

STRATEGIC MATURITY DESIDERATA OF CORPORATE CAPABILITIES – MODEL AND ITS EMPIRICAL VERIFICATION

DEZYDERATY DOJRZAŁOŚCI STRATEGICZNEJ ZDOLNOŚCI PRZEDSIĘBIORSTW – MODEL I JEGO WERYFIKACJA EMPIRYCZNA

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Abstract: The subject of the research of this elaboration are strategic maturity desiderata of the corporate capability of manufacturing enterprises operating in the agricultural machinery sector. The vital goal of this study is to determine the level of partial (functional) maturities constituting the strategic capability of the investigated enterprises. Achieving the main objective required the formulation and implementation of partial goals, which were applied to outline: nomination of desiderata determining strategic maturity (literature query), compilation of the research model in the form of an assessment sheet (literature exploration and expert research) and recognition of the level of strategic maturity among manufacturers of the agricultural machinery sector (theoretical model validation). The considerations contained in the paper are embedded in social sciences, and more specifically; in the field of management and quality sciences.

Keywords: abilities, resources, strategic maturity, maturity model of strategic capability

Streszczenie: Przedmiotem badań niniejszego opracowania są dezyderaty dojrzałości strategicznej zdolności przedsiębiorstw wytwórczych działających w sektorze maszyn rolniczych. Fundamentalnym celem badań jest określenie poziomu dojrzałości parcjalnych (funkcjonalnych) stanowiących o strategicznej zdolności badanych przedsiębiorstw. Osiągnięcie celu głównego wymagało sformułowania i zrealizowania celów cząstkowych, którymi nakreślono: nominowanie dezyderatów determinujących dojrzałość strategiczną (kwerenda literatury), skompilowanie modelu badawczego w postaci arkusza oceny (eksploracja piśmiennictwa oraz badanie eksperckie) oraz rozpoznanie poziomu dojrzałości strategicznej wśród producentów sektora maszyn rolniczych (walidacja modelu teoretycznego). Rozważania zawarte w pracy są umiejscowione w naukach społecznych, a dokładniej – w obszarze nauk o zarządzaniu i jakości.

Słowa kluczowe: zdolności, zasoby, dojrzałość strategiczna, model dojrzałości zdolności strategicznej

*We must have perseverance and above all confidence in ourselves.
We must believe that we are gifted for something
and that this thing must be attained*

Maria Skłodowska-Curie

Introduction

At the height of a wide-ranging discussion that has been going on in many circles recently, both scientists and practitioners, again the question arises whether it is possible to develop management concepts determining the ability of businesses to survive in the constantly changing environment. The answer to this question – according to the authors of this paper – should be

the model of a "mature" enterprise. Modelling of enterprise maturity, and an attempt to find its assessment on this concept, require the development of a set of determinants as well as their proper management. Creating innovative – responding to diverse market needs – products require enterprises to have the potential to provide them with significant independence, which

implicitly requires prior implementation of management concepts and methods that materialize their maturity.

There are many different categories of organizational maturity recognition: attribute-based, functional, cultural, strategic, structural or technological. Such a large number of categories forces the authors to recognize the organisation's maturity in terms of a system in which subsystems (strategic abilities) contribute to the success of the whole (holistic approach); materialize the goal (organization's maturity) at the highest level. Based on this approach, the organization's maturity is a kind of whole – due to attitude towards it – its elements, namely the whole, which all components contribute to the success of the whole. Therefore, the aspect of considering the organization as a system is crucial for maturity; it concerns the study of relationships that exist between its elements (subsystems)¹.

Maturity can be related to individual components of the organization – then it has a partial dimension (partial maturity). Due to the complex nature of the entire organization, which differs from each of its elements and at the same time contributes to its success, the isolation of partial maturity can be done in many different ways, using different criteria. This study assumes that maturity refers specifically to the organization's strategic ability.

Distinguishing partial (functional) maturities, although useful in practice (due to the effectiveness of the area of operation presents the opportunity to focus on their optimal level) implies the problem of interdependence between the maturity of individual components, as well as their relationships with the maturity of the enterprise as a whole. Regardless of the above, it should be emphasized that classification of types of maturity is useful both in scientific research and in the practice of manufacturing enterprises. It is therefore important to determine what types of maturity are important to formulate goals, which interrelationships can be sought between "maturity", and how specific decisions can affect a given type of maturity.

Analysis of the literature on the subject shows that the concept of "*maturity of strategic capability*" requires adaptation to the specifics of a particular sector. Nonetheless, no research intended to organise and comprehensively develop concepts related to maturity, especially in the context of the strategic capability of manufacturing companies referring them to agricultural machinery sector has

been conducted so far. The knowledge gaps identified and described above have become a motive to undertake research on this issue. This research directed the pursuit of ordering terminological and classification issues in the area of the "mature" organization paradigm and to develop a set of factors determining this maturity. The term "maturity", which is key for this thesis, is defined as a requirement, boundary condition, factor or set of standards that should be met so that the relationship between the achieved results and the used resources is as favourable as possible.

The problem directing research activities was the lack of a model defining the factors determining strategic maturity. In the context of a problem outlined this way, the question about desiderata forming a general model of strategic maturity of a manufacturing company in the agricultural machinery sector. It was reasonable to determine which of these should constitute the basis for assessment.

