# SINERGIJA KOT IZID RAZUMNEGA SODELOVANJA

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**Povzetek:** V prispevku nameravamo pokazati, da je za glavne posledice sinergije mogoče ugotoviti, da so izid razumnega sodelovanja in podlaga za uspeh organizacije. Prikazana spoznanja bodo dala oceno, da zavesten in usmerjen razvoj sinergije, ki ga krepi družbeni kapital, povečuje in krepi možnost uspeha. Zato je vodilna vloga bistvena, da se potencial organizacije razvije. Nadalje smo ugotovili, da je visoka raven zadovoljstva, zaupanja, kakovosti medsebojnih odnosov in sodelovanja, enako kot porast učinkovitosti delovanja bistvenega pomena za organizacijo v obdobju prosperitete. V razmerah, v katerih znanje velja za dejavnosti konkurenčnosti, je vredno podjetjem, ki iščejo učinkovite inovativne rešitve, da bi uresničile zastavljene cilje, pokazati, kako naj primerno uporabijo njihov socialni kapital. Le-ta ustvarja potencial, ki omogoča uspeh z razumnim sodelovanjem. S tega vidika se pokaže, da je življenjskega pomena razvoj pozitivnih medsebojnih vplivov, namreč: odnosov – sodelovanja – sinergije.

**Ključne besede**: sinergija, socialni kapital, razumno sodelovanje, razvoj organizacije, uspeh

# SYNERGY, THE RESULT OF INTELLIGENT COOPERATION[1]

**Abstract:** The objective of this paper is to demonstrate that the main implications of synergy are results of intelligent cooperation and the source of organizational success. Given the presented results, it is assumed that conscious and streamlined synergy development through social capital increases and strengthens the possibility of achieving success. Thus, the management staff's leading role is crucial in developing a company's potential. Furthermore, it is found that a high level of satisfaction, trust, quality of personnel relations and cooperation, as well as an increase in the effectiveness of performance are respectively of specific importance to an organization in times of prosperity.
**Keywords:** synergy, social capital, intelligent cooperation, organizational development, success.

### 1. Introduction

In determining the direction of change and innovation in an organization, one should assume that the foundation for success is a gradual increasing effectiveness of operations through intelligent cooperation. Strategically, the potential of employee competency and availability is of key importance (Lepak, Snell, 2003). The efficiency of personnel as the basis for prosperity is important, because in building social capital it determines the ability of improvement in the organization. In the process of working, people build a system of relationships through cooperation. They make a social subsystem, which is crucial to any organization's existence and ability to set

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and deliver goals. Therefore, to achieve and keep a competitive position, the management philosophy should be based on dispersed leadership. (Malone, 2004). Furthermore, the intention of the newly established operation concepts in an organization is to deliver newer and higher quality solutions (Corning, 1996), whose generation is the result of intelligent cooperation. Based on the interaction of science and business cooperation and subsequently undertaken research activities, it frequently proves difficult to develop a uniform model of procedure. Nevertheless, given the observed multiplicity of features, differences in an organization's operational methods, as well as factors determining their development, there is a common interest and that is the phenomenon of synergy.

Synergy (Corning, 1995) is becoming a more desirable and expected phenomenon in an organization since it is crucial to the delivery of real and measurable profits. It requires mentioning here that there is profit in both the economic and psychosocial aspects. They should have an organizational dimension, but also group and individual dimensions. Moreover, synergy fosters an effective management process, which aims at a balanced development of formal and informal relations. From this perspective, it may be stated that one of the core values giving meaning to an organization's existence, being the organization's capital, and causing synergy to occur is people and their intelligent cooperation (Lepak, Snell, 2003).

## 2. The basis for developing an organization's road to success

The basis for an organization's way to successful development is the efficient implementation of accepted assumptions. Conscious actions, focusing on the proper potential of an organization, leadership, inspiration, vision and the usage of passion all favour the above (Riad, 2005). Thus, the key role of management personnel in developing and moulding cooperation and targets should be recognized.

