging or even impossible to accomplish independently by a single enterprise.

Notes

1 The transaction cost theory belongs to the trend of the so-called new institutional economics, which rejects the assumption of traditional economic models that there are no transaction costs in economic processes and phenomena. The developer of the theory R. Coase (1937) in his article used the formulation of the costs of using the price mechanism and market costs. In his later works, he argued that the basis for determining the boundaries of the enterprise should not be technological conditions, but the amount of costs that will be incurred in connection with the transaction. These costs included both hierarchical transaction costs (occurring within the organization) and between enterprises on the market (Coase, 1990). The concept was further developed by Williamson, who introduced the term "transaction costs" and defined them as the comparative costs of planning, adapting, and supervising the fulfillment of tasks in various management structures (Williamson, 1975, 1979, 1985). Erin Anderson, on the other hand, played a key role in introducing the theory into the marketing literature (E. Anderson, 1988, 2008; E. Anderson & Coughlan, 1987; E. Anderson & Schmittlein, 1984)

2 In the 1960s and early 1970s, economists studied risk allocation between individuals or groups (Arrow, 1971; Wilson, 1968). The literature described the problem of risk allocation that arises when collaborating parties have different attitudes toward risk. The agency theory expanded the literature on risk allocation with the so-called agency problem, which arises when collaborating parties have different goals and division of labor (Jensen & Meckling, 1976; S. A. Ross, 1973). The popularization of the agency theory can be attributed to Michael C. Jensen and William H. Meckling, through their article *"Theoryof theFirm:Managerial Behavior, AgencyCosts,and Ownership Structure*. Their work had a significant impact on subsequent discussions regarding the application of the agency theory in economics, corporate finance, strategic management, as well as in legal theory, q.v.: (Eisenhardt, 1989; Hendry, 2002; Jeżak, 2012).

3 The emergence of game theory dates back to 1944 when mathematician John von Neumann and economist Oskar Morgenstern published their work *The Theory of Games and Economic Behavior (von Neumann & Morgenstern, 1944)*. Game theory involved the application of mathematics to social situations where rational individuals seek to achieve the best outcomes under specific circumstances. Initially, the application of game theory was limited to the field of economics, assuming player rationality and each player's pursuit of maximizing their own benefits. Game theory involved the application of mathematics to social situations where rational individuals seek to achieve the best outcomes given specific circumstances. Initially, the application of game theory was limited to the field of economics, assuming player rationality and each player's pursuit of maximizing their outcomes. However, it was the work of John Nash (1950) that laid the foundations of modern game theory. He introduced the distinction between cooperative and non-cooperative games and the concept of equilibrium in non-cooperative games (Nash, 1950, 1951).

4 The "added value" of forming coalitions and collaboration among players is mentioned, among others, by Brandenburger and Nalebuff (1995).

5 The term "resource-based theory" was introduced by B. Wernerfelt (1984) who argued that a firm's market position is based on the portfolio of resources it controls. Therefore, market competition can be understood as competition of resources held by firms. The concept of firm-specific resources was initially described in economic theory by E. Chamberlin (1933), who examined the impact of the diversity of resources held on competition and profit generation. E. Penrose (1959), played a significant role in the development of the theory, exploring the impact of owned resources on the growth of the firm. In subsequent years, scholars such as G. Hamel and C.K. Prahalad (1990), R. Grant (1991), J. Barney (1991), M. Peteraf (1993) further developed the theory.

6 <Resource Dependence Theory> originated from the research conducted by Emerson (1962) and J. Pfeffer and G. Salancik (1978). Since its publication, resource dependence theory has become one of the most influential theories of organization and strategic management (Hillman et al., 2009). Charakteryzuje ona organizację jako system otwarty, uzależniony od nieprzewidzianych zdarzeń w otoczeniu zewnętrznym (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978).

7 The theory of relational exchange emerges from behavioral theory and has developed as a critique of transactional exchange theory and in response to economic exchange theories (Hadjikhani & LaPlaca, 2013).

8 An overview of the various phases of the relationship life cycle phases can be found in: (Czakon, 2007)

9 Social exchange theory has its roots in anthropology (Firth, 1951); sociology (Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1976; Gouldner, 1960; Homans, 1958, 1967); social psychology (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959; Thibaut & Walker, 1978) behavioral psychology (Bandura, 1986; Skinner, 1950); philosophy (Rawls, 1971) and economics (Ricardo, 1817; A. Smith, 1976). The theory examines social behavior in the interaction between two parties that implement cost-benefit analysis to determine risks and benefits.

10 The term "stakeholder" was introduced by the Stanford Research Institute in 1963 to refer to groups that are essential for the functioning of an organization (Freeman & Reed, 1983). The concept was primarily developed by R. Ackoff, a representative of the systems school, in the 1970s. In the 1980s, the issue was addressed by R. E. Freeman (1984), further research on stakeholder theory was conducted by Donaldson and Preston (1995), Mitchell, Agle, and Wood (1997), Friedman and Miles (2002), and Phillips (2004). Stakeholder theory

has been applied in various management disciplines, including business ethics, strategic management, finance, accounting, and marketing (Parmar et al., 2010).

11 The relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and stakeholder theory will be discussed in more detail in the second chapter.

12 Social network theory stems from social comparison theory, which believes that individuals can adjust their attitudes and behaviors based on social reference ratings to gain peer acceptance and self-identity and to achieve group survival legitimacy (Riordan, 2000). The theory assumes that individuals are influenced by group relationships, thus focusing on the impact of connections between actors (Borgatti & Li, 2009). On the other hand, the concept of a social network was introduced by Barnes (1954) in the publication "*Class and Committees in a Norwegian Island Parish*" and was a kind of metaphor for social connections between individuals that "entangle" society.

13 In the Polish-language literature on the subject, the English word "cluster" is translated in various ways. The following terms are used: "grono", "skupisko", "kiść", "kompleks przemysłowy", and "lokalne systemy produkcji".

14 The precursor of cluster theory was the economist A. Marshall, who analyzed manufacturing firms in England and their tendency to situate their activities near competitors, suppliers, and customers. He introduced the term "*external economies of scale*", which resulted from the clustering of specialized buyers and suppliers in a given area, the development of the local labor market, and the exchange of knowledge among enterprises (Marshall, 1920). The concept of "industrial districts" was further developed by, among others, (Becattini, 1979, 1990; Krugman, 1991; Piore & Sabel, 1984; Saxenian, 1990).

15 Relationship marketing, also referred to as partnership marketing or bond marketing, is a marketing concept that emerged in the 1980s and 1990s. It was pioneered by L. Berry (1983), who introduced the term "relationship marketing" and defined it as "attracting, maintaining, and strengthening relationships with customers". The concept of relationship marketing developed within the fields of services marketing and industrial marketing (Grönroos, 1989, 1999; Gummesson, 1987, 1991).

16 The term "supply chain management" was first coined by K. Oliver in 1982, although the concept emerged in the early 20th century with the development of the assembly line (Oliver & Webber, 1982). The concept was introduced into the scientific literature, helping to unify procurement, production, and distribution into a more integrated discipline - supply chain management (Ellram & Cooper, 1990; Jones & Riley, 1985).

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3 Dimensions of collaboration in the enterprise

Introduction

The primary function of every enterprise is to achieve its established goals. These goals, reinforced by economic necessity, are often accomplished through collaboration with other enterprises. Management sciences focus on intraorganizational, organizational, and interorganizational phenomena. Therefore, collaboration as a phenomenon should be described by answering the questions: What is it? How does it manifest itself? And why does it take a certain form? (Czakon, 2017).

The complexity of collaboration is reflected in the literature, which identifies various dimensions associated with it, such as trust and risk (Das & Teng, 2001; Jiang et al., 2013; Johnston et al., 2004; Laeequddin & Sardana, 2010); formalization (Jiang et al., 2013; Schmoltzi & Wallenburg, 2012; Smith et al., 1995) and forms of interorganizational collaboration (Barringer & Harrison, 2000; Combs et al., 2004; Parmigiani & Rivera-Santos, 2011; Phillips et al., 2000); hierarchy (Jagdev & Thoben, 2001); relationship direction (Chan & Prakash, 2012; Simatupang & Sridharan, 2002); duration (Hartman et al., 2020; Holloway & Parmigiani, 2016; Kotabe et al., 2003); and the number of participating entities (Hallikas et al., 2002; Lavie et al., 2007; Mentzer et al., 2000). Table 3.1. presents the dimensions of collaboration.

Trust

Trust is the foundation of successful cooperation in interorganizational relationships. It can be defined as a psychological state of readiness to be vulnerable, based on positive expectations regarding the intentions or behavior of the other party in uncertain situations (Czernek et al., 2018; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Rousseau et al., 1998). The development of trust is based on various processes, such as calculation, anticipation, intentionality, ability, or transference (Doney et al., 1998; Sankowska, 2012). All these processes imply a willingness of a party to accept vulnerability based on the expectation

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Table 3.1 Dimensions of collaboration

Dimensions	*Characteristics*	*References*
Trust	• Immature collaboration, low level of trust • Mature collaboration, high level of trust	(Erin Anderson & Weitz, 1989; Barney & Hansen, 1994)
Risk	• High-risk collaboration • Low-risk collaboration	(Das & Teng, 1996; Światowiec-Szczepańska, 2012, 2014)
Formalization	• Formalized collaboration • Informal collaboration	(Reuer & Ariño, 2002; Ring & Van De Ven, 1994)
Hierarchy	• Collaboration based on hierarchical relationships • Collaboration based on nonhierarchical relationships	(Jagdev & Thoben, 2001)
Direction of collaboration	• Vertical collaboration • Horizontal collaboration • Lateral collaboration	(Simatupang & Sridharan, 2002)
Duration	• Short-term collaboration • Long-term collaboration	(Hartman et al., 2020; Holloway & Parmigiani, 2016; Kotabe et al., 2003)
Number of participating entities	• Bilateral collaboration (dyad) • Multilateral collaboration (networks)	(Czakon, 2012; Hallikas et al., 2002; Lavie et al., 2007; Mentzer et al., 2000)
Forms of collaboration	• Alliances • Joint ventures • Supply agreements • Licenses • Co-branding • Franchising • Cross-sector partnerships • Networks • Trade associations (industry-specific) • Consortia	(Barringer & Harrison, 2000; Combs et al., 2004; Parmigiani & Rivera-Santos, 2011; Phillips et al., 2000; Ratajczak-Mrozek, 2010)

Source: own study based on the cited literature

that it can rely on the other party (Bugdol, 2010; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). As such, trust can reduce perceived uncertainty and enable each partner to focus on fulfilling the actual task within the cooperation (Lewicka, 2012; Ratajczak-Mrozek, 2009). Additionally, the development of interorganizational trust is strongly influenced by relational factors (Atuahene-Gima & Li, 2002; Dyer & Chu, 2003; Sankowska, 2012). Successful cooperation requires a high level of trust between partners to mitigate the fear of opportunistic behavior and enhance relationship stability, although both trust and distrust at moderate or high levels are necessary for positive relational outcomes (Raza-Ullah, 2021).

Trust can arise from formal contractual safeguards, as well as from informal ones, such as a community of partners sharing goals and values (Barney & Hansen, 1994; Czakon & Czernek-Marszałek, 2018; Wasiluk, 2013), and a culture that influences not only cooperative values but also the level of trust preferred by a party in the pursuit of collaboration (Steensma et al., 2000).

Immediate trust is rare in partner relationships, but gathering and exchanging information about the partner's goals, expectations, or intentions can stimulate growth of trust. The time and resources required for this process can be referred to as transaction costs (Williamson, 1993) or as investments in social capital (Adler & Kwon, 2002).

Trust is not static and can vary depending on the duration of the relationship (Schilke & Cook, 2013; Vanneste et al., 2014). Therefore, trust develops over the course of interorganizational relationships, and the decision to trust each other is based on different premises as the relationship progresses through (Lewicki & Bunker, 1996; S. Zaheer et al., 1999). At the beginning of the relationship, trust often relies on formal foundations (Li, 2008; Schilke & Cook, 2013), while in later stages, trust is based on more personalized relationships (Levin et al., 2006; Lewicka & Szeliga, 2016; Lewicki & Bunker, 1996).

Barney and Hansen (1994) identify three levels of trust strength that can facilitate effective cooperation: 1) weak trust: limited opportunism possibilities; 2) semi-strong trust: trust through management; 3) strong trust: trust is a key element. Weak trust emerges when partners have no significant gaps in contracts or other contractual forms of cooperation management. Since the potential for opportunism is not a concern, trust between partners is not dependent on contractual safeguards or shared values and goals.

However, when the potential for opportunism exists, an entrepreneur may rely on semi-strong or strong trust. Semi-strong trust between partners occurs when contractual safeguards mutually protect both parties. If the penalties associated with opportunistic behavior outweigh the benefits derived from such behavior, it would be rational for each partner to behave in a cooperative manner (Hill, 1990). In this form of trust, formal management structures facilitate cooperation by creating a shared belief among partners that they will not exploit each other's weaknesses (Barney & Hansen, 1994). Strong trust exists when partners maintain a high level of confidence that they can avoid opportunistic behavior, even without the assurance provided by formal contractual safeguards. Strong trust between partners stems from shared vision, goals, and standards (Barney & Hansen, 1994). Similarity between partners in behavior patterns and goals promotes effective communication, leading to lower coordination costs and a reduced need for formal governance safety mechanisms (Whetten, 1981). On the other hand, differences in strategic objectives and values can erode trust

between partners and seriously hinder cooperation (Parkhe, 1991). This form of trust is more important than written cooperation agreements.

Thus, trust cannot be imposed but is the result of consistent efforts and perceptions over time. In building trust in the process of interorganizational collaboration, a crucial role is played by individuals who represent the organizations and their interpretation of the behavior of others (Blois, 1999; Czakon & Czernek, 2016). The length of the relationship is often seen as an indicator of relationship maturity, signaling the growth of trust (Anderson & Weitz, 1989). As collaborating partners interact and learn about each other, their relationships evolve, and the foundations of trust change (Grudzewski & Hejduk, 2007; Levin et al., 2006; Lewicki & Bunker, 1996). The foundations of trust can include factors such as the quality of communication (Anderson & Weitz, 1989) and honesty (Dwyer et al., 1987; Kumar et al., 1995), while unresolved conflicts from the past negatively impact trust-building in the collaborative process (Bstieler & Hemmert, 2008).

Risk

Risk assessment[1] is a crucial factor in the decision-making process regarding initiating or abstaining from interorganizational collaboration (Kuziak, 2011; Sitkin & Pablo, 1992; Światowiec-Szczepańska, 2012). It seems important for organizations to enter into agreements that enable them to maintain risk at an acceptable level. March and Shapira (1987) proposed two perspectives for defining and studying risk: the economic perspective and the managerial perspective. From an economic perspective, risk is the variance of the probability distribution of potential gains and losses associated with a given alternative. From a managerial perspective, uncertainty about positive outcomes is not considered important (as they represent the attractiveness of a given alternative). Risk tends to be associated with negative consequences (Jedynak, 2017), although it can also contribute to increasing the value of an enterprise (Kasiewicz & Rogowski, 2006). Risk is therefore perceived as "danger or threat", even in the context of collaboration. In the context of cooperative actions, manifestations of risk can include the nonperformance or improper execution of actions by a partner (Bahli & Rivard, 2003; Weerakkody & Irani, 2010).

Das and Teng (2001a, 1996, 1998) argue that risk plays a central role in making decisions regarding interorganizational management, including collaboration. One of the mechanisms for controlling risk is the choice of alliance structure, which can mitigate or increase the level of risk. A rational choice of alliance structure should ensure that the overall level of alliance risk is not excessively high. Building upon these considerations, the authors propose a theoretical framework that combines two dimensions of risk: relational risk and performance risk. Relational risk pertains to the cooperation

between partners, while performance risk is associated with the risk of not achieving the goals of a given collaboration (Das & Teng, 1996). Both dimensions of risk are linked to the process of collaboration (Światowiec-Szczepańska, 2012; Światowiec-Szczepańska & Zieliński, 2018).

Relational risk is associated with the likelihood that a partner will not engage in the desired manner (Światowiec-Szczepańska, 2012) and stems from opportunistic behavior by one or both organizations (Williamson, 1975). Actions that aim to prevent this include provisions in contracts that formalize the relationship. Sources of relational risk can include differences in bargaining power between collaborating enterprises (Williamson, 1993), lack of confidence in the competence and skills of the partner (Kale et al., 2000), lack of confidence in the good faith of the partner (de Man & Roijakkers, 2009; Gulati, 1995a), as well as factors related to different cultural backgrounds (Delerue & Simon, 2009; Oxley & Sampson, 2004).

Performance risk depends on a number of factors that can prevent the alliance from achieving its strategic goals despite the full cooperation of the enterprises (Das & Teng, 1996; Urbanowska-Sojkin, 2012). These factors include changes in the competitive environment, such as increased competition and new entrants; changes in the broader environment, such as in government regulations and policies; and changes in the internal environment, for example, the lack of specific competencies due to the emergence of new technology. Of course, the performance risk largely depends on the goals of the partnership. For example, if the collaboration involves technology development in R&D-intensive industries, the performance risk associated with this type of activity is inherently high, while collaborations in other industries associated with this type of risk will have a lower level of risk.

Formalization

Collaborative relationships can be formal or informal. Informal cooperation involves flexible arrangements in which behavioral norms, rather than contractual obligations, determine the contributions of the parties involved. According to Axelrod (1984), informal cooperation arises spontaneously, and the conditions that stimulate its emergence are 1) the belief of the parties in the relationship that they will be in contact with each other for a long time; 2) the conviction that cooperation will be beneficial for them; 3) the recognition that reciprocity is necessary for any benefits obtained through the strategy. This type of cooperation is voluntary and organic in nature (Astley, 1984). Collaboration that is not based on formal relationships is characterized by the presence of stronger incentives for activities beyond the scope of the partnership.

Formalized cooperation is characterized by the presence of contractual obligations and formal control structures (Pierścieniak, 2014). Over time,

formal types of cooperation may evolve into informal forms where rules and regulations are no longer necessary (Ratajczak-Mrozek & Małys, 2012; Ring & Van De Ven, 1994). Formal agreements constitute a promise or commitment to perform specific actions in the future (Macneil, 1978); they represent documented arrangements concerning voluntary exchanges governed by legal provisions (Suchman, 2003) and include mutual obligations, administrative processes, and dispute resolution mechanisms (Cavusgil et al., 2004; Hamilton & Nickerson, 2003; Mayer & Teece, 2008; Poppo & Zenger, 2002).

Interorganizational cooperation comes in various forms, such as alliances, joint ventures, supply agreements, licensing, co-branding, franchising, cross-sector partnerships, networks, trade associations, or consortia (Barringer & Harrison, 2000; Combs et al., 2004; Gręboszz, 2016; Parmigiani & Rivera-Santos, 2011). Each of these forms is based on a collaborative relationship between a primary organization and one or more partner organizations, aiming to cooperate, exchange resources, or improve performance.

Collaborating organizations are typically bound by formal contracts, and according to transaction cost theory, formal contracts curb opportunistic behavior by specifying rewards and penalties, building long-term commitment, and allowing for alternative partners in the face of a risk of exit (Reuer & Ariño, 2002; Williamson, 1985). In addition, in cooperation based on formal relationships, contracts prevent deliberate imitation and protect knowledge (Blomqvist et al., 2005), and they reduce transactional ambiguity by defining boundaries for appropriate partner behavior (Reuer & Ariño, 2002).

Ghoshal and Moran (1996), however, argue that formal contracts can signal distrust between partners by emphasizing control and legal rules, thereby encouraging opportunistic behavior. They argue that formal agreements can make a partner feel mistrustful, and their behavior is perceived as unlikely to be responsible. This may prompt the partner to engage in opportunistic behavior, either by passively withholding efforts or by actively seeking revenge (Ghoshal & Moran, 1996).

On the other hand, cooperation based on relational norms refers to the extent to which partnering organizations engage in behavioral practices that facilitate the development of informal, self-enforcing safeguards in their relationship (Sarkar et al., 2009; Światowiec, 2006). Since relationships are embedded in a broader social context (Czernek, 2017), over the long term, with expectations for future relations, this strengthens the presence and self-enforcement of relational norms in the cooperation process (Granovetter, 1985; Gulati, 1995a; Heide & Miner, 1992). Unlike formal contracts, in which all contingencies are formalized, cooperation based on informal relationships reflects social understanding and reinforcement of specific behaviors and exchange patterns.

Hierarchy

Business cooperation is based on relationships. Whether the cooperation involves two entities or a network of collaborating enterprises, each of these relationships is of a bilateral nature. Furthermore, each of these bilateral relationships can be hierarchical or nonhierarchical in character (Jagdev & Thoben, 2001). A hierarchical relationship occurs when one party has a stronger position and sets the rules of engagement. In a nonhierarchical partnership, both parties have equal status, and decisions regarding the principles of cooperation are mutually agreed upon. Relationships between enterprises are not static, and partners may strive to transform their relationship into a nonhierarchical one by offering better products or services (Jagdev & Thoben, 2001).

Evans and Wurster (1997) proposed a "hyperarchy" model to illustrate the complexity of interactions and interdependence between enterprises. In hierarchical relationships, there is a dependence of one enterprise on another. In "hyperarchy" type networks, relationships can be complex and in any direction, and typical hierarchical and nonhierarchical relationships will evolve. Yet another model that relates to relationships is holacracy[2], in which separate, independent, and self-managing teams are formed that are focused on accomplishing the tasks and goals of the company (Zohar, 2022).

Relationship direction

The type of collaboration can also vary depending on the relationship direction between the parties. Taking this criterion into account, one can distinguish between vertical, horizontal, and lateral collaboration. Cooperation involving vertical relationships will differ from cooperation involving horizontal relationships primarily in terms of interdependence. The level of interdependence between the parties will generally be clearer and more direct in vertical relationships, especially within organizations, than in horizontal relationships (Lewandowska, 2012; Smith et al., 1995). Lateral collaboration combines the benefits and opportunities of sharing vertical and horizontal integration.

Vertical agreements for the purchase or sale of goods or services are entered into between enterprises operating at different levels of production or distribution (European Commission, 2010). Vertical cooperation can be defined as collaboration when two or more organizations, such as a manufacturer, distributor, carrier, and retailer, share responsibilities, resources, and performance information to serve relatively similar end customers. Entities collaborating in this way form buyer–-seller relationships, and consequently this type of collaboration is most often discussed in the context

of the supply chain. The issues addressed in this area primarily concern the cooperation between buyers and suppliers (Fearne et al., 2006; Liu et al., 2020; Moradlou et al., 2020; Nyaga et al., 2013; Patrucco et al., 2019; Urbaniak, 2018b) and the impact of trust (Ha et al., 2011). Vertical collaboration in supply chains means achieving mutual benefits for participating partners, such as increasing sales, reducing costs and risks, increasing resource sharing, learning and knowledge sharing, and improving overall performance (Chan & Prakash, 2012; Czakon & Kawa, 2018).

However, benefits are sometimes difficult to achieve due to existing differences in the interests and goals of individual chain members. Each company seeks to maximize its own profit and minimize its own costs, which may potentially come at the expense of the profitability of other entities (Belaya & Hanf, 2016).

Horizontal collaboration refers to agreements or practices agreed upon between enterprises, operating at the same market level or levels. Such cooperation aims to identify and achieve benefits for the collaborating enterprises at the same level, where the benefits of production/purchasing cooperation include lower prices due to aggregated production/purchasing volumes, reduced supply risks, lower administrative costs due to centralized purchasing operations, and networking benefits where group members communicate and interact with each other, allowing the organizations involved to achieve better results than they would achieve on their own (Russo et al., 2019; Tella & Virolainen, 2005). In most cases, horizontal collaboration involves collaboration among competitors. It includes areas such as research and development (R&D), production, procurement, and commercialization.

In logistics, horizontal links pertain to areas such as transportation management (Buijs & Wortmann, 2014; Lozano et al., 2013; Wen, 2011, 2012) or cooperation between manufacturers (Bahinipati et al., 2009; Leat & Revoredo-Giha, 2013). The benefits of collaboration between partners at the same level include lower prices due to aggregated production or purchasing volumes, reduced supply risks, lower administrative costs resulting from centralized purchasing operations, and networking benefits arising from group members communicating and interacting with each other (Tella & Virolainen, 2005). However, disadvantages of horizontal collaboration can include loss of flexibility or control for members of the agreement, high coordination costs caused by competing partners, antitrust issues, or potential market consolidation (Bahinipati et al., 2009).

Lateral collaboration aims to achieve greater flexibility by combining and sharing capabilities vertically and horizontally. Integrated logistics and intermodal transportation are examples of the application of lateral integration, which aims to synchronize carriers and shippers of multiple companies into a seamless and efficient freight network (Simatupang & Sridharan, 2002).

Duration

The dimension of time allows us to distinguish types of cooperation based on the duration of their relationship. Taking into account the time horizon, we can refer to short-term, medium-term, and long-term cooperation.[3] Generally, the literature emphasizes the benefits of long-term cooperation (Ramanathan & Gunasekaran, 2014; Wang et al., 2016). Short-term cooperation can transform into long-term cooperation as organizations tend to return to partners with whom they have collaborated in the past if they prove to be reliable and willing to cooperate (Holloway & Parmigiani, 2016).

Long-term cooperation can also be based on relational agreements, as this form of organization emphasizes the bonds between partners and their shared goals, such as maintaining good relations, exchanging information, and ensuring continuity of relationships. Among the benefits of long-term cooperation, shared learning and problem-solving based on knowledge transfer are often mentioned (Tunisini & Zanfei, 1998). Common goals and values between partners also promote mutual learning (Fiol & Lyles, 1985; Holcomb & Hitt, 2007; Hult et al., 2007), while trust built through previous exchanges acts as a safeguard, discouraging partners from appropriating knowledge for their own benefit (Heiman & Nickerson, 2002; Hoetker & Mellewigt, 2009).

Long-term cooperation can facilitate adaptation and responsiveness to changing situations and uncertainty (Holloway & Parmigiani, 2016). A stable relationship means that partners may be willing to bear some of the costs of uncertainty and be more flexible. Uncertainty can lead to serious conflicts and renegotiations, which diminish when partners engage in long-term cooperation (Jeffries & Reed, 2000).

In addition to the undeniable advantages of long-term cooperation, it is characterized by certain drawbacks that can be arguments in favor of short-term cooperation. One of them is the instability of cooperation, defined as a significant change in the partnership status that is unplanned and premature from the perspective of one or both partners (Inkpen & Beamish, 1997). Instability is associated with changes in the bargaining power of partners. Changes in the balance of bargaining power occur when partners acquire sufficient knowledge and skills to eliminate dependency on the partner, which can result in instability affecting up to 50% of alliances (Bleeke & Ernst, 1991; Inkpen & Beamish, 1997).

Organizations can become vulnerable to opportunism from long-term partners because they are less likely to employ monitoring and formal mechanisms in the relationship (Williamson, 1985; Wuyts & Geyskens, 2005). Over time, partners become better at identifying each other's weaknesses and can exploit them for their own benefit (Anderson & Jap, 2005). Additionally, one partner may appropriate the knowledge of the other for their own purposes (Noordhoff et al., 2011), assuming that the costs of

finding a new partner will deter such actions (Poppo et al., 2008). Another disadvantage of long-term cooperation is the potential for better alternative partners to be overlooked (Ernst & Bamford, 2005).

The number of participating entities

Agreements between organizations to undertake cooperation can be analyzed from the point of view of the number of partners involved. Taking into account the number of actors involved, a distinction is made between bilateral and multilateral, i.e., cooperation in the form of dyads and networks, respectively.. Dyadic cooperation involves two partners, while network cooperation involves at least three. . A network represents a form of interorganizational cooperation that is goal-oriented and characterized by the existence of multiple interconnected partners, providing them with diverse resources, including information and knowledge flow (Sorenson & Stuart, 2008). They are used by enterprises to access distributed and localized knowledge and mitigate uncertainty, especially for entrepreneurial activities (Sorenson & Stuart, 2008) as well as to stimulate innovation (Czakon, 2012; Hoang & Antoncic, 2003).

In the literature, cooperation between two partners is often analyzed from the perspective of the concept of social embeddedness (Granovetter, 1985), which assumes that partners who collaborate over a longer period achieve better outcomes than those without such a history (Czernek, 2017; Gulati, 1995b; Uzzi, 1997), and the experience and trust gained in the previous relationship will determine the success of further cooperation (Gulati, 1995a; Rowley et al., 2000; Zaheer et al., 1998). Dyadic cooperation is defined as the systematic and strategic coordination of traditional business functions within a specific organization and between enterprises to improve the long-term performance of the collaborating enterprises (Mentzer et al., 2000). The functioning of a dyad can be evaluated by the effectiveness and efficiency of the collaboration (Selnes & Sallis, 2003). Efficiency can include joint development of new products, improvements in product quality, or other activities that enhance innovation or competitiveness. Efficiency, on the other hand, includes, for example, cost reduction, improvement in timely deliveries or shorter lead times.

Multilateral cooperation refers to situations where at least three entities are involved (a triad). The specifics of relationships in triads and other multilateral agreements fundamentally differ from dyads due to the greater diversity of roles and relationships among the partners, who may have their own specific approaches to cooperation (Klimas & Czakon, 2022). Multilateral agreements arise from strategic collaboration among more than two independent companies with the aim of achieving economic benefits (Hallikas et al., 2002), by engaging multiple partners in various value chain activities such as joint research, development, procurement, production, marketing,

and others (Lavie et al., 2007). Such agreements can be particularly effective for large-scale projects that require coordination and resources from multiple companies (Beamish & Kachra, 2004).

Collaboration within multilateral alliances appears to be more advantageous than dyads due to the various forms of cooperation in pursuit of common goals. However, there are several challenges associated with this type of collaboration, including an increased likelihood of misunderstandings and conflicts with a larger number of partners (Lavie et al., 2007), as well as a lack of trust (Czakon & Czernek, 2016; Heidl et al., 2014). The number of involved entities is therefore a significant factor that can determine cooperation. One of the primary reasons for forming alliances is to gain access to diverse resources from multiple partner organizations to achieve complex objectives.

Forms of collaboration

Alliances are a form of cooperation between organizations aimed at achieving common goals through the exchange of resources and skills while maintaining legal separateness of the entities (Dickson & Weaver, 1997; Gawinecki et al., 2000; Ireland et al., 2002; Mohr & Spekman, 1994). There are various types of alliances, and the ways of classifying them are often based on the type of cooperation, the characteristics of the partner or the legal structure (Albers et al., 2016). Alliances can take on different forms[4], and the concept itself is quite broad, encompassing both vertical and horizontal agreements and referring to cooperation between organizations that may not be complex and long-term (Barringer & Harrison, 2000). The objective of alliances is to improve competitive position (Sznajder, 2009), which is made possible by pooling resources, most often in the areas of R&D, marketing, or technology (Das et al., 1998; Kozyra, 2006). This form of cooperation is oriented toward knowledge exchange between partners (Inkpen & Tsang, 2007) and relies heavily on relational norms (Hillebrand & Biemans, 2003). Organizations are increasingly engaging in multiple alliances simultaneously (Wassmer, 2010).

Collaboration within a **joint venture** involves the creation of a separate entity jointly owned by the partners, with the aim of carrying out a specific task or engaging in a particular business activity, while sharing profits, costs, and losses (Inkpen & Crossan, 1995). A distinguishing feature of this type of cooperation is the presence of shared capital, which can function as a governance mechanism (Brouthers & Hennart, 2007). Traditionally, joint ventures have been used to gain access to foreign markets or to pursue specific activities that were peripheral to the strategic priorities of the partners (Oczkowska, 2005). The reluctance of companies to cooperate on

strategically important issues was due to fear of loss of proprietary information and the disclosure of trade secrets (Barringer & Harrison, 2000). Nowadays, partners engage in a wide range of activities, including research, production, marketing, distribution, international operations, which places emphasis on trust, cooperation, and commitment as key elements of success (Ren et al., 2009).

Supply agreements between suppliers and buyers within the supply chain, licensing, and *co-branding* belong to vertical agreements of cooperation. **Supply agreements** between buyers and sellers are analyzed from the perspective of supply chain management (Ellram & Ueltschy Murfield, 2019; Soosay & Hyland, 2015). Cooperation involves agreements regarding product flow and inventory management (Gümüs & Güneri, 2007; Huang et al., 2020; Karimi et al., 2016), partner selection and evaluation (McCutcheon & Stuart, 2000; Meixell & Norbis, 2012; Urbaniak, 2015; Voss, 2013), buyer–supplier relationships (Kros et al., 2019; Meyer et al., 2020; Saunila et al., 2019), and manufacturer–distributor relationships (Liu et al., 2020; Thomas et al., 2015). The most frequently analyzed area is the cooperation between buyers and suppliers, where issues related to technology (Danese, 2006; Sari, 2010); knowledge (Balboni et al., 2017; Rungsithong & Meyer, 2020); trust (Ha et al., 2011; Rungsithong & Meyer, 2020); risk (Fan & Stevenson, 2018; Lee, 2009); sustainable development (Beske & Seuring, 2014; Urbaniak, 2018a; Varsei et al., 2014); and humanitarian supply chains (Maon et al., 2009).

A **licensing agreement** specifies the terms of cooperation in which one company (licensor) grants the right to use proprietary knowledge[5] to another company (licensee) for use in the development and sale of products in exchange for a lump sum payment and/or a license fee (Parmigiani & Rivera-Santos, 2011; Schuett, 2012). Licensors possess proprietary knowledge such as inventions or designs and wish to expand but lack certain manufacturing or marketing capabilities that licensees provide. Such agreements are common when expanding into new international markets or across different industries. *Co-branding* represents a long-term collaboration in the area of marketing (Helmig et al., 2008). It is used by two or more organizations that seek to leverage the combination of two existing brands to reduce costs, strengthen market position, or enter new market areas.