In the context of the above, the fundamental goal of the research was to determine the level of partial (functional) maturity constituting the strategic capability of the evaluated enterprises. Achieving the main objective required the formulation and implementation of partial goals, which were applied to outline: nomination of desiderata determining strategic maturity (literature query), compilation of the research model in the form of an assessment sheet (literature exploration and expert research) and recognition of the level of strategic maturity among manufacturers of the agricultural machinery sector (theoretical model validation). The considerations contained in the paper are embedded in social sciences, and more specifically; in the field of management and quality sciences.

The above circumstances and conviction of the existence of the economic demand for results of an application nature constitute the main inspiration to undertake such research. This paper was created as a result of many years of scientific and practical inquiries by the authors, but also numerous discussions with scientists, managers and consultants, which were conducted during professional meetings, training sessions and consulting works.

According to the authors' assumptions, the results of the work are to form the basis of a conscious development strategy of a production company, a strategy that consists in the systematic evaluation of strategic capabilities.

¹ According to the general theory of systems, it is assumed that the same set of desiderata, which differs only in the relationships that occur, results in various systems.

Strategic capability of enterprises – concept conceptualization

In order to decide about the reality, phenomena and processes related to general management, it is necessary to clearly specify the scope of deadlines implied by the conducted research. Because the term of “technical capabilities” occurs both in colloquial thought and scientific developments, the authors considered it legitimate to present their own definition and confront it with reality.² Assumably, it will allow for the development, adoption and consistent use of the term, especially that its meaning is not precisely determined. The attempts to organise the terminology undertaken in this development were only of a cognitive nature, which made it possible for the authors to capture the areas, dependencies and approaches from the point of view of research carried out.

Many researchers and managers are wondering about the essence and limits of strategic capabilities. There are many ambiguities in the interpretation of this concept. Defining strategic capabilities is as difficult as their exact differentiation in enterprise development processes. This term is ambiguously understood. The situation is hindered by the occurrence of synonymous terms, such as dynamic capabilities (Eisenhardt, Martin, 2000; Karpacz, 2014; Krzakiewicz, Cyfert, 2016; Ortega, 2010; Teece, 2007; Teece, 2012; Teece, Pisano, Shuen, 1997) or key competences (Hamel, Prahalad, 1990; Hamilton, Eskin, Micheals, 1998; Hamel, Prahalad, 1994; Bratnicki, 2000; Gierszewska, 2005; Thompson, Richardson, 1996).

It is not an isolated situation that the concepts of capability and competence are treated as synonyms. When distinguishing concepts, it should be emphasized that capabilities are usually acquired before taking any action; sometimes they can be acquired and improved by undertaking further actions (practice effect). In this sense, capabilities are closer to skills, and as such are an integral part of competence. Capability is part of the company's strategic competence confirmed by knowledge and experience. Among numerous attempts to distinguish competences from capabilities, there are those that indicate the superiority of competences over capabilities.

Therefore, capabilities and competences were separated in this paper, indicating differences between them. It was assumed that competences can be considered against the background of achieved results, while capabilities are identified with possibilities or skills. Capabilities are usually obtained before starting a specific activity and are independent of it. In the case of competences, the situation is the opposite, as they are revealed during the performance of specific manufacturing activities.

The complexity and dynamics of the environment results in the occurrence of many opportunities that should be identified and used by the companies. Building and implementing innovative strategies and business models under which an enterprise will be able to seize opportunities requires specific capabilities. It is therefore assumed that the ability to search and seize opportunities depends on the strategic capability of the company. The opportunities often appear under the guise of problems or situations that seem not to be promising at first glance. What is noticeable when confronted with them depends on the perception of the company involved and on the viewpoint adopted by it. A positive attitude allows seeing the opportunity where others can only see problems.

Due to the continuous and sudden variability in conditions, enterprises must create new characteristics, behaviour and attitude, which will be an adequate and effective response to the globally transforming reality (Nogalski, Szpitter, 2014, p. 197-210). This means that a significant characteristic of the present era is recognition of strategic capabilities as a critical factor determining the survival or development of the organization, and skilful management of the attribute being strategic capabilities becomes (in the conditions of uncertainty and dynamical changes) an instrument opening new horizons in front of the enterprise. Strategic capabilities are the distinguishing features that should characterize every enterprise operating in the new conditions of the business environment and struggling to survive in it. As a capability to respond strategically to new business environment criteria, in practice this means using methods, production and organizational processes, practices and tools,

² The definition was devised during direct interviews with deliberately selected experts. The form of conversation was adopted, in which the authors – guided by the research objective – had full initiative in the conducted considerations. With reference to the presented assumptions and literature concepts, the task of the purposely selected experts was to present their own interpretation of strategic capabilities.

The consultations were conducted with 9 people, where: 7 represented micro [1], small [3], medium [3] production enterprises of the agricultural machinery sector; 1 person Marshal's Office of the Greater Poland Voivodeship; 1 person Łukasiewicz Research Network – Industrial Institute of Agricultural Machines.

most of which have been developed so far (Sajdak, 2014, p. 114 and further).