Synergy conceptualisation and a willingness to familiarize its complex nature require a multi-aspect approach. The reference used to interpret this notion is the approach used in management science. It shows that synergy is an interaction of various factors, whose outcome is considered to be larger than the sum of individual actions. Synergic operation mean multiplied profits due to combined components. Moreover, it is assumed that synergy is a naturally created phenomenon defining the order level of inter-stimulating factors (Corning, 1997). Synergy emerges thanks to the interaction of a specific force (potential of social capital) in a given system (organization team) and is created as the result of a proper set of components: cooperation, coordination, and synchronization of actions.

Synergy (in the behavioural aspect of an organization) is a condition, which is signalized by a perceivable increase in a satisfactory level of cooperation and in the achievement of measurable results. The basis for the emergence of synergy is a high cooperation level (intelligent cooperation), which is the result of high quality relations in a given environment. With synergy as an implication of the quality of social capital, one may assume that synergy is indirectly the interference result of not just numerous social conditions, but also of personal and organization conditions. Synergy is considered to be a condition function, meaning that it depends mainly on the condition of relationship, i.e. on real values of its set parameters, such as cooperation quality, relations, the number of cooperating subjects, competencies, and resources (Jasińska, 2011). It is said that condition function value is the result of the difference between the beginning and finals condition of a relationship and is independent of the manner used to deliver the change. It should also be mentioned that achieving success is not a twist of fate, but is a well thought out and purposed process delivered in a specified period of time due to the undertaken cooperation. Success perception depends also on the values dominating in an organization's culture. In the case of most subjects, it becomes evident that intangible values prevail. Therefore, a measure of success is often profit, effectiveness, personal and organization development, knowledge level, and investments in intellectual and social capital.

Factors presented in figure 1 are used in an attempt to demonstrate one of the possible ways an organization may deliver success. (5). It is agreed that developing a synergy-friendly climate is, from this perspective, the proper direction (4), all via a built-up level of cooperation (3), relations quality, (2) and proper organization potential usage (1). The selected indicated components in the model were considered to be a primary source of substrates commonly generating a bigger and better energy, enabling the mutual achievement of more tangible effects of action (Miura, Hida, 2004).

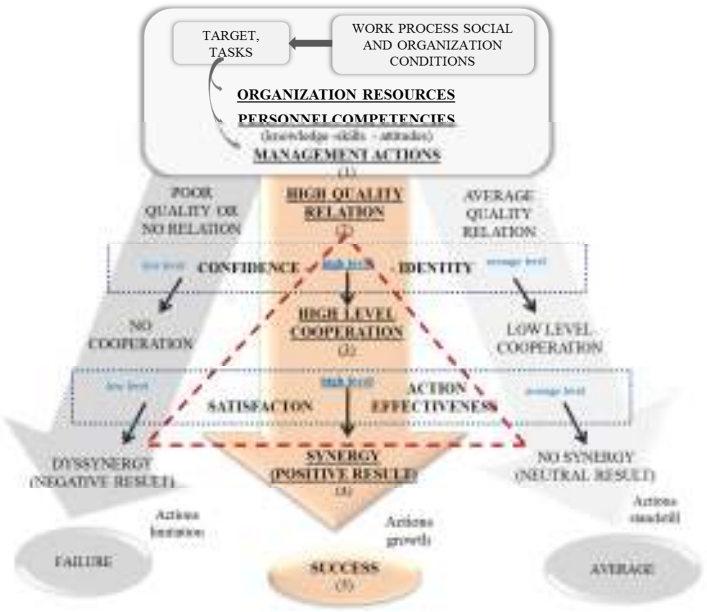



*Figure 1: Emerging factors in the success of an organization.*

Based on the model shown in Figure 1 and on the previous research experience of the author, the concept assumption is that synergy can occur when:

- cooperation reaches scale level 5 – the level of intelligent cooperation – as long as the cooperation is strengthened with a high level of social capital (trust, quality of relationships, identity, norms governing behaviour at work), the employee attitude towards work and operations of managing personnel
- the benefit of intelligent cooperation in the form of efficient actions (an increase in functionality, the team acquiring the ability to solve problems and make product improvements) is also increased by the objective function → the satisfaction of working together.