Franchising is a form of cooperation between enterprises in which one enterprise (the franchisor) sells to another enterprise (the franchisee) the rights to market goods or services under its own brand and use its business model (Combs et al., 2004). According to the European Code of Ethics for Franchising (2016), it is a system of selling goods, services, or technology based on a close and ongoing collaboration between legally and financially independent enterprises. Companies that collaborate on the basis of this form of cooperation often belong to the service sector, possess

complementary resources, and encounter challenges in aligning incentives (Parmigiani & Rivera-Santos, 2011).

Cross-sector partnerships are voluntary collaborations between entities from two or more economic sectors aimed at addressing a problem of mutual interest concerning social or public issues, such as healthcare, economic development, or environmental sustainability (Waddock, 1991). Such collaboration involves a range of institutions, with relationships varying in terms of scope, duration, and number of partners (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012; Selsky & Parker, 2005). Partner configurations include, under various names, public–private partnerships, business–NGO partnerships, government–NGO partnerships, and tripartite partnerships, the latter involving parties from all three social sectors (Selsky & Parker, 2005).

A key feature of partnerships is the diverse nature of the partners and the focus primarily on social rather than business issues. The goals and approaches of partners in addressing social problems often vary due to being influenced by distinctly different stakeholder groups (Selsky & Parker, 2005). The differences lie in the nature and scope of the problem they seek to address and the means by which they do so. Partnerships are formed in response to or in anticipation of social problems relating to economic development, education, healthcare, poverty reduction, community capacity building, and environmental sustainability (Vestergaard et al., 2020). Organizations may engage in collaboration to enhance their image, legitimize their actions, or attract better employees. For nonprofit organizations, the aim of collaboration is often to bring about social change, while government organizations may respond to increasing demands for efficiency and accountability (Parmigiani & Rivera-Santos, 2011). These diverse motivations often make this form of collaboration challenging to create and manage.

Trade associations are voluntary institutional networks composed of organizations that choose to collectively address issues that impose high costs on individual organizations but can be resolved together at a lower cost (Bennett, 1996). Trade associations play a fundamental role in developing public goods and facilitating the exchange of ideas and information. Trade associations are typically nonprofit organizations formed by companies belonging to the same industry. They serve the purpose of gathering and disseminating trade information, providing legal and technical advice, conducting industry-specific training, and creating a platform for collective lobbying. The formation of industry associations is common in sectors where the risk of government intervention is high and lobbying activities are strong (Gupta & Lad, 1983).

Consortia are defined as specialized, multilateral strategic alliances involving three or more entities (Barringer & Harrison, 2000). Typically, consortia are formed by organizations with similar needs that come together to create a new entity to meet those needs. Consortia enable companies to

pool resources, conduct joint research, and undertake activities that individual companies would not be able to afford. As a result, consortia allow for risk-sharing, cost-sharing, and knowledge-sharing, providing necessary research and development work, serving as a platform for collective lobbying, and facilitating the dissemination of trade information (Barringer & Harrison, 2000).

Conclusions

In summary, interorganizational cooperation is a highly complex phenomenon that occurs widely and is instrumental in achieving organizational goals. The literature on the subject, which has been cited, provides evidence that this phenomenon has been studied for many years, and the knowledge base regarding cooperation is extensive. The analysis conducted allows for capturing the dimensions that constitute the subject of cooperation. Trust is a fundamental element of successful cooperation. Collaborating parties must trust each other to take risks and share information. Trust is built through transparency, honesty, and meeting expectations. Cooperation involves a certain degree of risk. Each participating entity must be willing to take on the risks associated with cooperation, such as resource sharing, financial investments, or decision-making. Risk management is essential for maintaining sustainable cooperation and minimizing adverse consequences. Formalization refers to the extent to which cooperation is regulated through agreements, policies, and procedures. It can be expressed in the form of contracts, agreements, or regulations. Cooperation can have varying degrees of hierarchy and distribution of authority. Some forms of cooperation are based on equal relationships where decisions are made through consensus, while others are more hierarchical with clearly defined leaders and subordinate structures. Relationship direction refers to how information, resources, and decisions are transferred between cooperating parties. Cooperation can have varying durations, ranging from short-term, one-off collaboration to long-term strategic partnerships and the forms in which it is implemented.

Notes

1 Risk is associated with the specificity of investments and the uncertainty of the environment. According to the transaction cost theory discussed earlier, these factors increase transaction costs, thus requiring more hierarchical forms of management (Williamson, 1979, 1981, 1985). On the other hand, according to the theory of real options (Folta, 1998; Kogut, 1991; Myers, 1977), uncertainty leads firms to prefer more flexible and less hierarchical modes of management to avoid the costs of alternative irreversible investments in joint ventures (Folta, 1998).

2 This model was first introduced in 2007 by Brian Robertson, founder of Ternary Software. It is less hierarchical, a hybrid of top-down design by management and

self-organization by employees who have certain roles to fulfill. The roles are organized by self-organizing circles that have their autonomy within their areas of competence (Zohar, 2022)

3 The basis for analyzing cooperative relationships from the perspective of the time factor can be found in Coase's article "The Nature of the Firm" (1937), which referred to long-term relationships in cooperation between firms, arguing that it may be desirable to enter into long-term contracts, thus avoiding the costs associated with short-term cooperation. Additionally, due to the risks involved in cooperation, partners may prefer long-term cooperation to short-term cooperation.

4 Diverse forms of alliances are described, among others, by Xie and Johnston (2004). (2004)

5 There is no uniform European Union copyright law common to all Member States. There is also no comprehensive regulation in Community law concerning the issue of concluding contracts on the grounds of copyright and related rights. In Polish law, a licensing agreement grants the licensee the right to use a work, i.e. selected copyrights, for a period of five years in the territory of the country where the licensee has its registered office unless otherwise specified in the agreement (*Acts of February 4, 1994 on Copyright and Related Rights, Journal of Laws of 2017, item 880*).

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Part 2

Organization's collaboration with suppliers

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4 The importance of collaboration with suppliers

Introduction

Global competition, shortened product life cycles, and increased demand for customized products are driving companies to respond more quickly to customer needs. Meeting this challenge requires exchanging information between partners, rapidly developing new products, and reducing delivery times – customer satisfaction becomes the organization's primary concern. Cooperation with suppliers enables the achievement of these goals.

Motives, barriers, and benefits of collaboration with suppliers

Motives, barriers, and benefits of collaboration with suppliers may vary depending on the specific context and industry. Table 4.1 provides an overview of them.

The overview of motives, barriers, and benefits related to supplier collaboration presented is general in nature, and specific motives, barriers, or benefits may vary depending on the sector or industry. The motives for engaging in supplier collaboration can also be interpreted as future, expected benefits. The need to increase competitiveness is a motive that can be broadly associated with various benefits related to process improvement/ refinement. The processes mentioned are characteristic of the buyer–supplier relationship and involve aspects such as inventory management, replenishment, and on-time delivery, as well as customer service levels. Strong competition and the emergence of international market players require organizations to adopt new practices to become more efficient.

Collaboration with suppliers can also be pursued due to specific product or market characteristics. Currently, a challenge for enterprises is coping with the shortened product lifecycle. The market pressure to shorten the product lifecycle, lead time, and adapting to changes in consumer needs can serve as an impetus for engaging in supplier collaboration (Freitas et al., 2018).

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Table 4.1 Motives, barriers, and benefits of collaboration with suppliers

Motives	*Barriers*	*Benefits*
- The need to increase competitiveness - Specificity of the product or market - Strong competition - The need to cope with the shortening of the product life cycle - Globalization - Response to cooperation initiatives in the market - Attempting to solve existing problems regarding the operation of the supply chain - Previous, positive experience of cooperation - Pressure from the partner - Restructuring the supply chain - Existing relationships with the partner - Product complexity - Seeking sources of innovation - -	- Poor strategic planning - Lack of trust between partners - Lack of commitment from top management - Lack of willingness to share information - Lack of trust - Lack of training - Technological differences - Different goals - Lack of orientation toward relationship - Lack of ability to share risks and benefits - Difficulties in integrating key processes - Inflexible organizational systems and processes - Inadequate performance measurements - Lack of coordination - Incompatible organizational culture - Lack of formalized processes and documents - Lack of joint planning - Individual problem-solving and decision-making - The way cooperation is organized - Concerns about losing control over the supplier - Conflict of interests in the relationship - Lack of control over loss of knowledge - Lack of guarantee of future collaboration - Uncertainty of collaboration - High level of latent knowledge - Partner's inability to understand different perspectives on collaboration - Strong bargaining power of the partner	- Better inventory management - Improved demand predictability / better forecasting - Enhanced planning - Improved replenishment process - Improved production cycle - Improved relationships - Increased efficiency - Improved quality - Better supply chain management - Improved product mix - Improved promotional activities - Shortened lead cycle time - Increased efficiency in product launch - Improved innovation - Improved ability to implement sustainable development - Cost reduction - Increased competitiveness - Improved delivery timeliness - Better information sharing - Higher level of customer service - Improved asset management - Increased product availability - Sales growth - Continuous process improvement - Ability to develop new technologies - Better risk management performance

Source: own study based on: (Akamp & Müller, 2013; Bagchi et al., 2005; Barratt, 2004; Bengtsson et al., 2013; Cao & Zhang, 2010, 2011; Cuervo-Cazurra & Annique Un, 2010; Dahlquist & Griffith, 2017; De Freitas et al., 2018; Delbufalo, 2012; Eslami & Melander, 2019; Fawcett et al., 2012; Fawcett et al., 2008b; Gold et al., 2010; Grandinetti, 2017; He et al., 2017; Heirati et al., 2016; Heirati & Siahtiri, 2019; Kache & Seuring, 2014; Kashyap & Lakhanpal, 2019; Shuting Li & Chen, 2019; Liu et al., 2020; Melander & Tell, 2019; Moradlou et al., 2020; Pagell & Wu, 2009; Patrucco et al., 2019; Patrucco et al., 2017; Sanders, 2007; Singh et al., 2018; Un et al., 2010; Wang et al., 2016)

Effective management of the entire chain, including supplier relationships, is crucial for achieving a competitive advantage (Kisperska-Moroń et al., 2010; Park & Krishnan, 2001; Szymonik, 2011). Collaboration with suppliers brings various benefits, such as inventory reduction, on-time delivery, and shorter product development cycles (Fawcett et al., 2007). Bagchi i inni (2005), point out the key benefits of collaboration, such as reduced logistics costs and improved order fulfillment. Sanders (2007) emphasizes the positive impact of collaboration on quality, costs, and delivery, while Cao and Zhang (2010, 2011) identify increased sales as a benefit of collaboration and cost savings as one of the greatest benefits of long-term collaboration with suppliers.

The aim of collaboration with suppliers is therefore to achieve various types of benefits. However, there are certain barriers to collaboration that influence the partnership and, consequently, the results or expected benefits. Undoubtedly, important barriers that significantly hinder collaboration include a lack of willingness to share information (Barratt, 2004), lack of trust (Delbufalo, 2012), or technological differences (Hoffman & Mehra, 2000). Collaboration with suppliers can also be challenging due to the need to overcome structural and cultural barriers (Fawcett et al., 2012, 2010; Stank et al., 2001). A large number of barriers are also associated with the heterogeneous structure and complexity of industries (Kitsiou et al., 2007). Melander and Tell (2019), on the other hand, emphasize that the problems that can hinder cooperation with suppliers relate to the way cooperation is organized, supplier control, knowledge management, and the potential for conflicts in the relationship. Grandinetti (2017) points out that collaboration with a supplier becomes challenging when the partner remains in the relationship due to power imbalances and strong dependency. Information asymmetry complicates the collaboration further. A large number of barriers are also associated with the heterogeneous structure and complexity of industries (Kitsiou et al., 2007). Melander and Tell (2019), on the other hand, emphasize that the problems that can hinder cooperation with suppliers relate to the way cooperation is organized, supplier control, knowledge management, and the potential for conflicts in the relationship. Grandinetti (2017) points out that collaboration with a supplier becomes challenging when the partner remains in the relationship due to power imbalances and strong dependency. Information asymmetry complicates the collaboration further.

The significance of collaborative relationships with suppliers is crucial at both strategic and operational levels. It is linked to all essential variables in business management. The barriers and challenges indicate that the benefits are not automatically within reach; rather, a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and efficient management of it are necessary.

In the literature on the subject, collaboration with suppliers is defined on the basis of supply chain management using various interchangeable terms such as partnership, integration, alliances, and relationships (Armistead et al., 2007). Most commonly, it is defined as the collaboration of independent

parties that establish long-term relationships and work closely together to achieve a common goal (Sheu et al., 2006; Simatupang & Sridharan, 2005). It involves creating and managing unique value-added processes to better meet customer needs (Fawcett et al., 2008a). Lambert et al. (1996) define supply chain collaboration as individualized business relationships based on mutual trust, openness, shared risk, and shared rewards, which provide a competitive advantage and result in better business performance compared to what organizations would achieve individually. Such collaboration involves sharing information, resources, knowledge, risks, and rewards, as well as making joint decisions to achieve mutual benefits (Mentzer et al., 2000).

Collaboration with suppliers is multidimensional and multilevel. Zacharia et al. (2009) believe that collaboration with suppliers can occur at different levels, ranging from low to high. Such variation is associated with the dependence on resources and the intentions of the partner – low-level collaboration would require minimal resource commitment, while high-level collaboration entails significant resource commitment (Ramanathan et al., 2014).

Factors affecting cooperation with suppliers

Cooperation with suppliers can be shaped by a number of factors that can affect its effectiveness and success. According to Marqui et al. (2013), there are factors that affect the course of cooperation with suppliers. Table 4.2 presents an overview of these factors (Table 4.2.).

The presented compilation of factors suggests that collaboration with suppliers is perceived as a multi-level construction that encompasses various aspects. In light of the research, some of the listed factors have a positive impact on collaboration, while others have a negative impact. Long-term collaboration with suppliers contributes to achieving greater efficiency and competitiveness, allowing for the generation of unique value (Nyaga et al., 2010). It is most often perceived as a result of prior experiences, where satisfaction and trust influence the decision to engage in long-term collaboration with suppliers (Lui & Ngo, 2010). Collaboration involving information exchange can bring various benefits to partners, such as improved forecast accuracy, better customer service quality, and stronger relationships between the company and its suppliers (Panahifar et al., 2018).

The benefits of flexible collaboration emerge when partners are willing to cooperate, understand differing perspectives, share information and resources, and achieve common goals (Stank et al., 2001). Therefore, effective communication is essential for successful collaboration with suppliers. There are three aspects of communication behavior that are important in maintaining collaborative relationships. First, the quality of communication, which includes aspects such as accuracy, timeliness, relevance, and credibility.

Table 4.2 Factors affecting collaboration with suppliers

Factors	*Definition*	*References*
Long-term relationship	The outcome of previous experiences, where satisfaction and trust influence the decision to engage in long-term collaboration with suppliers.	(Fynes et al., 2005; Nyaga et al., 2010; Singh et al., 2018; Szymonik, 2011)
Information sharing	It involves exchanging significant, often confidential information with suppliers through various communication channels.	(Al-Doori, 2019; Awasthi & Grzybowska, 2014; Cai et al., 2010; Cao & Zhang, 2011; Freitas et al., 2018; Jin & Hong, 2007; Kwon & Suh, 2004; Mofokeng & Chinomona, 2019; Nyaga et al., 2010; Panahifar et al., 2018)
Flexibility	The ability to adapt and react to new circumstances can be a significant factor in building and maintaining cooperative behavior with suppliers.	(Awasthi & Grzybowska, 2014; Marqui et al., 2013)
Communication	It includes all forms of information exchange, including informal communication that takes place within the framework of collaboration..	(Cao & Zhang, 2011; Forslund & Jonsson, 2009; Fynes et al., 2005; Marqui et al., 2013; Mofokeng & Chinomona, 2019)
Behavioral uncertainty	It refers to various types of tension in a cooperative relationship with a supplier, which may be rooted in concerns about the difficulties in anticipating and understanding the actions of the partner.	(Chen et al., 2011; Kwon & Suh, 2004; Lee et al., 2011)
Level of cooperation	Cooperation with suppliers can take place at various levels, including operational, managerial, and strategic levels.	(Angerhofer & Angelides, 2006; Li & Chen, 2019; Zacharia et al., 2009)
Transparency	It means immediate communication with the supplier, transparency and availability when a problem or potential disruption occurs.	(Marqui et al., 2013; Pitsis et al., 2004)
Incentive system	It refers to the process of sharing costs, risks, and benefits among partners, which also includes formulating incentive programs.	(Cao & Zhang, 2011; Freitas et al., 2018; Simatupang & Sridharan, 2002, 2005, 2008)

(*Continued*)

Table 4.2 (Continued)

Factors	*Definition*	*References*
Information technology	Technologies necessary for information processing, with particular emphasis on computers and software for transforming, storing, transferring and retrieving information, which provide up-to-date, accurate and reliable information.	(Angerhofer & Angelides, 2006; Awasthi & Grzybowska, 2014; Crook et al., 2008; Lee et al., 2011; Singh et al., 2018)
Management support	It includes the management's commitment to implementing collaborative practices in the supply chain and thus also in the relationship with suppliers.	(Awasthi & Grzybowska, 2014; Fawcett et al., 2008a; Marqui et al., 2013; Tan et al., 2006)
Joint decision-making	The process by which supply chain partners coordinate planning and action steps to optimize supply chain benefits.	(Al-Doori, 2019; Cai et al., 2010; Cao & Zhang, 2011; Freitas et al., 2018; Mofokeng & Chinomona, 2019; Simatupang & Sridharan, 2005, 2008; Singh et al., 2018; Zacharia et al., 2009)
Co-creation of knowledge	It refers to the extent to which supply chain partners engage in interrelated processes that enable the exchange of information and create an infrastructure for processing the information obtained to create new knowledge.	(Cao & Zhang, 2011; Crook et al., 2008; Fynes et al., 2005; Mofokeng & Chinomona, 2019; Simatupang et al., 2002; Walter, 2003)
Resource sharing	It refers to the process of leveraging and investing in the capabilities and assets of a supply chain partner. Resources include physical assets such as manufacturing equipment, facilities, and technology.	(Al-Doori, 2019; Awasthi & Grzybowska, 2014; Cao & Zhang, 2011; Mofokeng & Chinomona, 2019; Nyaga et al., 2010; Singh et al., 2018)
Interdependence	The need to maintain an exchange relationship to achieve desired goals between partners. It refers to the extent to which organizations work together to achieve mutual benefits that depend on the partner's knowledge; it includes issues such as sharing risks, benefits, and losses.	(Fynes et al., 2005; Marqui et al., 2013; Nyaga et al., 2010)

(*Continued*)

Table 4.2 (Continued)

Factors	*Definition*	*References*
Commitment	It means that organizations involved in the relationship are willing to make an effort and allocate resources to support the relationship and achieve the goals of the entire supply chain, including collaboration with suppliers.	(Chen et al., 2011; Fynes et al., 2005; Kwon & Suh, 2004; Marqui et al., 2013; Nyaga et al., 2010; Singh et al., 2018; Walter, 2003; Zacharia et al., 2009)
Trust	It includes three main characteristics: reliability, predictability and fairness.	(Cai et al., 2010; Chen et al., 2011; Crook et al., 2008; Forslund & Jonsson, 2009; Fynes et al., 2005; Kwon & Suh, 2004; Nyaga et al., 2010; Panahifar et al., 2018; Simatupang et al., 2004; Singh et al., 2018; Szymonik, 2011; Walter, 2003; Wu et al., 2014; Zacharia et al., 2009)
Compatibility of organizational culture	It includes a system of meanings adopted by the members of the organization, distinguishing this organization from others whose similarity may increase the level of inter-organizational interactions.	(Awasthi & Grzybowska, 2014; Jin & Hong, 2007; Marqui et al., 2013; Tan et al., 2006)
Integrated processes between organizations	It includes the integration of resources to exchange information and coordinate activities among partners, as well as collaborative efforts that facilitate visibility and information flow.	(Angerhofer & Angelides, 2006; Freitas et al., 2018; Fynes et al., 2005; Simatupang & Sridharan, 2005, 2008; Walter, 2003)

Source: own elaboration based on cited literature and Hudnurkar et al., (2014)

Second, the mode of information exchange or the extent to which critical, and sometimes confidential, information is shared. Third, participation, which refers to the extent to which both parties actively engage in planning and goal-setting (Mohr & Spekman, 1994). It follows that the quality of communication, modes of information exchange, and participation are factors that will influence collaboration with suppliers.

Behavioral uncertainty, defined as the "the inability to predict the behavior of a partner or changes in the external environment" (Joshi & Stump, 1999), stems from the difficulties associated with monitoring the outcomes of collaboration (Williamson, 1985). Kwon and Suh (2005) note that

behavioral uncertainty and trust have an inverse relationship. According to the authors, high behavioral uncertainty is associated with lower levels of trust, while low levels of behavioral uncertainty are associated with higher levels of trust. The predictability of a partner's behavior can contribute to reducing uncertainty, thereby lowering transaction costs in the relationship. Trust emerges when an organization believes that its partner is honest and benevolent (Dyer & Chu, 2000). On the other hand, behavioral uncertainty refers to the inability to predict the behavior of partners (Joshi & Stump, 1999). It can be argued that a high level of behavioral uncertainty may have a negative impact on the level of trust and also undermine the positive effects of information sharing, its quality, and availability. The presence of behavioral uncertainty makes it difficult to predict that a partner will behave honestly and benevolently, which is crucial in the context of collaboration with suppliers.

The decision regarding the level at which cooperation is implemented will depend on the market environment and the business strategy adopted. In times of rapidly changing technology, dynamic growth of knowledge, and highly specialized knowledge, individual organizations often lack the necessary knowledge or resources to solve complex problems. Therefore, there is a high probability of collaboration with a supplier who possesses them. Organizations collaborate with suppliers to gain access to knowledge, skills, or resources that they do not possess themselves. Operational-level collaboration may involve outsourcing transportation services, managerial-level collaboration entails optimizing the transportation process, while strategic-level collaboration will involve the supplier developing a transportation strategy for the organization they are collaborating with.

Transparency in the communication channels used between companies is key to strengthening cooperation between a company and its suppliers (Pitsis et al., 2004). In the context of collaborative relationships, transparency means immediate communication with a supplier when there is a problem or potential disruption (Barratt, 2004). Fawcett, Magnan, and Fawcett (2010), on the other hand, emphasize that collaborative relationships with suppliers in a supply chain are characterized by transparency if all members use a single channel of communication.

Successful collaboration with suppliers means not only a fair distribution of profits and losses but also tangible benefits for both parties involved (Manthou et al., 2004). Aligning incentives requires defining mechanisms that evenly divide profits, which means that returns are commensurate with investment and risk (Lee & Whang, 2001).

Organizations in the supply chain often adopt information technologies (IT) due to institutional pressures exerted by their supply chain partners (Lai et al., 2006; Martinez-Sanchez & Lahoz-Leo, 2018). Collaboration

with suppliers, therefore, involves the implementation and maintenance of supporting technologies. Implementation costs may include the cost of the hardware and software itself, as well as potential costs associated with changing business processes and training users (Willis et al., 2001). The potential benefits of implementing supporting technology are significant and can occur at any level (Angerhofer & Angelides, 2006). At the operational level, transaction processing systems support supply chain processes and enable an efficient communication infrastructure in relations with suppliers. At the managerial level, planning and coordination activities are supported by management information systems, which can provide relevant and accurate information in a timely manner. At the strategic level, supporting technologies are helpful in making decisions that typically have long-term consequences. They provide information that enables the selection of the appropriate course of action in relations with suppliers.

For top management, support and commitment are key to implementing collaborative practices in the supply chain and therefore also in supplier relationships (Fawcett et al., 2006). Furthermore, managers must "sell" the idea of collaboration within their organizations' internal environment (Stank et al., 2001), investing in promoting a culture based on teamwork (Fawcett et al., 2006).

An important element of joint decision-making is relations with suppliers based on trust, loyalty, and previous positive collaborative experiences (Basu et al., 2017). The aim of joint decision-making is to align partners and synchronize activities related to order placement, inventory replenishment, and delivery (Cao et al., 2010). As partners may have different goals and expectations, this can lead to uncertainty, which can be reduced through the strategy of joint decision-making. Furthermore, as Rose (2015) argues, joint decision-making with suppliers can improve the efficiency of logistical processes.

Collaboration with suppliers in the realm of co-creating knowledge facilitates coherence between partners, contributing to achieving optimal outcomes (Mofokeng & Chinomona, 2019). There are two types of activities related to co-creating knowledge: knowledge exploration (i.e., searching for and acquiring new and relevant knowledge) and knowledge exploitation (i.e., assimilating and applying relevant knowledge) (Bhatt & Grover, 2005). The capture, exchange, and assimilation of knowledge (such as process, technology, or market knowledge) among supply chain partners, and by extension from suppliers, enable innovation and long-term competitiveness of the entire supply chain (Harland et al., 2004).

Resource sharing with suppliers is widely practiced in the retail sector. The concept of *Vendor Managed Inventory* (VMI), also known as *Supplier Managed Inventory*, enables suppliers to assess inventory levels through

electronic data interchange (EDI) and take necessary follow-up actions (Molka-Danielsen et al., 2017).

Interdependence in the context of cooperation covers issues such as sharing risks, benefits, and losses (Barratt, 2004). Due to the fact that collaboration with suppliers is embedded within the supply chain, the relationships between partners are even more interdependent, and supply chain management becomes increasingly challenging as conflicting goals of partners need to be addressed and a multitude of activities need to be synchronized (Capaldo & Giannoccaro, 2015).

Commitment refers to the belief of an exchange partner that a durable relationship with the other party is so important that they will make maximum efforts to maintain it, assuming that the relationship will endure indefinitely (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Commitment between trading partners refers to the willingness of buyers and suppliers to make efforts for the sake of the exchange relationship (Spekman et al., 1998). Wilson and Vlosky (1998) identify commitment as a variable that distinguishes relationships that endure from those that break down. On the other hand, Kwon and Suh (2005) suggest that any enduring business relationship between partners in the supply chain requires the commitment of both parties to achieve the goals of the entire supply chain. Thus, the organization's commitment to the supplier relationship is crucial to achieving the desired outcomes for both organizations and has a direct, positive impact on performance (Agarwal & Narayana, 2020; Prahinski & Benton, 2004; Sener et al., 2019).

Considering cooperation with suppliers, trust is a key factor that underpins cooperation and fosters commitment (Ghosh & Fedorowicz, 2008; Kwon & Suh, 2004), information exchange (Mirkovski et al., 2019; Panahifar et al., 2018), and information transparency (Akkermans et al., 2004). In supply chain management within the electronic market, trust is not only the basis for all interactions but also an effective mechanism that fosters collaboration between suppliers and customers (Chang et al., 2014).

The lack of compatibility in organizational culture may result in lesser willingness to communicate and coordinate activities between partners (Park & Ungson, 1997). A certain level of compatibility of organizational culture is essential for the success of collaborative relationships (Marqui et al., 2013). The integration of supplier and buyer processes is associated with trust between the collaborating parties and close relationships, which take time to build (Barratt & Oke, 2007).

Summing up, the listed factors have both positive and negative effects on cooperation with suppliers. Some of them interact with each other – for example, behavioral uncertainty and trust, communication is directly related to information sharing, process integration is dependent on long-term orientation, etc. These factors stimulate collaborative initiatives with suppliers and affect the effectiveness of the entire supply chain (Singh et al., 2018).

Conclusions

In conclusion, cooperation with suppliers has many motives, barriers, and benefits. The main motives for collaborating with suppliers include gaining access to resources and cost optimization. A significant barrier to collaboration is the lack of trust and communication. On the other hand, the benefits of cooperation with suppliers primarily include improving the quality of products or services, gaining access to knowledge and resources, and mitigating risk. There are also factors that influence supplier collaboration, which can have both positive and negative impacts. Some of these factors interact with each other; for example, behavioral uncertainty and trust, communication is directly related to information sharing, process integration depends on long-term orientation, etc. These factors stimulate initiatives for supplier collaboration and impact the effectiveness of the entire supply chain (Singh et al., 2018).

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5 The status of suppliers in the management of an enterprise

Introduction

The issue of suppliers is one of the key areas in the literature on the supply chain. With the increasing impact of suppliers on costs, quality, time, and flexibility of the buying organizations, supply chain management can be seen as a strategic tool used by organizations to improve quality, customer service, and competitive advantage (Tan et al., 2002). The dynamics and complexity of the environment have an impact on supply chains, which, in order to maintain operational continuity, need to possess the ability to adapt, provide reactive responses, and recover lost strength. Resilient supply chains exhibit these characteristics and have effective mechanisms to confront uncertain and unpredictable changes (Świerczek, 2020). Procurement processes are often linked to strategy formulation by organizations (Moses, 2011), and effective management of supply chain partners affects business performance (Collins et al., 2010).

The relationships between organizations and their suppliers are examined from various research perspectives, resulting in different and usually complementary descriptions of supplier roles (Jedynak, 2010). Taking into account various proposals, the following approaches to the status of suppliers us in management can be identified: 1) suppliers as a competitive force within the sector, 2) suppliers as part of the value chain system, 3) suppliers as part of the organization's environment, 4) suppliers as stakeholders of the organization, 5) suppliers as part of organizational relational strategies, 6) suppliers as part of the supply chain, 7) the organization and its suppliers are in the concept of an ecosystem (Table 5.1).

Suppliers as a competitive force within the sector

Porter's concept of five forces (1979) allows for assessing the attractiveness of a sector and its structure. The forces listed in the model include: threat of new entrants, bargaining power of buyers, bargaining power of suppliers, threat of service substitutes, and rivalry among existing competitors. In the concept,

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Table 5.1 Status of suppliers in management

Status of supplier	*Characteristics*	*References*
The strength of competition within the sector	The bargaining power of suppliers represents one of the potential threats to an organization and refers to their bargaining ability and control over resources.	(Porter, 1979; Wellner & Lakotta, 2020; Yunna & Yisheng, 2014)
Part of the value chain	Building an effective competitive advantage may be based on coordinating collaboration with partners, including suppliers.	(Bhatnagar & Teo, 2009; Michael Porter, 1985)
Part of the organization's environment	Suppliers as part of the so-called target environment, which consists of organizations or groups that affect the organization, while being part of the so-called external environment, including all aspects that can affect the organization.	(Dill, 1958; Estafen, 1971)
Stakeholder of the organization	The organization's consideration of suppliers' expectations and concern for their welfare. Satisfying the needs of stakeholders, including suppliers, in a mutually beneficial way by determining the most favorable relationship between them.	(Álvarez-Gil et al., 2007; Berman et al., 1999; Harrison et al., 2010; Jedynak & Kuźniarska, 2019)
Part of the organization's relational strategies	Collaboration with suppliers is intended to generate above-average benefits and serve as a source of competitive advantage. The relationships between an organization and its suppliers are fraught with uncertainty, which becomes a fundamental issue in relationship management.	(Czakon, 2005, 2018; Eriksson & Sharma, 2003; Klimas, 2019; Piwoni-Krzeszowska, 2013)
Part of the supply chain	Suppliers, as a key player in supply chain partnerships, are part of the value chain contributing to the long-term benefits of the entire chain by providing individualized offerings.	(Lambert & Schwieterman, 2012; Min et al., 2019; Świerczek, 2020)
Part of the concept of an ecosystem	Suppliers can be part of an ecosystem centered around a company – either as a central entity or fulfilling the functions of such a center – with the aim of creating sustainable competitive advantage. Suppliers also form part of a network that enables them to acquire resources necessary for their operations, including the development of innovations sourced from an organization belonging to the same network.	(Adner, 2006; Ansari et al., 2016; Liu et al., 2019; Potter & Wilhelm, 2020)

Source: own study

the bargaining power of suppliers represents one of the potential threats to an organization. Supplier power refers to their bargaining power and control over resources. Bargaining power is the ability to raise prices, lower the quality of purchased goods and services, while control over resources is demonstrated by the difficulty other companies face in acquiring similar resources (Yunna & Yisheng, 2014). Suppliers have high bargaining power if they have a stable market position, offer unique products or services that make it difficult for customers to change suppliers or the costs of changing suppliers is high, or if it is easier for suppliers to form strategic alliances (Porter, 1979).

A strong supplier position can diminish the profit potential of an industry (Wellner & Lakotta, 2020). If the market is dominated by a few suppliers, the products sold are highly diverse and constitute a significant component of the final product, substitute products are scarce in the market, there are high costs associated with changing suppliers, and suppliers pose a threat to the industry through vertical integration, thereby becoming competitors themselves (Porter, 2008). The bargaining power of suppliers can be assessed based on criteria such as the number and importance of suppliers, the threat of new entrants, the importance of buyers to the supplier, the existence of substitutes, and their threat to the supplier (Baxter, 2019).

As Porter's concept itself has come under criticism, including in the context of suppliers, there are certain difficulties in considering its assumptions. The framework of the model is challenging to operationalize, making it difficult to precisely determine at what point the bargaining power of suppliers becomes significant (Lee et al., 2012). Narayanan and Fahey (2005) question the relevance of factors determining high bargaining power, while Grundy (2006) emphasizes that Porter's approach is "frozen in time" and does not account for dynamic changes in the environment, including those concerning suppliers. Additionally, the concept focuses on large organizations and value chains rather than ecosystems, which is particularly relevant in the context of suppliers (Keen & Williams, 2013).

Suppliers as part of the value chain

Porter's (1985) concept of the value chain allows for the identification of two types of functions within an organization: primary functions (internal logistics, operations, logistics in distribution, marketing and sales, and service – after-sales service) and support functions (infrastructure, human resource management, technology development, and procurement). Optimizing these activities should lead to a competitive advantage, so it is essential to identify the interrelationships between them. These interrelationships contribute to achieving a competitive advantage through optimization and coordination.