To manufacture products efficiently, while ensuring acceptable quality, the capability to reallocate production resources is crucial. In the short term, this means the capability to adapt to changing conditions using existing resources. In the long run, it is the capability to introduce new products, new resources and production methods, and integrate them with existing management systems. The capability to change or react, with little expenditure in terms of time, cost or performance, is of key importance here. Therefore, strategic capabilities allow meeting the expectations of achieving specific results by the company. Enterprises are able to use their knowledge, skills and experience to achieve the goal. An enterprise is "capable", if thanks to its employees and their appropriate attitude and motivation it will be able to positively use their resources.

By taking the above as an interpretation in this development, it was assumed that: *the strategic capability of a manufacturing enterprise outlining itself as the capability to dynamically configure production means, work items and available technology that is based on knowledge, experience, attitudes, motivations and behaviours, allows the enterprise to use the emerging weave of various circumstances of economic nature or economic effects, providing opportunities for achieving additional benefits.*

The strategic capabilities of the enterprise give it the opportunity to implement activities that are difficult to imitate; they are to be developed to take advantage of new opportunities. Therefore, activities that are considered as unique resources in the enterprise are indicated (Bratnicki, 2000, p. 16). The legitimacy of this approach seems to be confirmed by K. Krzakiewicz and S. Cyfert (2016, p. 87) postulating that capabilities are a combination of resources, people, structures, knowledge, rules, etc., allowing an organization to do what other organizations are not capable of doing.

The presented definitions are the context of different approaches. The essence of strategic capabilities presented in the subject literature is relatively dispersed; some of the proposals are

limited to reactions, others only to adaptation of the enterprise to changing conditions, yet others only limit the scope of capabilities to changes or resources at the disposal of the enterprise. As the conducted research indicates the identification of strategic capabilities with the resource approach, where the term "resource" is understood in the sense of every factor at the disposal of the enterprise and used in the production process, the definition highlights:

- capability to deliberately create, expand or change an enterprise's resource potential;
- the process of integrating, reconfiguring, acquiring and releasing the resources in order to be able to respond to the market changes occurring in the environment, or even to spontaneously provoke their occurrence;
- manipulation with the existing company resources to create new configurations.

Material and methods

Applying the method of reconstruction and interpretation of the literature on the subject (among others: Leonard-Barton, 1992; Stańczyk-Hugiet, 2013; Al-Aali, Teece, 2014; Helfat, et al., 2007; Blyler, Coff, 2003; Bratnicki, 2010; Drnevich, Kriauciunas, 2011; Foss, Heimeriks, Winter, Zollo, 2012; Hitt, Ireland, Hoskisson, 2004; Macher, Mowery, 2009; Makadok, 2001), supported by the authors' own opinions and experience, a catalogue of issues related to the theory of the strategic capability of enterprises in the context of assessing its maturity was selected. The literature query was supported by a survey of purposely selected experts (R¹)³. At the design level, this enabled the compilation of a research tool in the form of an evaluation sheet. The research technique was an in-depth individual interview conducted among 14 intentionally selected experts⁴. The individual interview had the form of a casual conversation; it proceeded according to a pre-agreed scenario. First, general questions were presented, which gradually turned into a more detailed issue. The chosen method of recording data from the conducted qualitative research was to record the course of individual

³ Expert selection methods as an independent research problem are the subject of many papers (Afshari, Yusuff, 2012; Vaidya, Kumar, 2006).

⁴ Taking into account the distribution by age, 4 people (28.57%) were in the 31-40 age range, 5 people (35.71%) in the 41-50 age range, 2 people (14.29) in the 51-60 range, while 3 respondents (21.43%) were over 60 years old. Among the experts, the majority of people with secondary or higher education was prevailing (92.86%), of which 71.43% of experts had higher, 31.43% – secondary, and 7.14 – vocational education.

thematic sessions included in the study immediately after its completion.

One of the issues whose significance was particularly important in the initial phase of the study was the selection of experts presenting outstanding theoretical and practical knowledge in the given field.

Their task was to provide substantive support to contractors. Nine business owners (including the co-author of the study), deputy director of the Regional Policy Department of the Marshal's Office of the Wielkopolska Province, head of the Industrial Research Laboratory of the Institute of Agricultural Machines (Research Network – Łukasiewicz) and 3 university

representatives (including: Prof. dr hab. Bogdan Nogalski – co-author of the study). When grouping all of the opinions and confronting them with the suggestions of selected researchers, a catalogue of maturity desiderata of strategic corporate capability – significant from the perspective of conducted studies – was formulated, which was verified among intentionally selected enterprises (R^2). The research implementation scheme is illustrated in Figure 1.

The proposed assessment concept included 30 characteristics generated in relation to 2 management paradigms (Figure 2).