Therefore, synergy will be expressed in the simultaneous occurrence of strong ties in the triad of the level of cooperation, satisfaction and effective performance.

## 3. Research Settings

This paper presents the importance of intangible values, i.e. the social capital of an organization, cooperation and satisfaction in delivering the planned results. The purpose of this paper is to present the empirical data as a basis for making out presumptions on synergy emergence. Moreover, an attempt was made to define, using the above basis, the ability of a tested organization to deliver success. The evaluation level of selected aspects of personnel competencies in the Integrated Management System (IMS), resource availability vital to execute assigned tasks, actions of the management, social relations quality, and undertaken cooperation results are considered significant variables. The included indicators, in spite of common perception, are considered essential, but not unique. The significance of demonstrated components, being key sources for the development of cooperation-enhancing synergy emergence has been substantiated via statistical analysis. A model presented in figure 1 illustrates key factors determining an organization's road to success and shows basic dependencies between variables defined in the research (marked as 1, 2 and 3). Research activities were the inspiration for the described question, which presented a similar model of research that became the foundation for working out a concept of teams X (Ancona, Bresman, 2007) and scattered leadership (Malone, 2004), (Ancona, Malone, Orlikowski, Senge, 2007).
An attempt to answer the research questions below was the cognitive objective of research:
Q 1: What conditions should be provided to increase the level of cooperation in the team?
Q 2: What factors determine the occurrence of synergy in the team?
Q 3: What relationship occurs among the levels of cooperation, satisfaction and effectiveness in teams?

### 3.1. Research Participants

The analyzed research results were acquired by research performed in the second quarter of 2013 in a company with leadership status in Polish engineering and in the construction sector. The objective of the studied company is to 'incorporate' quality in all operations. Thus, it is assumed that quality systems are applied as one of the

major mechanisms in the entire organization's management system. The reason for such research was the desire to know why the level of effective actions decreased among employees of one of the capital group's plants, which up till now generated some serious profits.

Administrative and blue-collar employees were the research subjects. 222 people, who shared the teamwork, participated in the research (performed in 18 teams). The indicated number of respondents defines 100% of the collective whole in this organization's analyzed empirical material. Subjects of the research were mainly respondents between 26 and 45 years of age, of secondary education, and work experience between 6 and 15 years. The respondents also worked as teams, most often in groups of 6 to 14 people.

### 3.2. Research Method

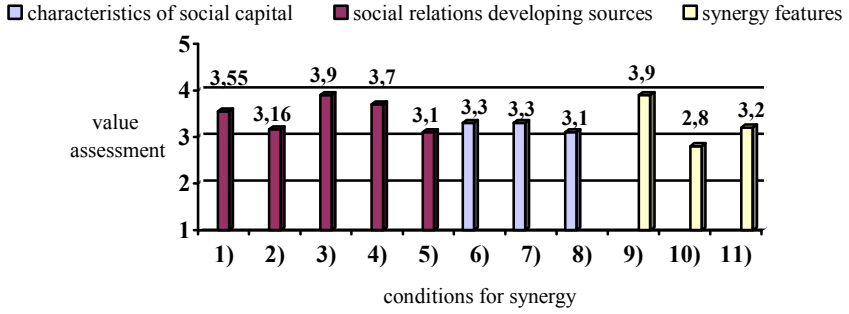
To achieve a basic research objective, the field research method was applied using surveying, in-depth interview, and indirect, hidden, and unclassified observation. In addition, a statistical analysis was prepared allowing for a co-dependent level of determination between variables included in the research. Statistical conclusions were delivered as per r–Pearson correlation analysis. The level of significance was taken into account when conducting a bilateral test for df = 25. The reliability of the instrument used in this research (Cronbach's Alpha) is $\alpha$=0.829. In order to quantify and present selected aspects, the author used a five level order scale (Likert scale) that defines the value of individual assessments. Given that scale, assessment values accepted the following interpretation: 1 – very low; 2 – low; 3- average; 4 – high; 5 – very high. The grades presented in figure 2 are the result of demonstrated arithmetic calculations of the respective scopes answering the questions, which, as per statistical analysis, were considered to be most significant to the presented scope of research.