The basic premise of the value chain model is to divide a company's activities into strategically important activities (sets of functions) in order to identify cost and profit centers as well as potential sources of competitive advantage. The value chain is therefore not a set of independent functions but a system of interdependent activities (Porter, 1985). The impact of transactions on value chain activities determines the long-term economic benefits and strategic advantage of companies. Transactions can either optimize a company's collective activities or minimize its overall costs compared to its competitors.

Although according to Porter, the source of competitive advantage lies in the efficiency of a single company's operations; the concept can also be used to examine the costs and benefits associated with interorganizational relationships (Porter & Fuller, 1986). A company's competitive position is therefore influenced not only by the relationships within its own value chain activities but also by the relationships in the value chain between buyers or suppliers. Such an approach is particularly important in the context of embedding relationships within a broader network, where markets are described as sets of mutually dependent exchange relationships between entities controlling resources, which include suppliers (Johanson & Mattson, 1992). Furthermore, as Cyfert (2012) claims, the boundaries defining the level of activity in the value chain are associated with decision-making processes as to which activities will be performed by the company itself and which will be related to expanding the scope of operations and networking the organization.

Value chain analysis involves breaking down the stages of product creation to identify the sources of cost and added value. Therefore, considering suppliers is particularly important, especially in cases where there are critical interdependencies between different organizations in the chain. According to Porter (1985), interrelationships can provide a competitive advantage in two ways: through optimization and coordination. A company can coordinate and optimize the relationships that reflect its strategies to achieve a competitive advantage. A cost-competitive enterprise, by collaborating with suppliers, can benefit from coordinating and jointly optimizing value chains to reduce the final cost of the product. On the other hand, an organization pursuing a differentiation strategy can tailor the configuration of its value chain to create real or perceived value for buyers (Bhatnagar & Teo, 2009). The source of competitive advantage from the perspective of the value chain can be actions taken in all its links, including logistics. It follows, therefore, building an effective competitive advantage may be based on coordinating collaboration with partners, including suppliers.

Suppliers as part of the organization's environment

The environment, understood as elements, factors, and processes beyond the boundaries of an organization (Cyfert, 2012), is of fundamental importance for the functioning of a company. The contemporary view of an enterprise's environment can be traced back to the 1950s when the notion developed that an organization constitutes an open system (Katz & Kahn, 1966). Adopting the so-called systems approach means that organizations are open systems, engaging in multiple interactions with the environment. This view was upheld by Porter (1979), who stated that organizations must operate within an environment consisting of suppliers, customers, and competitors. Further research on the organization's environment has made it possible to structure it, with individual elements falling into different areas of the environment. The key elements that structure the environment include the microenvironment and macroenvironment, as well as the industry (sector) as the primary level of analysis. The organization's environment. can be described at the micro level, which refers to the immediate task environment of the organization, and at the macro level, which refers to the general environment. Suppliers belong to the so-called target environment, which consists of organizations or groups that impact the organization, which in turn is part of the so-called external environment, which includes all aspects that can affect the organization.

Suppliers as stakeholders of the organization

Freeman (1984) defines a stakeholder as "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives. Subsequently, researchers define the key concepts of stakeholder theory in more detail, while also identifying specific groups, individuals, or other organizations that are considered stakeholders: "The success of an organization depends on how well it manages its relationships with key groups such as customers, employees, suppliers, communities, financiers, and others who can influence the achievement of its goals" (Ditlev-Simonsen & Wenstøp, 2013; Edward Freeman & Phillips, 2002).

The basic classification of stakeholders, proposed by Freeman (1984), distinguishes between internal stakeholders, who are members of the organization, and external stakeholders, which include suppliers. An organization's decisions and performance are heavily influenced by the involvement of a broad range of stakeholders (Matos & Silvestre, 2013). Consequently, the successful long-term survival of a company depends on the effective management of relationships with, among others, suppliers (Álvarez-Gil et al., 2007; Clarkson, 1995; Post et al., 2002). This will become possible when the company takes into account the expectations of suppliers and takes care

of their well-being (Álvarez-Gil et al., 2007; Jedynak & Kuźniarska, 2019). Satisfying the needs of stakeholders, including suppliers, in a mutually beneficial way (Berman et al., 1999) is done by determining the most favorable relationship between them (Harrison et al., 2010).

Integration of the company with suppliers, understood as the exchange and sharing of resources, information, and services (Harrison et al., 2010) allows for a better understanding of requirements (Armstrong, 2008); effective communication and understanding of needs (Kochan & Rubinstein, 2000) and should include an analysis of their importance, taking into account the fundamental criteria, such as strength, legitimacy, and persistence (Jedynak, 2010).

Suppliers as part of an organization's relational strategies

According to the relational approach, the ability of an organization to survive and thrive is determined by its external relationships (Håkansson & Snehota, 1989). Therefore, as a key aspect of organizational functioning, the relational approach assumes cooperation with other entities that aims to generate above-average benefits (Czakon, 2005; Klimas, 2019) and serve as a source of competitive advantage (Czakon, 2018; Piwoni-Krzeszowska, 2013). This perspective focuses on the nature of relationships between partners and assumes that relational rents can be achieved through effective relationship management (Dyer & Singh, 1998; Stańczyk-Hugiet, 2011; Zakrzewska-Bielawska, 2018).

A relational strategy should take into account building and managing a set of purposeful relationships with diverse actors (Czakon, 2018), including suppliers, customers, competitors, R&D institutions, financial institutions, government and social institutions, industry consortia, and others (Zakrzewska-Bielawska, 2017). The relationship between an organization and its suppliers is fraught with uncertainty, which becomes a fundamental issue in relationship management (Eriksson & Sharma, 2003). Relational value is created through the interrelated actions of buyers and suppliers (Möller, 2006), while the fundamental problem of relationship management is the nature of uncertainty that affects the way interactions and collaboration with suppliers take place (Eriksson & Sharma, 2003).

This uncertainty can be caused by interdependence or divergence between the supplier and the buyer. Collaborating partners are typically interdependent as they need to maintain relationships to achieve their goals. High interdependence increases the need for a shared formalized language to facilitate the exchange of information or materials between the supplier and the organization (Gattiker & Goodhue, 2004). Divergence refers to the uniqueness of tasks, technology, environment, and goals between the supplier and the organization and can be counterproductive due to

mismatches, conflict, and distrust (Sáenz et al., 2014). Uncertainty in relationships decreases when cooperating parties commit resources and adapt. Therefore, selecting the appropriate supplier has a significant impact on the efficiency and stability of collaboration (Feng et al., 2010).

Investing in the relationship between the supplier and the organization can stabilize collaboration (Lu & Wang, 2012). These investments can be tangible (e.g., production plant, machine park) or intangible (e.g., knowledge, technology) (Jap, 1999). In relational terms, four types of relationship-related investments are identified to promote the efficiency of collaboration between the supplier and the organization: 1) collaborative know-how, 2) relational capital, 3) partner-specific absorptive capacity, and 4) implementation of interorganizational transaction support systems (Lu & Wang, 2012). Making relationship-specific investments and taking initiatives that facilitate and sustain the collaboration between the organization and the supplier help reduce the uncertainty inherent in the relationship. The organization's suppliers are therefore a crucial entity in the relationship.

Suppliers as part of the supply chain

One of the key elements of supply chain management is supplier relationship management, which focuses on developing and maintaining these relationships (Lambert & Schwieterman, 2012; Świerczek, 2020). The supply chain is characterized by the flow of goods, relationship management, and extends from the supplier to the end customer (Lambert et al., 2005; Novack & Simco, 1991). The goal of the supply chain is the strategic coordination of business functions to improve the long-term performance of the involved entities, both organizations and individuals directly involved in the flow of products and services, financial resources, and/or information from the sources of supply to the customer (Mentzer, DeWitt, et al., 2001). The benefits of sharing information, risks, and rewards, as well as collaboration and partnership, are essential. However, the impact of technology, due to its ubiquitous nature, does not provide a competitive advantage (Min et al., 2019). Instead, competitive advantage will be based on delivering customized offerings with the involvement of all entities, including suppliers. Suppliers are therefore a crucial entity participating in supply chain partnerships. They are part of the value chain and contribute to achieving long-term benefits for the entire chain by providing customized offerings.

In the context of suppliers as part of the supply chain, a phenomenon called the "bullwhip effect" can occur, leading to serious problems that affect the overall performance of the chain (Giri & Glock, 2022). This phenomenon involves the inability to accurately estimate demand from individual participants in the supply chain during fluctuations in order volumes

and can lead to serious problems that affect supply chain performance, such as redundant stock and high adjustment costs (Lee et al., 1997). Suppliers can therefore be a weak link that leads to instability and disruption of the entire supply chain (Liu et al., 2022).

The organization and its suppliers in the concept of an ecosystem

The business ecosystem has become an established concept in management sciences and also in business (Moore, 1993, 1996). The concept builds upon the value chain network, extending the value chain to include other organizations such as universities, trade associations, and other stakeholders, including suppliers, as well as the interactions between them (Lipińska, 2018; Rong et al., 2015; Stanczyk-Hugiet, 2015). Adaptability, ambiguous boundaries, and complex interactions contribute to the lack of a single, clear definition of a business ecosystem, and the term itself is used interchangeably with categories such as cluster or network (Gobble, 2014; Iansiti & Levien, 2004; Stanczyk-Hugiet, 2015).

According to the concept of an ecosystem., the performance [1] of organizations within it depends not only on their own competencies but also on interactions with other entities and the health of the ecosystem as a whole (Håkansson & Ford, 2002; Von Raesfeld & Roos, 2008). The business ecosystem is characterized by three attributes: symbiosis, platform, and coevolution (Li, 2009). Symbiosis means that the ecosystem consists of loose networks of suppliers, distributors, outsourcing companies, manufacturers of related products/services, technology providers, and many other organizations. These loose relationships increase the need for symbiosis, making them a source of flexibility in partner selection and shaping the entire system (Stanczyk-Hugiet, 2015). From this perspective, suppliers play a crucial role in determining the efficiency of the entire ecosystem.

A platform refers to services, tools, or technologies that members of an ecosystem can utilize, thereby improving their own performance. Organizations that provide a platform often act as the main actor, hub, or player that brings together participants in the ecosystem around a specific project, innovation, or service (Ceccagnoli et al., 2012; Dass & Kumar, 2014; Dobson, 2006; Gawer & Cusumano, 2014; Gobble, 2014).

Coevolution, on the other hand, signifies a departure from perceiving businesses as hierarchical organizations and instead recognizing them as part of a complex, evolving system (Moore, 1998), in which entities seek business opportunities (Stańczyk-Hugiet, 2015). According to the concept, the performance of organizations that are part of business ecosystems depends not only on their own competencies but also on interactions with other entities and the health of the entire ecosystem (Håkansson & Ford,

2002; Von Raesfeld & Roos, 2008). From this perspective, suppliers play a crucial role in determining the efficiency of the entire ecosystem.

In the literature, three streams have been identified as the focal points of research on ecosystems: 1) the ecosystem as a group of collaborating organizations that revolve around a focal organization and work together to build sustainable competitive advantage; 2) the ecosystem as an innovative network in which organizations interact with each other to engage in activities related to product innovation; 3) the ecosystem as a group of interdependent organizations that revolve around technology platforms, which connect organizations and enable them to share or access technology and *open-source* resources (Jacobides et al., 2018).

Taking such a perspective, suppliers can be part of an ecosystem centered around a focal enterprise or even act as such a center themselves, aiming to create sustainable competitive advantage (Ansari et al., 2016). Creating an ecosystem, therefore, requires actors/businesses (suppliers) to develop shared value that allows them to operate around the focal enterprise and collaborate with each other to reduce uncertainty and capitalize on business opportunities (Iansiti & Levien, 2004; Jacobides et al., 2018). Suppliers also serve as nodes in a network, enabling them to acquire resources necessary for their operations, including the development of innovations sourced from other organizations within the same network (Adner, 2006; Kawa & Czakon, 2020; Liu et al., 2019; Potter & Wilhelm, 2020). The concentration of suppliers, especially in service supply chains, around the platform technology helps reduce uncertainty in service demand (Dolgui et al., 2018) as well as risk (Asian & Nie, 2014; Choi et al., 2019).

The relationships between the organization and its suppliers, analyzed from the perspective of different approaches, are complementary in nature. Suppliers are part of the organization's environment and, under certain conditions, can exert power over the organization. The greater the strength of their influence and the more willing suppliers are to use it, the greater the need to analyze its sources.

The value chain perspective also considers the context of the environment, and effective coordination with suppliers can be a source of competitive advantage. Typically, value chain analysis deconstructs the stages of product development from inception to final sale and may involve suppliers, especially where there are critically important links between them and the rest of the chain. Identifying areas of inefficiency or ineffectiveness through systematic categorization of activities and associated costs allows for the identification of opportunities to add value through better coordination with suppliers.

Collaboration between organizations and suppliers, on the other hand, due to their stakeholder status, can be a source of mutual benefits or harm,

which necessitates an analysis of their significance and leverage. The success of an organization will, therefore, depend in part on how well it manages its relationships with suppliers, and, in turn, the decisions and performance of the organization will be greatly influenced by the involvement of suppliers.

The organization's suppliers are also an important subject of the relationship. Investments in knowledge exchange procedures and in relationship-related assets can be a source of relational rent for the organization as well as reduce the uncertainty of cooperation. Building relationships based on cooperation with suppliers can also be a source of competitive advantage.

Suppliers play a key role in supply chain management. Supplier status analyzed from this perspective means belonging to a network whose coordination contributes to moving material goods, acquiring and distributing services, and making offerings available to customers and buyers.

Supply chains, along with suppliers, can also be part of an ecosystem. Viewing the position of suppliers in this way highlights once again the aspect of a network of relationships in which organizations share common values and rely on each other to achieve their goals. Suppliers will play a crucial role in carrying out activities that contribute to the survival of the ecosystem.

Conclusions

The issue of the status of suppliers reflects the relationships between an organization and its suppliers from the perspective of interorganizational relations. Such an approach allows for formulating an answer to the question of who a supplier is. On the other hand, businesses classify the suppliers they collaborate with. The literature on supplier classification addresses this issue from a descriptive perspective, indicating the criteria used by buyers to classify suppliers (Mokadem, 2017; Kar & Pani, 2014; Kawa, 2010; Taherdoost & Brard, 2019), or from a normative perspective, referring to the methods for selecting and implementing multiple operational and strategic criteria that buyers use to categorize suppliers (Chai et al., 2013; De Boer et al., 2001; Jedynak, 2015; Liu & Hai, 2005).

Note

1 English-language texts contain the word "performance", which has different meanings (type - financial, market, innovation) and time horizon (short-term, long-term, survival).

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6 Concepts of collaboration with suppliers

Introduction

The management system of a company is complex and consists of various elements and relationships between them (Lichtarski & Czura, 2002). Management concepts form a part of this system, providing a coherent and comprehensive approach to solving managerial and organizational problems (Szpitter, 2011) and enabling the improvement of organizational efficiency. Management concepts, developed through science and business practice, include diverse approaches and recommendations for managing a company. These approaches may be neutral (indifferent) toward each other, but more often they are complementary or mutually exclusive (Lichtarski & Czura, 2002). Concepts related to supplier collaboration, such as supply chain management and supplier relationship management, are examples of complementary concepts aimed at optimizing cooperation.

Supply chain management

The concept of supply chain management was introduced by Oliver and Webber (1982) and has evolved over the years, starting from order management, through physical distribution, inventory management, customer service, and the introduction of integrated logistics, production planning, and purchasing. The supply chain itself has become embedded in the value chain (Singh et al., 2018). Stevens (1989) proposed a shift from internal optimization to external optimization. Cooper, Lambert, and Pagh (1997) introduced customer satisfaction orientation and emphasized the separation of supply chain management concepts from logistics. On the other hand, Harland (1996) highlighted the importance of product, service, financial, and information flows, as well as the significance of relationships and the perspective of a network.

The diversity of definitions of supply chain management is largely due to the different perspectives of the analyses conducted and the evolution of the chain itself (Blaik, 2010; Ciesielski, 2011; Ellram & Cooper, 2014; Gibson

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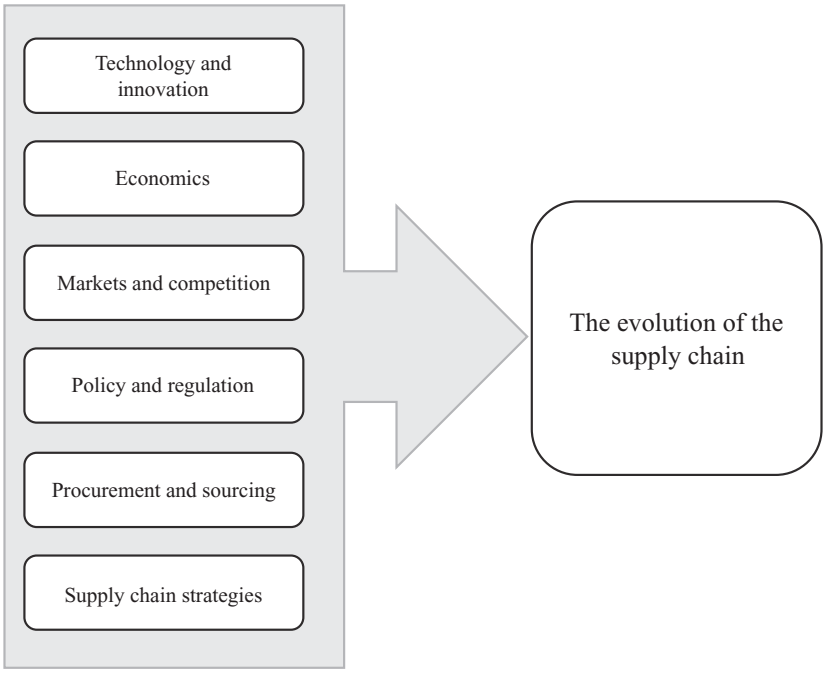

Figure 6.1 Factors influencing the evolution of the supply chain
Source: own study based on MacCarthy et al. (2016)

et al., 2005; Lummus et al., 2001; Mentzer, Dewitt, et al., 2001; Min et al., 2019; Rossetti & Dooley, 2010; Rutkowski, 2004; Szymczak, 2015b; Szymonik, 2011; Witkowski, 2016). The factors that stimulate and influence the evolution of supply chains are illustrated in Figure 6.1.

The impact of technology on the supply chain is clearly evident. Companies attempting to adapt their services to customer requirements are already optimizing existing processes and utilizing new technologies, which affect entire supply chains. Technological changes pertain to processes such as warehouse automation, identification, and control, as well as operations related to the location and movement of goods. Process technologies also influence the emergence of new supply chains or change existing ones, for example, by eliminating process steps, reconfiguring supply processes, or enabling demand control.

Cost factors have always influenced decisions regarding supply and purchasing, which are particularly evident in supply chains, for example, in the context of labor costs. However, it is not only labor economics that affects supply chains but also broader economic considerations, including

transportation, energy, water, resource costs, investment costs, exchange rates, and local incentives. Various economic perspectives, such as transaction cost economics (Williamson, 1979, 2008) and internalization theory. [1] (Rugman, 2005) attempts to explain *outsourcing* and *offshoring*. On the other hand, factors other than purely economic considerations may influence choices made in configuring the supply chain, including historical ties, cultural, and linguistic bonds, and network development (Johanson & Vahlne, 2009).

Market changes can result in changes or developments in supply chains. Considering the global market, companies are trying to find a balance between global and local sourcing, especially due to increasing consumer pressure and their interest in the carbon footprint generated, which in turn results in *reshoring* and *nearshoring*[2], which determine the configuration of supply chains (Ellram et al., 2013). Market demands may require greater diversity and customization, necessitating new solutions in terms of delivery and order fulfillment (MacCarthy & Jayarathne, 2013). With the emergence of new markets, such as those in Africa, supply chains can further evolve. The expansion of international trade through organizations like the WTO and the growth of free trade zones in North and Latin America, Europe, and Asia have impacted existing supply chains and led to the emergence of new supply routes (Gereffi, 1999). As a result of global crises, such as the financial crisis in 2008–2009, the coronavirus pandemic in 2020–2021, and the war in Ukraine, new political, economic, and developmental factors are shaping global value chains at the macro level (Gereffi, 2014; Nikolopoulos et al., 2021). Furthermore, government policies play a role in shaping supply chains. For instance, in the aerospace industry, "offset clauses" impose obligations on companies like Boeing and Airbus to conduct a part of their production locally in countries that purchase the final products. Political instability can lead to a rapid decline in trade, and politics itself has a major impact on infrastructure investments, tax breaks, as well as on the skill sets and education of supply chain and logistics personnel who plan and manage supply chains.

Sourcing products and raw materials has been shaping supply chains for centuries. When supply is limited or in industries with low margins and high competition, sourcing rules and decisions can fully explain the configuration of the supply chain. Global sourcing, domestic sourcing, as well as *reshoring* and *nearshoring* phenomena (Ellram et al., 2013) have altered the configuration of supply chains. Understanding the distribution of potential sources and optimizing their utilization remains a ubiquitous challenge for many companies. However, purely economic considerations are complemented by other factors, including flexibility, innovation, risk, and sustainability (Van Weele, 2009). Many organizations rely on supplier innovations and engage in co-creating products and services (Wagner & Bode, 2014).

The emergence of supply chain risk management practices along with sustainability requirements is changing sourcing practices in various industries, often leading to a re-evaluation of existing purchasing decisions (Wilhelm et al., 2016).

Supply chain strategy refers to the deliberate and intentional restructuring of the chain, undertaken when there is a need for change often driven by shifting market conditions – the need to better serve markets, taking advantage of new opportunities, and achieving improved operational and/or cost performance. Lean thinking is often a dominant factor in contemporary supply chain design (Rossetti et al., 2011). Mergers and acquisitions can also be a stimulus for supply chain restructuring initiatives. Power is a key element in implementing supply chain strategies (Cox, 1999). In particular, the bargaining power of major network actors, whether manufacturers, retailers or service providers, can play a crucial role in shaping today's global supply networks (Gereffi, 2014). As with sourcing strategies, risk factors play an increasingly important role in supply chain selection (Nagurney et al., 2005).

The aforementioned factors have determined and will continue to influence supply chains. Considering the evolution of the concept, in a modern approach, a supply chain is defined as a network of interdependent relationships developed and fostered through strategic collaboration among supply chain partners, aimed at achieving mutual benefits (Chen & Paulraj, 2004; Qian et al., 2020). Supply chain management also includes the design and coordination of the network through which organizations and individuals acquire, use, deliver, and dispose of material goods; procure, and distribute services; and make their offerings available in the marketplace to customers and consumers (LeMay et al., 2017).

A key element of every supply chain is the ability to meet the expectations of the buyer, made possible through the collaboration of supply chain partners. Collaboration in the supply chain is undertaken to improve the performance of individual companies as well as the entire supply chain. Nearly all modern concepts of supply chain collaboration can be traced back to changes that began in the early 1990s, resulting from the general acceptance of supply chain management as a discipline in the mid-1980s and the use of the Internet, which significantly enhanced collaboration (Table 6.1).

The QR (Quick Response) concept was developed in the USA in the 1980s by suppliers and retailers in the *fast fashion* sector (Birtwistle et al., 2006; Iyer & Bergen, 1997). It is a just-in-time (JIT) strategy that involves delivering raw materials for production in a specified quantity and within defined time frames to reduce inventory throughout the entire supply chain (Harris et al., 1999). A key feature of the *fast fashion* supply chain is its ability to respond to market changes with reduced lead times. Capturing this vital function brings great benefits to the management of the entire supply chain (Choi, 2018).

Table 6.1 Concepts of supply chain collaboration

Concepts of supply chain collaboration	*Characteristics*	*References*
*Quick Respo*nse (QR)	A concept of having a supplier quickly delivering raw materials for production in a specified quantity and within a certain timeframe, in order to reduce the inventory of the entire supply chain.	(Birtwistle et al., 2006; Choi, 2018; Iyer & Bergen, 1997)
Efficient Consumer Response (ECR)	A concept of the distribution of frequent purchase items based on integrating supply chain entities (manufacturers, distributors, retailers, and intermediaries) to reduce costs and meet the needs of customers identified based on real demand	(Bhutta et al., 2002; Derrouiche et al., 2008; Hoffman & Mehra, 2000; Soret et al., 2008; Whipple & Russell, 2007)
Continuous Replenishment Program (CRP)	A concept in which companies share inventory information with suppliers, enabling automatic replenishment when needed. Automated replenishment helps reduce logistics and warehousing costs and align production with demand.	(Cachon & Fisher, 1997; Lee et al., 2003; Parsa et al., 2017; Tyan & Wee, 2003)
Vender Managed Inventory (VMI)	A concept in which suppliers manage predetermined inventory levels. The supplier makes decisions on behalf of the retailer, with the supplier constantly replenishing inventory	(Birtwistle et al., 2006; Blackhurst et al., 2006; Disney & Towill, 2003)
Collaborative Planning Forecasting and Replenishment (CPFR)	A concept in which supply chain entities plan key activities to effectively meet customer demand at the lowest possible cost. This collaboration typically involves planning, forecasting sales, and replenishing raw materials and finished goods.	(Caridi et al., 2006; Hill et al., 2018; Singhry & Abd Rahman, 2019)

Source: own study

ECR (Efficient Consumer Response) is a supply chain operating concept that emerged in the early 1990s in the grocery industry, introducing information sharing, trust between partners, and improving supply chain performance (Whipple & Russell, 2007). The aim of the strategy is to increase the competitiveness of the supply chain and enhance value for the consumer. Manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers collaborate as business partners

to reduce overall costs, inventory, and tangible assets in the supply chain while offering consumers a wide choice of high-quality, fresh produce (Kurt Salmon Associates, 1993). ECR is an extension of QR (Derrouiche et al., 2008; Hoffman & Mehra, 2000; Soret et al., 2008), transforming the supply chain from a "push" system to a "pull" system driven by the market, where trading partners collaborate and replenishment is linked to point-of-sale data (Harris et al., 1999).

The CRP concept was developed on the basis of ECR, which was characterized by aligning product flows in the supply chain with consumer demand. CRP introduced a new mechanism for managing the flow of information and products between the supplier and a group of retailers (Cachon & Fisher, 1997), designed for better coordination of product flow through improved forecasting (Lee et al., 2003; Tyan & Wee, 2003). CRP has been implemented in the grocery sector as well as other industries, often referred to as Vendor Managed Inventory (Keh & Park, 1997; Waller et al., 1999). CRP requires the manufacturer (upstream partner) to manage the replenishment process using inventory and demand information provided by the distributor (downstream partner). CRP thus resembles a centralized inventory control system, a concept that has been adopted by many organizations across different sectors and is one of the best practices for improving supply chain efficiency (Krichanchai & MacCarthy, 2017; Waller et al., 1999). It introduces two innovations: the vendor must share their inventory levels, which have traditionally been viewed as sensitive and confidential information; and the vendor's inventory management is handled by manufacturers (Raghunathan & Yeh, 2001).

VMI is a concept in which the supplier is responsible for managing customer inventories and determining replenishment policies (Birtwistle et al., 2006; Blackhurst et al., 2006; Disney & Towill, 2003). Kauremaa, Småros, and Holmström (2009) define VMI based on two fundamental conditions: 1) the transfer of the buyer's sourcing decisions and responsibilities to the supplier; 2) increased visibility promoted by the buyer so that the supplier meets its additional responsibility.

Comparing the two concepts, in CRP it is often the distributor who is responsible for providing demand forecasts to the manufacturer, while in VMI the producer generates forecasts based on the demand data provided by the distributor. In VMI, the manufacturer is the primary decision-maker for placing orders and controlling inventory by determining appropriate inventory levels for each product (within agreed limits) and appropriate inventory policies to maintain those levels (Derrouiche et al., 2008). Therefore, CRP represents a relationship with a more balanced distribution of power between the supplier and the retailer, while VMI shifts more power to the seller.

Compared to previous supply chain collaboration practices (e.g., ECR and VMI), the concept of CPFR was developed to incorporate a greater amount of information shared between partners, ranging from end-user

demand data to retailer promotion information and manufacturer capacity, all of which are critical resources (Panahifar et al., 2018). The CPFR concept is an innovative technological tool that encompasses a set of business practices utilizing the Internet and EDI to achieve two objectives: drastically reducing inventory and costs while simultaneously improving customer service. CPFR assumes that sellers and buyers collaborate, adjusting and proposing prices and quantities to generate a single forecast (Caridi et al., 2006). CPFR integrates supply and demand sides, enabling the collaborative creation of an efficient environment that meets consumer requirements, improves vendor forecasting, and allows for quick responses to market changes (Chang et al., 2007). It involves joint planning of long-term supply chain activities using real-time and up-to-date changes in demand and market dynamics among trading partners. Figure 6.2 illustrates the evolution of collaboration concepts undertaken by supply chain members.

The concepts of collaboration and their evolution presented in Figure 6.2 refer to various types of initiatives that share a common feature: They are based on modern information technologies, which are a key component of the supply chain. These initiatives are subservient to the expectations of the chain partners regarding visibility of product demand at every level, which, in turn, is expected to lead to improved efficiency of physical

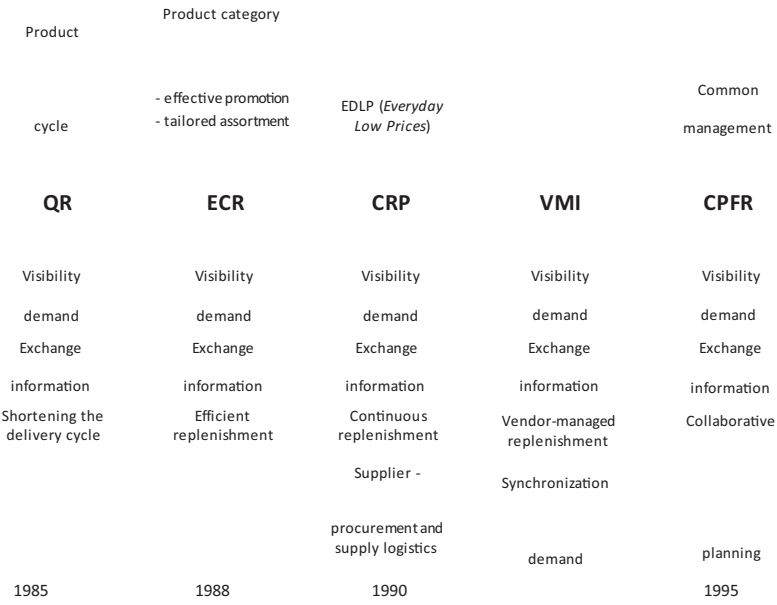

Figure 6.2 Evolution of the concept of supply chain collaboration.