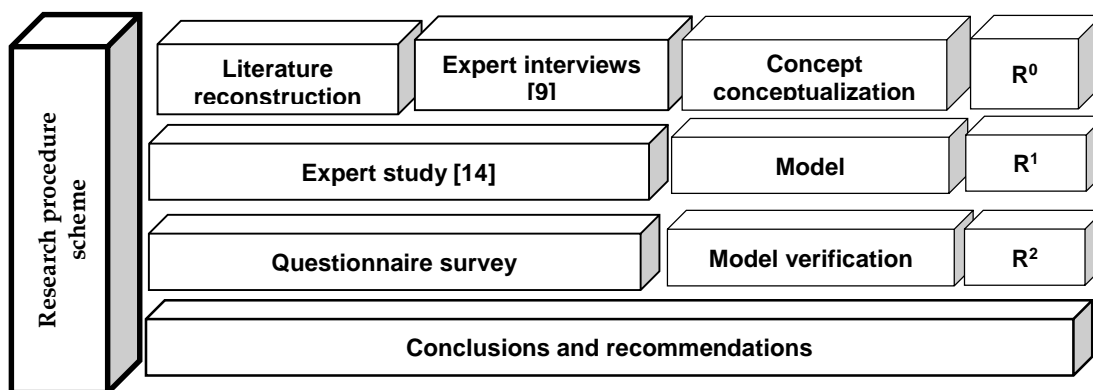


Figure 1. Research implementation scheme
Source: own development.

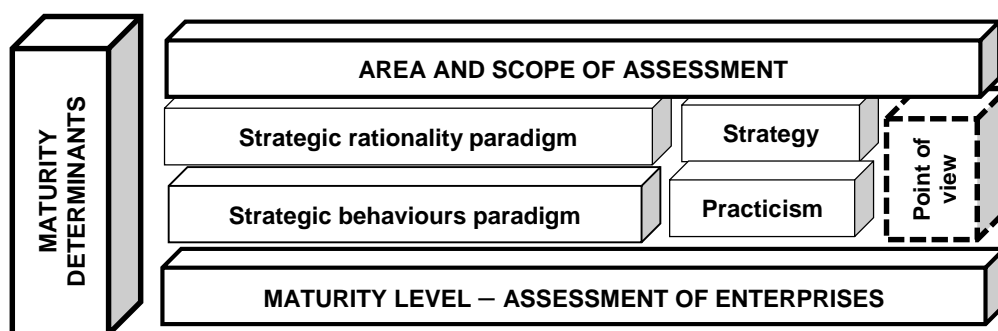


Figure 2. The area and scope of maturity desiderata of strategic corporate capability
Source: own development.

The desiderata of strategic maturity were based on the strategic rationality paradigm. They are based on the assumption that thanks to strategic capability it is possible to manage a company in a stable way. In contrast, desiderata based on the paradigm of strategic behaviour – based on experience and proven, practical methods – are characterized by practicality; they do not use theoretical techniques and assumptions (Lisiński, 2011 p. 13; Pierrings, 2011, pp. 31-32).

The basic study (verification of the theoretical model) was carried out in the period June-August 2019. Taking into account the suggestions of the experts (R^1), a research tool was prepared in the form of a survey. The proposed concept of the questionnaire survey included 36 closed questions. The need to limit the number of questions that were included in the study was dictated by the difficulty of carrying out the study with too many. In addition, according to expert assessment, the indicated areas were

considered sufficient to make a comprehensive evaluation of the strategic maturity of enterprises. The research was carried out on a sample of 71 enterprises representing the agricultural machinery sector. The selection of respondents is a factor strongly affecting the process of research implementation and determining the results to a large extent, hence the use – consisting of subjective selection by researchers – of arbitrary selection⁵.

The respondents were the owners and managers representing: micro – 11 persons (11.27%), small – 22 persons (30.99%), medium – 35 persons (49.30%) and large companies – 6 persons (8.45%). Taking into account the distribution based on age, 7.04% of respondents were 30 years old or younger, 29.58% were respondents in the 31-40 age range, 26.76% in the 41-50 age range, 23.94% in the age range between 51-60 years, while 12.68% of the respondents were over 60 years old (Table 1.).

Table 1. Characteristics of the studied population by age (N=71)

Interval	Data (age)	
	Number	[%]
30 and less	N=5	7.04
31 to 40	N=21	29.58
41 to 50	N=19	26.76
51 to 60	N=17	23.94
above 60	N=9	12.68
Total:	N=71	100.00

Source: own study.

Among the surveyed, a group of people with secondary and higher education was the largest; with 57.75% of the respondents with higher education, 26.76% with secondary education, and 15.49% – vocational education. Detailed characteristics are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Characteristics of the studied population by education (N=71)

Interval	Data (education)	
	Number	[%]
Vocational	N=11	15.49
Secondary	N=19	26.76
Higher	N=41	57.75
Total:	N=71	100.00

Source: own study.

At this stage of the survey, respondents were asked to assess the maturity of the strategic capability owned or implemented by enterprises. A five-grade scale was used for this purpose, where 1 meant a very low of the feature, and 5 – a very high one.

Considering the maturity criterion of the selected feature of the strategic capability, they were divided into three groups, i.e. desiderata characterized by high, medium and low maturity. The assignment of the 30 selected features was made based on their mean value, calculations based on the indications of the whole group participating in the study. The authors adopted the following solution: the lower limit of the value range for high-maturity desiderata was the value of the third quartile, while the upper limit of the value range for low-intensity desiderata was the value of the first quartile. As a result, the following value ranges were obtained:

- 5.00-4.00 – desiderata with a high level of maturity (group 1),
- 3.99-2.50 – desiderata with a medium level of maturity (group 2),
- 2.49 and less – desiderata with a low level of maturity (group 3).