### 3.3. Research Assumption

In order to define the condition of synergy emergence in an organization, a point of view was accepted showing that high internal dynamics, observable as a high quality of social relations, creates a foundation for good cooperation. Should effective interaction and an increase in cooperational satisfaction take place, a climate that is good for synergy emergence will be developed. Further, it was also assumed that a high assessment of social capital indicates only the ability to achieve synergy, but does not guarantee that synergy will emerge and that long-term success will be achieved.

## 4. Assessment of the conditions for synergy emergence – research results analysis

In an attempt to diagnose an ability to achieve synergy and to attain a definitive level of development, a basis is accepted, (see fig. 1) , co-dependent, the dimensions indicating the value of human capital, as well as social and organizational. The above-mentioned areas, which define an organization's potential, were assessed by a group of employees. Results of the assessment considered to be significant determinants of the phenomenon of synergy are presented in figure 2.




**Legend - conditions for synergy:**

**SOCIAL RELATIONS DEVELOPING SOURCES (**average **3.48)**

1) Resources at disposal of work
2) Managers actions* - stimulating and strengthening activities
3) Knowledge - substantive knowledge
4) Skills - skills and abilities at work
5) Attitudes** - commitment to work

**CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL (**average **3.2)**

6) Relation quality - coherence in a team
7) Confidence - trust in co-workers
8) Identity - employee identification within the company

**SYNERGY INDICATORS (**average **3.3)**

9) Cooperation - cooperation in the pursuit of a common purpose
10) Satisfaction** - the satisfaction of working in a team
11) Actions effectiveness** - results the joint action

* necessitates the improvement ** needs strengthening

*Figure 2: Conditioning assessment of synergy emergence in an organization.*

Research analysis results demonstrated further on in this article shall be presented in relation to the above three highlighted areas in turn (relations quality and the symptoms, social relations developing sources, cooperation and its results).

### 4.1. Sources for Developing Social Relations

Taking into consideration the first indicated area, i.e. relation developing sources, the total average grade (3.48) allows for an indication of areas specially requiring improvements. It refers mainly to the lowest grade of the identified elements in the group, i.e. 3.1, which was allocated to personnel attitude. As one of the three elements of competency, attitude versus knowledge was assessed as lower than knowledge – 3.9 and skills – 3.7. Statistical analysis shows that the average grade of attitude influences at a significance level $p<0.005$ ($r=0.375$), the average grade of personnel skills, especially in the scope of utilizing experience in undertaken actions. Moreover, a dependability of attitude ($p<0.005$; $r=0.6$) is observed versus the personnel knowledge level especially in terms of IMS obligations in the company. Given the variable of personnel attitude, one may, on the one hand, make an analysis-based assumption that the strongest feature influencing the indicator's grade is a high level (4.1) of work commitment and knowledge of the full range of responsibilities in the workplace (4.7). It is also clear that these characteristics are mutually reinforcing, as evidenced by their correlation to the level of $p<0.025$ and $r=0.381$. On the other hand, the index 2.9 (the average grade) of an acceptable level of actions taken in the work place, may be understand as limiting rate of higher grade of personnel attitude.