Source: own study based on (Freitas et al., 2018; Panahifar et al., 2018; Parsa et al., 2017; Szymczak, 2015b)

Table 6.2 Criteria for supply chain design

Criteria for supply chain design	*Characteristics*	*References*
Efficient supply chain	• An approach based on eliminating extra steps, using advanced technology, and minimizing inventory. • The faster and more uniform the flow of materials through the supply chain, the higher the production capacity or efficiency of the chain • The efficiency of a company's supply chain refers to the maintenance of a fast flow of materials, while stability refers to the absence of harmful variability observed through an even flow of materials. • Benefits – removal of surplus inventory, improvement in quality, cost reduction, and enhanced efficiency across various sectors.	(Daneshvar et al., 2020; Modi & Mabert, 2010; Qrunfleh & Tarafdar, 2014)
Agile supply chain	• Agile supply chain is a strategy for managing the supply network and developing flexible capabilities to meet rapidly changing customer requirements. • Agile supply chain means the ability to respond and be ready for changes in the market, where this strategy is driven by demand. • The primary drivers of an agile supply chain are cost, efficiency and speed.	(Christopher et al., 2004; Goldman et al., 1994; Kawa & Maryniak, 2019; Lim & Zhang, 2012; Shashi et al., 2020; Szymczak, 2015a; Zhang, 2011)
Lean supply chain	• An approach in which a group of organizations directly connected by the flow of products, services, information and finances, up and down the chain, work together to reduce costs and waste through the efficient use of what is needed to meet the needs of individual customers. • Better profits come from collaboration, not negotiations or imposing power over supply chain partners. • It is characterized by reduced changeover times for production machinery to enable cost-effective production of small quantities of standard or functional products, thereby achieving cost reduction, flexibility and internal responsiveness. There is no possibility for mass customization, and cannot be easily adapted to future market requirements, as it emphasizes minimizing waste and reducing downtime.	(Garcia-Buendia et al., 2020; Kawa & Maryniak, 2019; Lamming, 1993, 1996; Naim & Gosling, 2011; Reichhart & Holweg, 2007; Tortorella et al., 2017)

(*Continued*)

Table 6.2 (Continued)

Criteria for supply chain design	*Characteristics*	*References*
Leagile supply chains	• A supply chain based on a hybrid approach that combines lean and agile concepts is referred to as *leagile* • Leagile is the integration of *lean* and *agile* paradigms within the entire supply chain strategy by placing the *decoupling point* in a way that best responds to the variable downstream demand. • The decoupling point is located in the material flow streams where customer orders are received.	(Agarwal et al., 2006; Haq & Boddu, 2017; Kisperska-Moron & De Haan, 2011; Krishnamurthy & Yauch, 2007; Mason-Jones et al., 2000; Naim & Gosling, 2011; Naylor et al., 1999; Prince & Kay, 2003; van Hoek, 2000), (Fadaki et al., 2020)
Resilient supply chain	• An approach that determines the ability of a supply chain to reduce the likelihood and/or impact of possible disruptions and reduce recovery and resumption times. • Supply chain resilience has several dimensions, such as anticipation (i.e., detecting disruptions in advance), preparedness (i.e., reducing response time), robustness (i.e., reducing the impact of disruptions), and recovery (i.e., restoring/resuming disrupted processes to their minimum acceptable/normal operational levels). • Supply chain resilience also refers to its absorptive, adaptive, and regenerative capacities, which clearly distinguish between capabilities before and after a disruption. • Resilient supply chains require the resilience of its individual components and subsystems, and the resilience of the entire supply chain is determined by the resilience of the weakest link	(Chowdhury & Quaddus, 2017; Christopher & Peck, 2004; Falasca et al., 2008; Hosseini et al., 2019; Świerczek, 2020; Szymczak, 2015a; Vugrin et al., 2011)
Hybrid supply chain	• An approach based on providing customers with a comprehensive solution - integrated services along with the product offerings (supply chain incorporating the process of servitization).	(Johnson & Mena, 2008; Lin et al., 2014; Marić & Opazo-Basáez, 2019; Paschou et al., 2020)

(*Continued*)

Table 6.2 (Continued)

Criteria for supply chain design	*Characteristics*	*References*
	• A hybrid supply chain consists of groups of manufacturers and service providers who collaborate to offer customers comprehensive solutions by adding services to core products. • In a hybrid supply chain, two types of requirements can be distinguished: one coming from the products and the other from related services, including after-sales support of products, both of which must be fulfilled within a single supply chain. • Customer reactions to varying service levels and interactions between inventory strategy and service performance strategy have a significant impact on the volatility of such a supply chain.	
Digital supply chain	• The digital supply chain is a set of interconnected activities involved in the supply chain processes between suppliers and customers, supported by new technologies. • It enables broader access to information and infinitely better interaction, communication, and collaboration, leading to increased trust, efficiency, and productivity. • It requires the integration of digital tools, strategies, and approaches that support interactions between customers and suppliers externally, as well as employees internally. • It is based on both digital transformation and smart technologies.	(Ivanov & Dolgui, 2020; Liu et al., 2013; Matt et al., 2015; Nasiri et al., 2020)
Sustainable supply chain	• An approach in which the overall goals of the supply chain align with sustainability goals, encompassing three interdependent and interconnected elements or dimensions of their activities – society, environment, and economy (*triple bottom line* - TBL). • Sustainable supply chains are a critical component of sustainable development, where, in addition to meeting customer needs and related economic criteria, environmental and social criteria must also be met. • It refers to resource management, waste reduction throughout the supply chain, and collaboration among chain partners to ensure sustainability.	(Carter & Rogers, 2008; Giannakis & Papadopoulos, 2016; Grzybowska et al., 2014; Khan et al., 2021; Łupicka & Grzybowska, 2017; Pava, 2007; Taticchi et al., 2013; Turker & Altuntas, 2014)

(*Continued*)

Table 6.2 (Continued)

Criteria for supply chain design	*Characteristics*	*References*
Socially responsible supply chain	• A socially responsible supply chain means combining internal management and external partnerships to create and maintain fair working conditions throughout the supply chain.	(Park-Poaps & Rees, 2010; Tang, 2018; Wang et al., 2019; Wu & Huang, 2020)
Green supply chain	• An approach that incorporates environmental concerns into the traditional supply chain, which primarily aims to improve products and services while minimizing costs. • This combination results in customer satisfaction by improving performance in terms of quality and cost while considering the environmental impact. • It includes a set of practices such as green purchasing, eco-friendly production/ materials management, green distribution/ marketing, and return logistics.	(Dubey et al., 2017; Green et al., 2012; Hervani et al., 2005; Min & Kim, 2012; Sarkis et al., 2011; Srivastava, 2007; Tundys, 2015; Witkowski & Pisarek, 2017; Zhu et al., 2005)
Circular supply chain	• The circular supply chain is the integration of the circular economy concept with supply chain management and the surrounding industrial and natural ecosystems. • It is based on a zero-waste approach by introducing innovations in business models and deliveries throughout the system. • Supply chain processes - from product/service design to end-of-life and waste management - involve all stakeholders involved in the product/ service lifecycle: component, parts, product manufacturers, service providers, consumers, and users.. • The integration along the supply chain, both forward and backward, aims to create value from products/services, by-products, and flows of useful waste over an extended life cycle to improve the organization's economic, social, and environmental sustainability.	Atasu & Wassenhove, 2012; Dev et al., 2020; Farooque et al., 2019; Ferguson & Souza, 2010; Guide, 2000; Lahane et al., 2020; Souza, 2013; van Capelleveen et al., 2021)

(*Continued*)

Table 6.2 (Continued)

Criteria for supply chain design	*Characteristics*	*References*
Closed-loop supply chain	• The supply chain in which, in addition to typical forward flows, there are reverse flows of used products (reused) back to the manufacturers. • It involves coordinated planning and management of all production, distribution, and return processes along with reverse processes such as recycling, regeneration, or refurbishment, within the same supply chain. • In a typical closed-loop supply chain with recycling, new products are manufactured at the production facility, then stored in a warehouse, and delivered to customers through distributors. • Returned products are collected from customers by collectors or distributors and then forwarded to recycling organizations or to the manufacturer. • A returned product is one that meets one of the following conditions: defective, obsolete, unsold, withdrawn, or contains spare parts for repair.	(Blumberg, 2007; Ferguson & Souza, 2010; Kuvvetli & Erol, 2020; Souza, 2013)
Cold supply chain	• A supply chain in which all material flow-related activities are subordinated to the ability to maintain temperature, from the storage of raw materials to the final distribution of products • The specificity of this type of supply chain lies in its use for preserving products to keep them fresh and available. • In addition to typical supply chain operations, employees and equipment involved are also required to maintain the temperature of the chain at all stages of the flow.	(Gogou et al., 2015; Khan & Ali, 2021; Robertson et al., 2017)

Source: own study based on the cited literature

flows. In each of the mentioned forms, suppliers play a crucial role in the success of the collaboration process. The pressure on suppliers to improve the replenishment process is emphasized from QR, which aims to reduce delivery cycles, to ECR, CRP, and VMI, which attempt to achieve efficient replenishment through continuous replenishment (CRP) and supplier

replenishment (VMI), to CPFR, which introduces collaborative replenishment. The involvement, responsibility, and participation of suppliers, therefore, are significant and increase as forms of cooperation evolve. Different criteria that shape supply chains are discussed in the literature (Table 6.2).

The examples cited of different types of supply chains illustrate that the supply chain itself evolves and changes according to various needs. Supply chains change in size and shape, as well as in the way they are configured, controlled, and managed. New types of supply chains can emerge for a variety of reasons, such as in response to technological breakthroughs (digital supply chains), the introduction of a new product (cold supply chains for COVID-19 vaccines), market niches (hybrid supply chains), or new geographic markets.

Relationships based on collaboration within the supply chain are driven by effectiveness and the ability to respond to market changes. Depending on the type of supply chain, different requirements will be imposed on suppliers. This becomes particularly evident in the context of socially responsible, sustainable, green, or circular supply chains. In these types of chains, expectations from suppliers are not driven solely by the desire to gain competitive advantage or reducing transaction costs. Instead, they are based on various regulations, norms, ethical codes, sustainability programs, and environmental protection guidelines (Pagell & Wu, 2009). Global sourcing strategies have also led to changes in supply chain network configuration, which not only determines the configuration of the entire chain but also shapes the collaboration with suppliers. Organizations can proactively redesign their networks to align with their production and/or marketing strategies to better serve their markets. As a result, requirements and expectations from suppliers will vary depending on the type of supply chain.

Supplier relationship management

Managing collaboration with suppliers is closely connected to managing relationships with them. Changing global trends, such as global sourcing and shorter product life cycles, have made supplier relationship management a "strategic asset" (Tseng, 2014). Managing collaboration with suppliers is closely connected to managing relationships with them. Changing global trends, such as global sourcing and shorter product life cycles, have made supplier relationship management a "strategic asset" (Tseng, 2014). *Supplier relationship management* (SRM) is a comprehensive approach to managing an organization's interactions with the companies that supply the products and services it uses. The concept emerged in the 1980s based on the works of Dwyer (1987) on relationship theory and Davenport and Short (1990) on process redesign. Supplier relationship management has become a critical business process as a result of: competitive pressure; the need to address sustainability, risk, cost efficiency, and the development of closer

relationships with key suppliers who can provide the expertise necessary to develop new innovative products and to successfully release them into the market (Lambert & Schwieterman, 2012).

Today, software vendors who have developed a wide range of ICT functions supporting SRM activities are an important part of supplier relationship management. The immediate goal of this concept is to streamline and enhance the efficiency of purchasing processes between a company and its suppliers. Indirectly, SRM also aims to improve the quality of information, products, services, and workforce potential (Jiputra et al., 2020). Active supplier involvement in value creation for a company, through increased cost efficiency and the provision of competitive products, as well as sharing risks, will significantly contribute to the development of innovative products and an increased product market share (Lambert & Schwieterman, 2012).

SRM is defined as a business process that manages all contracts between an organization and its suppliers (Amoako-Gyampah et al., 2019) and includes establishing, developing, stabilizing, and terminating relationships with internal suppliers, as well as monitoring of external suppliers to generate and enhance value within these relationships (Moeller et al., 2006). At the same time, both parties can solidify their relationships through discussion and adjustment. In supplier relationships, both parties are committed to a long-term relationship (Giannakis et al., 2012), hence sharing a common interest in establishing close collaboration by developing joint products and sharing costs to maximize mutual benefits.

SRM is also described as supplier–buyer relationship management, a two-way process that aims to improve the performance of both organizations (Fogg, 2006); it represents the management of strategic suppliers to reduce costs, increase the predictability and repeatability of purchases, ensure expertise in supplier integration, and leverage the benefits of the relationship (Herrmann & Hodgson, 2001). The goal is to foster bonds with suppliers that go beyond a transactional approach to market collaboration (Sosnowski, 2019).

Supplier relationship management has an interdisciplinary dimension, is addressed in various research streams, and can bring benefits to both parties: it provides a competitive advantage, as companies can jointly leverage existing resources (Lii & Kuo, 2016); it enables anticipation of changes in demand patterns, inflationary pressures, currency fluctuations, and government policies, which creates conditions of supply uncertainty (Yang et al., 2016; Zhang & Cao, 2018); it minimizes transaction costs, allows value creation through internal capabilities and external resources, and enables reduction of dependency and availability risks (Lintukangas, 2011).

Supplier relationships vary from purely transactional, price-based relationships to highly interdependent partnerships and alliances (Heckman, 1999).

Based on the level of interaction and cooperation between organizations, buyer–supplier relationships are categorized into four types: 1) traditional relationships, 2) operational relationships, 3) project-based partnerships, and 4) developed partnerships (Saccani & Perona, 2007). The concept of traditional relationships refers to situations where suppliers are expected to provide guarantees of customer service and product quality, while market mechanisms typically determine prices. Operational relationships are a response to the need for cost reduction associated with exchanging large quantities of goods with high frequency. Project-based partnerships can involve designing, developing, or redesigning a product, manufacturing process, and facility layout, or assisting the customer in selecting suppliers. Developed partnerships result from the need for joint development of products or components that require close logistical integration to synchronize demand and supply or reduce transportation, storage, and administrative costs.

The supplier relationship management process occurs at two levels: the strategic process and the operational process, where implementation takes place. At the strategic level, the supplier relationship management process provides a framework for how supplier relationships will be developed and managed. It consists of five subprocesses: 1) reviewing corporate, marketing, production, and supply strategies; 2) identifying criteria for classifying suppliers; 3) defining guidelines for the degree of alignment in the product/service agreement; 4) developing a framework of metrics; and 5) developing guidelines for sharing the benefits of process improvement with suppliers (Lambert & Schwieterman, 2012).

Supplier relationship management is determined by the company's strategy, which influences the adopted purchasing strategy depending on the type of goods/services ordered and available sources of supply. Supplier management involves a multi-level process, consisting of the following stages: 1) supplier identification, 2) identification of constraints, 3) supplier analysis, 4) supplier evaluation, 5) supplier selection or control, 6) supplier integration and development (Lasch & Janker, 2005).

Supplier relationship management consists of categories such as 1) supplier policies, 2) communication/information sharing, 3) joint buyer/supplier activities, 4) maintenance of the relationship, 5) supplier support, and 6) quality of the relationship (Theodorakioglou et al., 2006), while the concept covers issues of shaping purchasing strategies, selection, evaluation, and development of suppliers (Park et al., 2010).

Various approaches to defining the stages of the supplier relationship management process highlight its complex and multi-level nature. Given that the strategic goal of supplier relationship management is to collaborate with suppliers in a way that allows the company to competitively develop new products and efficiently produce them, Figure 6.3. presents a synthesis

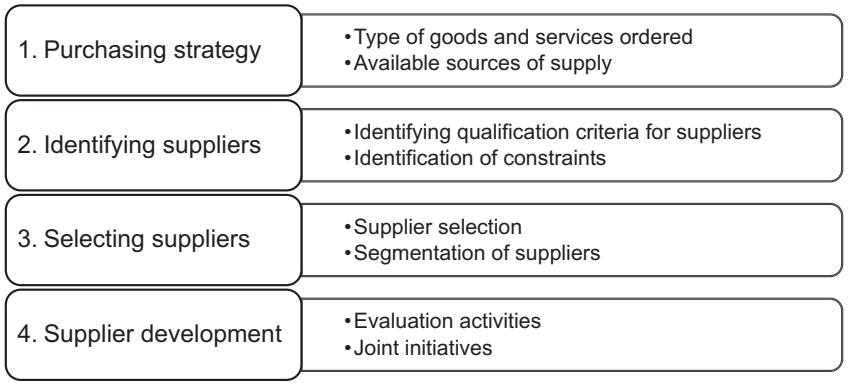

Figure 6.3 Stages of the supplier relationship management process.

Source: own study

of different approaches outlining the components of the supplier relationship management process.

The supplier relationship management process is multistage and is linked to the overall company strategy as well as functional strategies. The starting point is defining the adopted purchasing strategy. Purchasing itself is defined as the management of the organization's external resources in a way that ensures the supply of all goods, services, capabilities, and knowledge necessary for conducting, maintaining, and managing the organization's core and supporting activities under the most favorable conditions (Van Weele, 2010). Purchasing strategy encompasses decisions regarding supplier selection and relationship management made by buyers to support the company's competitive strategy (Terpend et al., 2011). Research suggests that developing a single comprehensive purchasing strategy is challenging (Mazaud, 2020). Kraljic (1983) introduced the matrix – the most well-known tool for supplier segmentation and associated purchasing strategies, which has become a pivotal tool for managing purchasing processes within organizations. In this model, based on two dimensions: the impact of a given category on the company's financial performance and the risk associated with supplies (security of supply), four main groups of categories have been identified: strategic "leverage" items, strategic items, noncritical items, and bottleneck/specialized items. This process helps in defining the management strategy for a given category, i.e., elements such as the relationship model to be established with suppliers in that category, negotiation tactics (and tools), and goals to be set for the purchasing process (Padhi et al., 2012).

Identification of suppliers includes defining criteria for their qualification and indicating any potential constraints. This stage is also referred to as

supplier prequalification (Lasch & Janker, 2005). Petersen, Handfield, and Ragatz (2005) demonstrated that a thorough and comprehensive analysis of potential suppliers, leading to the selection of a supplier with suitable capabilities and culture, impacts the effectiveness of collaboration. Based on the specific need, in the identification stage, it is necessary to identify suppliers who offer the required item for purchase. To do this, an analysis of the market is conducted to identify potential suppliers who manufacture the desired item or are capable of doing so, and the criteria to be considered are defined. Researchers have addressed the issue of identification and classification of suppliers in various contexts (Ghobadi, 2019), with a particular focus on the diverse criteria organizations use to help in selecting the right supplier (Kar & Pani, 2014). For the first time, criteria in the form of a list were formulated by Dickson (1966), who created a set of 23 criteria for evaluating and selecting the best suppliers. This set served as a starting point for defining new sets of criteria (Aguezzoul, 2011; Cheraghi et al., 2011; Weber et al., 1991), which vary depending on the industry and the purchasing strategy (Bharadwaj, 2004; Liu & Hai, 2005) or product categories (Bharadwaj, 2004). Traditionally, these sets included criteria such as price, quality, delivery, etc. However, due to globalization and increased competition, companies are considering different criteria to minimize costs and maximize profits. For this reason, more and more often, among the criteria defined in the supplier selection process, there are those that take into account the requirements of CSR or environmental responsibility.

Supplier selection plays a key role in a company's purchasing process. Selecting the right supplier can reduce costs, mitigate risks and contribute to meeting customer requirements, thereby increasing the competitiveness of the organization (Heidarzade et al., 2016). In the literature, the subject of supplier selection is analyzed considering issues related to models, processes, methods, techniques, as well as criteria applied in the selection process (Jedynak, 2014). Supplier selection models[3] reflect the adopted criteria for selecting suppliers. Supplier selection is also a decision-making process that narrows down the pool of potential suppliers (Ordoobadi, 2009). It is characterized by the presence of multiple variables, including uncertainties in demand, lead time, and delivery (Kumar et al., 2018). According to Chai et al. (2013), various types of methods and techniques are used in the decision-making process, which can be categorized as follows: 1) MCDM[4] methods, 2) MP[5] techniques, and 3) AI[6] techniques.

Multicriteria decision-making methods[7] provide a methodological framework that aims to provide decision-makers with sound recommendations among a finite set of alternatives. Some examples of such methods used in the supplier selection process include the analytic hierarchical process (AHP), which is useful because it is based on both quantitative and qualitative criteria for supplier selection (Astanti et al., 2020;

Diouf & Kwak, 2018; Hu et al., 2020); the analytic network process (ANP), which is an extension of the analytic hierarchy process by incorporating dependencies among the elements of the hierarchy (Tavana et al., 2017; Wan et al., 2017); or multicriteria optimization and compromise solution (VIKOR) (Chen & Wang, 2009). Mathematical forecasting techniques include, among others, *data envelopment analysis* (DEA), which enables the examination of efficiency outcomes based on input expenditures and is employed for classifying suppliers according to their performance levels (Wu & Blackhurst, 2009). On the other hand, an example of applying artificial intelligence techniques in the supplier selection process could be neural networks, which provide the capability for computer-based solutions for practical issues. For instance, they can be utilized to refine general evaluation criteria compiled into a set of common supplier performance metrics (Çelebi & Bayraktar, 2008).

Classification of suppliers takes place after their selection. The organization classifies suppliers so as to manage the relationship with them in different ways (Dyer et al., 1998). The aim of such segmentation is to create a certain number of categories of suppliers, thus reducing the number of strategies the organization needs to develop.

Supplier development is any activity or investment initiated by a buyer to improve the supplier's performance/capacity, or both, to meet short and/or long-term supply needs, thereby achieving mutual benefits (Krause et al., 1998, 2000). To improve supplier performance, purchasing organizations use various options, including (1) evaluating suppliers, (2) encouraging suppliers to improve their performance, (3) stimulating competition among suppliers, and (4) engaging in direct collaboration with them on training or other activities (Krause et al., 1998). The joint effort between the purchasing company and its suppliers is aimed at improving their technical capabilities, quality, delivery conditions, as well as managing costs and supporting continuous improvement (Handfield et al., 2000; Kauppila et al., 2020). The monitoring of suppliers at this stage is carried out through their continuous evaluation on the basis of a set of preset quantitative and qualitative criteria (Govindan et al., 2015; Jedynak, 2015; Simić et al., 2017).

In the literature, supplier development is depicted as an activity that takes place after the selection process (Araz & Ozkarahan, 2007; Krause & Ellram, 1997; Park et al., 2010; Talluri & Narasimhan, 2004; Wagner, 2011; Wagner & Krause, 2009), as the evaluation and subsequent selection of a supplier allows the buyer to effectively manage a balanced portfolio of suppliers (Foerstl et al., 2010). In specific sectors, such as the automotive sector, supplier development may precede the selection stage, due in part to the prior design of supplied components in the *just-in-time* concept (Luzzini et al., 2015). Supplier development, which includes both direct and indirect actions taken toward suppliers, affects the performance of the

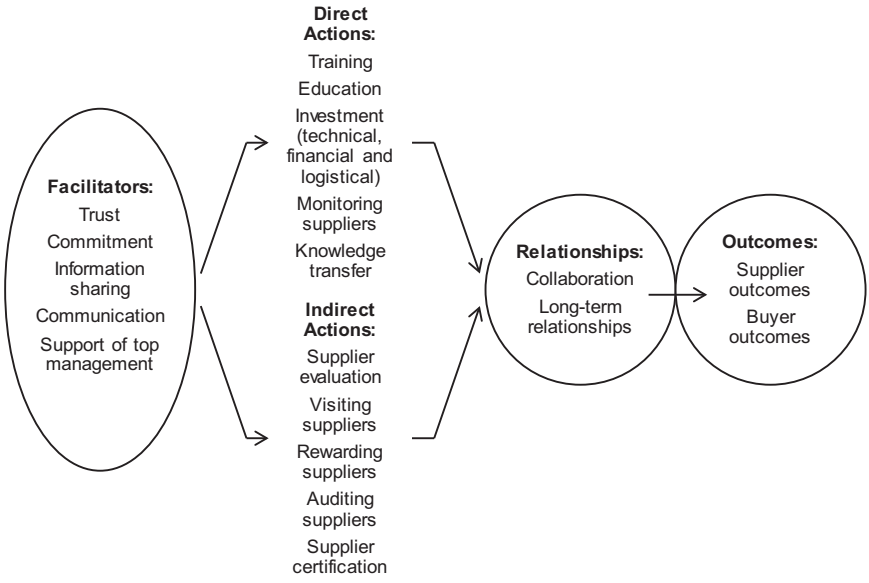

Figure 6.4 A process-oriented approach to supplier development.

Source: own study based on (Nagati & Rebolledo, 2013; Sucky & Durst, 2013; Yawar & Seuring, 2020)

purchasing organization (Wagner, 2010). Figure 6.4. provides an overview of the components of supplier development.

Specific facilitators such as trust, commitment or information sharing (Carr & Kaynak, 2007; Modi & Mabert, 2007; Narasimhan et al., 2008) are not only required to initiate supplier development but also significantly influence the nature of the chosen initiative. Furthermore, improved relationships lead to enduring commitment and collaboration, facilitating the sharing of risks and benefits between buyers and suppliers (Matook et al., 2009; Terpend & Krause, 2015). Supplier development programs include various types of support tools for suppliers, such as credit, credit guarantees, physical investments, guaranteed prices, or timely payments (Jedynak et al., 2020; Krause et al., 2007).

Supplier integration refers to the process of interaction and collaboration between a company and its suppliers to ensure a smooth flow of supplies (Das et al., 2006; Flynn et al., 2010; Zhao et al., 2008) as well as the acquisition and sharing of technical, operational, and financial information, along with related knowledge (Narasimhan et al., 2010). Supplier integration is also seen as the development of long-term, mutually beneficial relationships between a company and its suppliers (Li et al., 2006), driven by increasing global competition (Beheregarai Finger et al., 2014; Zhao et al.,

2008). The integration process involves determining the extent of shared responsibilities, deciding how and when to involve suppliers in the process, intercompany communication, intellectual property agreements, integrating suppliers into project teams, and aligning organizational goals with expected outcomes (dos Santos Bento et al., 2020).

Conclusions

Collaboration is crucial for the success of an enterprise and represents a central category of management. In turn, collaboration with suppliers is vital for smooth functioning, leading both managers and researchers to focus their attention in this direction, resulting in the emergence of a vast body of concepts and empirical research.

Notes

1 The process of internalization in the supply chain involves taking control over a supplier or a customer, which can be a way to bypass a market that is unattractive for various reasons. On a domestic level, this process partially overlaps with *insourcing*.
2 *Reshoring* is the concept of bringing a process/processes that were previously performed outside the country to the domestic market. It can be a tool to improve product quality (*offshoring* helped lower costs, but resulted in damage to brands due to a decrease in product or service quality). *Nearshoring* offers an alternative to total *offshoring*, by bringing manufacturing operations closer to where they are used. For example, a manufacturer in the UK may choose to outsource production to a neighboring European country. Although costs tend to be higher compared to *offshoring*, the cost disparity between *nearshoring* and *offshoring* is decreasing, bearing in mind that labor costs in countries that are popular offshoring locations, such as Malaysia, India, China and the Philippines, are also rising.
3 To see an overview of examples of supplier selection models: (Jedynak, 2014)
4 Multicriteria decision making
5 Mathematical programming
6 Artificial intelligence
7 Multi-criteria decision-making methods used to select suppliers taking into account CSR guidelines will be discussed later in the paper

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Part 3

The evolution and significance of CSR

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7 The origins of the concept of corporate social responsibility

Introduction

The issue of corporate social responsibility (CSR) toward society, rather than solely financial responsibility toward shareholders, has been increasingly addressed in the scientific literature over the past few decades. It has also become a subject of controversy and debate (Fifka, 2009; Wachowiak, 2013). Financial responsibility was established by Friedman (1970), who presented the "traditional" business view that corporate responsibility boils down to utilizing its resources and engaging in activities aimed at increasing its profits. This approach has also faced criticism (Mulligan, 1986), and the concept of CSR continues to be the subject of research, discussion, and analysis (ElAlfy et al., 2020; Jastrzębska, 2016; Jurek, 2016).

The evolution of CSR

The first publications and literature on CSR emerged in the 1930s. However, according to Chaffee (2017), the origins of the social component of corporate behavior can be traced back to ancient Roman laws, which can be seen in initiatives such as asylums, hospitals, homes for the poor, orphans, and the elderly. This perception of corporations as social entities continued through English law in the Middle Ages, in academic, municipal, and religious institutions. It later extended into the 16th and 17th centuries under the influence of the English Crown, which viewed corporations as instruments of social development (Chaffee, 2017). In the following centuries, with the expansion of the English empire and the colonization of new lands, the English Crown exported its corporate law to the American colonies, where corporations played a social role to some extent (Chaffee, 2017).

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the Christian religious philosophy and the approach to the prevailing social context were seen as a response to the moral failure of society, manifested by the poverty of the entire population of the British Empire and certain parts of Europe (Harrison, 1966). The religious approach gave way to social reforms and Victorian philanthropy,

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which recognized a range of social problems related to poverty and ignorance, as well as child and female labor (Carroll, 2008; Harrison, 1966). The religious roots of Victorian social consciousness resulted in a high level of idealism and humanism, and by the end of the 19th century, philanthropic efforts were focused on the working class and the creation of social programs (Carroll, 1999).

At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, social welfare programs emerged, adopting a paternalistic approach aimed at protecting and retaining workers, and some companies even sought to improve their quality of life (Carroll, 2008; Heald, 2018). This period also witnessed a rise in urbanization and industrialization characterized by large-scale production. It brought about new concerns in the labor market, such as new challenges for farmers and small corporations to keep up with the new interdependent economy, the formation of workers' unions seeking better working conditions, and the middle class worried about the loss of religious and family values in the new industrial society (Heald, 2018). In response to these new challenges and in order to find harmony between industry and the workforce, some business leaders established organizations that promoted values and improved working conditions[1].

In the 1920s and early 1930s, businesses began to take responsibility for balancing profit maximization with meeting the demands of their customers, workforce, and communities. This led to managers being seen as trustees of a different set of external relationships with the company, which in turn translated into corporations taking on social and economic responsibility (Carroll, 2008; Heald, 2018). Later, with the development of business during World War II and the 1940s, companies began to be seen as institutions responsible for social matters, and discussions about them became more widespread (Heald, 2018).

It was only in the 1950s that attempts were made to define the social responsibilities of organizations, which can be seen as the beginning of the modern definition of corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Frederick, 2008). Society began to expect an increasing number of social services and private corporations taking care of social issues. This period can be seen as a time of adaptation and changing attitudes toward the CSR discussion, as well as a time when there were few corporate activities that went beyond philanthropic activities (Carroll, 2008). Since then, CSR has evolved, and its meaning and definition have expanded over the years. According to Frederick (2008, 2016), four stages of CSR evolution can be identified (Figure 7.1.).

CSR stages in the evolution of CSR

Table 7.1 presents the characteristics of the stages in the evolution of the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility.

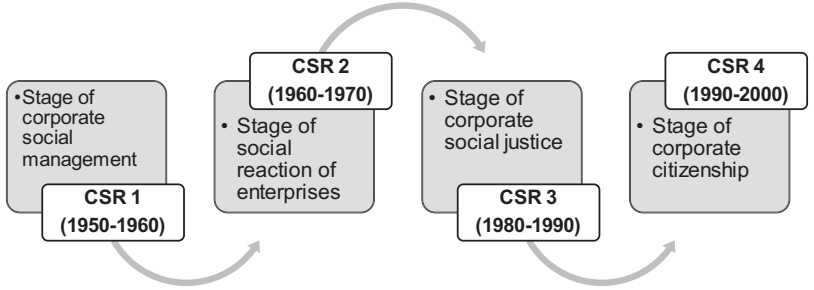

Figure 7.1 Evolution of CSR

Source: own study based on: (Frederick, 2008, 2016)

The evolution of the concept of CSR, presented above, allows us to conclude that the belief in the responsibility of businesses toward society is not new and has been observed for several centuries. However, it was not until the 1930s and 1940s that the role of management and corporate social performance began to appear in the literature (Carroll, 1999), and authors began to discuss what the specific social responsibilities of companies were.

The first stage revealed three fundamental principles: 1) corporate managers as public trustees and stewards of broad economic interests; 2) an executive duty to balance competing claims of employees, customers, owners, and society; and 3) philanthropic support for noble social needs (Frederick, 2008). Corporate social responsibility at that time was voluntary and based on social awareness.

Then, CSR changed its meaning in the late 1960s and 1970s. At this stage, companies were expected not only to provide discretionary support to social causes but also to help address social problems through more diverse forms of social engagement. The public expected to see the impact and tangible results of socially responsible practices. CSR ceased to be passive responsibility and became an active social response for leading corporations (Frederick, 2008, 2016).

Stage three marks the expansion of CSR beyond philanthropy and social activism and a shift toward creating an ethical corporate culture and sustaining it into the 1980s and 1990s. CSR as "corporate social integrity" refers to the integration of ethical issues into the central decision-making process in the corporation. Companies have sought to meet public expectations by defining their ethical codes, mission statements and ethical principles for both the company itself as well as all employees (Frederick, 2008, 2016).

The concept of CSR was expanded to include global corporate citizenship in the late 1990s and 2000s. At this stage, "corporations have the same duties and obligations as other members of civil society" (Frederick, 2008, s. 527). Moreover, corporate social responsibility relates to an increasingly

Table 7.1 Stages in the evolution of corporate social responsibility

Stage of evolution	*Characteristics*	*References*
1950s and 1960s		
Social responsibility of entrepreneurs	Entrepreneurs are left with an obligation to make policy, make decisions or act in a way that is desirable and consistent with the goals and values of society.	(Bowen, 1953)
	Some socially responsible business decisions can be justified by the long-term economic gains of the company. Entrepreneurs have broad responsibilities toward society in terms of economic and human values.	(Davis, 1960)
	Acknowledging that private resources of entrepreneurs should be used for a wide variety of social purposes.	(Frederick, 1960)
1970s		
Stakeholder concept	Shifting from a focus on maximizing profits for shareholders to taking responsibility and considering the interests of employees, suppliers, distributors, local communities, and the entire country.	(Johnson, 1971)
Enterprises in the service of society	Enterprises operate with the approval of the public, and their primary purpose is to constructively serve the needs of society.	(Committee for Economic Development, 1971)
Corporate social responsibility as an obligation	Presenting corporate social responsibility as a duty and an obligation of management to undertake actions aimed at protecting and improving the well-being of society as a whole, as well as the interests of the organization.	(Davis & Blomstrom, 1975)
Three-dimensional model	Identifying the three dimensions of the concept: 1) corporate responsibility (i.e., economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic), 2) social aspects of business (labor standards, human rights, environmental protection and anti-corruption measures), and 3) corporate actions (reactive, defensive, accommodative and proactive actions).	(Carroll, 1979)
1980s and 1990s		
CSR as a decision-making process affecting corporate behavior	Perceiving CSR as a decision-making process that would impact the behavior of a company.	(Jones, 1980)
Three-dimensional model of rules, policies and processes	Adapting the principles of corporate responsibility, social management policies and the operation process to the evolving system.	(Wartick & Cochran, 1985)

(*Continued*)

Table 7.1 (Continued)

Stage of evolution	*Characteristics*	*References*
Corporate Social Performance Model.	Defining the framework and activities of enterprises, identifying four types of corporate responsibility: 1) economic, 2) legal, 3) ethical and 4) philanthropic. These were combined with the three basic levels (legal, organizational and individual), while corporate actions were expanded to include evaluation, shareholder management and implementation management.	(Wood, 1991)
CSR pyramid	Defining four types of responsibility: 1) economic (maximizing profit, increasing efficiency, strengthening the competitive position, the foundation for subsequent spheres of responsibility); 2) legal (compliance with the law and market regulations, law as a social codification of right and wrong actions); 3) ethical (acting honestly, fairly, adhering to moral norms, including newly emerging ones); and 4) philanthropic (organization as a citizen).	(Carroll, 1991)
Companies as citizens (*corporate citizenship*)		
Dimensions of strategic CSR	Defining five dimensions of strategic CSR that result in identifiable and measurable value creation (in the form of economic benefits for the company).	(Burke & Logsdon, 1996)
Early 21st century		
Defining the modern concept of CSR	CSR is a concept whereby companies voluntarily incorporate environmental (ecological) and social aspects into their business operations and stakeholder relations.	(European Commission, 2001)
CSR as a social contract	CSR is a response to the implicit social contract between business and society and can become a strategic component of a company's management plans for generating profits.	(Lantos, 2001)
An approach based on the three dimensions of CSR	Three aspects of corporate responsibility: economic, legal and ethical.	(Schwartz & Carroll, 2003)
CSR in conjunction with sustainable development is a response to the new roles and responsibilities of each sector of society	Formulating a new perspective on CSR in conjunction with corporate sustainability. This approach is a strategic response to new corporate challenges that are the result of the evolving roles and responsibilities of each sector of society.	(Marrewijk, 2003)

(*Continued*)

Table 7.1 (Continued)

Stage of evolution	*Characteristics*	*References*
CSR as a source of sustainable competitive advantage - *Strategic Corporate Social Responsibility*	Transforming the perception of CSR from a minimal commitment to a strategic necessity that can translate into a sustainable competitive advantage - *Strategic Corporate Social Responsibility.*	(Werther & Chandler, 2005)
Creating shared value – *Strategic Corporate Social Responsibility*	Achieving a competitive advantage through *Strategic Corporate Social Responsibility* (SCSR), which results in the creation of shared value.	(Porter & Kramer, 2006)
	SCSR generates new opportunities through the constant pursuit of value creation, which is at the same time inevitably linked to social demands.	(Husted & Allen, 2007)
CSR 2.0	Moving from a philanthropic and PR-driven approach to a more interactive, bottom-up, stakeholder-oriented approach to co-creation and diversity, resulting in social innovation. It assumes the use of new technologies, such as social media, to engage in dialog with stakeholders, and is based on five principles[2]: 1) building relationships, 2) scalability, 3) responsiveness, 4) duality and 5) circularity.	(Visser, 2010)
1920s		
Creating Shared Value (CSV)	The aim of collaboration becomes the creation of shared value, so CSV should replace CSR.	(Porter & Kramer, 2011)
Consumer-Driven Corporate Responsibility (CDCR)	The Consumer-Driven Corporate Responsibility (CDCR) model is based on the assumption that consumer demand for socially responsible actions is both the most likely and the most effective stimulus for implementing CSR within a company.	(Claydon, 2011)
Creating products / services in a socially responsible way	SCSR seen as central to a company's strategic decision-making, as well as their day-to-day operations, enabling companies to create market products/services in an effective and socially responsible manner.	(Chandler & Werther, 2013)

(*Continued*)

Table 7.1 (Continued)

Stage of evolution	*Characteristics*	*References*
CSR as a benchmark and *Socially Responsible Movement*	Acknowledging that the concepts of stakeholder engagement and management, business ethics, corporate citizenship, and creating shared value are interconnected and overlapping, all of them have been incorporated into CSR. In this approach, these concepts are defined as a point of reference and the centerpiece of the socially responsible movement.	(Carroll, 2015)
Generating sustainable value	Generating sustainable value is the primary aim of SCSR.	(Chandler, 2016)

Source: own study based on the cited literature

broader range of companies worldwide, as corporations take responsibility for global consequences. Companies have evolved into global corporate citizens, with greater consideration for global sustainability agendas (Mackey, 2014; Wachowiak, 2013). Each stage highlights a different approach to understanding CSR, characteristic for a given historical period. Such diverse approaches were based on different theoretical frameworks. Figure 7.2 illustrates the chronology of different theories and approaches to corporate social responsibility.