In the further part of the study, an attempt was made to interpret the results based on respondent declarations.

Results and discussion

When conducting the evaluation of the level of maturity of the strategic capability of manufacturing enterprises operating in the agricultural machinery sector – which is a symptom of partial capabilities – a universally accepted practice was used in developing the results of the surveys. The recognition was made based on their average value, calculations based on the indications of the respondents participating in the study. As in the research methodology the average value of a given feature is used (despite the fact that in principle it should not be counted on ordinal scales), this fact is also used in this study. As a result, an answer was obtained regarding the degree of assimilation or implementation of the indicated desiderata. The research results are shown in Table 3.

⁵ The following sets of criteria were adopted: high level of interdisciplinarity of possessed knowledge and experience in management, ability to cooperate (relational competence),

experience in innovative and implementation works as well as readiness to cooperate during the project implementation period (availability).

Table 3. Results of own research

Item	DESIDERATA	% of INDICATIONS					\bar{X}
		Feature Intensity					
		1	2	3	4	5	
1.	Ability to obtain innovative solutions	-	2.0	6.0	28.0	35.0	4.35
		-	2.8	8.5	39.4	49.3	
2.	Adaptation to changes in parallel taking into account various action options	1.0	3.0	6.0	31.0	30.0	4.21
		1.4	4.2	8.5	43.7	42.3	
3.	Capability to configure resources in the context of provoking and taking advantage of opportunities; orientation towards creating and taking advantage of new opportunities	-	2.0	4.0	28.0	37.0	4.41
		-	2.8	5.6	39.4	52.1	
4.	Matching goals to conditions	1.0	2.0	5.0	29.0	34.0	4.31
		1.4	2.8	7.0	40.8	47.9	
5.	Readiness of the managerial and executive staff for intensive development	2.0	2.0	5.0	29.0	33.0	4.25
		2.8	2.8	7.0	40.8	46.5	
6.	Motivations for introducing evolutionary and revolutionary solutions	2.0	2.0	7.0	21.0	39.0	4.31
		2.8	2.8	9.9	29.6	54.9	
7.	Capability to manage the change process	2.0	2.0	9.0	27.0	31.0	4.17
		2.8	2.8	12.7	38.0	43.7	
8.	Attitudes and behaviours resulting in the acceptance of strategic goals	2.0	2.0	11.0	27.0	29.0	4.11
		2.8	2.8	15.5	38.0	40.8	
9.	Capability to react immediately to an opportunity	1.0	1.0	7.0	27.0	35.0	4.32
		1.4	1.4	9.9	38.0	49.3	
10.	Knowledge and skills underlying competitive advantage	1.0	1.0	8.0	28.0	33.0	4.28
		1.4	1.4	11.3	39.4	46.5	
11.	Integrated use of skills, traits, knowledge and skills to implement the strategy	1.0	2.0	11.0	24.0	33.0	4.21
		1.4	2.8	15.5	33.8	46.5	
12.	Effective, responsible, energetic, economical and skilful management of all matters, material, capital, human and information resources	1.0	2.0	14.0	24.0	30.0	4.13
		1.4	2.8	19.7	33.8	42.3	
13.	Implementation of set goals	1.0	2.0	13.0	18.0	37.0	4.24
		1.4	2.8	18.3	25.4	52.1	
14.	Strategic skills that, when using resources, enable actions that are difficult to imitate	1.0	1.0	7.0	25.0	37.0	4.35
		1.4	1.4	9.9	35.2	52.1	
15.	The capability to reduce costs that hinder imitation by competitors (cost leadership)	1.0	1.0	5.0	24.0	40.0	4.42
		1.4	1.4	7.0	33.8	56.3	
16.	Creating a network of internal and external ties underlying the creation of added value	-	1.0	6.0	23.0	41.0	4.46
		-	1.4	8.5	32.4	57.7	
17.	The capability to deliberately create, expand or change the current resource potential	1.0	3.0	10.0	18.0	39.0	4.28
		1.4	4.2	14.1	25.4	54.9	
18.	The capability to overcome the difficulties encountered by an enterprise on its path of development	1.0	3.0	12.0	20.0	35.0	4.20
		1.4	4.2	16.9	28.2	49.3	
19.	The capability to maintain the development potential and competitive enterprise in the long term	1.0	4.0	10.0	22.0	34.0	4.18
		1.4	5.6	14.1	31.0	47.9	
20.	The capability to respond, allowing to create and maintain satisfactory relations between the goals of the company and its resources vs. changing conditions arising in the environment to achieve the highest possible efficiency	-	3.0	9.0	25.0	34.0	4.27
		-	4.2	12.7	35.2	47.9	
21.	The capability to create actions to achieve the required results	1.0	3.0	9.0	26.0	32.0	4.20
		1.4	4.2	12.7	36.6	45.1	
22.	An action plan setting directions and showing how to allocate resources to implement the organization's mission and goals, while maintaining a competitive advantage	1.0	4.0	6.0	27.0	33.0	4.23
		1.4	5.6	8.5	38.0	46.5	
23.	Description of the desired future company condition as a result of looking inside the organization and evaluating its culture	1.0	4.0	9.0	28.0	29.0	4.13
		1.4	5.6	12.7	39.4	40.8	