The second competence component subjected to an assessment of employees were the skills (3.7) they used to improve actions in the work process. Here, the strengthening indicator is a good ability (4.13) of employees to use experience in undertaken actions. A good level of familiarization with work position responsibilities ($p<0.025$; $r=0.384$) influences the assessment of this skill. In turn, as a factor hampering the growth of skills assessment, the average (3.25) degree of personnel knowledge on IMS usage to improve task execution should be considered. The average (3.1) support offered by the managers in terms of self-improvement and competence development ($p<0.005$; $=0.354$) is the key factor determining assessment of this feature.

The next important competence element is the knowledge that enables the appropriate fulfilment of responsibilities, which was the highest rated (3.9) between the two other components of competency. The statistical analysis allows for the assumption that knowledge is the variable, which essentially determines the degree of knowledge of the full range of responsibilities in the workplace ($p<0.001$; $r.=0.446$). Moreover, personnel knowledge is enhanced by serious (4.13) experience in delivered tasks ($p<0.005$; $r=0.488$) as well as a good (4.08) level of education in relation to fulfilled responsibilities ($p<0.025$; $r=0.419$). The average level (3.2) of knowledge of IMS operation principles ($p<0.005$; $r=0.708$) and average level (3.2) of knowledge of internal IMS principles of operation ($p<0.005$; $r=0.512$) should be considered as significantly weakening factors of employee knowledge during the execution of assigned responsibilities. There is a significant inter-dependence between those variables in the $p<0.005$ level, where $r=0.621$. Furthermore, the above features, actually imply quite a low level (2.9) of personnel acceptance versus undertaken actions ($p<0.005$; $r=0.656$ and $r=0.543$).

In terms of organization management efficiency, actions taken by the managers are significant sources of developing social relations, and employees rated those as average (3.16). Quite a good grade of labour law abidance (3.82), technical norms (3.75) and an average (3.58) level of proper conduct and due diligence observance are indicators included in the research of enhancing the above grade. The statistical analysis shows an interdependence between the three features on $p<0.005$ level and that those features are implied by the average assessment of availability of resources significant to the assigned tasks' execution ($p<0.005$; $r=0.488$). The weakening factors in the assessment of managers' actions are average (3.2) support provided to employees (e.g. in the competency scope of mastery and tasks' execution) and communication system including an average (3.27) efficiency of information distribution. Both features determine the average grade of resource availability significant to task execution ($p<0.025$; $r=0.384$). In the case of an assessment of communication systems, a

moderate influence, and in case of provided support, quite a poor influence on the average grade of knowledge on the IMS level ($p<0.005$; $r=0.578$ and $r=0.333$) and an average level of IMS knowledge in terms of the assigned tasks' execution improvement ($p<0.005$; $r=0.549$ and $p<0.05$; $r=0.354$).

To have the work process fully performed and generating specific results, resources enabling an effective achievement of the objective are necessary to managers' actions. Availability of the resources necessary to execute a task on a job position was assessed since it was perceived as yet another significant source of developing relations. Respondents' opinions showed the average (3.55) availability of necessary resources, which included knowledge, technology, infrastructure, IT system, finances, and people (quantity/competence). Based on the analysis, it may be stated that the average condition of the availability of resources reflect quite a poor level of employee acceptance of undertaken actions ($p<0.005$; $r=0.489$). This indicates an average support provided by the managers ($p<0.025$; $r=0.411$) and an average company IMS knowledge level ($p<0.05$; $r=0.37$).

One may deduce, considering the sources for developing social capital in a company presented above, that the area requiring the most improvement is employees' attitude to work and actions taken by the managers. Employees assessed knowledge, skills, and resources availability quite highly, and those components could be treated as a significant way to improve the development of quality relations.