The evolution of corporate social responsibility, presented chronologically, taking into account the stages of development and identifying the theories and approaches that contribute to the concept allows us to conclude that there is a connection between societal expectations regarding corporate behavior and the way CSR has evolved over time.

Conclusions

To summarize the development of CSR, the 1920s and 1930s saw the assumption of social and economic responsibility by companies, the 1950s and 1960s marked the beginning of a new era of corporate social responsibility, in the 1970s it analyzed how to adapt to the new obligations imposed on businesses by regulations related to environmental aspects, product safety, and workers' rights. The 1980s, on the other hand, looked at how to effectively implement CSR, to be followed in the 1990s by the challenge of globalization in the context of corporate social responsibility. During this time, the concept of CSR began to significantly gain ground, mainly in Japan, the US and Western Europe (Wołkowicka & Dąbrowski, 2012). The beginning of the 21st century was characterized by a strategic approach to

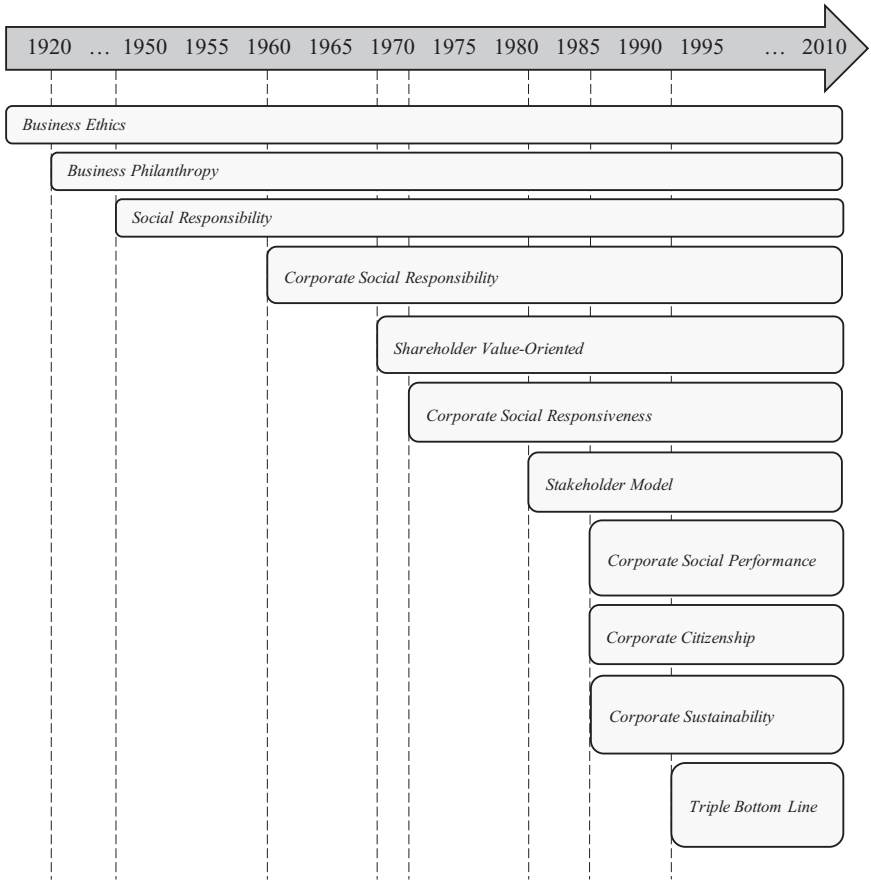

Figure 7.2 Theories and approaches in the concept of CSR in chronological order.
Source: own compilation based on (Mele, 2008)

CSR, considering the specificity of the Internet and social media and their influence on the concept. Efforts were made toward analyzing CSR and creating shared value.

Notes

1 An example of such an organization is the *Civic Federation of Chicago*, an organization created to promote better working conditions, where religious values were combined with economic goals and a sense of civic pride (Heald, 2018).
2 According to Visser (2010), building relationships means creating multilateral relationships with all stakeholders (without singling out shareholders).

Scalability means actions taken on a sufficiently large scale, focusing on tangible benefits for society and the environment. Responsiveness is about reacting to global challenges, even if it is inconvenient for the company. Duality is about considering a broader context, taking into account local conditions. Circularity means activities that are sustainable from start to finish (not wasting resources, caring about the development of human capital and local communities).

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8 Mapping meanings of corporate social responsibility

Introduction

Despite the interest in the concept of CSR and numerous studies related to it, the term "corporate social responsibility" lacks a universally accepted definition (Green & Peloza, 2011; Rok, 2013; Wachowiak, 2013). Most often, definitions of CSR stem from various perspectives regarding the responsibilities and business obligations of companies, which in turn are the result of a broader debate about the role of organizations in society (Maignan & Ferrell, 2003). CSR is a term that often translates into a range of different actions and objectives, depending on the company, entity, or organization. CSR can be understood in a broad context and encompasses many concepts and ideas known by different names, such as corporate responsibility, business ethics, corporate citizenship, sustainable development, etc. (Lu et al., 2019).

Definitions of CSR

An overview of definitions of corporate social responsibility is provided in Table 8.1.

CSR is defined as a set of domestic and international legal and ethical commitments, as well as commitments to stakeholders of an organization, arising from the impact of the organization's activities and operations in the social, labor, environmental, and human rights spheres (López Jiménez et al., 2021). One of the widely accepted definitions of CSR is the one formulated by the European Commission (2001), which states that " companies voluntarily integrate social and environmental concerns into their activities and stakeholder relations." Although this definition is quite general, it accurately reflects the specifics of the concept, which boils down to corporate involvement that goes beyond financial or commercial responsibility.

The understanding of the concept has evolved from a very narrow definition that focused solely on increasing stakeholders' wealth (Friedman, 1962), through legal, ethical, and discretionary issues (Carroll, 1979), to

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Table 8.1 An overview of definitions of corporate social responsibility

Author(s)	*Definitions of CSR*
(Bowen, 1953)	Social responsibility is the duty of businessmen in carrying out such policies, making decisions, or pursuing directions that are in alignment with the values and goals agreed upon by society.
(Carroll, 1979)	CSR encompasses the economic, legal, ethical and discretionary expectations that society has of an organization at any given time.
(Rybak, 2001)	It is the responsibility of the management to choose decisions and actions that contribute not only to their own interests (such as increasing the company's profit) but also to the protection and enhancement of social welfare.
(European Commission, 2001)	Corporate social responsibility is a concept in which companies voluntarily take into account social and environmental issues in their operational activities and in their interactions with stakeholders. Being socially responsible means not only fully complying with applicable legal obligations but also going above and beyond and investing "more" in human capital, the environment, and stakeholder relationships.
(World Bank, 2005)	The commitment of business to contribute to sustainable development with the participation of employees, their families, local communities, and society as a whole, in order to improve the quality of life, yielding positive effects for both business and societal development.
(McWilliams et al., 2006)	The situation in which a company goes beyond the requirements imposed on it and incorporates activities into its operation that create social good that goes beyond the company's interests.
(Korpus, 2006)	CSR is a global trend in strategic business management that obliges companies to pursue sustainable development while respecting principles of economics, ecology, and ethics.
(Kotler & Lee, 2007)	The commitment of a company to enhance the well-being of society through independent business practices and the use of the company's resources.
(Carroll, 2008)	CSR means the commitment of enterprises to seek strategies, make decisions or continue those lines of activity that are consistent with social values and expectations.
(Adamczyk, 2009)	CSR is a commitment to transparent and ethical business conduct based on principles of sustainable development; it involves the pursuit of social well-being while taking stakeholder expectations into account, but in accordance with the law and norms of behavior. Addressing stakeholder expectations and creating value for them leads to social equilibrium, which is essential for reducing uncertainty in business operations.

(*Continued*)

Table 8.1 (Continued)

Author(s)	*Definitions of CSR*
(Ismail, 2009)	The concept that business organizations take into account the public interest by assuming responsibility for the impact of their actions on customers, suppliers, employees, shareholders, communities, and other stakeholders, as well as on their environment.
(Hediger, 2010)	Programs in which companies not only aim to increase profits but also contribute to the well-being of stakeholders.
(International Organization for Standardization, 2010)	CSR is the responsibility of an organization for the impact of its decisions and actions on society and the environment through transparent and ethical conduct that: • Contributes to sustainable development, including the health and well-being of society. • Takes into account the expectations of stakeholders (individuals or groups who have an interest `in the organization's decisions or actions). • Complies with applicable law and aligns with international standards of conduct. • Is integrated with the organization's activities and practiced in its activities undertaken within its sphere of influence.
(European Commission, 2001)	Corporate responsibility for the impact on the environment and society.
(Bartkowiak, 2011)	CSR is based on the premise that companies are not only economically and legally responsible for their activities, but feel obliged to undertake actions to achieve social goals.
(Paliwoda-Matiolańska, 2012)	The process of managing relationships with a company's stakeholders, which, by addressing their identifiable expectations, contributes to the company's competitiveness, ensuring its stability and sustainable development while shaping favorable conditions for both economic and social growth, creating both social and economic value.
(Rudnicka, 2012)	CSR is a concept that supports the fulfillment of the principles of sustainable development at the corporate level, enabling organizations to improve their performance in a changing environment. It provides a direction for enterprises that aware of their social and environmental impacts to strengthen relationships with various stakeholder groups and discover additional opportunities for enhancing their competitive position.
(Fontaine, 2013)	A steadfast commitment of enterprises to conduct themselves in a proper, fair, and responsible manner and to contribute to economic development by improving the lives of employees and their families, as well as the local community and society as a whole.

(*Continued*)

Table 8.1 (Continued)

Author(s)	*Definitions of CSR*
(Filek, 2013)	CSR is the voluntary assumption of commitments by business entities toward stakeholders that go beyond legal requirements, aiming at addressing social issues that may not be solvable without the cooperation and involvement of the business world, all while avoiding illegal and unethical behaviors.
(Sokołowska, 2013)	CSR entails economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic obligations of a company toward both external and internal social groups. It can be the subject of deliberate and rational, as well as institutionalized corporate action, which is a source of competitive advantage.
(Szumniak-Samolej, 2013)	A strategic and holistic approach to organizational management that involves: • Voluntary adherence to ethical principles. • Elimination of negative impacts on the environment (both immediate and broader) while maximizing positive ones. • Engaging in a dialogue with stakeholders and taking into account their expectations.
(Wachowiak, 2012, 2013)	Business activities that take into account social interests, environmental protection, and relationships with stakeholders. Being a responsible business means not only achieving key objectives and adhering to legal and ethical standards but also increasing investments in human resources, environmental protection, and stakeholder relations.
(The World Business Council for Sustainable Development)	The ongoing commitment of business to ethical conduct and contributing to sustainable economic development by improving the quality of life for employees and their families, as well as the local community and society as a whole.

Source: own study based on the cited literature

encompass the obligation of a company to work toward social improvement (Frederick, 1994). This approach implies that it becomes essential to provide a return on investment to owners and shareholders, create jobs and fair wages for employees, explore new resources, promote technological progress, innovation, and the development of new products and services (Carroll, 1979).

Further development of CSR has been linked to the inclusion of other stakeholder groups. In addition to the traditional groups, the concept's focus area is expanding to include so-called "silent groups" such as local communities (Simmons, 2004), and CSR increasingly aims to generate reputation and influence stakeholder behavior (Neville et al., 2005). When

defining CSR, it is most often emphasized that the concept refers to context-specific organizational activities and policies that address stakeholder expectations as well as positive economic, social, and environmental outcomes (Aguinis, 2011).

Corporate social responsibility is an evolving concept that reflects various views and approaches regarding corporate relations with the broader society. Most definitions of CSR implicitly include business ethics, whereby companies voluntarily take into account environmental protection and the importance of stakeholders, among whom employees, local communities, investors, shareholders, and business partners are mentioned. Furthermore, CSR has become a crucial activity for many businesses, as it is considered the right thing to do (Allen & Peloza, 2015; Gan, 2006). The vast majority of definitions emphasize its voluntary nature, although on the other hand, companies are embracing social responsibility because they realize that in today's market realities, legitimacy to conduct business must be granted by all representatives of the organization, including stakeholders (Yan, 2019).

Likewise, most definitions consistently emphasize the same conceptual areas and the need to address stakeholders. The main areas include issues related to the environment, society, and employees. Some authors argue that CSR concepts can be understood as a business strategy for long-term sustainable growth and competitive advantage (Carroll, 2008; Korpus, 2006; Paliwoda-Matiolańska, 2012). Carroll's definition of CSR still appears to be the most widely accepted in academic research (Han et al., 2019; Weber, 2008), despite the fact that new questions and ambiguities continue to arise.

Conclusions

In summary, CSR is about directing resources and capabilities toward achieving a harmonious symbiosis between the economy, ecology, and society. The concept itself should be viewed as a process that encompasses the entire production cycle, the development of a product or service, as well as the environmental, social, financial, and ethical aspects involved (Neculaesei et al., 2019).

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9 Assessment of the CSR concept

Introduction

Analyzing CSR, it can be observed that in addition to the advantages, which are often expected benefits of implementing the concept, the literature also addresses the theme of drawbacks and costs associated with social responsibility.

CSR Benefits and advantages, as well as drawbacks and costs of CSR

A synthetic overview of the advantages and benefits, as well as the disadvantages and costs associated with implementing CSR is presented in Table 9.1.

It is widely believed that implementing principles of social responsibility is a form of ethical business practice. Companies engaged in responsible activities can not only ensure the long-term sustainability of their operations but also reap tangible benefits. Managers guided by ethical considerations produce high-quality financial reports; consequently, CSR companies are less likely to engage in aggressive profit management, highlighting the impact of CSR on corporate governance. Socially responsible activities can also help a company build a positive image and enhance its reputation (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990), as well as reduce information asymmetry and lower financing costs (El Ghoul et al., 2011).

Better corporate social performance can lead to increased investment efficiency and improved financial results (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001). It can also foster relationships between the company and the government or other regulatory entities (Ma & Parish, 2006). Political ties, as an important source of social capital, can further assist a company in gaining easier access to government resources, such as state-owned bank loans (Su & He, 2010). Companies that are socially responsible may achieve a lower loan default rate and a longer credit period (Goss & Roberts, 2011). For many of them, CSR engagement is a way to enhance their reputation and reduce financing costs, which can directly increase the company's value in the long term.

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Table 9.1 Advantages and benefits as well as disadvantages and costs of CSR

Advantages and benefits of corporate social responsibility	*Disadvantages and costs of corporate social responsibility*
Better results: • Cost reduction through resource conservation • Increased operational efficiency and cost savings • Improved financial performance • Enhanced investment efficiency • Increased chances of long-term sustainability for the company • Resources available for addressing social issues • Higher motivation among managers and employees • Positive impact on corporate governance • Improvement in management quality	Hypocrisy: • Corporate hypocrisy • Potential damage to the company's image when motives are perceived as insincere • Unethical behavior by managers driven by personal gain • Manipulation of information regarding socially responsible activities • Consumer skepticism as a response to a company's advertising about CSR initiatives • Lack of skills in addressing social issues • Insufficient level of responsibility toward society
Reputation: • Building a reputation as a socially responsible company • Increased attractiveness of the company as an employer • Easier entry into new markets	Increase in costs: • Abandonment of the principle of profit maximization • Expenditure for social purposes • Short-term increase in the price of products or services • Need to invest in preventing environmental damage • Increased costs of reporting and transparency
Values: • Synergistic value creation • Development of new products • Facilitating of access to capital, including government resources such as state-owned bank loans • Creating business-friendly long-term prospects • Enhancing the quality of reporting • Moral commitment to socially responsible activities • Strengthening human resources and intellectual capital • Increasing environmental sensitivity • Influencing the shaping of state policy • Sustainable development of the country or region	Additional activities: • The need for constant interaction with the community • The need for reporting on social responsibility • The need for monitoring internal operations • The need to have a human rights policy in place
Risks: Reducing legal risk and insurance costs	
Stakeholders: • Improved quality of life for communities • Feedback loop between the business and the environment • Facilitating problem-solving in collaboration with stakeholders • Promoting principles of resolving social conflicts • Increasing innovation, competitiveness, and market position • Creating corporate social capital • Better relations with regulatory bodies • Addressing changing social needs and expectations • Reducing information asymmetry • Easier access to media • Enhancing security of cooperation with collaborators	

Source: own study based on: (Alhouti & D'Souza, 2018; Arli et al., 2019; Armstrong & Green, 2013; Cismas et al., 2019; Du, 2015; Dyck et al., 2019; El Ghoul et al., 2011; Filek, 2013; Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Goss & Roberts, 2011; Hejase et al., 2012; Hopkins, 2003; Hou et al., 2019; JuŠčius, 2007; Ksiezak, 2016; Ma & Parish, 2006; Marcinkowska, 2010; McWilliams & Siegel, 2001; Scheidler et al., 2019; Shim & Kim, 2017; Su & He, 2010; Wachowiak, 2013; Wagner et al., 2009; Wołkowicka & Dąbrowski, 2012; Yoon et al., 2006)

Generally, the most frequently cited benefits of CSR by various authors include reduced costs and risks, profit maximization, gaining a competitive advantage, improving reputation, and synergistic value creation. Socially responsible companies find it easier to assess potential risks, reduce costs, and enhance financial performance.

However, the notion that CSR plays an exclusively positive role is not always true. CSR has evolved over the years. On one hand, from the agency theory perspective, companies may engage in socially responsible actions for the sake of individual personal benefits of managers (such as personal prestige, power, status, or rewards), at the expense of shareholders' wealth (Friedman, 1970), leading to strategic shortsightedness (Czakon, 2020) or the herd effect. Misallocation of resources destroys value for shareholders and undermines the competitiveness of the company.

On the other hand, managers can deliberately manipulate CSR information to whitewash their unethical behavior in order to maintain a good reputation (Hou et al., 2019), misleading stakeholders and reducing the impact of immoral actions, such as manipulating compensation levels. Furthermore, companies operating in socially sensitive industries (such as energy or tobacco) often heavily engage in CSR activities to divert public attention from their undesirable behavior toward the environment (Du, 2015; El Ghoul et al., 2011). This can lead to negative consequences because CSR is seen as a kind of umbrella under which unpopular or unethical activities are concealed.

The phenomenon of "corporate hypocrisy," which is related to customer suspicions arising from a company's declared social responsibility and the actions actually undertaken, can nowadays be considered one of the significant flaws of CSR (Arli et al., 2019; Chen et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2015). When a company's commitment to CSR contradicts its own stated social responsibility standards or implies inconsistency between its treatment of external and internal stakeholders, it can lead to a perception of corporate hypocrisy and a negative attitude toward the company (Scheidler et al., 2019; Wagner et al., 2009).

Another aspect of corporate social responsibility can be the widely debated issue of the negative consequences of scandals related to the inappropriate behavior of companies that publicly declare the implementation of various CSR initiatives (Armstrong & Green, 2013; Shim & Kim, 2017). Companies that do not adhere to social responsibility principles may experience problems due to inconsistency in management, labor strikes, or fraud (Cismas et al., 2019).

A review of the various definitions of CSR and a discussion of the main advantages and benefits, as well as the disadvantages and costs, leads to the conclusion that there is no single accepted perspective, theory or definition that defines corporate social responsibility. Some of the fundamental characteristics of CSR undoubtedly include a commitment to society, stakeholder

engagement, enhancement of the company's image and reputation, economic development, ethical business practices, compliance with the law, voluntariness, human rights, environmental protection, transparency, and accountability (Hamidu et al., 2015). These characteristics illustrate how CSR is represented by various initiatives and processes, ranging from volunteer activities, managing external factors, stakeholder management, the integration of social and economic responsibility, the consideration of practices and values, to ultimately expanding CSR activities beyond philanthropy.

Conclusions

In conclusion, CSR can bring many benefits, but it requires proper management, investment, and consideration of various factors to avoid potential drawbacks and costs associated with its implementation. Companies must be aware of their CSR goals and strive to achieve a balance between social and business objectives. CSR has the potential to yield benefits but it also comes with costs and risks. Companies need to strike a balance between social and business interests to effectively implement CSR and achieve positive results.

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Part 4

CSR

Related theories and models

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10 Stakeholder theory and CSR

Introduction

The stakeholder theory is closely related to the literature on CSR because it provides a framework that specifies how companies should manage stakeholders and treat them appropriately (Calvo & Calvo, 2018; Galant, 2017; Waheed et al., 2020). The first significant link between CSR and stakeholder theory was identified by Carroll (1991), who personalized corporate social responsibility by determining which groups or individuals organizations are responsible to and should respond to. Carroll (2004) introduced the concept of "stakeholder" into his model of corporate social responsibility, arguing that organizations take actions that are required by the global market, and those that are necessary, expected, and demanded by market stakeholders.

Relationship between CSR and stakeholder theory

In the literature, there are various positions regarding the relationship between CSR and stakeholder theory. According to some, one concept is a subset of the other (Garriga & Melé, 2004; Wood, 1991), while others perceive them as somewhat competing views (Brown & Forster, 2013; Schwartz & Carroll, 2008). There are also those who have built their arguments on the complementarity of CSR and stakeholder theory, assuming that these are separate concepts (Jamali, 2008; Kurucz et al., 2009; Roberts, 1992; Russo & Perrini, 2010).

Assuming that CSR and stakeholder theory represent separate concepts, it is important to emphasize that they overlap in some aspects, with the main similarity being their emphasis on incorporating social interests into business operations (Jedynak & Kuźniarska, 2019). A significant difference between these concepts arises when it comes to scope and area of operation – while CSR focuses on one-way responsibility (the company's responsibility to stakeholders) and ethical aspects of activities centered around employees customers and suppliers, or environmental protection, the stakeholder

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theory focuses on multi-directional responsibility, comprehensively covering both the company's responsibilities to stakeholders as well as the stakeholders' responsibilities toward the organization (Freeman & Dmytriyev, 2017). The relationship between CSR and stakeholder theory is illustrated in Figure 10.1.

The foundation of CSR lies in the identification of stakeholders and their involvement in the management process. Understanding stakeholders' opinions and expectations toward the organization, as well as among themselves, is a valuable source of information for managers, especially when seeking new solutions. An essential element when it comes to stakeholder expectations is balancing the company's interests with stakeholders, and then among the stakeholders themselves. Only after considering these factors can decisions be made regarding the manner and extent of collaboration with various stakeholder groups (Reynolds et al., 2006). Therefore, engaging and interacting with stakeholders involves analyzing different roles and approaches to stakeholders and making decisions about which stakeholders to involve in the development of CSR (Hultman & Elg, 2018; Morsing & Schultz, 2006; Nijhof et al., 2008; Pater & van Lierop, 2006).

Another distinction between CSR and stakeholder theory is the perspective from which they view the company (Freeman & Dmytriyev, 2017).

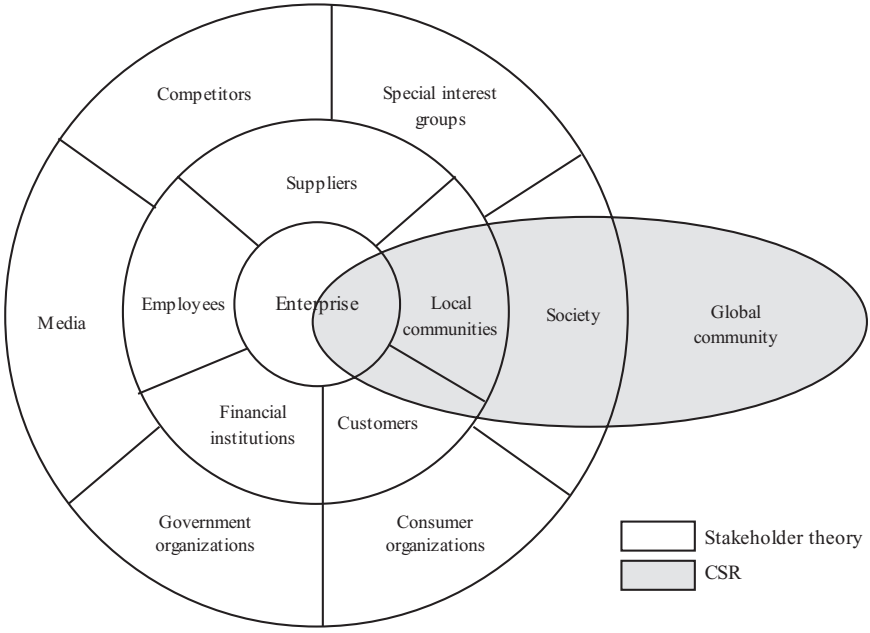

Figure 10.1 Relationship between stakeholder theory and CSR

Source: own study based on (Freeman & Dmytriyev, 2017)

Stakeholder theory primarily looks at the company from the company's own perspective and that of its direct stakeholders. This perspective is shaped by the assertion in stakeholder theory that the company is responsible for acting in the interests of all its stakeholders (Freeman, 1984). Furthermore, stakeholder theory assumes that stakeholders are interdependent and that creating value for one stakeholder creates value for others (Freeman et al., 2010). In contrast, the perspective of social responsibility involves perceiving society as a whole in order to further prioritize some responsibilities over others, meaning the company's responsibility to society (Freeman & Dmytriyev, 2017).

Both stakeholder theory and CSR emphasize the importance of a company's responsibility to communities and society. However, stakeholder theory focuses on the scope of a company's activities, thus concentrating on local communities, while the CSR perspective extends the company's social orientation much further, addressing broader societal issues, such as poverty alleviation, labor conditions, etc., even if the company is not directly involved in activities related to these issues (Freeman & Dmytriyev, 2017).

The concept of CSR is used to build a company's reputation, which, in turn, is associated with stakeholder trust, partly stemming from informing stakeholders about the social impact of their actions on the environment. CSR is not only about individual projects or programs but also an analysis of how a company's overall business activities affect stakeholders such as customers, suppliers, employees, communities, government, and the environment (Rake & Grayson, 2009). Stakeholder theory facilitates an increase in social awareness, business responsibility, business ethics, and practices that enable more informed decisions regarding the importance of stakeholders (Fassin, 2010) and more accurate assessments of CSR (Fassin & Buelens, 2011).

Conclusions

To summarize, stakeholder theory and CSR are interrelated through the idea of considering the interests of various groups in the decision-making process and operations of organizations. CSR can be viewed as the practical implementation of this theory, where organizations strive to achieve social and environmental goals while taking into account the interests of their stakeholders.

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11 The CSR pyramid

Introduction

One of the more important frameworks for Corporate Social Responsibility is Carroll's pyramid (1991, 1979), which introduces four areas of responsibility that society expects from businesses: 1) economic responsibility, 2) legal responsibility, 3) ethical responsibility, and 4) philanthropic responsibility. The CSR Pyramid emphasizes that a company should be responsible on multiple levels, starting from compliance with the law and ethical actions, and extending to community involvement and collaboration with stakeholders. Pursuing higher levels of CSR can contribute to building a positive corporate image, increasing customer loyalty, and contributing to social and environmental sustainability.

Caroll's pyramid and its evolution

According to Carroll, all business obligations stem from the existence of the company, which is consistent with Friedman's statement (1970) that profit is the primary goal of a business. The economic responsibility is placed at the bottom as the base of the pyramid, and only after fulfilling this principle can other responsibilities emerge. The second level comprises legal obligations, ensuring that business operations adhere to the law and all guiding principles and regulations, maintaining responsible business practices. The third level represents ethical responsibilities, where corporations are obligated to do what is right, fair, and just for their stakeholders and avoid causing them harm. The final level, the philanthropic responsibility, ensures that the corporation acts as a good citizen within the community, contributing resources as needed (Carroll, 1991).

The last two levels of the pyramid have also been emphasized within the framework of the social contract theory of CSR, which regards a corporation as a citizen within the community and thus should contribute to society like any other individual (Dahl, 1972). This implies that economic responsibilities form the basis, and all other responsibilities (legal, ethical, and philanthropic) stem from this, meaning that a company will be socially responsible only if it fits the economic purpose of profit generation.

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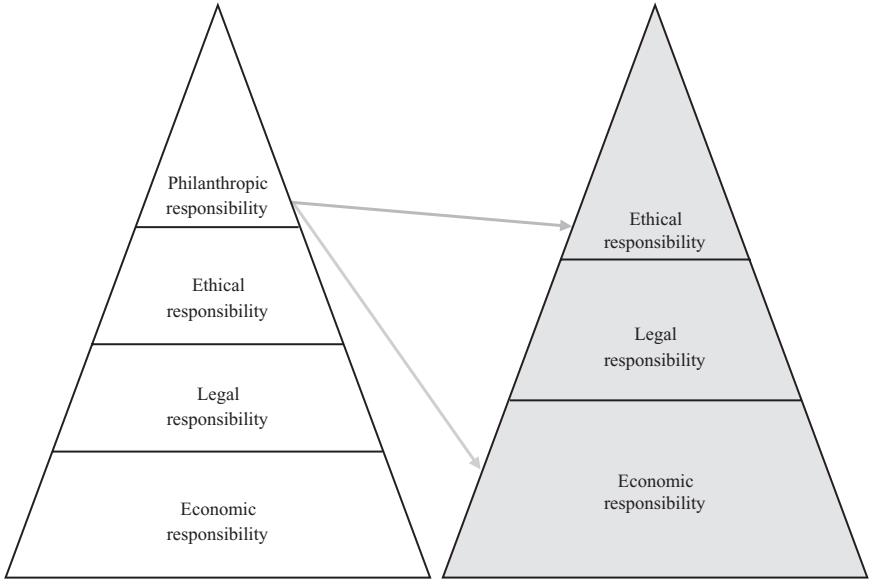

Figure 11.1 The evolution of Carroll's CSR Pyramid

Source: own study based on (Carroll, 1991; Pinkston & Carroll, 1996)

Although Carroll's pyramid is perhaps the most popular and recognized concept of CSR, it has faced criticism and the model itself has evolved over time. Pinkston and Carroll (1996) noted that the original layers of the pyramid remain relevant, but the gap between economic and ethical responsibilities has narrowed, and the ethical sphere itself has grown in significance, while there has been a decline in companies' commitment to philanthropic responsibility. This approach led to a modification of the original pyramid, creating a model composed of three layers (Figure 11.1). In this modified model, the philanthropic responsibility sphere does not figure, and its related aspects are incorporated into the economic and ethical spheres.