24.	Future action model based on proven and grounded previous behaviours and experiences	1.0	3.0	9.0	27.0	31.0	4.18
		1.4	4.2	12.7	38.0	43.7	
25.	The capability to increase and use resources to present customers with a product and service offer whose value exceeds the offer of the competition and which at the same time ensures profitability of the company	1.0	2.0	7.0	28.0	33.0	4.27
		1.4	2.8	9.9	39.4	46.5	
26.	Capability to build a value chain allowing for efficient use and renewal of resources and skills	1.0	2.0	7.0	33.0	28.0	4.20
		1.4	2.8	9.9	46.5	39.4	
27.	The capability to create links between resources being at the disposal of the company and activities creating value for broadly understood customers	-	2.0	6.0	31.0	32.0	4.31
		-	2.8	8.5	43.7	45.1	
28.	Taking advantage of resources, activities and partners determining the possibility of reaching as well as maintaining contact with customers	-	2.0	6.0	32.0	31.0	4.30
		-	2.8	8.5	45.1	43.7	
29.	The capability to refresh or exchange those features of the organization that have a significant impact on its long-term functioning prospects	-	4.0	7.0	26.0	34.0	4.27
		-	5.6	9.9	36.6	47.9	
30.	Acquisition and use of new knowledge through innovative behaviours that lead to the development of capabilities and ultimately to modify the strategic domain	1.0	3.0	7.0	28.0	32.0	4.23
		1.4	4.2	9.9	39.4	45.1	

Source: own development based on research and literature on the subject (among others: Oblój, 2010; Agarwal, Helfat, 2009; Prashantham, 2008; Romanowska, 2009; Urbanowska-Sojkin, Banaszyk, Witczak, 2007; Rokita, 2005; Nogalski, Niewiadomski, 2019).

From the point of view of ensuring and maintaining competitive advantages, the high level of capabilities to obtain innovative solutions (average grade 4.35; 49.3% of indications for a rating of 5 points) – declared by the surveyed enterprises, is of great importance. Building an advantage using new solutions of a product, process, technology (Huang, 2011), marketing or organizational nature is not an easy task (Cakar, Erturk, 2010; Lichtenthaler, 2008). As it requires creating ones own innovation potential depending on the resources owned by the company⁶. Since economic practice as a remedy to increase the unpredictability of the environment most often chooses resource orientation, it is justified – in the authors' opinion – to treat resources in the category of the maturity of the organization's strategic capability. Nevertheless, the source of the company's success is not only having the resources, but their optimal configuration. Therefore, it is the capability to configure the resources in the context of provoking and taking advantage of opportunities that determines the maturity of the surveyed enterprises (average rating 4.41; 52.1% of indications for a rating of 5 points)⁷. The resource approach assumes that at

the heart of effective management lies a focus on looking for emerging changes, responding to them and using them in the perspective of emerging business opportunities. In the context of the above, it should be emphasized that the flexible adaptation of organizations to changes taking place both internally and externally as well as in its environment, is an important condition for the survival and development of the surveyed enterprises. At the same time, it is equally important for them to be able to anticipate and overtake emerging changes, and not just to react to existing ones, and therefore skilful and consistent change management, taking into account various options of action, is particularly important in this area (average rating 4.21; 42.3% of indications for 5 points). From a business point of view, it is necessary to observe the company's own market environment and respond appropriately to its changes, because the development of the environment or its anticipation are a signal to make changes. The introduction of a change requires a systematic redesign of the organization in such a way as to facilitate its adaptation to radical changes in the environment and achieve new goals. For the change to be

⁶ At this point, it should be emphasized that the determinant of market success are not only resources understood as a kind of asset, or capability (Olsson, Wadell, Odenrick, Bergendahl, 2010; Parthasarathy, Huang, Ariss, 2011; Tsai MT, Tsai Ch. L, 2010; Zheng, Liu, George, 2010) skills, organizational processes, attributes, information, knowledge, etc. (Kogut,

Zander, 1992; Daft, 2001, p. 140), but also – as the authors have emphasized many times – the ability to use them.

⁷ Attention is paid to the capability to react immediately to an opportunity (average rating 4.32; 49.3% of indications for a rating of 5 points).

effective, it is necessary for the participants to understand the nature of the change process and to adapt the goals to the conditions in which it happened; high level of capabilities among the surveyed enterprises (average rating 4.31; 47.9% of indications for a 5-point rating).

Therefore, professionals are needed who recognize the importance of modern management in the process of change, have managerial skills, the necessary knowledge of organization and management, and show readiness for intensive development (average rating 4.25; 46.5% of indications for a rating of 5 points) Among the surveyed enterprises, it is easy to observe the motivation to introduce evolutionary and revolutionary solutions (average rating 4.31; 54.9% of indications for a rating of 5 points). Using the available resources, techniques and tools, taking into account the needs and aspirations, as well as the state of the environment, enterprises are able to transfer from the initial state to the assumed final state (average grade 4.17; 43.7% of indications for a grade of 5 points). In this case, the special role of the strategy was emphasized as a tool enabling management of the entire change process.