### 4.2. Characteristics of Social Capital

Considering the average grade (3.48) of the first research field, one may consider it to be a justifying conditioning for the average grade (3.3) of the second field, i.e. quality of relation ($p<0.001$, $r=0.594$). Significant indicators of this variable, selected as per the statistical analysis, are the average grade of personnel selection, integration, satisfaction of work and communication [8]. In terms of relation quality development, the statistically most significant indicators, which require enhancement, are a quite poor level of employee acceptance of the work process ($p<0.005$; $r=0.6$), and an average grade of actions taken by managers: mainly in the scope of applied improvements ($p<0.005$; $r=0.566$) as well as information distribution ($p<0.005$; $r=0.503$). A high grade of employee commitment to work ($p<0.001$; $r=0.447$) is considered to be a feature, which improves relation quality. The average (3.3) confidence level ($p<0.001$, $r=0.642$) is complimentary to the value of social relation quality as well as to employees' sense of identification to the work place (3.1) ($p<0.001$, $r=0.636$). One may think that the average grade of personnel attitude including an acceptance level of quite poor actions taken along with a perception of advantages for both themselves and the company from the application of IMS could be considered a significantly influential feature for the specified average for confidence level and employee identification within the company. When explicating this dependency, it is worthwhile to turn to the acquired personnel level of IMS knowledge which appears to be the result of an information distribution system from the management malfunctioning ($p<0.005$; $r=0.564$).

### 4.3. Indicators of Synergy

A stipulation for synergy to occur is the simultaneous attainment of high levels for three parameters: collaboration (intelligent cooperation), satisfaction (satisfaction with interactions) and efficiency (functionality and effectiveness in joint actions). Based on the acquired research results, it is said that the diagnosed average (3.3) of relation quality suggests quite a high (3.9) cooperation level between employees when delivering mutual tasks ($p<0.005$; $r=0.487$). This means that the higher the quality of relationships, the greater the increase in the level of cooperation (a moderate degree of dependence indicates that the level of cooperation is influenced by more factors than just the quality of the relationship). One may wonder, given the situation, where the difference in the acquired assessment of the above defined variables comes from. Based on the statistical analysis, it is plausible that to a great extent, it is a result of employees' conscious interaction (this knowledge relates to an awareness of a professional role) which says that:

- Work and applied management systems influence customer satisfaction ($p<0.005$; $r=0.737$),
- Mutual work and accuracy in execution of procedure are the basis for proper products and services quality ($p<0.005$; $r=0.657$),
- Cooperation in procedural observance ensures work safety and hygiene ($p<0.005$; $r=0.507$),
- Personnel has access to necessary resources ($p<0.01$; $r=0.446$),
- IMS knowledge level as an improvement of the execution of assigned responsibilities influences cooperation level ($p<0.025$; $r=0.429$),
- Cooperation influences the activity of the undertaken actions ($p<0.001$; $r=0.582$).

Given the above qualifiers, one may think that the basis for cooperation quality is a common goal - customer satisfaction and a willingness to accomplish it through the assurance of higher quality products and services. What appears to be interesting is that statistical analysis demonstrates also no clear (strong) influence of

employee commitment level over cooperation. On these grounds, one may state that employees do not perceive commitment to be a direct and significant element to the emergence of cooperation. It shows that the level of commitment is conditioned mainly by personal interest of employees, i.e. a better chance for employees to accomplish their personal interest – if they accomplish their own personal gains (satisfaction), they will be satisfied by the outcome and their commitment will be greater ($p<0.001$; $r=0.524$). In such a situation, it must be maintained that achieving a higher level of commitment (scale level 5 - commitment to joint actions) depends quite strongly on the high level of satisfaction (scale level 5 - satisfaction with interactions). Employees consider the execution of knowledge-enabling responsibilities ($p<0.01$; $r=0.448$), familiarization with responsibilities ($p<0.005$; $r=0.382$), the influence of experience on actions taken at work ($p<0.05$; $r=0.375$), and education level versus delivered responsibilities ($p<0.05$; $r=0.329$) to be the basis for developing the level of commitment. These are basic factors of a commitment to work, but they are not sufficient to obtain additional benefits. An important factor in securing added value proves to be satisfaction in joint actions.