Schwartz–Carroll's three-domain CSR model

Further evolution of Carroll's pyramid resulted in the development of a three-domain model of CSR (Figure 2), where the three fundamental domains – economic, legal, and ethical responsibilities – define seven categories of CSR arising from the overlap of the main domains (Schwartz & Carroll, 2003):

1) ethical responsibility – actions taken solely based on moral principles without considering the economic and legal dimensions, without direct or indirect economic or legal influences on the activities of the organization;

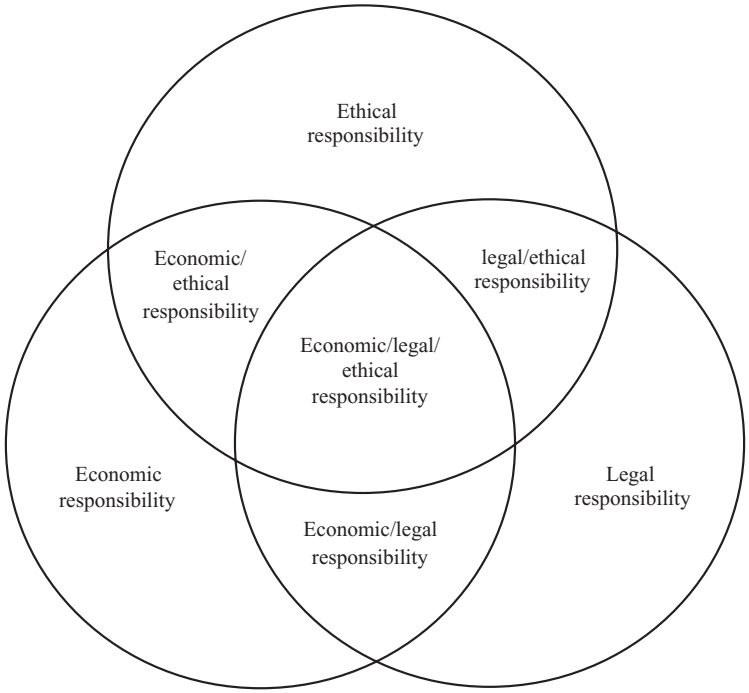

Figure 11.2 Schwartz–Carroll's three-domain CSR model.
Source: own study based on: (Schwartz & Carroll, 2003)

2) economic responsibility – activities aimed at directly or indirectly creating a positive economic impact on a corporation. This positive impact is based on two distinct yet interconnected criteria: profit maximization and/or maximizing shareholder value;
3) legal responsibility – refers to the company's response to legal expectations imposed and expected by society in the form of applicable law;
4) economic/ethical responsibility – taking action based on economic and ethical conditions, when legal provisions are not the basis for taking action, although they might be passively met;
5) economic/legal responsibility – taking action based on economic and legal considerations. Ethical criteria might also be passively met;
6) legal/ethical responsibility – involves actions taken not for economic benefits but guided by legal provisions and ethical principles, although economic benefits might arise as a byproduct;
7) the central domain of responsibility - involves taking actions considering economic, legal, and ethical considerations at the same time.

The Schwartz-Carroll three-domain model of CSR is based on the three pillars of CSR responsibility indicated in the pyramid model, but at the same time, it allows for the elimination of the inherent assumption of a hierarchical relationship between the areas present in the classic model.

Criticism of the CSR pyramid

Indeed, along with the evolution of the CSR pyramid model, there have also been critical viewpoints. One strand of criticism raises the issue that both of Carroll's models (the original four-part model from 1979 and the pyramid model from 1991) were created in the context of developed countries, especially American-style capitalist societies. This poses challenges in transferring the model to other countries (Matten & Moon, 2005; Visser, 2006).

Carroll's model has also been criticized for its difficulty in precisely defining and evaluating philanthropic activities (Aupperle et al., 1985). Further critical observations highlight that Carroll failed in his efforts to effectively integrate various related concepts such as business ethics, corporate citizenship, and stakeholder management (Visser, 2006). By contrast, according to Campbell (2007), economically weaker companies are less inclined to engage in CSR activities `because they have fewer resources to invest time, effort, and money to do so. Thus, while the pyramid's simple design is in some ways its main strength, it is not adequate as a tool to explain the complex relationships between business, society, and the environment.

Conclusions

The CSR pyramid, describing the hierarchy of corporate social responsibility, has evolved and developed alongside advancements in CSR thinking and practices. The evolution of the CSR pyramid reflects the growing awareness and understanding of the role that businesses play in society and the environment. The modern approach to CSR suggests that a company should strive to strike a balance between profit generation and creating social and environmental value, while considering the needs of its stakeholders. Ultimately, the CSR pyramid serves as a tool to delineate the scope of CSR activities, but its specific form may vary depending on the individual company, its values, as well as applicable standards and regulations.

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12 Sustainable development and CSR

Introduction

Although CSR has been present in academic literature for several decades, as previously mentioned, the concept is not unambiguously defined. However, regardless of the adopted approach, CSR covers a wide range of topics, including social issues, philanthropy, sustainable development, and environmental matters, with voluntary action being a recurring element in the definitions. The basic premise is the acknowledgment that companies bear a responsibility that goes beyond the mere pursuit of profit, which includes economic, social, and environmental issues. The integration of these three dimensions explains the emergence of the term "sustainable" [1], as an essential part of CSR (Kolk, 2010).

The definition of sustainable development

Brundtland (1987), building upon the definition formulated in the report "Our Common Future", defined sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". It emphasizes that development pertains not to short-term goals but rather to long-term objectives. The idea of sustainable development encompasses economic concepts, social, and environmental sustainability. Hence, it is necessary to ensure economic and social development while respecting the environment in which activities are conducted. The difficulty that arises is finding the balance between the economic, social, and environmental goals of sustainable development (Adams, 2001).

In addition, the adoption of the term "sustainability" creates further confusion in definitions, not fully clarifying whether sustainability is a dimension of CSR or whether it means extending the concept beyond the mere "social" aspect (ElAlfy et al., 2020). The interchangeability of the terms "sustainability" and "responsibility" in relation to CSR perpetuates the ambiguity. The concept consists of economic, environmental, and social

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issues at the corporate level, with CSR being the social aspect of sustainable development that emphasizes stakeholder interests (Ebner & Baumgartner, 2006). Similarly, many publications emphasize that CSR contributes to sustainable development (Behringer & Szegedi, 2016; Kolk & van Tulder, 2010; Kwarcińska, 2016).

Although corporate responsibility and sustainable development are concerned with the relationship between business and society, these two areas differ. Despite the fact that both managers and researchers use the words "responsibility" and "sustainable" interchangeably, inconsistently, and ambiguously, they represent distinct concepts (Bansal & Song, 2017)

Inconsistencies in measuring CSR and a lack of strategic orientation undermine the progress of businesses in terms of sustainable development (Porter & Kramer, 2006). Such an approach implies that only strategic CSR can enhance a company's competitive advantage (Drucker, 1984). According to this paradigm, CSR is not perceived as an add-on to business operations but as a strategy (Weber, 2014). Defining "strategic CSR" as outlined by Werther and Chandler (2005) implies strategic and operational integration aimed at enhancing competitiveness, efficiency, and profitability (Porter & Kramer, 2006)

A key contributor to the development of resources and capabilities of businesses is the environment, and by engaging in environmentally responsible actions, companies can achieve a greater competitive advantage and/or become dominant over competitors who do not engage in such activities (Moon, 2007). As a result, many businesses are transforming their business models to be more socially responsible, simultaneously becoming more appealing to society and stakeholders (Oginni & Omojowo, 2016). This transformation allows them to gain a competitive edge that enables them to conduct business in a sustainable manner.

At the same time, the contribution of CSR to achieving sustainable development is a pressing concern. In addition, CSR is very important for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals[2] (SDGs), which aim to strengthen world peace and eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions in order to achieve sustainable development for people, planet, and prosperity (United Nations, 2018). The Sustainable Development Goals include 17 goals and 169 related actions that pertain to a wide range of sustainable development issues and center around five areas: 1) *people*, 2) *planet*, 3) *prosperity*, 4) *peace*, and 5) *partnership* (Ede et al., 2016).

The sustainable development goals are beneficial for implementing CSR because they constitute a set of universally agreed-upon issues related to sustainable development, many of which are directly linked to corporate social responsibility (Schönherr et al., 2017). In addition, they provide a set of common objectives that enable various stakeholder groups to build partnerships to jointly address sustainability issues beyond individual capabilities

and provide a framework through which business entities can map and assess their CSR activities (Schönherr et al., 2017). In summary, there is a relationship between CSR and sustainable development. This relationship highlights the contribution of CSR to sustainable development and vice versa.

CSR 2.0

The evolution of CSR and the changes that have occurred in the market have made it necessary to combine the principles of sustainable development, shared value, and responsibility for the world based on mutual cooperation (Elkington, 2018). Enterprises must act responsibly, which means transitioning from shared value to integrated value, enabling the synergistic effect between social, economic, human, and technological values (Latapí Agudelo et al., 2019; Visser, 2018). This mutual responsibility leads to a reciprocal exchange of values and supports a circular economy and leads to sustainability on both the supply and demand sides of the market (Maťová et al., 2020). Such an approach is feasible provided there is a shift from the concept of CSR 1.0 toward CSR 2.0 (Visser, 2010).

The concept of CSR 2.0 responds to the needs of a new reality in which, as a result of the digital transformation (Jedynak et al., 2021), we are dealing with growing online communities, using social media and networks, guided by new rules (Jastrzębska, 2016). According to Visser (2010), the creator of the concept, there are fundamental differences between the traditional perception of CSR and the new model (Figure 12.1).

Building relationships with stakeholders means transitioning from purely economic dependencies toward constructing multi-level and rich relationships with various parties. Scaling involves moving a company's activities to global markets, which are significantly broader than the local environment. Responsiveness is understood as the ability to take action to address social and environmental issues on a large scale. Duality is the understanding of the need for action through the lens of local events, adapting global strategies to local capabilities, and circularity, a closed cycle that signifies a shift toward production

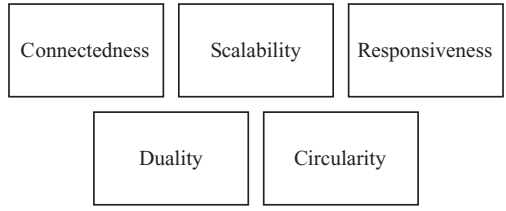

Figure 12.1 Characteristics of CSR 2.0

Source: own study based on: (Visser, 2010)

that contributes to increasing the broader good rather than, as in the case of the traditional approach, minimizing harm (Visser, 2010).

To sum up, CSR 2.0 signifies impacting, for instance, the global community (not just the local one) or the influence a company exerts on the natural environment, considered as the entire system created by nature (therefore, not solely the immediate environment). The core elements of CSR 2.0 include aspects such as value, management, social contribution, and integration with the environment, i.e. pro-ecological attitude and behavior (Stefańska, 2013).

Conclusions

To sum up, sustainable development is a broader concept that covers social, environmental, and economic aspects. CSR is one of the tools that businesses can employ in the pursuit of sustainable development, focusing on their impact on society and the environment and taking appropriate actions. The ultimate goal of both concepts is to create a more sustainable and ethical approach to business that considers not only profits but also social and environmental benefits.

Notes

1 The report of the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development, titled "Sustainable Development. "Our Common Future" (WCED, 1987), defines sustainable development as: "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet them".
2 The Sustainable Development Goals (*Millennium Development Goals*, 2000) are an action plan for transforming and reshaping the world in which the needs of the present generation can be met in a sustainable manner, respecting the environment and taking into account the needs of future generations.

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Part 5

The role of CSR in collaboration with suppliers

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13 Integrating corporate social responsibility and supplier collaboration

Introduction

Corporate social responsibility has been widely studied in the management literature (Dowell & Muthulingam, 2017; Marquis et al., 2016; McWilliams & Siegel, 2001), including in the realms of operational management (Kleindorfer et al., 2005; Lee et al., 2018; Liu et al., 2012), marketing (Bhattacharya, 2016; Maignan & Ferrell, 2004; Rahman et al., 2017; Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001), and logistics (Liu et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2012; Wyrwich, 2015). The literature on CSR integration and supplier cooperation is based, among others, on issues of supply chain management and supplier relationship management. The following will discuss the impact of the concept of corporate social responsibility on supply chain management and consequently on collaboration with suppliers. Subsequently, the issue of socially responsible collaboration with suppliers will be analyzed in the context of the concept of supplier relationship management.

CSR and supplier collaboration in the context of supply chain management

Reflections on the integration of corporate social responsibility from a management perspective are present in academic literature. The issue of collaboration with suppliers, analyzed in the context of CSR, is a part of these considerations. Traditionally, supply chain management is defined as the management of physical, information, and financial flows in intra- and inter-organizational networks that collectively add value and enable customer satisfaction (Mentzer et al., 2001; Stock & Boyer, 2009). From a process perspective, it encompasses planning, procurement, production, and distribution logistics, but it does not exclusively focus on any one of these areas (Cooper et al., 1997).

Unlike a traditional supply chain, which typically focuses on economic and financial business outcomes, a sustainable supply chain is characterized by a clear integration of environmental or social goals that expand

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the economic dimension towards the triple bottom line (Seuring & Müller, 2008a).

The issue of implementing corporate social responsibility principles in the field of supply chain management, and consequently, supplier collaboration, has been widely discussed in recent years (Ahi & Searcy, 2013; Ansari & Kant, 2017; Baraniecka, 2015; Beske-Janssen et al., 2015; Brandenburg et al., 2019; de Oliveira et al., 2018; Gimenez & Tachizawa, 2012; Marić & Opazo-Basáez, 2019; Urbaniak, 2018b). This discussion centers on closely related areas, such as sustainable, responsible, green, closed, or ethical supply chains, and these terms are themselves often used interchangeably (Ahi & Searcy, 2015; Gurtu et al., 2015). Figure 13.1 illustrates the different types of supply chains that incorporate social responsibility principles.

A sustainable supply chain transparently integrates the social, environmental, and economic goals of an organization through systematic coordination of inter-organizational business processes to enhance the long-term economic performance of the organization, its supply chain, and stakeholders (Carter & Rogers, 2008; Zimon et al., 2019). A characteristic feature of such a chain is the use of environmentally friendly resources to sustain its growth over an extended period (Golińska, 2014).

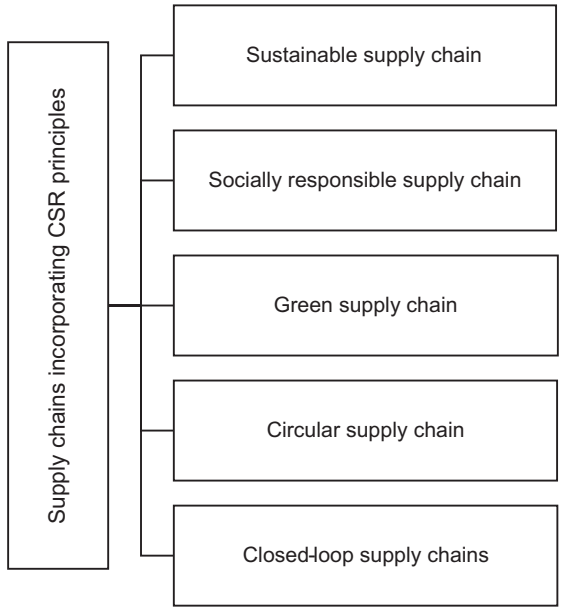

Figure 13.1 CSR supply chains incorporating CSR principles

Source: own study

A socially responsible supply chain refers to the concept of CSR and is defined as the relationship of its participants who collectively adapt, implement, and coordinate values, strategies, and tactics to integrate all levels of social responsibility with business processes in the chain (Li et al., 2021; Vaaland & Owusu, 2012).

Green supply chain management focuses on interorganizational interactions from the perspective of factors influencing economic outcomes and environmental aspects, such as minimizing greenhouse gas emissions, environmental waste, optimizing and utilizing resources, and reducing waste resulting from its operation (Sarkis et al., 2011; Tseng et al., 2019). Green supply chain management covers all stages of production: product design, supplier selection, material resources, the production process, product packaging, product delivery to customers, and recycling (Witkowski & Pisarek, 2017).

Circular supply chain management integrates the concept of a circular economy with supply chain management. The goal of such chains is the organization and coordination of organizational tasks, such as production, marketing, information technology, finance, logistics, and customer service, across all entities and institutions involved in the supply chain, aiming to minimize waste and emissions through resources and circular energy management. The result of these efforts is the improvement of operational effectiveness and efficiency, leading to a competitive advantage (Geissdoerfer et al., 2018; Kühl et al., 2022).

A closed-loop supply chain integrates and coordinates the flow of goods both forward – from suppliers of raw materials for production, to downstream entities (e.g., consumers) – as well as manages reverse flows from downstream suppliers to upstream suppliers. Product returns from consumers to manufacturers or to another party characterize the main difference between a traditional supply chain, which focuses on forward flows of goods (Brzeziński et al., 2021; De Giovanni & Zaccour, 2022; Katsoras & Georgiadis, 2022).

Globalization imposes demands on supply chain management to go beyond purely economic considerations and also take into account factors such as fair labor conditions and environmentally friendly production. Sustainable supply chain management is becoming an increasingly significant challenge for companies of all sizes and across many industries. Meeting environmental and social standards at all stages of the supply chain ensures the attainment of (at least) a minimum level of sustainable development. This is a more reactive approach to responding to external pressure from governments, consumers, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), or the media (Seuring & Müller, 2008b), and it can be complemented by the development and introduction of sustainable products.

The introduction of principles of social responsibility in supply chains requires CSR to be embedded throughout the entire organization, including

overseas subsidiaries and offshore suppliers. This involves training employees and sharing experiences, training key personnel at the supplier level, providing positive incentives for suppliers in the form of long-term contracts and increased orders, as well as conducting regular audits of supplier performance (Andersen & Skjoett-Larsen, 2009).

Given the growing importance of the 'triple-bottom-line' in supply chain management, the ecological and social dimensions are of interest to both practitioners and researchers (Winter & Lasch, 2016). The pressure to create shared value compels companies to generate outcomes that are beneficial for all in terms of social responsibility, environmental care, and cost efficiency, all at the same time. Internal and external stakeholders also monitor the social responsibility of organizations and their environmental impact.

Integrating CSR into supply chain management therefore appears to be a necessity. In the context of the supply chain, issues such as the environment, ethics, diversity, labor rights, human rights, fair trade, health and safety, and corporate philanthropy have been explored in relation to procurement and logistical functions (np. Andersen & Skjoett-Larsen, 2009; Carter & Jennings, 2004; Rotter et al., 2014; Urbaniak, 2015). The literature also mentions various supply chain activities, with an emphasis on sustainable social development, such as socially responsible sourcing (Carter & Jennings, 2004; Maignan et al., 2002); social responsibility in logistics (Ciliberti et al., 2008); or social responsibility in transportation and freight (Yuen et al., 2017).

Carter and Jennings (2002) introduced the concept of social responsibility into supply chains. They demonstrated that service providers can be in a better competitive position by considering increased commitment to socially responsible activities. Cruz (2008, 2009) discussed the impact of social responsibility on supply chain members using a cross-cultural decision-making method. Carter and Rogers (2008) emphasized that integrating environmental, social, and economic criteria in supply chain management allows organizations to achieve long-term economic viability. Tate, Ellram, and Kirchoff (2010) showed that improvements in CSR activities in the supply chain can influence consumer choices, company image, and reputation. Boehe and Cruz (2010) stated that if a company wants to protect its image and reputation, it must ensure that social responsibility extends to its supply chain. Companies aiming to offer low-cost products largely ignore social responsibility in supply chain management (Hoejmose et al., 2013)

Park-Poaps and Rees (2010) define a socially responsible supply chain as a combination of internal management and external partnerships aimed at creating and maintaining fair working conditions throughout the supply chain. McWilliams et al. (2006), Carter and Easton (2011), and Carter et al., (2019) discuss how the field of sustainable supply chain management has evolved from CSR to a more widespread perspective of a sustainable

supply chain, addressing environmental and social issues rather than just profitability.

The pro-social effect may play a role in the decision to purchase socially responsible products (Bénabou & Tirole, 2010). When choosing environmentally friendly products, one can observe the "warm glow giving"[1] effect, encouraging the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions, suggesting that customers want to reap the benefits of supporting green activities (Hartmann et al., 2017; Ma & Burton, 2016).

As can be seen, in the literature, various issues related to supply chain management, incorporating CSR principles, are discussed. Table 13.1 provides an overview of specific aspects of supplier collaboration within the supply chain from the perspective of the dimensions of social responsibility.

Growing environmental, social, and ethical concerns have led to increased pressure from consumers on companies to take these aspects into account in their supply chains, including, in particular, in collaboration with suppliers. Specific demands placed on suppliers include improving transportation and storage conditions, providing real-time information, waste reduction, or engaging in closed-loop logistics chains (Jemai et al., 2020).

The areas of collaboration with suppliers analyzed through the lens of the specifics of different types of supply chains are mostly consistent, regardless of the type of chain, especially since the criteria for distinguishing a particular type of chain are often vague and used interchangeably (Ahi & Searcy, 2015; Gurtu et al., 2015). The majority of areas related to responsible collaboration with suppliers pertain to the environmental dimension, which seems obvious given the range of physical processes that impact the environment in which suppliers participate.

The problem of sustainable procurement, in addition to the obvious issues of acquiring products and services with the least possible environmental impact, and taking into account the social and economic effects of purchasing decisions, in the context of supplier collaboration`, may also involve `other aspects – for example, the issue of additional emissions related to transportation arises when a company buys from a supplier located in an undersupplied market, which can lead to indirect transportation as players in that market may source from other markets (Prosman & Sacchi, 2018).

The environmental impact of collaboration with suppliers is already highlighted from the stage of sustainable product design, through responsible production and the repetitive manufacturing of environmentally friendly goods and services; to sustainable packaging processes, encouraging suppliers to accept packaging returns, reduce the quantity of packaging materials, and use recyclable pallets. Packaging is a critical area of collaboration with suppliers, as it has a direct impact on the environment and operational efficiency. Moreover, it applies to every type of supply chain, including

Table 13.1 Specific aspects of supplier collaboration within the supply chain in the context of CSR dimensions

Specific areas of collaboration with suppliers	*Type of supply chain*					*References*
	Sustainable supply chain	*Socially responsible supply chain*	*Green supply chain*	*Circular supply chain*	*Closed-loop supply chain*	
Environmental dimension						
• Monitoring and/or assessing suppliers' sustainability practices	√	√	√			(Holt & Ghobadian, 2009; Hu & Hsu, 2006; Krause et al., 2000; Paulraj, 2009; Prosman & Sacchi, 2018; Vachon, 2007; Zhu et al., 2008a)
• Green/sustainable/socially responsible procurement	√	√	√	√	√	(Carter & Jennings, 2004; Carter et al., 2000; Ciliberti et al., 2008; Holt & Ghobadian, 2009; Hu & Hsu, 2006; Lee et al., 2012; Maignan et al., 2002; Routroy, 2009; Sun et al., 2020; Zsidisin & Siferd, 2001)
• Sustainable design: Providing suppliers with design specifications that take into account environmental requirements, designing products aimed at avoiding or reducing the use of environmentally hazardous raw materials, designing products for disassembly	√	√	√	√	√	(Chien & Shih, 2007; González et al., 2008; Holt & Ghobadian, 2009; Hu & Hsu, 2006; Kuvvetli & Erol, 2020; Lee et al., 2012; Trivellas et al., 2020; Zhu & Sarkis, 2004; Zhu et al., 2008b, 2007; Zhu et al., 2008a)

• Sustainable manufacturing and re-manufacturing: environmentally friendly products, use of environmentally friendly raw materials, reduction of raw materials (i.e., use of recycled raw materials), minimization of waste, use of standardized components to facilitate reuse	√	√	√	√	√	(Chien & Shih, 2007; González et al., 2008; Govindan et al., 2020; Kuvvetli & Erol, 2020; Min & Galle, 1997; Vachon, 2007; Zhu et al., 2008b, 2008a)
• Sustainable packaging: Encouraging suppliers to accept returns of packaging, reducing the amount of packaging materials, using recyclable pallets	√	√	√	√	√	(Ciliberti et al., 2008; Holt & Ghobadian, 2009; Kuvvetli & Erol, 2020; Min & Galle, 1997; Rao & Holt, 2005; Trivellas et al., 2020; Vachon, 2007)
• Waste management problem: responsibility for disposal of hazardous materials	√	√	√	√	√	(Kazancoglu et al., 2020; Kuvvetli & Erol, 2020; Min & Galle, 1997; Prosman & Sacchi, 2018)
• Adoption of green technologies to save resources	√			√		(Kazancoglu et al., 2020; Khan & Qianli, 2017)
• Reducing/Eliminating the negative impact of supplier activities on the environment	√		√			(Holt & Ghobadian, 2009; Hu & Hsu, 2006; Lippmann, 1999; Paulraj, 2009; Zhu et al., 2007)
• The problem of returns and recycling: using recycled products	√		√	√	√	(Chien & Shih, 2007; Ciliberti et al., 2008; González et al., 2008; Govindan et al., 2020; Kuvvetli & Erol, 2020; Rao & Holt, 2005; Sheu, Chou, & Hu, 2005; Srivastava, 2007, 2008; Vachon, 2007)
• Sustainable transport: optimization of vehicle routes, greener vehicles, reduction of carbon dioxide emissions	√	√	√	√	√	(Bonsu, 2020; Ciliberti et al., 2008; Croce et al., 2019; Holt & Ghobadian, 2009; Lu et al., 2019; Prosman & Sacchi, 2018; Rao & Holt, 2005; Yuen et al., 2017)

(*Continued*)

Table 13.1 (Continued)

Specific areas of collaboration with suppliers	*Type of supply chain*					*References*
	Sustainable supply chain	*Socially responsible supply chain*	*Green supply chain*	*Circular supply chain*	*Closed-loop supply chain*	
• Reducing pollution emissions in supplier logistics operations	√	√	√	√	√	(González et al., 2008; Khan & Qianli, 2017; Rao & Holt, 2005)
• Supplier's environmental threat prevention system and readiness for emergency situations	√		√			(González et al., 2008; Hu & Hsu, 2006)
• Selection of warehouse location, production facility or other elements of the supplier's logistics network taking into account the impact on the environment	√	√	√			(Azevedo et al., 2011; Ciliberti et al., 2008; Raut et al., 2017; Sarkar & Majumder, 2013; Trivellas et al., 2020)
• Informing suppliers about environmental protection: promoting environmentally friendly behavior, encouraging supplier certification (e.g., ISO 14000)	√	√	√	√	√	(Holt & Ghobadian, 2009; Hu & Hsu, 2006; Zhu et al., 2008a, 2008b)
• Supplier's commitment to the environment	√	√	√	√	√	(Carter et al., 1998; Simpson et al., 2007)
• Partnership with suppliers in the field of environmental protection	√		√			(Hu & Hsu, 2006; Min & Galle, 1997; Paulraj, 2011)
• Proactive approach of the supplier to environmental protection	√					(Bowen et al., 2001)
• Supplier's capabilities of environmental protection	√	√	√			(Bowen et al., 2001; Carter et al., 1998)
• Supplier's "green" innovations	√		√			(Routroy, 2009)
The social dimension						
• Defining common values and ethics of conduct		√				(Carter & Jennings, 2004; Ciliberti et al., 2008; Maignan et al., 2002; Yuen et al., 2017)

• Optimization of information exchange with suppliers	√	√	√	√	√	(Tan et al., 2020; Trivellas et al., 2020)
• Ethical criteria for purchasing products and/or services	√	√	√	√	√	(Holt & Ghobadian, 2009; Hu & Hsu, 2006; Zhu et al., 2008a)
• Selection of warehouse location, production facility or other elements of the supplier's logistics network taking into account social costs	√	√	√			(Azevedo et al., 2011; Ciliberti et al., 2008; Raut et al., 2017; Sarkar & Majumder, 2013)
• Safe loading and unloading		√				(Carter & Jennings, 2004; Ciliberti et al., 2008; Maignan et al., 2002; Yuen et al., 2017)
The economic dimension						
• Cost of disposal of hazardous materials	√	√	√			(Min & Galle, 1997)
• Cost of environmentally friendly goods	√	√	√			(Min & Galle, 1997)
• Cost of environmentally friendly packaging	√	√	√			(Min & Galle, 1997)
• Optimal use of natural resources to improve performance	√	√	√			(Kannan et al., 2013; Khan & Qianli, 2017; Rao & Holt, 2005; Wong et al., 2012)
• Assessment of suppliers' operational performance	√	√	√			(Min & Galle, 1997; Trivellas et al., 2020)
• Improving the economic, environmental, operational and social performance of suppliers	√	√	√			(Azevedo et al., 2011; Carter et al., 2000; Chien & Shih, 2007; Geng et al., 2017; Green et al., 2012; Günther & Scheibe, 2006; Hung Lai & Wong, 2012; Lee et al., 2012; Paulraj, 2011; Sarkis, 2003; Sbihi & Eglese, 2010; Sheu et al., 2005; Srivastava, 2007)
• Measures aimed at economic stability and profitability of suppliers	√	√	√			(Geng et al., 2017; Min & Galle, 1997)

Source: own study based on the cited literature

closed-loop or circular ones, where it is particularly important to ensure that products or packaging can be reused.

Reducing or eliminating the negative environmental impact of a supplier's activities is partly associated with the transportation sector. Freight transport plays a significant role in emissions related to physical flows involving suppliers. Therefore, emission reduction practices in transportation, the choice of means of transportation (Lu et al., 2019), and the optimization of the transportation network are crucial issues in supplier collaboration. A series of decisions regarding the supplier's choice of transportation means (greener vehicles), efficient loading and unloading, and route optimization affect the perceptions of the entire supply chain, both in forward and reverse flows.

Another significant area of collaboration with suppliers appears to be the issue of warehouse location, which is important in terms of its impact on both the environment and society. Warehousing is undoubtedly a critical component of the entire logistics network and, consequently, influences the efficiency of the entire supply chain. Suppliers play a crucial role in lead time, so choosing a strategic location for a sustainable warehouse is a decision-making issue based on multiple criteria. This choice holds immense importance for many companies when collaborating with suppliers (Raut et al., 2017). The decision to choose a sustainable warehouse location should not only consider economic factors but also balance social and environmental consequences (Azevedo et al., 2011). Collaboration with suppliers may also be influenced waste management activities preferred from the point of view of environmental protection, which constitute an important component of the concept of corporate sustainability.

Establishing long-term collaboration with suppliers results in improved performance both economically and environmentally, provided that suppliers meet specified environmental requirements. In this context, companies are developing various sets of initiatives to address a supplier's green practices. This includes screening suppliers for environmental efficiency, commitment to environmental protection, a supplier's proactive approach to environmental conservation, or a supplier's "green" innovations. Collaboration in this regard may also involve providing training to build suppliers' capabilities for environmental management.

The social dimension of collaboration with suppliers pertains to issues that impact society, and in this context, includes, among others, the definition of shared values and a code of conduct, as well as ethical criteria for purchasing products and/or services. On the other hand, the economic dimension of collaboration significantly relates to problems of improved performance as a result of the supplier's commitment to socially responsible activities. Consequently, companies expect that participating in responsible collaboration with suppliers will further strengthen environmental

and financial performance, thereby positively influencing organizational performance.

The aforementioned areas of collaboration with suppliers from the perspective of socially responsible activities are interdependent and often overlap across various dimensions of CSR. Taking action in one area may involve the need for trade-offs in other areas of sustainability. An example of such interdependence could be a reusable packaging system that enhances resource efficiency, leading to cost savings, but also generates more reverse logistics routes, thereby resulting in higher emissions in transportation (a compromise between environmental and economic performance).

CSR and collaboration with suppliers in the context of supplier relationship management

Supplier Relationship Management is a comprehensive process of developing and managing supplier collaboration that can have a significant impact on achieving CSR goals (Ashby et al., 2012; Sosnowski, 2019). SRM can be seen as a tool for influencing supplier behavior and shaping an organization's sustainability practices by collaborating with suppliers on activities such as reducing packaging, improving working conditions in warehouses, using more cost-effective transportation and requiring suppliers to comply with environmental protection and social programs (Carter & Rogers, 2008).

In this context, the pursuit of sustainability refers to collaborating with suppliers to incorporate environmental, social and economic dimensions into supply chain management practices (Dabhilkar et al., 2016). This includes adopting procurement strategies, identifying suppliers, and making choices that involve the selection, evaluation, and classification of suppliers, as well as supplier development. However, social and environmental criteria often conflict with traditional supply chain management goals such as cost, quality, flexibility, or short lead times. This is particularly significant when there is a trade-off between potentially conflicting objectives of cost reduction and collaboration with suppliers that takes into account the organization's noneconomic goals (Reuter et al., 2012) (Table 13.2).

Supplier relationship management through the lens of CSR allows identifying areas that impact collaboration with suppliers. Corporate practices in the realm of procurement strategies are playing an increasingly significant role in addressing social and environmental issues. Adopting a procurement strategy linked not only to economic goals but also to environmental and social objectives means that collaboration with suppliers is influenced by stakeholders, ethical factors, social considerations, and environmental aspects. These factors will determine the selection of suppliers and a company's commitment to mitigating the negative impact on the environment.