Contours of business organizations of the future are drawn by many practitioners and representatives of science. Most of them build anticipated competency profiles of effective managers. The knowledge and skills underlying the competitive advantage of the surveyed enterprises clearly reveal their maturity (average rating 4.28; 46.5% of indications for a rating of 5 points). Attention is also paid to attitudes and behaviours that lead to the acceptance of strategic goals, which are – in the case of the surveyed enterprises – a strategic competence (average rating 4.11; 40.8% of indications for a rating of 5 points).

Companies need employees who will meet the challenges of the 21st century. The way to success are people who can more effectively use the company's current resources, look ahead, often see what others do not see⁸. The capability to integrate the use of skills, traits, knowledge and skills, determining the implementation of the adopted strategy, which in perspective determines the successes achieved by the surveyed enterprises is crucial here (average rating 4.21; 46.5% of indications for a rating of 5 points). A contemporary employee appears as a

professional who is characterized by creativity, innovation, the ability to acquire new competences, the ability to accept and tolerate uncertain reality and teamwork. In the opinion of the surveyed enterprises, it implies effective, responsible, energetic, economic and skilful management of all matters, material, capital, human and information resources (average rating 4.13; 42.3% of indications for a rating of 5 points). Setting strategic goals is one of the key management skills. Only the precise formulation of strategic goals makes them measurable. The best way to formulate a goal precisely is to put it in the form of a significant relationship of one factor to another (Oblój, 2010). Setting and achieving strategic goals is not an easy task, but it is certainly necessary to run a business successfully. All the more it should be noted that the capability to set and implement the company's strategic goals is one of the elements that distinguishes the surveyed enterprises (average rating 4.24; 52.1% of indications for a rating of 5 points).

In the context of the strategic capability, it can be said that the mere possession of resources is not a sufficient condition for gaining a competitive advantage. To acquire it, it is also necessary to skilfully develop these resources and create new combinations⁹, and the proper use of capacity to meet market and environmental requirements. The surveyed enterprises that are aware of this fact are able to develop and use unique, difficult to imitate and valuable capabilities, thanks to which they can achieve an above-average income and gain a competitive advantage (average rating 4.35; 52.1% of indications for a rating of 5 points).

They gain competitive advantage by reducing production costs (cost leadership). Therefore, the activities of enterprises are focused on the main goal, which is to minimize total costs. Rationalization of costs and the resulting advantage, however, requires not only the ability to constantly invest in technology, search for cheap sources of raw materials and materials, but also to minimize the costs associated with after-sales service and advertising (average rating 4.42; 56.3% of indications for a rating of 5 points).

The strategic capabilities should include managing the multidimensional relationships of the company with its stakeholders, which are holistic, i.e. they create a system covering many multi-faceted relationships with various entities.

⁸ Such employees are often referred to as strategic employees.

⁹ The surveyed enterprises are characterized by the capability to deliberately create, expand or change the current resource potential (18 average rating 4.28; 54.9% of indications for a rating of 5 points).

Thanks to the development of the capabilities and resources in which key competences are embedded – the studied enterprises – can more effectively achieve the set objectives, related to creating customer value, enterprise value and value for individual stakeholders (average rating 4.46; 57.7% of indications for a rating of 5 points).

The growing uncertainty, which is a feature of the modern turbulent environment, means that one of the challenges faced by managers is the speed of action (Kozłowski 2004, p. 67). According to M. Castells (2008, pp. 436-437), today, in the conditions of a network economy, time is managed as a resource, and a differentiating factor. The speed of response is one of the basic manifestations of the capabilities of the surveyed enterprises to overcome the difficulties encountered in their development (average rating 4.20; 49.3% of indications for a rating of 5 points). It determines their ability to adapt to a changing environment, as well as having such an impact on the environment that means they do not have to change plans and assumptions. Due to the uncertainty of the environment, enterprises declare the capability to maintain development and competitive potential in the long term (20 average rating 4.18; 47.9% of indications for a rating of 5 points).

Openness to the environment and a quick response to signals flowing from there is therefore one of the main success factors of the surveyed enterprises. The capability to react enables creating and maintaining satisfactory relations between the objectives of a company and its resources, and the changing surrounding conditions, so as to achieve the best possible efficiency (average rating 4.27; 47.9% of indications for a rating of 5 points). In the context of the above, the ability to create actions to achieve the required results is declared, taking into account the capability to react to new competition conditions emerging in the company environment and opportunities to improve results and threats arising from them (average rating 4.20; 45.1% of indications for the rating of 5 points).

The strategic capability of enterprises is reflected in an action plan setting directions and showing how to allocate resources to implement the mission of the organization and achieve its goals, while maintaining a competitive advantage (average rating 4.23; 46.5% of indications for a rating of 5 points). An important criterion is, therefore – declared by the respondents – the description of the desired state of the company in the future as a result of looking inside the organization and assessing its culture (average

rating 4.13; 40.8% of indications for a rating of 5 points). Depending on the concept, it takes a different dimension. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the capability of enterprises to create flexible business models reflecting the direction of future activity is highlighted; while in the continuous transformation of the organization their managers rely on proven and well-grounded previous behaviours and experiences (25 average rating 4.18; 43.7% of indications for a rating of 5 points).