A complementary element affecting the assessment of cooperation is the low level (2.8) of a sense of team satisfaction with work ($p<0.001$, $r=0.735$). An average level (3.3) of confidence ($p <0.001$, $r = .684$) and an average level (3.1) of identity with the workplace ($p <0.001$, $r = 0.646$) influence the study's obtained level of satisfaction. The indicator of satisfaction may justify commitment conditioning by quite a low attitudes level. Therefore, the satisfaction level defined in the research is not a cooperation enhancing and developing feature, and as such may be considered a limitation to synergy emergence. Furthermore, it appears that despite quite a good general level of cooperation, the level of personnel satisfaction limits the ability to accomplish measurable results of actions (3,2). Based on statistical analysis, it can be assumed that the level of effectiveness of a team depends significantly on the level of satisfaction with joint actions taken ($p<0.001$, $r=.768$). The acquired result shows that on the level of $p<0.05$, the key source for the growth of work effectiveness is mainly the execution of procedures ensuring: proper products and service quality ($r=0.736$), work safety and hygiene ($r=0.646$), apt timelines to deliver a task ($r=0.499$), and the ability to use norms recommendation in their work ($r=0.539$). Apart from that, it is also worth noting that the level of effectiveness for actions taken is a significant implication of cooperation quality ($p<0.001$, $r=0.755$), employee awareness of customer satisfaction ($p<0.001$, $r=0.652$), and the need to perfect and develop personnel competencies ($p<0.001$, $r=0.481$).

Based on the acquired results, one may only assume that the average general grade of the three examined fields presented in figure 2 is not high enough for synergy to emerge. Therefore, the generated assessment of the above-mentioned variables in the examined organization cannot be considered to have fostered a complete success.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Under the circumstances where knowledge is considered to be the competitive factor, it is worth demonstrating to companies searching for effective innovative solutions for the execution of their set objectives - a proper usage and development of an organization's social capital. The latter provides the potential to enable success through intelligent cooperation. From this perspective, it appears vital to develop positive interactions, namely: [relations→ {cooperation & satisfaction}] → result $^{n}$ → synergy.

An important source in terms of making use of knowledge and skills that provides a basis for synergy is the attitude of employees towards work. A commitment to cooperation should be strengthened and awareness of a professional role should be raised. An especially strong factor is an acceptance of actions taken (a sense of meaning and understanding of the work undertaken). This demands the managing personnel to take an informative and supportive role.

Management efficiency is significantly associated with building up the quality of relationships, with an openness to collaboration with other teams, with developing entrepreneurial behaviours, with strengthening the system of communication, and with the management and acquisition of new potential. This is the basis for the development of external management.

In regards to the definition of synergy and postulations of the study covered in step 2 of the article, three significant statistical relationships appear:

- The level of cooperation - the level of satisfaction → $p <0.001$, $r = 0.735$
- The level of cooperation - the level of effectiveness → $p <0.001$, $r = 0.755$
- The level of satisfaction - the level of effectiveness → $p <0.001$, $r = 7.68$ (an expression of multiple benefits).

Below are the presented assumptions expanding on the basis of collected research data:

- Conscious and focused synergy emergence by way of social capital in an organization increases intelligent cooperation and strengthens the possibility for success.

- The occurrence in a team of intelligent cooperation simultaneously enhanced by satisfaction with joint actions determines a high level of efficiency in joint actions and makes multiple profit success possible. This interdependence also indicates the occurrence of synergy in a given system.
- Intelligent cooperation is the basis for the emergence of synergy.

In the studied organization where synergy was not clearly observed, a particular analyzed competency of the system can be discussed (pointing to a fairly good level of cooperation, a commitment to work, employee knowledge and skills, or availability of resources). Factors significantly limiting the occurrence of synergy are mainly personnel attitude (a low acceptance of tasks and activities at work, lack of engagement in joint activities, low demonstration of initiative), low levels of satisfaction (not achieving the level - satisfaction with interaction), and average performance results.

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