Table 13.2 Integration of CSR and collaboration with suppliers in the context of supplier relationship management

Stages of supplier relationship management	*Results taking into account CSR goals*	*References*
1 Procurement strategy		
Socially responsible procurement	• Increasing trust and commitment towards suppliers • Improving results throughout the supply chain • Improving the competitive position of suppliers due to greater buyer engagement and better performance • Defining socially responsible procurement practices: 1) developing internal policies; 2) establishing purchasing criteria that take into account social issues; 3) implementing practices ensuring supplier relationship management; and 4) building internal capacity • Supplier selection determined by stakeholders • Supplier selection determined by organizational values • Selection of suppliers determined by media attention • Supplier selection determined by the concerns of the purchasing company's employees • Imposing work standards on suppliers is driven by the organization's vulnerability to the risk of loss of reputation • Barriers related to the selection of socially responsible suppliers: 1) lack of resources for supplier audits, 2) difficulties in ensuring that all suppliers adhere to the code of conduct, 3) differences in culture and management style, 4) low levels of social standards and high levels of corruption in some supplier countries	(Carter & Jennings, 2002; Hoejmose & Adrien-Kirby, 2012; Leire & Mont, 2009; Maignan et al., 2002; Mont & Leire, 2009; Park & Stoel, 2005; Worthington et al., 2008; Wright, 2016)
Ethical procurement	• Identification of ethical factors helpful in supplier selection. • Human rights and workplace safety as part of collaboration with suppliers. • Ethical issues related to procurement managers (e.g., bribery and corruption). • Implementation of ethical codes of conduct for suppliers generates benefits (e.g., improvement of workers' rights) and limitations (e.g., related to their application in different sectors).	(Carter, 2000; Copper et al., 2000; Jedynak, 2018; Kim et al., 2018; Preuss, 2009; Roberts, 2003)
Eco-friendly procurement	• Mitigating the environmental impact of consumption and promoting the development of clean production technologies • Facilitating and encouraging suppliers to implement ISO 14001 and ISO 14000 • Improving environmental and financial performance. • Supplier diversity promotes environmentally friendly sourcing and improves consumer welfare • Supplier selection is the result of a trade-off between cost and the desired level of environmental impact reduction • Supplier selection is driven by institutional pressure (environmental protection regulations) • Supplier selection is related to the commitment of the buyer/top management to environmental protection • Supplier selection is based on procedures and programs rooted in environmental management systems and cleaner production initiatives • Supplier selection is determined by the performance of the purchasing company • The recycling capabilities of suppliers directly determine how green the supply chain is	(Abdallah et al., 2012; Bian & Zhao, 2020; Blome et al., 2014; Chen, 2005; Hoejmose & Adrien-Kirby, 2012; Jabbour et al., 2015; Ji et al., 2015; Min & Choi, 2019; Schoenherr et al., 2014; Wong et al., 2020)

(*Continued*)

Table 13.2 (Continued)

Stages of supplier relationship management	*Results taking into account CSR goals*	*References*
Sustainable procurement	• Protecting organizations from accusations of irresponsible behavior • Suppliers have a say in implementing sustainable sourcing • Providing reclaimed raw materials can help reduce risk while paving the way to a circular economy • Increasing a supplier's sustainability capabilities improves their ability to secure orders • A supplier's commitment to sustainability gives it a competitive advantage • The willingness to adopt environmental and social practices, in addition to the supplier's internal capabilities (technical, human, and financial), determines their ability to win orders • Supplier selection is influenced by customer expectations of suppliers' commitment to sustainable sourcing practices • Enforcement of supplier sustainability standpoints is done through assessment (monitoring) and contract adjustments	(Gerard et al., 2019; Goebel et al., 2012; M. Høgevold et al., 2014; Pagell et al., 2010; Paulraj, 2011; Reuter et al., 2010; Rogetzer et al., 2019; Schneider & Wallenburg, 2012; Thorlakson, 2018; Veit et al., 2018)
2 Identification of suppliers		
Supplier qualification criteria taking into account CSR	• 1. Human rights, 2. Child labor, 3. Women's labor, 4. Long working hours, 5. Environmental pollution, 6. Safeguard mechanisms (system for monitoring CSR practices), 7. Organizational legal obligations (paying taxes, paying customs duties and complying with local and global labor laws)	(Xu et al., 2013)
	• 1) Price, 2) Quality, 3) Reputation, 4) Service and delivery, 5) Distance, 6) Use of eco-friendly materials, 7) Emission rate, 8) Wastage rate, 9) Energy efficiency, 10) Capability for eco-design	(Galankashi et al., 2015)
	• 1. Environmental competence, 2. Green product design, 3. Carbon management, 4. Energy/resource consumption, 5. Green material labeling, 6. Hazardous substance management, 7. Waste management system, 8. Recycling, 9. Green purchasing, 10. Green research and development, 11. "Green" image, 12. Environmental regulation	(Villanueva-Ponce et al., 2015)
	• Management: 1. Established policies and continuous improvement, 2. Management responsibility, 3. Partners, 4. Training and competencies • Environment: 1. Compliance with environmental legal requirements, 2. Waste, 3. Air emissions and climate change, 4. Water and wastewater, 5. Land use and biodiversity, 6. Land and groundwater • Health and safety: 1. Product safety, 2. Transportation safety, 3. Production and storage safety, 4. Emergency preparedness, 5. Medical assistance, 6. Safety supervision • Labor and human rights: 1. Child labor, 2. Forced labor, 3. Working hours, 4. Minimum wages, 5. Freedom of association, 6. Discrimination, 7. Special employment contracts, 8. Infrastructure and housing • Management culture: 1. Corporate commitments, 2. Respect for privacy and intellectual property, 3. Risk area: Conflict minerals, 4. Risk area: Animal protection, 5. Fair competition, 6. Disciplinary and grievance procedures	(Ecovadis, 2017)

(*Continued*)

Table 13.2 (Continued)

Stages of supplier relationship management	*Results taking into account CSR goals*	*References*
	• 1. Benefits, 2. Cost, 3 .Manufacturing capability, 4. Delivery reliability, 5. Quality, 6. Technology capability, 7. Customer services, 9. Risk, 10. Service performance, 11 .Supplier's profile, 12. Risk factor, 13 .Financial, 14. Service, 15. General information of the supplier, 16. Financial status, 17. Equipment status of the supplier, 18 .Manufacturing capability of the supplier, 19. Material delivering capability of the supplier, 20. Quality system certificate of the supplier, 21. Selective risk, 22. Information selectivity, 23. Information substitution, 24. Transaction simplification, 25. Variance reduction, 26. Inventory velocity, 27. Postponement, 28. Shared/ shifted risk, 29. Environmental compliance, 30. Trust, 31. Management and organization, 32. Capability of Supplier/Delivery, 33. Service capability, 34. Pricing policy, 35. Responsiveness and services, 36. Flexibility, 37. Technical and production capability, 38. Relation combination, 39. Organizational management, 40. Eco-efficiency, 41. Price, 42. Capacity/infrastructure, 43. Location, 44. Socio-efficiency, 45. Knowledge management, 46. Delivery, 47. Quality of the product, 48. Delivery schedule, 49. Overall cost of the product, 50. Environmental collaboration, 51. Capability of Supplier/Delivery, 52. Production, 53. Market strategy, 54. Business improvement, 55. Extent of suitability, 56. Quantity, 57. Logistics, 58. Value-added services to customers, 59. Alliances with suppliers, 60. Environment, 61. Process and product quality, 62. Management and innovation, 63. Financial position, 64. Capacity, 65. Transport, 66. Environmental protection/environmental management, 67. Corporate social responsibility, 68. Pollution control, 69. Green product, 70. Green Image, 71. Green Innovation, 72. Hazardous substance management, 73. Compliance, 74. Reputation, 75. Long-term relationships, 76. Operational performance, 77. Financial performance, 78. Risk management, 79. Performance measurement, 80. Utilization of logistics workforce, 81. Flexibility in billing and payment, 82. Quality of management, 83. Diversity of supplies, 84. Distance.	(Konys, 2019)
	• Eco-design, 2. "Green" image, 3. Environmental management system, 4. Resource consumption, 5. Pollution control, 6. Environmental training of personnel, 7. Price, 8. Service quality, 9. Service level	(Gupta et al., 2019)
	• Economic: 1. Cost, 2. Quality, 3. Delivery, 4. Service, 5. Technology, 6. Flexibility • Environmental: 1. "Green" image, 2. Pollution control, 3. "Green" competences • Social: 1. Employees, 2. Information, 3. Social responsibility	(Zhang et al., 2020)
Limitations	• dentification of suppliers offering the required procurement item, taking into account CSR, procurement strategy and constraints arising from them	(Lasch & Janker, 2005)

(*Continued*)

Table 13.2 (Continued)

Stages of supplier relationship management	*Results taking into account CSR goals*	*References*
3 Selection of suppliers		
Supplier selection	• The AHP method (*Analytical Hierarchy Process*)	(Anjali Awasthi et al., 2018; Gupta et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2009; Pishchulov et al., 2019; Roy et al., 2020; Xu et al., 2019)
	• The ANP method (*Analytical Network Process*)	(Bakeshlou et al., 2017; Büyüközkan & Ifi, 2012; Faisal et al., 2017; Govindan et al., 2018; Kuo & Lin, 2012)
	• The MABAC method (*Multi-Attributive Border Approximation Area Comparison*)	(Gupta et al., 2019; Xu et al., 2019)
	• The WASPAS method (*Weighted Aggregated Sum-Product Assessment*)	(Gupta et al., 2019; Keshavarz Ghorabaee, Zavadskas et al., 2016; Mishra et al., 2019)
	• The DEMATEL method (Decision Making Trial and Evaluation Laboratory)	(Bakeshlou et al., 2017; Büyüközkan & Ifi, 2012; Govindan et al., 2018)
	• The PROMETHEE method (*Preference Ranking Organization METHod*)	(Abdullah et al., 2019; Govindan et al., 2017; Roy et al., 2020)
	• The TOPSIS method (*Technique for Order Preference by Similarity to Ideal Solution*)	(Gülin Büyüközkan & Ifi, 2012; Gupta & Barua, 2017; Gupta et al., 2019; Tian et al., 2018)
	• The GRA method (Grey Relational Analysis)	(Haeri & Rezaei, 2019; Malek et al., 2017)
	• The MULTIMOORA method (Multiple Objective Optimization on the basis of Ratio Analysis plus Full Multiplicative Form)	(Liu et al., 2018; Mohammadi et al., 2017; Quan et al., 2018)
	• The ELECTRE method (*ELimination Et Choice Translating Reality*)	(Kumar et al., 2017; Lu et al., 2018; Shojaie et al., 2018)
	• The QUALIFLEX method	(Li & Wang, 2017; Liang et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2017)
	• The BWM method (*Best-Worst Method*)	(Bai et al., 2019; Gupta & Barua, 2017; Haeri & Rezaei, 2019; Wu et al., 2019)
	• The VIKOR method (*VlseKriterijumska Optimizacija I Kompromisno Resenje*)	(Anjali Awasthi et al., 2018; Datta et al., 2012; Wu et al., 2019)
	• The EDAS method (*Evaluation based on Distance from Average Solution*)	(Xu et al., 2020; Yazdani et al., 2019)
	• The AQM method (Alternative queuing method)	(Liu et al., 2019)

(*Continued*)

Table 13.2 (Continued)

Stages of supplier relationship management	*Results taking into account CSR goals*	*References*
	• Fuzzy sets: *Fuzzy Delphi Method* (FDM), *Fuzzy Analytic Hierarchy process* (FAHP), Fuzzy TOPSIS (*Technique for Order Preference by Similarity to Ideal Solution*), Fuzzy VIKOR (*VlseKriterijumska Optimizacija I Kompromisno Resenje*), Fuzzy extended ELECTRE (*ELimination Et Choice Translating Reality*)	(Gülin Büyüközkan & Ifi, 2012; Govindan et al., 2018; Kumar et al., 2017; Wu et al., 2019; Xu et al., 2019)
	• Prospect Theory	(Phochanikorn & Tan, 2019; Wu et al., 2019)
	• TODIM (*TOmada de Decisão Interativa e Multicritério – Interactive and Multicriteria Decision Making*)	(Bai et al., 2019; Qin et al., 2017; Sang & Liu, 2016)
	• The (Axiomatic design method	(Guo et al., 2017; Kannan et al., 2015)
	• The DEA model (*Data Envelopment Analysis*)	(Dobos & Vörösmarty, 2019; Kuo & Lin, 2012; Zarbakhshnia & Jaghdani, 2018)
	• The MOLP model (Multi-Objective Linear Programming)	(Bakeshlou et al., 2017; Khalilzadeh & Derikvand, 2018; Pandey et al., 2017)
	• Bayesian network	(Zhang & Cui, 2019)
	• The QFD method (*Quality Function Deployment*)	(Van et al., 2018)
	• The Delphi method	(Lee et al., 2009)
	• Six Sigma quality indicators	(Chen et al., 2019)
	• Supplier sustainability performance evaluation questionnaire	(United Nations Global Compact & BSR, 2015)
	• Monitoring the code of conduct	(Egels-Zandén, 2014; Jedynak, 2018; Keating et al., 2008; Urbaniak, 2018a)
	• Supplier sustainability report, Self-Assessment Questionnaire	(Fraser et al., 2020a; Gallego-Álvarez & Ortas, 2017)
	• Audits (*Validated Audit Process*)	(Boiral & Henri, 2012; Ghadimi et al., 2017; Grosvold et al., 2014; Lee, 2015; Neves et al., 2017; Turker & Altuntas, 2014)
	• Certification	(Boiral & Henri, 2012; Grosvold et al., 2014; Lee, 2015; Neves et al., 2017; Turker & Altuntas, 2014; Urbaniak, 2018a)
	• Sustainable labeling	(Kumar, 2016; Wojnarowska et al., 2021)
	• Establishing minimum standards	(Urbaniak, 2018a)
Supplier segmentation	• Segmentation of suppliers based on competence and willingness to cooperate with respect to environmental issues	(Duc et al., 2021)
	• Supplier segmentation in a sustainable supply chain based on supplier risk management related to the impact on future corporate profits	(Rius-Sorolla et al., 2020)

(*Continued*)

(*Continued*)

Table 13.2 (Continued)

Stages of supplier relationship management	*Results taking into account CSR goals*	*References*
1 Supplier development		
Evaluation activities	• Evaluation of the environmental efficiency of a supplier in terms of energy consumption, emissions, and material usage	(Ehrgott et al., 2013)
	• Monitoring suppliers' environmental performance to ensure it is consistent with the buyer's environmental objectives	(Jedynak et al., 2020; Saghiri & Mirzabeiki, 2021; Zhu et al., 2013)
	• Monitoring the supplier's compliance with environmental protection regulations	(Chiarini, 2017)
	• Initiatives to monitor the transparency of supplier activities	(Fraser et al., 2020b; Kashmanian, 2017; Kashmanian & Moore, 2014)
	• Exerting pressure by the buyer on the supplier to take more environmentally friendly actions	(Hoejmose & Adrien-Kirby, 2012; Mollenkopf et al., 2010)
Joint activities (environmental collaboration)	• Transfer and communication in the field of green knowledge	(Bai & Sarkis, 2010; Fu et al., 2012)
	• Exchange of information related to CSR activities	(Vachon & Klassen, 2008)
	• A mutual desire to learn about related production processes in order to define environmental improvement goals	(Vachon & Klassen, 2008)
	• Investments and transfer of resources	(Bai & Sarkis, 2010; Fu et al., 2012)
	• Management and organizational practices	(Bai & Sarkis, 2010; Fu et al., 2012)
	• Partnership programs/projects focused on environmental or social goals	(Ehrgott et al., 2013; McIntyre et al., 1998; Reiskin et al., 2000)
	• Consultations, training, seminars, and workshops on the implementation of the concept of social responsibility	(Rao, 2002; Trapp & Sarkis, 2016; Zhang et al., 2017)
	• Coordination of buyer and supplier activities to reduce negative environmental impact	(Chan et al., 2013)
	• Promoting knowledge about environmentally friendly products/processes	(Zhu et al., 2005)
	• Dissemination of standard operational procedures incorporating CSR	(Zhang et al., 2017)

Source: own study based on the cited literature

Identification of supplier qualification criteria is another area that concerns collaboration with suppliers. Among the various sets of criteria, proposed by the authors, the issues of human rights, pollution reduction/elimination, product safety, "green" image or social responsibility of the supplier dominate. The methods used for the selection of suppliers taking into account CSR do not differ from those applied in traditional selection processes; they are merely used to select a "green", sustainable or socially responsible supplier. The methods, models and techniques used for evaluation apply to both the initial evaluation and can later be used for periodic evaluation.

The topic of supplier segmentation based on CSR guidelines is the least addressed in the literature on the subject. This may be due, on the one hand, to the insufficient influence of CSR-related criteria on the segmentation process (where traditional approaches dominate) or, on the other hand, to the research gap in this area, which may be filled with the pressure to introduce social and environmental goals into supplier relationship management and supply chain management, and thus integrate supplier cooperation with these goals.

In turn, sustainable, ecological, or green development of suppliers encompasses all activities through which the purchasing company helps its suppliers reduce their negative impact on the environment. These activities can involve the evaluation or initiation of environmental cooperation with suppliers. Among the most commonly mentioned activities are monitoring and certification, incentives, and direct engagement. Regular assessment and feedback actions motivate suppliers to enhance their performance and qualifications. Direct engagement can take the form of capital investments in the supplier's operations and investment in human and organizational resources, defined as actions related to the transfer of operational knowledge. Partnership programs, training, seminars, or workshops enable collaboration with suppliers with CSR goals in mind. While ensuring supplier compliance with CSR standards may entail increased costs, time, and the need for specialized knowledge, expanding supplier development programs to include these standards involves assistance from the buyer, including the provision of support and necessary resources, which contributes to strengthening collaboration and enables strategic benefits for all participants in such a supply chain.

Conclusions

The integration of CSR and collaboration with suppliers is carried out both in the field of supply chain management and supplier relationship management. The result of such integration is the creation of more sustainable, ethical, and environmentally friendly supply chains. The company can enhance its reputation, reduce supplier risks, and contribute to more sustainable production. Suppliers, in turn, can benefit from development, support, and opportunities to deliver products and services in line with CSR principles.

Note

1 Andreoni (1990, 1989) points out that earlier models of giving (such as charity) are based on pure altruism, in which the doer of good deeds receives absolutely no benefit. He proposes an alternative model in which the doer of good deeds receives a "warm glow" from their actions - in other words, he is rewarded in the form of well-being, higher status, or recognition in society (Jemielniak & Kobus, 2014).

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14 Development of social responsibility management models including cooperation with suppliers

Introduction

Over recent years, a very large number of diverse models of social responsibility have emerged. This large number and the diversity have led to a demand for creating typologies to facilitate orientation amidst the multitude of different guidelines and indicators (Lewicka-Strzałecka, 2017). Initiatives related to the creation of corporate social responsibility models are generated at two levels. At the macro level, a catalog of predefined norms related to social and environmental issues is being created. These norms are closely linked to actions at the micro level, determining the possibilities for undertaking such actions. In turn, at the micro level, with the participation of various stakeholders, there is reflection on the norms created at the macro level, which, through feedback, contributes to the development and improvement of these norms and even inspiring new ones (Gilbert & Rasche, 2008; Jedynak & Jedynak, 2016).

Types of social responsibility models

Koerber (2009), referring to social responsibility standards, classifies them into three categories: 1) normative action models providing guidelines regarding accepted goals and achievements; 2) guidelines for conducting processes that include indications for measurement, communication, and compliance; and 3) management systems providing detailed and integrated guidelines on how to integrate the management of social and environmental issues with effective and efficient operational activities. The latest standards are mostly inspired by the principles of the Global Compact.

Another approach to classifying CSR standards is based on two criteria: the degree of complexity and the form in which the standard is published (Balzarova & Castka, 2018; Jedynak, 2016). According to the first criterion, we distinguish between partial and comprehensive standards, and according to the second criterion, we distinguish between standards published in the form of guidelines and certified standards. A number of other criteria can

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be applied in the ordering of social responsibility standards, including, for example, result or process orientation, nature, scope of application, concentration, geographical scope, and level (Rasche & Esser, 2006); the type of issues codified, the nature of the standardization process, and the level of detail (Gilbert & Rasche, 2008).

Analyzing the practices of classifying patterns of social responsibility, it can be noticed that the previous proposals for their ranking were primarily based on the types of instruments used, sources of their origin, scope and subject matter, and mutual relationships (Makuch, 2011). Regardless of the mentioned difficulties with classifying patterns of social responsibility, it seems, however, that it will be clearest to organize them by their status, that is, their formal status, functions, and importance. Following such a criterion, the following types of social responsibility patterns can be distinguished: 1) principles and codes of conduct, 2) guidelines for management or certification systems, 3) evaluation models, and 4) reporting and communication guidelines (Table 14.1).

The social responsibility models listed in Table 14.1, concerning the collaboration between enterprises and suppliers, are created by international bodies such as the UNO, the European Commission, and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), which underscores the widespread need for global standardization, the inability to resolve issues at the national level, and the need for legitimacy. In the following sections, the mentioned models will be discussed.

Principles and codes of conduct

Ethical and social standards or codes are sets of requirements developed by international organizations, industry trade groups, or individual enterprises to define the desired conduct by business partners, mainly suppliers.

OECD guidelines for multinational enterprises

The OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises were first issued by the organization in 1976 and have since been revised several times. The current version dates back to 2011 (Cernic, 2012; Schekulin, 2011). These recommendations on standards for responsible business conduct are addressed to multinational enterprises operating or having their headquarters in countries implementing the guidelines. The application of the guidelines assumes mutual support and cooperation among all units within the multinational enterprise. The structure of the guidelines includes (OECD, 2011): general policies; disclosure ; human rights; employment and industrial relations; environment; combating bribery, bribe solicitation, and extortion; consumer interests; science and technology; competition and taxation. One of the very important recommendations for multinational enterprises is

Table 14.1 Basic functions and scope of application of selected social responsibility patterns in relation to cooperation of enterprises with suppliers

Model	*Basic functions*	*Scope of application*
Principles and codes of conduct		
OECD Guidelines	• Mutual cooperation among the entities that form a multinational enterprise in the scope of CSR, including cooperation with suppliers. • Risk management in the field of CSR, including cooperation with suppliers as a potential risk area • Addressing remedial measures against risks related to the entire supply chain.	• A model addressed exclusively to multinational enterprises operating in multiple countries. • The model does not contain sector restrictions.
Principles of the Global Compact	• Using the 10 principles of the Global Compact as one of the tools for shaping sustainable supply chains. • Encouraging suppliers to implement principles of sustainable development. • Monitoring the credibility of suppliers' social statements • Improving the shaping and achievement of social responsibility goals by enterprises and their suppliers. • Improving the image of companies and their suppliers. • Increasing the level of trust in relationships between companies and suppliers.	• The model is addressed to all enterprises.
UN guidelines	• Placing responsibility for human rights compliance on suppliers under corporate social responsibility. • Analyzing the risk of human rights violations in the context of business relationships between enterprises and their suppliers. • Ensuring the participation of suppliers in the development of organizational solutions within enterprises concerning the respect for human rights. • Including suppliers in operational action plans	• The model is addressed to all enterprises

(*Continued*)

Table 14.1 (Continued)

Model	*Basic functions*	*Scope of application*
Strategy of the European Commission	• Promoting the use of internationally recognized CSR best practices by enterprises and their suppliers • Increasing the competitiveness of enterprises and their suppliers through ongoing CSR activities • Improving transparency and mutual trust between enterprises and their suppliers • Reducing control processes in relationships between enterprises and suppliers.	• A model aimed specifically at enterprises operating in EU member states.
Guidelines for management or certification systems		
ISO 14001 standard	• Promoting the use of internationally recognized CSR best practices by enterprises and their suppliers • Motivating suppliers to improve their environmental performance. • Integrating suppliers' operations with enterprises' environmental management systems, including through strategic and operational activities. • Meeting the requirements of supply chain partners by enterprises and suppliers. • Integrating activities to counter environmental threats	• A model addressed to all enterprises, particularly those characterized by significant environmental aspects in their operations.
ISO 26000 standard	• Identifying supplier relationships to fully define the scope of corporate social responsibility • Including in the analyses the relationship that occurs between suppliers and society. • Analysis of suppliers' expectations towards enterprises and their compliance. • Analysis of the potential for support of enterprise activities by suppliers.	• A model addressed to all enterprises.
SA 8000 standard	• Enterprises taking responsibility for compliance with labor rights also with regard to employees of suppliers, sub-suppliers and other individuals working for these entities. • Conducting an assessment of the compliance of suppliers, subcontractors, and sub-suppliers with the requirements of the standard.	• A model addressed to all enterprises.

(*Continued*)

Table 14.1 (Continued)

Model	*Basic functions*	*Scope of application*
20400 Standard	• Encouraging suppliers to make sustainable purchasing decisions. • Harmonization of purchasing processes of the company and its suppliers. • Jointly reducing risk in supply chains. • Joint compliance with the principles of social responsibility engaging in activities aimed at social achievements throughout entire supply chains.	• A model addressed to all enterprises, especially those with extensive procurement processes, with separate organizational units responsible for procurement, and as participants in supply chains.
Assessment models		
SMETA	• Mutual reduction of information asymmetry and understanding the degree to which partners meet social responsibility requirements • Enabling benchmarking of the social achievements of entrepreneurs and suppliers • Planning corrective actions for areas that require improvement.	• A model addressed to all enterprises, especially participants of global supply chains.
Others (ICTI IETP, PSCI, FWF, ASI, RBA VAP, JAC, amfori BSCI)	• Use of standardized and proven evaluation methods in the assessment of enterprise suppliers • Taking into account specific requirements for assessing suppliers in certain sectors.	• Models typically addressed to participants in specific sectors, with the exception of amfori BSCI (addressed to participants in global supply chains).
Guidelines for reporting and communication		
GRI Guidelines	• Mutually reducing the risk in decision-making by making data available in the form of standardized metrics included in sustainability reports • Integration of various data, especially in the areas of social responsibility and finance. • Enterprises providing data concerning the assessment of supplier's social achievements and their compliance with the principles of social responsibility.	• A model addressed to all companies, especially those with an extensive stakeholder structure

(*Continued*)

Table 14.1 (Continued)

Model	*Basic functions*	*Scope of application*
AA1000 standards	• Ensuring supplier participation in the development and implementation of sustainability initiatives • Mutually assuring the credibility of reporting by companies and suppliers in the field of social responsibility.	• A model addressed to all enterprises.

Source: own study based on (AccountAbility, 2015b; Antošová & Csikósová, 2015; Balzarova & Castka, 2018; Cernic, 2012; Chakroun et al., 2019; Chen et al., 2017; de Andrade & Bizzo, 2019; de Jonge & Tomasic, 2017; Foreign Trade Association of German Retailers, 2021; Fraser et al., 2020; Göbbels & Jonker, 2003; Graafland & Smid, 2016; Gregg, 2021; Griffith et al., 2020; Hamidah & Arisukma, 2020; Hoessle, 2015; Husted et al., 2016; ISO, 2017; Jones et al., 2016; Lin-Hi, 2012; Lindholm et al., 2016; Marques, 2019; Martinuzzi et al., 2011; Moratis, 2016; Murmura et al., 2017; OECD, 2011; Peršič & Peršič, 2016; RBA Validated Assessment Program, 2020; Sedex Members Ethical Trade Audit, 2020; Teixeira et al., 2018; Topić, 2020; Veleva et al., 2018; Williams, 2018)

managing the risk of contributing to negative impacts on issues covered by the guidelines (Reinert et al., 2016; Robinson, 2014).

The authors of the guidelines took into account the fact that the likelihood and consequences of such risks may be influenced by the business relationships of a multinational enterprise, including relationships with suppliers. Therefore, they make two recommendations directly related to the cooperation of these enterprises with suppliers. First, if multinational enterprises cooperate with multiple suppliers, it is recommended to identify the general areas where the risk of negative consequences is highest and, based on such risk analysis, prioritize supplier analyses (OECD, 2011). Second, if an enterprise identifies the risk of negative impacts in the context of supply chain operations, necessary countermeasures should be taken regarding that supply chain. Cooperation between multinational enterprises and suppliers is therefore an important area that, like other significant activities of these enterprises, should be subject to risk analysis and the implementation of countermeasures aimed at minimizing such risks.

The ten principles of the global compact

The Global Compact was established in 1999, initiated by Kofi Annan, the then Secretary-General of the United Nations. The initiative aims to encourage voluntary participation of enterprises, creating a platform for dialog and learning. Today, the Global Compact is the world's largest initiative for corporate responsibility and sustainability, with numerous companies from approximately 150 countries participating (Williams, 2018). The Global Compact is based on a call to businesses

to incorporate 10 basic principles into their operations. These principles include (Global Compact, 2021)[1]:

- in terms of human rights: 1) respecting and supporting the protection of internationally recognized human rights and 2) eliminating all cases of human rights violations by the enterprise;
- in terms of labor standards[2]: 3) upholding the freedom of association and the effectively recognizing the right to collective bargaining;, 4) supporting the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labor, 5) contributing to the effective abolition of child labor, and 6) combating discrimination in in respect of employment and occupation;
- in terms of environmental protection: 7) supporting a precautionary approach to environmental challenges, 8) undertaking initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility, 9) encouraging the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies;
- in terms of combating corruption: 10) combating all forms of corruption, including bribery and extortion.

The principles mentioned are considered tools for ensuring sustainable supply chains, through actions such as (de Jonge & Tomasic, 2017): using opportunities for sustainable development of suppliers, cooperation and engagement mechanisms of enterprises throughout the supply chain, monitoring the credibility of declarations of supply chain partners. Their implementation leads to a series of positive consequences, particularly the identification and achievement of measurable sustainability goals for supply chain participants, such as ensuring comprehensive product identification (de Jonge & Tomasic, 2017; Williams, 2018). Research conducted in American enterprises that have joined the Global Compact initiative has shown that participation in this initiative has become a source of image improvement not only for these enterprises but also indirectly for their business partners and has contributed to the growth of mutual trust between enterprises and their stakeholders, including suppliers (Hoessle, 2015).

UN guiding principles on business and human rights

The guidelines are the result of work coordinated by the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General "on human rights and international corporations", established in 2005, and were presented in 2011 (Polish Institute for Human Rights and Business, 2014). The guidelines assume that integrated cooperation between states and enterprises is required for effective protection of human rights. They are based on three pillars, the second of which refers to the responsibility of enterprises to respect human rights.

Corporate responsibility is defined in the form of general principles and operational principles. General principles include (United Nations, 2011): 1) avoiding human rights violations and counteracting negative effects on the implementation of human rights, as well as taking corrective measures, 2) respecting, at a minimum, the human rights enshrined in the International Bill of Human Rights and the fundamental rights set forth in the Declaration of the International Labour Organization, 3) that enterprises take measures to prevent negative impacts on human rights linked directly to their activities, products or services and through their business relationships, even if they themselves have not contributed to it, 4) tailoring the scale and complexity of measures used by enterprises to ensure human rights toward the significance or potential significance of the enterprise's impact on these rights, 5) having policies and procedures that include a policy-level commitment to accountability for respecting human rights, identifying, preventing and mitigating possible negative impacts on human rights, and accounting for how the enterprise seeks to address its negative impact on human rights.

Operational principles are a specification of the general principles and relate to (OECD, 2011): submitting a corporate policy statement, designing a process to ensure due diligence in the field of human rights, identifying and assessing existing negative consequences of the company's activities for human rights, monitoring the effectiveness of actions undertaken, and communicating with the environment regarding incidents of human rights violations.

The guidelines discussed, in the perspective of cooperation between enterprises and suppliers, have the following significance (Gregg, 2021; Griffith et al., 2020; Topić, 2020): 1) they clearly indicate that corporate social responsibility for respecting human rights also extends to its stakeholders, including suppliers, 2) the risk analysis of human rights violations by enterprises should include its business relations, including relationships with suppliers, 3) creating organizational solutions (policies, procedures) oriented towards ensuring respect for human rights should be created by the enterprise in dialogue with its stakeholders, including suppliers. The UN guidelines, while providing some practical guidance, need to be fleshed out in the form of action plans for states and enterprises and their partners, especially suppliers (Dharmawan et al., 2018). Ensuring that enterprises and their stakeholders respect human rights is a particular challenge in so-called "troubled times", including the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic (Fasciglione, 2020).

European commission's CSR strategy

The strategy for implementing and disseminating the concept of corporate social responsibility was published by the European Commission in 2011

and was prepared for the period 2011–2014[3]. This strategy introduced a definition of corporate social responsibility, understood as the responsibility of businesses for their impact on society (European Commission, 2011). The strategy outlines eight areas requiring action to promote CSR. The strategy highlights the need for the application of recognized international principles and guidelines on CSR. It should be implemented through the support provided to enterprises by member states. The strategy's assumptions include the following references to the cooperation between enterprises and suppliers: 1) the implementation of CSR strategies is specifically aimed at simultaneously increasing the competitiveness of enterprises and their partners that jointly form various business relationships (Martinuzzi et al., 2011); 2) the spread of the actual application of CSR principles and guidelines should contribute to an increase in trust in business relationships, which can be achieved, among other things, through transparent information exchange between business partners (Antošová & Csikósová, 2015). Over time, increased trust can lead to a reduced need for monitoring suppliers, which previously seemed necessary due to the impact of suppliers' behavior on the company's reputation (Moczadlo, 2015).

CSR guidelines for management or certification systems

ISO 14001 standard

The ISO 14001 standard was created as part of the work of the International Organization for Standardization. The first edition of this standard dates back to 1996. Subsequent revisions took place in 2004 and 2015 (Jedynak, 2016). The ISO 14001 standard is agreed upon and applied internationally. The introduction of management systems in enterprises in line with this standard is aimed at achieving a number of important objectives, in particular (Sorooshian et al., 2018; Tocan, 2016): improving compliance with legal requirements; improving environmental performance by rationalizing the use of resources and reducing waste; holistically identifying, monitoring and controlling environmental issues; enhancing the involvement of leaders and employees in environmental matters, improving the environmental competencies of employees, and a number of other objectives.