When competing through resources, enterprises declare the capability to expand and use them to present customers with an offer of products and services, the value of which exceeds the offer of the competition and which, at the same time, provides the company with profitability (average rating 4.27; 46.5% of indications for a rating of 5 points). Capability to build a value chain allowing for the efficient use and renewal of resources and skills is also highlighted. (average score 4.20; 39.4% of the indications for 5 point score). Renewal requires the use of both existing capabilities and the acquisition of new ones. By redefining or reconfiguring resources towards a new approach to running a business, in the absence of other solutions – the surveyed enterprises – introduce new elements to their resource profile. The development of a "new" image of the organization – in their opinion – is associated with the need to acquire the capability to create links between resources being at the disposal of the company and activities creating value for broadly understood customers (average rating 4.31; 45.1% of indications for a rating of 5 points). Although it essentially concerns the use of a new – from the business point of view – capacity, it also applies to ensuring exchange in business networks. It is therefore important to have resources, activities and partners determining the possibility of reaching, as well as maintaining, contact with customers (average rating 4.30; 43.7% of indications for a rating of 5 points).

The strategic capability of an organization sometimes forces a modification of the business and/or organizational system. It can be done by reorganizing, changing technologies, diversifying, rebuilding operational processes or shifting the product portfolio. Problems related to the increase or decrease in the value of resources and capabilities are typically strategic because they determine the set of choices to be made in the future (Agarwal, Helfat, 2009, pp. 281-293). Attention is paid to the capability of the surveyed enterprises to "refresh" or exchange those features that have a significant impact on their long-term prospects of functioning (average rating

4.27; 47.9% of indications for a rating of 5 points). In the context of the above, the capability to acquire and use new knowledge is declared through innovative behaviours that lead to the development of new abilities, and, ultimately, to the modification of the strategic domain (average rating 4.23; 45.1% of indications for a rating of 5 points). This can be manifested by the transformation of the organization by renewing the key ideas on which it is built (Guth, Ginsberg, 1990), the transformation of the organization in terms of changing the scope of its activities or the concept of the strategy (Zahra, 1996) or the fundamental change in the manner of competition as a result of which the organization tries to redefine its relations with its market partners or competitors (Covin, Miles, 1999).

Conclusions

During numerous conferences devoted to issues in the field of management and quality sciences, and as a result of numerous meetings with representatives of business practice, the authors were asked questions concerning the available knowledge about the desiderata of strategic maturity. Aiming to fill the existing gap in knowledge, a series of studies was conducted, the subject of which was an attempt to concretize the maturity model of the strategic capacity of a production company by defining the desiderata that determine it.

The fundamental objective of the research was to identify the actual level of maturity of manufacturing enterprises in the area of their strategic capabilities. The adopted research methodology countenanced recognition of the quantitative and qualitative intensification of the descriptors among selected enterprises operating on the agricultural machinery market. The gathered research material enabled the authors to draw conclusions of a general and cognitive nature. The paper proposes a procedure and a tool enabling identification of key desiderata of the strategic maturity of enterprises, which, in the view of the authors, will contribute to the fragmentary filling of the lack of knowledge in this area. The maturity evaluation method discussed in the article is part of a comprehensive approach towards the holistic assessment of business maturity and clarification of management mechanisms. It is used to indicate the strengths and weaknesses as well as to identify areas requiring improvement.

The studied enterprises declare a high level of maturity in the presented scope, which,

according to the authors, proves their transformation in line with the paradigms of today's management. The partial desiderata selected in the model – constituting the total strategic capacity of enterprises – are characterized by a high level, hence they were classified within group 1. It was vital in the paper to capture the important role (both stimulating and inhibitory) of strategic capability, and the most important premise for further exploration of the research problem raised in the paper is undoubtedly confirmation of the existence of strong connections and interrelationships between selected strategic capacity desiderata and the business position of enterprises. In practice, this means that enterprises showing a high level of strategic maturity are characterized by vulnerability and the potential to achieve a higher level of competitiveness in the studied sector. An important premise for theory and practice is the confirmation of the validity of considering enterprise development through the prism of the used set of tangible and intangible resources, key competences, the enterprise's vulnerability to activate and use opportunities or innovative organization of the operations as determinants of competitive advantages.

The main enunciation in the paper is confirmation that the fight for being competitive requires rethinking, organizing and properly implementing a strategy or business model in the daily activities of companies. This requires multi-level implementations in the executive areas as well as planning and development activities. Running a business requires observation of the market and, depending on the perceived needs, reorganizing activities that are a response to changes, moderations and continuous novelties occurring in the environment.

The theoretical basis of the research presented in the publication, for management practitioners, can be the foundation for diagnosis and inspiration to build their own strategic capability model. Such an approach confirms the point and purposefulness of the "useful" research carried out by the authors in management practice. Notwithstanding the above, the authors perceive the need for further – even more in-depth – research in the discussed area.

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