Among the objectives of introducing environmental management systems in accordance with ISO 14001 are also those that relate directly to corporate social responsibility and cooperation with suppliers, including but not limited to improving the company's "green" image and increasing stakeholder confidence (Peršič & Peršič, 2016), encouraging suppliers to improve their environmental performance by integrating their activities into the company's environmental management system (Graafland & Smid, 2016), meeting the requirements of partners, including suppliers in supply

chains (Husted et al., 2016), reducing the risk of environmental threats in supply chains (Ibrahim & Razak, 2018)

The implementation of ISO 14001 brings both strategic and operational implications for working with suppliers (ISO, 2015a, 2015b; Weerasinghe & Jayasooriya, 2020):

- the suppliers of the enterprise should, together with the enterprise, apply a life-cycle approach to continuously consider environmental aspects;
- suppliers should work together with the enterprise towards a balance between the three key dimensions of sustainability;
- suppliers co-create the context of the enterprise's operations and at the planning stage the enterprise should analyze their needs and expectations as one of the key stakeholders;
- responsibility for overseeing requirements for suppliers should be established within the enterprise;
- suppliers participate in the environmental operational activities of the enterprise.
- processes outsourced to suppliers require oversight by the company;
- suppliers should participate in an incident prevention-oriented approach to environmental issues;
- suppliers' activities are subject to compliance assessment;
- suppliers should be subject to the principle of continuous improvement;
- suppliers, like other stakeholders, are beneficiaries of the enterprise's communication strategy tailored to them.

ISO 26000 standard

The ISO 26000 standard, similar to the ISO 1400 standard, was established by the International Organization for Standardization. The work within one of the working groups of this organization (IS/WG SR) led to the publication of the standard in 2010. Among the four specific objectives accompanying the creation of the standard, is the creation of a guide that would eliminate the shortcomings of previous, usually scattered practices in the field of social responsibility, applied by various organizations (Hemphill, 2013).

The approach to social responsibility represented in ISO 26000 is based on seven principles (ISO, 2010, 2014): 1) responsibility (the need for enterprises to be responsible to society, the economy, and the environment), 2) transparency (the need to know the decisions and actions of enterprises affecting society and the environment), 3) ethical behavior (the behavior of enterprises should be based on honesty, fairness, and integrity), 4) respect for stakeholders (the need for enterprises to consider and take into account their needs), 5) compliance with legal regulations (acknowledging that compliance with regulations is mandatory), 6) compliance with international

norms of behavior (adhering to norms and taking steps to improve social responsibility performance), 7) respect for human rights (respecting and promoting these rights).

What is particularly important, from the perspective of cooperation between enterprises and suppliers, is that adhering to the above-mentioned principles requires identifying all the relationships that enterprises have, which determine the final scope of their social responsibility. According to the assumptions of ISO 26000, these are relationships between the enterprise and society, as well as relationships between the enterprise and its stakeholders (including suppliers), and, interestingly, between stakeholders and society (Balzarova & Castka, 2018; Licandro et al., 2019).

Specifically, two points in ISO 26000 (4.5 and 5.3) relate to the cooperation between enterprises and suppliers. The first of these points (4.3) elaborates on the principle of respect for stakeholders, which includes the need to accept the fact that stakeholders have a strong influence on the company's goals (Chakroun et al., 2019; Moratis, 2016) and recommendations for enterprises, including recognizing and respecting not only the formal but also the customary expectations of stakeholders, analyzing areas of impact of stakeholders' activities on the company, and taking stakeholders' perspectives into account in decision-making. On the other hand, Section 5.3 provides guidelines for the content of relationships between enterprises and stakeholders in the sphere of social responsibility. Among other things, it is recommended (Jedynak, 2016): to understand how stakeholders affect the enterprise and their motivations; to identify the potentially negative impact of stakeholders on the enterprise, to assess the possibility of stakeholders supporting the enterprise's activities.

SA8000 standard

SA 8000 is a standard applicable to all businesses, regardless of their size, that wish to demonstrate to stakeholders that they comply with corporate social responsibility requirements. Unlike ISO 26000, SA 8000 allows for auditing and certification (Murmura et al., 2017), providing an opportunity for objective confirmation of the degree of compliance with the standard's requirements by a third party, such as an independent certification body. The standard was developed as part of the work of *Social Accountability International*, a non-profit organization specializing in the development and promotion of social responsibility standards (SAI, 2014). Four versions of the standard have been published to date, with the most recent one from 2014.

The provisions of the standard are based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Conventions of the International Labor Organization, international human rights standards and national sources of labor law (Santos et al., 2018). The standard is based on the fundamental premise

that every workplace should be managed in a manner that ensures compliance with basic human rights, and that management is willing to accept responsibility for this (de Andrade & Bizzo, 2019). The requirements for social responsibility are formulated as nine points, each of which is further elaborated in the form of detailed criteria to be met. They relate to (SAI, 2014): 1) child labor, 2) forced or compulsory labor, 3) health and safety, 4) freedom of association and right to collective bargaining, 5) discrimination, 6) disciplinary practices, 7) working hours, 8) remuneration, and 9) management system.

The intentions regarding the suppliers of enterprises that have chosen to implement SA 8000 are most clearly defined by the standard's objective, which refers to ensuring the rights and protection of workers "... *including personnel employed directly by the organization and by its suppliers, sub-suppliers, sub-subcontractors and contractors of outlay work*" (SAI, 2014). Using the interpretation of the business relationships of enterprises specific to supply chains, the SA 8000 standard assumes that corporate social responsibility to employees applies not only to the company's own employees, as well as to the employees of suppliers who directly provide products or services to the company, but also to the employees of sub-suppliers who work with suppliers, and to those associated with the aforementioned entities by contracts who do not perform work on their premises (de Andrade & Bizzo, 2019).

SA 8000 also devotes a separate section to cooperation with suppliers, in which requirements for conducting an assessment of the compliance of suppliers, subcontractors, and sub-suppliers with the standard are included. Exactly the same approach should also be applied at the stage of their selection (Murmura et al., 2017). Additionally, three actions, considered as minimal, have been identified, the implementation of which is aimed at meeting the above-mentioned requirements: 1) effectively communicating the requirements of the standard to the management of suppliers, subcontractors, and sub-suppliers, 2) assessing significant risks of non-compliance by these entities, 3) taking actions to address identified risks.

ISO 20400 standard

ISO 20400 was published in 2017 thanks to the work of the International Organization for Standardization. The standard contains guidelines aimed at integrating an organization's procurement processes with the concept of sustainable development (ISO, 2017). These guidelines are primarily directed at the leadership of the procurement department. They cover strategic aspects of procurement processes in order to align procurement practices with the organization's goals and tasks while co-creating a culture of sustainable development (ISO, 2017). The goal of implementing the standard is that sustainable procurement decisions are also made by suppliers and other business stakeholders. One of the desired effects of aligning a

company's procurement function and its stakeholders is to reduce risks in the supply chain, such as those associated with disruptions due to product recalls or breakdowns at the supplier end (Teixeira et al., 2018).

ISO 20400 is based on principles similar to ISO 26000 regarding human rights, labor practices, and fair business practices. Prior to the implementation of ISO 20400 guidelines, a strategic reflection should take place within a company focusing on the following issues (Harris & Divakarla, 2017): 1) identifying the company's prevailing "procurement culture", including an assessment of the degree of control over suppliers' risks and the realism of the demands placed on them, 2) understanding the supply chain in which the company participates, including assessing the knowledge of suppliers' impact on society and the environment, and 3) evaluating opportunities to strengthen cooperation with suppliers throughout the product life cycle.

Since ISO 20400 pertains to sustainable procurement, its guidelines almost entirely relate to collaboration with suppliers. The philosophy of a company's approach to its procurement activities is described by the following fundamental principles (ISO, 2017): 1) responsibility for the impact on society, the economy, and the environment, which applies to the company's supply chains, 2) transparency in the context of procurement and encouraging suppliers to maintain transparency, 3) ethical behavior and its promotion within supply chains. 4) providing suppliers with full and fair opportunities to compete, 5) respecting the needs of stakeholders, 6) respecting the rule of law and international standards of conduct, including ensuring awareness of their violations in supply chains, 6) respecting human rights, 7) applying innovative solutions and promoting them in supply chains, 8) focusing on needs, 9) integrating procurement practices with the principle of sustainability, 10) conducting a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis of its operations, 11) continuous improvement of its operations and encouraging partners in the supply chains to do the same.

In order to realize the above-mentioned principles in the enterprise, ISO 20400 formulates numerous guidelines for strategic and operational activities, which in the area of supplier cooperation are related, among other things, to (Nugroho Sukardi & Abduh, 2019): its formalization, monitoring of company and supplier performance, risk assessment, supplier selection, awarding of contracts, contract management (including, for example, supplier relationship management, encouraging joint initiatives, managing supplier disruptions). All of the aforementioned activities should be undertaken from the perspective of entire supply chains.

CSR assessment models

Social responsibility assessment models focus on moral, social, environmental and economic aspects as well as stakeholder relations. Such models provide a tool that can help manage practices in labor relations or supply chains.

Their standardization contributes to the emergence of standardized rules of conduct, which in turn facilitates the evaluation of the actions taken.

SMETA – Sedex Members Ethical Trade Audit

SMETA is an audit procedure developed by the SEDEX (Supplier Ethical Data Exchange) organization based on the ethical standard of the ETI Base Code. Through the SEDEX platform, it communicates the results of the degree of compliance, which are visible to the business partners of the companies being assessed (Sedex Members Ethical Trade Audit, 2020). Any company that has implemented the principles of social responsibility can become a member of SEDEX, regardless of its profile, size, or location. Based on the rights granted, SEDEX divides its members into three categories (Sedex Members Ethical Trade Audit, 2019): 1) Category A, which includes retail chains, government and charity organizations, and those that want to post supplier data on the audit platform, 2) Category AB, which includes organizations that want to share assessment data of their own facilities and data on the results of ethical audits of their suppliers with other customers, 3) Category B, which is for organizations that can post on the platform an audit report conducted in-house, conduct their own self-assessment and post corrective action cards.

SMETA audits are particularly useful in global supply chains. Using the SMETA methodology, a supplier can commission a single audit procedure and then make its results available to multiple clients (Marques, 2019). The SMETA audit was conceived in two versions as 1) a two-pillar audit, which includes an examination of aspects such as labor standards and occupational health and safety and, in addition, universal rights, management systems, entitlement to work, subcontracting and homeworking, or 2) a four-pillar audit (the former aspects supplemented by environmental issues and business ethics).

Only authorized entities may conduct audits for compliance with the SMETA procedure. The SMETA procedure is not a typical certification, although it uses such tools as audit and corrective action cards. Since the audit results and action cards are posted on the SEDEX platform and are visible to the company's contractors (according to their membership status), this information practice makes it possible to obtain credible information about the extent to which current or potential suppliers meet social, ethical, and environmental standards (Fraser et al., 2020).

Other selected assessment models

In addition to the SMETA procedure, there are other standardized supplier assessment systems focused on social responsibility issues. They are usually referred to as sustainability audits, sometimes as CSR audits, social audits,

or environmental or ethical audits (Fraser et al., 2020). Among the more popular ones are:

- ICTI IETP (*International Council of Toy Industries ICTI Ethical Toy Program*), addressed to participants in the toy industry (Lin-Hi, 2012);
- PSCI (*Pharmaceutical Supply Chain Initiative*) used in the pharmaceutical industry (Veleva et al., 2018);
- FWF (*Fair Wear Foundation*) linked to apparel manufacturers (Lindholm et al., 2016);
- ASI (*Aluminium Stewardship Initiative*) suitable for raw material sectors (ASI, 2020);
- RBA VAP (*Responsible Business Alliance Validated Audit Program*), applicable in the electronics sector (RBA Validated Assessment Program, 2020);
- JAC (*Joint Audit Cooperation*), used in the telecommunications sector (Chen et al., 2017);
- amfori BSCI (*Business Social Compliance Initiative*) used in global supply chains (Foreign Trade Assiciation of German Retailers, 2021).

These systems are usually, although not always, addressed to companies representing selected sectors. However, they have some common elements that make the methodology of supplier assessment similar. The supplier assessment process usually includes all or the majority of the following components (Fraser et al., 2020): 1) pre-audit planning, 2) preparing the course of the audit, 3) conducting the audit (opening meeting, site visit, interviews, documentation review, meeting before closing the audit, closing meeting), 4) preparing the report and corrective action plan, 5) closing the audit.

Guidelines for reporting and communication[4]

Reporting and communication guidelines pertain to the content and quality of non-financial information. Their standardization enables comparisons or analyses and serves as a management and communication tool for understanding and measuring how companies report their CSR activities.

GRI guidelines

GRI's (*Global Reporting Initiative*) sustainability reporting guidelines contain internationally agreed-upon indicators and metrics that enable access to information and comparison of data in sustainability reports, providing corporate stakeholders with greater knowledge to make informed decisions (Global Reporting Initiative, 2016). The current fourth edition of the G4 guidelines adopts the principle of focusing on so-called "material issues", i.e. those that are of critical importance to organizations and their

stakeholders. The G4 guidelines are universal in nature and are suitable for all organizations (large and small) worldwide. The G4 guidelines include references to commonly accepted and used documentation standards related to specific issues and are designed as a consolidated reporting base that references various laws and norms related to sustainability. The guidelines primarily respond to the strong current trend of integrating strategic sustainability information with other relevant financial data (Hamidah & Arisukma, 2020).

The process of using guidelines is strictly defined and includes the following steps (Marinescu, 2020): 1) assessing the current situation, 2) choosing the preferred reporting option (basic or extended), 3) preparing to present profile indicators, 4) preparing to present detailed indicators, 5) preparing a sustainable development report.

Profile indicators refer to (Jones et al., 2016; Rudyanto, 2017): strategy and analysis, organizational profile, identified relevant aspects and their corresponding boundaries, stakeholder engagement, report profile, organizational governance, and ethics. In turn, specific indicators are defined in three groups: economic, environmental and social, with the latter divided into subgroups (employment and decent work practices, human rights, society, product responsibility).

What is particularly important, is that a significant part of the reported indicators in the GRI guidelines relate directly to supply chains and enterprises' relationships with their suppliers. These indicators include, among others: organizational profile and governance of suppliers, corporate procurement practices,, environmental assessment of suppliers, assessment of suppliers in terms of hiring practices, assessment of suppliers in terms of respect for human rights, and assessment of suppliers in terms of social issues. Reports prepared in accordance with the GRI guidelines thus document both the involvement of suppliers (as a specific stakeholder group) and the assessments of their sustainability performance, presented in the form of indicators.

AA1000 standards

The series of three AA1000 (*AccountAbility*) standards is addressed to various types of organizations, including enterprises. By applying the guidelines of the standards, businesses can demonstrate the application of leadership principles and performance in terms of transparency, accountability, and sustainability (Göbbels & Jonker, 2003). The series includes standards covering: 1) the development, analysis, and implementation of sustainability initiatives (AA1000AP from 2018), 2) the creation and implementation of inclusive stakeholder engagement practices related to sustainability (AA1000SES from 2015), and 3) ensuring credibility in reporting progress towards sustainability goals (AA1000AS, version 3). The basis of

organizational accountability practices according to AA1000AP are four principles (AccountAbility, 2018b):

- inclusiveness, which means actively identifying stakeholders and enabling their participation in determining aspects of the organization's sustainability and developing a strategic response,
- significance, referring to the identification and prioritization of the most momentous aspects of sustainability, taking into account their impact on the organization and its stakeholders,
- responsiveness, which is the organization's adequate and timely response to significant aspects of sustainability and their associated effects, including communication with stakeholders,
- impact the impact on the economy, environment, society, and stakeholders.

In order to effectively implement the principle of inclusiveness, especially towards those groups that lack leverage, stakeholder involvement and mutual integration of activities, a professional four-step process for their inclusion in cooperation with the organization is recommended (AccountAbility, 2015a). It includes planning, preparation, implementation as well as assessment and improvement activities. The cycle of activities is intended to lead to a permanent increase in the maturity of stakeholder engagement from an ad-hoc level, when engagement is a temporary response to various changes and pressures of circumstances, through planned and systematic engagement focused on risk and performance management, to integrated, strategic engagement focused on a transformational and sustainable form of operational efficiency.

Suppliers, according to the AA1000 standards, are considered important stakeholders. The provisions of the standards emphasize their participation in the social activities of the company and their participation in ensuring the credibility of reporting (AccountAbility, 2018a).

Conclusions

What emerges is a complex picture of the role of the presented models of social responsibility in the context of cooperation between enterprises and suppliers. Particularly noteworthy is the broad understanding of the scope of corporate social responsibility in the models discussed, which definitely goes beyond the strictly understood boundaries of the enterprise, often encompassing not only the practices of suppliers but also sub-suppliers and numerous other stakeholders. This broad approach to understanding social responsibility is also evident in the fact that a number of joint activities between companies and suppliers within the framework of social

responsibility should be undertaken not with bilateral relations in mind, but in the interest of entire supply chains.

The guidelines of individual models often refer to common principles and values, which means that they can be applied complementarily in shaping the practices of cooperation between enterprises and suppliers. The application of some models is possible only among participants in specific sectors, while others are more universal in nature. However, even in the latter case, there is, to some extent, selective use due to various constraints, such as the need for enterprises and their suppliers to bear the costs associated with the use of the models, related, for example, to expenditures on external certification services (Ayuso et al., 2016).

Notes

1 In addition to universal CSR initiatives like the Global Compact, there are also attempts to create sector-specific frameworks of conduct. One example is the Principles for Responsible Banking, which provides a basis for ensuring that the strategies and operating practices of signatory banks comply with the vision society has set for the future in the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Climate Agreement (Kumar & Prakash, 2020).
2 In the field of labor standards, International Labor Organization Conventions also play a significant role, particularly those related to: freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining (Conventions No. 87 and 98), the prohibition of all forms of forced or compulsory labor (Conventions No. 29 and 105), the effective abolition of child labor (Conventions No. 138 and 182), and the elimination of discrimination in employment and occupation (Conventions No. 100 and 111). As can be seen, the scope and purpose of these conventions align with the principles of the Global Compact (Huw & Turnbull, 2020).
3 After 2015, the Polish government adopted and presented to the European Commission the "Strategy for Responsible Development", which included guidelines for the continuation of CSR practices (Wiktorska-Święcka, 2019). Following the announcement of the strategy, various regulations were introduced to strengthen the dissemination of CSR principles among enterprises in European Union countries. For example, the European Parliament Directive of October 22, 2014, on the disclosure of non-financial and diversity information by certain large entities was published. Additionally, in 2019, new guidelines were introduced for reporting information related to climate issues (European Commission, 2011).
4 In addition to the GRI guidelines and AA 1000 standards outlined below, there are other models for social responsibility communication and reporting, such as the LGB model (London Benchmarking Group). However, these models are less relevant to collaboration between companies and their suppliers (Usman, 2020).

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15 Factors in the implementation of corporate social responsibility principles by suppliers

Introduction

Companies meet their sourcing needs by working with suppliers, often located around the globe, in such a way as to meet customer requirements in terms of cost, quality, speed, and flexibility. Organizations are under increasing pressure to comply with government regulations, satisfy customer needs and meet the sustainability requirements of NGOs and other stakeholders in their products and business processes (Igarashi et al., 2013; Seuring & Müller, 2008). Enterprises are responsible not only for their own operations but also for the activities of their partners, with a particular focus on suppliers. Therefore, in addition to their own processes, organizations must consider implementing sustainability aspects across the entire supply chain (Pagell & Wu, 2009; Zhu et al., 2008a).

Factors in the implementation of CSR principles by suppliers

Organizations, in addition to traditional economic criteria, take into account environmental and social factors when selecting suppliers as part of a broader goal of achieving sustainable forms of production and consumption. The scope of "sourcing" has therefore been expanded from traditional factors such as quality, time, performance history, and cost to more sustainable sourcing practices (Dai & Blackhurst, 2012).

As a result, suppliers are under pressure to adopt sustainability in their practices (Lee, 2008). Suppliers face bottlenecks in achieving supply chain sustainability due to limited resources, funds, suboptimal operational planning, and slow implementation of technology (Lee, 2008). This makes the ability of suppliers to adapt to sustainability practices important, although the implementation of corporate social responsibility principles by a company's suppliers brings not only benefits but also incurs costs (Hajmohammad & Vachon, 2016).

Increasingly, collaboration with suppliers who do not respect social or environmental aspects is seen as risky and potentially leading to significant

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losses for the company (Goebel et al., 2012). Traditional performance metrics used to assess a supplier's financial and operational performance include cost, delivery time, and quality (Chen & Paulraj, 2004a; Gold et al., 2009) However, as companies measure the performance of their suppliers in terms of environmental (Christensen et al., 2008) and social (Maignan et al., 2002) aspects, this can be an important argument for the supplier to integrate economic, environmental, and social factors. Another reason for suppliers to implement social responsibility principles is that procurement processes are critical to meeting growing sustainability needs.

The growing concern over global warming, the depletion of nonrenewable resources, and pollution is forcing manufacturing companies to implement sustainable, especially environmentally friendly, initiatives in their supply chains, and their success is often determined by suppliers. The position of suppliers in the market has changed in recent times, mainly due to shrinking margins caused by intense competition. This has made sourcing from socially responsible suppliers increasingly common, especially for global corporations that are under public pressure to be transparent about their operations (Ambekar et al., 2019). Suppliers are a key element of the chain and are responsible for designing and delivering products, selecting and hiring transport and logistics services, and optimizing flows, so they have a major impact on the company's sustainability performance and to some extent help determine how sustainable the company is (Schoenherr et al., 2012). Therefore, buyer pressure for a supplier to implement CSR into its operations is also a significant motivator.

Supplier activities undertaken as part of CSR are analyzed in the literature in the context of the entire supply chain. Suppliers play a crucial role in ensuring sustainability in supply chains, as they are key intermediaries and often responsible for shaping the final product. In response to the challenge of operating with minimal negative environmental impact, green supply chain management has become an important area of research (Sarkis, 2012). Environmental degradation results from transformative activities at various stages of the production cycle, including raw material extraction, water and energy consumption, air emissions, and environmental impacts generated during the production and disposal of goods (Govindan et al., 2014).

Therefore, if organizations aim to reduce the harmful effects of their economic activities, it is necessary to focus on the entire supply chain, considering a broad range of practices, including green procurement, integrated supply chains flowing from suppliers to producers, customers, and reverse processes (Kauppi & Hannibal, 2017). The actions of suppliers who implement CSR principles, expecting specific benefits, will be crucial for achieving these goals, - integrating economic and environmental goals should lead to a reduction in ecological inefficiency and risk (Kumar et al., 2011). Table

Table 15.1 Factors in the implementation of CSR principles by suppliers

Implementation factors		*References*
Motives		
Regulations	• Compliance with environmental regulations	
	• Regulations of governing organizations	
	• International certification standards (e.g. ISO 14001)	
Stakeholder pressure	• Buyer/stakeholder pressure	
	• Pressure from environmental groups	
	• Social pressure	
Market	• Deliveries to foreign customers	
	• Demand for environmentally friendly products	
	• Competition from "green" suppliers on the market	
	• Growing competitiveness/competitive advantage	
	• Increased opportunities to win orders from buyers who use sustainable practices when evaluating and selecting suppliers	
	• Reducing the risk of criticism by market entities	
Cooperation	• Environmental partnership/cooperation with the buyer	
	• Increasing buyer confidence	(Zorzini et al., 2015), (M. Winter & Knemeyer, 2013)
	• Support for the buyer in the implementation of socially responsible practices	
	• Integration of technology and logistics with the main customer	
	• Reverse logistics and feedback system in the supply chain	
	• Facilitating long-term cooperation with the buyer	
	• Facilitate long-term innovation in the area of sustainability	
	• Limiting the buyer's number of suppliers in favor of working with a socially responsible supplier	
Supplier-related factors	• Supplier's social and environmental awareness	
	• "Green" image	
Product, packaging and waste	• Potential legal conflicts over products supplied	
	• Reuse and recycling of materials and packaging	
	• Resource scarcity, increased waste production, and issues with its disposal	
	• Developing environmentally friendly products and packaging	
	• Potential liability for disposal of hazardous materials	
	• Reducing energy consumption and reducing waste	
	• Reducing the disposal costs of hazardous materials	

(*Continued*)

Table 15.2 (Continued)

Implementation factors		*References*
Barriers		
Regulations	• Lack of uniform sustainability standards and appropriate regulations • Accounting guidelines limiting "green" reporting • Lack of certification (e.g. ISO 14001)	
Stakeholder pressure	• Pressure for lower supply prices	
Market	• Economic uncertainty • Industry-specific barriers • The phenomenon of *greenwashing*[1] • Lack of support from governing organizations • Lack of demand and public awareness of CSR activities in the market	
Cooperation	• Lack of cooperation from other supply chain participants • Passing the costs of environmental initiatives of the entire supply chain to suppliers • Lack of awareness / interest from buyers regarding eco-friendly practices • Reluctance to share information among supply chain members • Lack of "green" initiatives on the part of the buyer • Lack of integration with the buyer's IT system / supply chain entities • Poor implementation of green practices in the supply chain	
Supplier-related factors	• Discrepancy between the supplier's short-term and long-term strategic goals • Lack of technology infrastructure • Implementation costs • Lack of knowledge and experience in eco-friendly practices • Focus on cost reduction rather than eco-friendly practices	
Product, packaging and waste	• Difficulty in finding alternative materials / raw materials with a lower negative impact on the environment	

Source: own study based on the cited literature

15.1 provides an overview of the determinants that are important for suppliers when implementing CSR principles into their operations.

The determinants of CSR principles implementation by suppliers, both in terms of motives and barriers, as presented in Table 1, are grouped into six main areas: 1) regulations, 2) stakeholder pressure, 3) market, 4) cooperation, 5) supplier-related factors, and 6) product, packaging, and waste. The reasons for a supplier's implementation of CSR principles have

characteristics that are both external (pressures, regulations, expectations) as well as internal (benefits or own goals).

The first, important group consists of the legal or formal regulations that prompt suppliers to implement green practices. Government laws and regulations are a major factor influencing corporate environmental management regulations. Some actions are influenced by formal and informal pressures from government institutions. For example, governments can exert pressure by imposing trade barriers or penalties on raw materials or materials that do not comply with environmental protection regulations (Rivera, 2004). Normative guidelines, such as ISO 14001 or other environmental protection regulations, indicate directions, principles, and guidelines for desired supplier actions. An example of such regulations may be the *Green Credit Policy* in South Korea, which is an environmentally friendly regulation that enables manufacturers to reduce pollution by working with suppliers (Kang et al., 2020).

Stakeholder pressure is an important determinant in the implementation of socially responsible practices – various stakeholder groups influence the integration of sustainability aspects in supplier selection processes, "forcing" suppliers to implement these practices (Lechler et al., 2020). Institutional requirements are based on institutional theory, which states that an organization's adaptation to the environment may be influenced by three different types of requirements: normative, coercive, and mimetic (Zhu et al., 2010). Stakeholders with decision-making authority, such as government and environmental regulations, impose coercive requirements. Normative requirements are brought by external stakeholders who have a direct or indirect interest in the organization (e.g., customers). Finally, mimetic requirements arise when the organization imitates the successful actions of competitors in the industry (Zhu et al., 2010, 2013), including other suppliers who operate in a socially responsible manner.

In the case of suppliers, buyer pressure is the biggest contributor to the implementation of CSR principles (Agrawal & Lee, 2019). To meet the growing demand for sustainably produced products, companies must have the ability to source them sustainably from their suppliers. The buyer (manufacturer or seller) may use green sourcing principles and influence its suppliers to adopt sustainable processes that can meet specific CSR criteria (Agrawal & Lee, 2019). Sustainable sourcing policies therefore influence raw material suppliers to transition to sustainable processes, and this is an important motivator for implementation.

In addition, institutional pressures exerted through customer demands and the need to ensure regulatory compliance also influence CSR initiatives undertaken by suppliers (Kauppi & Hannibal, 2017). In the coming years, society will face a significant challenge related to minimizing environmental damage. To prevent long-term, irreversible harm to our planet, companies are

forced to participate in eco-friendly supply chain management, and thus social pressure makes suppliers obligated to do so as well (Boy & Kuruba, 2015).

Market conditions represent a specific set of factors that can vary depending on the environment. In the markets of developed countries, there is a growing demand for environmentally friendly products, and customers are increasingly socially aware - they take into account what they buy, from whom, and who the supplier is. Companies are adopting CSR practices in response to stakeholder demand for eco-friendly products and processes (Green et al., 2012). Furthermore, the implementation of green practices by a supplier contributes to increased competitiveness and, consequently, a competitive advantage – among other things, by increasing the ability to win orders from buyers who use sustainable practices when evaluating and selecting suppliers and reducing the risk of criticism by other entities in the market. The introduction of green practices by a supplier can increase competitive advantage, which is why companies are seeking to integrate their suppliers to achieve environmental goals and meet buyer pressure (Somjai et al., 2020). In the international market, suppliers who have implemented CSR practices may be more competitive compared to suppliers who have not. Supply chain partners are also making efforts to assist and provide technical support to suppliers in implementing environmental management systems and organizing training, seminars related to environmental awareness (Somjai et al., 2020), which is another factor that promotes suppliers' green practices.

Collaboration between suppliers and partners in the supply chain is also undertaken to achieve CSR goals (Y. Yang et al., 2020). The motives in this area are similar to the factors that determine cooperation per se, namely increased trust, partnership, long-term relationship, and facilitation of joint initiatives. It can therefore be observed that the implementation of CSR activities by the supplier will affect the lastingness of cooperation, also in areas not directly related to corporate social responsibility.

Factors that are supplier-dependent also influence decisions regarding the implementation of CSR principles. Social and environmental responsibility is an important factor for a supplier to undertake CSR initiatives, as it evaluates and takes responsibility for the impact of its actions on the environment and society (Bhool & Narwal, 2013). In doing so, it also shapes a "green" image, which is an important attribute of a supplier that is taken into account by buying organizations. Companies improve their profits and corporate image if environmental attributes are treated as additional criteria for supplier selection, and they usually also improve the quality of their production process (Villanueva-Ponce et al., 2015).

Product, packaging, and waste are important considerations for suppliers to introduce sustainable practices. Consumers are increasingly developing an environmental awareness, preferring "ecological" products (Zhu et

al., 2013). Scarcity of resources, environmental degradation, and growing consumer pressure are driving individual supply chain partners, including suppliers, to implement green practices. Limiting certain chemicals when designing eco-friendly products, developing reverse logistics networks, or waste disposal with environmental goals in mind make a compelling case for introducing CSR by a supplier.

The process of implementation of social responsibility by suppliers brings not only benefits but also a series of barriers or costs. The same areas that group together the factors that constitute the rationale behind implementation also carry a number of constraints and impediments.

Norms and rules related to socially responsible behavior can be both a motivator for implementation – compliance with them gives legitimacy to actions but also constitute a barrier. The lack of uniform sustainability standards and appropriate regulations complicates the implementation process, especially from the perspective of a supplier in the international market, where differences can be significant, e.g., the specific nature of Asian markets with different regulations (Yang et al., 2020; Zhu et al., 2013).

Stakeholder pressure, including buyer pressure, can provide a strong rationale for CSR implementation by the supplier – on the one hand, the literature on buyers and suppliers indicates that buyers can strategically influence suppliers' operating practices (e.g., quality management, implementation of ISO 9000 and ERP systems), and the influence of such buyers can be strategic and natural through daily communication and interactions (Carter & Liane Easton, 2011; Doorey, 2011; Krause et al., 2007). On the other hand, the ubiquitous pressure on the market for lower delivery costs can be a barrier to the implementation of CSR.

Economic uncertainty, industry-specific barriers, the phenomenon of *greenwashing*, lack of support from governing organizations, or lack of demand and public awareness of the need to conduct business responsibly in the market are other barriers to CSR implementation by suppliers. The lack of government incentives and rewards for best CSR practices, as well as the lack of preferential treatment and long-term contracts for entities acting responsibly, can discourage implementation (Balasubramanian, 2012). The presence of demand for socially responsible products is a characteristic feature of developed markets, conditioned by a number of factors such as subjective knowledge about the product's impact on the environment or the perceived importance of the product's impact on the environment (Gregory-Smith et al., 2017), therefore suppliers in economically underdeveloped markets will not be interested in being responsible.

Greenwashing is a phenomenon linked to scandals that often occur at the supply chain level and therefore also affects suppliers when the supplier's behavior violates the company's sustainability declarations (Pizzetti et al., 2019). A company's communications based on false or misleading

environmental protection declarations can cause mistrust among partners and be a deterrent to CSR implementation. Sometimes the company itself becomes a victim of *greenwashing*, for example, by sourcing from dishonest suppliers, and if the situation is widespread in the industry, any socially responsible actions will be perceived through the prism of dishonest practices.

The behavior of buyers and other supply chain partners can also hinder the implementation of CSR by the supplier. Behaviors that have been identified as barriers include, among others: lack of cooperation from other supply chain participants, shifting the costs of environmental initiatives across the entire supply chain to suppliers, lack of buyer awareness/interest in ecological practices, unwillingness to share information among supply chain members, lack of "green" initiatives on the part of the buyer, or poor implementation of ecological practices in the supply chain. The implementation of CSR is associated with additional initial costs, which in turn can lead to discrepancies between the supplier's short-term and long-term strategic goals. Implementation costs can also be a barrier for small businesses – the size of the organization can also be a factor that hinders the implementation process. The lack of technological infrastructure or knowledge and experience in ecological practices discourages the supplier from implementation, while focusing on cost reduction rather than ecological practices demonstrates the pressure of low-cost supply, which is not conducive to CSR principles.

Difficulties in finding alternative materials/raw materials with lower negative environmental impact are another factor that does not favor the implementation of responsible practices by suppliers (Bey et al., 2013). Desirable practices include replacing or moving away from environmentally harmful materials and raw materials, using recyclable plastics, sourcing wood and wood products sustainably, or using plant-based substitutes for leather.

Conclusions

In summary, the trend of implementing CSR principles in individual markets, supply chains, and the organizations that make them up, including suppliers, is driven by recognizing the potential business consequences associated with it. Suppliers are increasingly beginning the processes of developing and implementing "green" strategies. Although many factors encourage such actions, there are still barriers.

Note

1 *Greenwashing* is the process of creating a false impression or providing misleading information about how a company's products or activities are more environmentally friendly than they actually are.

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