

EXPERTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE ORGANISATION'S STAKEHOLDERS – SEMANTIC FIELD ANALYSIS

Iryna MANCZAK^{1*}, Justyna DĄBROWSKA², Volodymyr MOROZ³

¹ Krakow University of Economics; manczaki@uek.krakow.pl, ORCID: 0000-0002-9661-9945

² Krakow University of Economics; dabrowsj@uek.krakow.pl, ORCID: 0000-0002-8821-7161

³ National Technical University «Kharkiv Polytechnic Institute»; moroz.volodymyr.d.sc@gmail.com,
ORCID: 0000-0003-0796-5035

* Correspondence author

Purpose: The purpose of this article is to identify experts' perception of stakeholders.

Design/methodology/approach: The research methodology involved conducting focus group interviews in a remote format. The obtained material was transcribed and interpreted through the prism of semantic field analysis.

Findings: The approach used made it possible to depict perceptions of stakeholders among the research participants.

Research limitations/implications: The article contains a preliminary study. In the future it is planned to conduct additional quantitative and qualitative research also at international level.

Practical implications: The conclusions proposed as an outcome of this research can have an impact on the formulation of a strategy aiming at managing relations with the organisation's stakeholders.

Social implications: The article demonstrates the opinions of experts representing a variety of organisations and sectors.

Originality/value: For the purpose of the research, a purpose-built methodology was developed to obtain the answers to the research questions. On-line interviews were conducted in line with the authors' research design.

Keywords: stakeholder theory, qualitative research, semantic field analysis, expert interviews, co-management

Category of the paper: The article presents the results of the authors' own research.

1. Introduction

Stakeholder theory sits within the key research areas in the social sciences (Nartney et al., 2023). The theory focuses on aspects related to organisational activities determining the direction which an organisation is taking (Bonnafeous-Boucher, Rendtorff, 2016; Moroz et al., 2021). The concept also addresses the expectations of stakeholders, with whom relationships are built at various levels. Taking into account the perspective of stakeholders in the process of creating an organisation's strategy indicates that its activities are carried out in a socially responsible manner, as well as the decisions made lead to balance the interests of various social groups. In business management, stakeholder theory encourages the involvement of external stakeholders already at the stage of creating and consolidating strategic activities (Kaplan, Norton, 1992). A problem that emerges straightaway is the diversity of expectations of stakeholders representing different sectors and social groups. Heterogeneity and hierarchical nature of the actors can hinder the relationship between stakeholders. However, if these relationships are properly managed, harmonized, and aligned with common needs, shared added value is produced. The issues outlined above indicate that the stakeholders and their involvement in organisations is complex but important and worth being investigated from the point of view of the social sciences.

The purpose of the article is to identify experts' perceptions of stakeholders and their involvement in organisations' activities. The research methodology involved conducting on-line focus group interviews. The obtained material was transcribed and interpreted through the prism of semantic field analysis. The approach used made it possible to understand how stakeholders and their involvement are perceived by research participants representing various organisations and sectors.

2. Experts participating in the qualitative research

Nowadays, expert knowledge is of high value in many areas of socioeconomic environments (Cukras-Stelągowska, 2021). This knowledge can be obtained through qualitative research and leads to describe reality as it is in order to understand socioeconomic changes. A list of reasons justifying the use of the indicated approach can include (Czernek, 2015):

- building a new theory when the theory explaining a phenomenon does not exist or is insufficiently developed,
- capturing the life experiences of the subjects of the study in their natural environment, including the interpretation of these experiences,

- illustration of some abstract idea deduced from the theory,
- examination of narratives, discourse or other unusual phenomena.

Qualitative research can be conducted through interviews, which are divided into individual and group interviews (Maison, 2022). Their objective is to obtain respondents' statements of facts, which are subjective in nature, but nevertheless referring to experiences and individual observations. The literature points out that the interview interaction „is characterized by a kind of dynamics based on the constant interpretation and establishment of meanings between the researcher and the respondent, the questioner and the respondent” (Geisler, 2013, p. 45).

For the purpose of this research the term „expert” is synonymous with a research participant. It can be considered that the group of experts is made up of people with strong professional experience as a result of duties they have carried out at work for many years (Manczak, Gruszka, 2021). Most often, these individuals are in leadership positions. Expert interviews are a type of meeting between researchers and a group of people who represent a relatively small population under study (Döringer, 2021). Those interviews take form of non-standardised interviews, which in market research are mostly known as in-depth interviews, while in academic sociology they are referred to as free-form targeted interviews (Stempień, Rostocki, 2013). It is worth mentioning that the use of this type of approach „makes it possible to learn the internal viewpoint of a community from the perspective of its leaders” (Cukras-Stelałowska, 2021, p. 117). The discussion above indicates the rationale for undertaking qualitative research with the participation of representatives coming from the economic environment. By inviting the market actors to take part in the research the scientific community showcase an attitude of openness towards changing economic environment and aspire to understand the phenomena occurring in the socio-economic landscape.

Undoubtedly, this approach gives an opportunity to further investigation of problems under discussion and may also lead to identify new and meaningful issues that fall within the thematic scope of the analyses conducted (Hackley, 2019).

Previously prepared interview scenario sets the way interviews with the participation of experts are conducted. They follow carefully designed research methodology and set out general research orientation. In order to expand the discussion, in-depth questions are most often prepared in advance that allows the researchers to obtain detailed primary data (Thomas, 2006). Often, the course of an interview is heavily determined by the level of experts' responsiveness to the interview questions and their interest in items and issues taken up by the other participants in the meeting.

3. Purpose and the research method used

The purpose of the research was to identify how stakeholders are perceived by participants taking part in the focus group interviews. The participants consisted of people who have worked as managers in various organisations. The interviewees can be considered as experts having strong professional experience and a good understanding of operations carried out by their organisations. In order to identify the most appropriate variables describing the social phenomena in organisations it is recommended to get close to the nature of the activities performed by individuals in their environments (Glińska-Neweś, Escher, 2018).

The research was conducted in series between February and March 2022. Six virtual meetings were held in which all together 23 participants took part (four participants took part in each out of five meetings, three participants took part in one meeting)¹ (Table 1).

Table 1.

Profile of the respondents participating in the study

Lp.	Function	Organisation type
1.	chairman (R ₁)	a housing association
2.	Department manager (R ₂)	a museum
3.	chairman (R ₃)	a company operating in the transport and logistics sector
4.	chairman (R ₄)	a municipal company operating in the area of transport
5.	manager (R ₅)	a bank
6.	manager (R ₆)	a plant operating in the field of metallurgy
7.	board member (R ₇)	a railroad sleeper plant
8.	chairman (R ₈)	an airport
9.	deputy director (R ₉)	an aducation institution
10.	chairman (R ₁₀)	a company operating in the area of industrial automatics
11.	deputy director (R ₁₁)	a television station
12.	chairman (R ₁₂)	a shared services centre
13.	CEO (R ₁₃)	a food industry company
14.	co-owner (R ₁₄)	an accounting office
15.	deputy chairman (R ₁₅)	a company operating in the area of accounting, consulting and audits
16.	chairman (R ₁₆)	a company operating in the area of automation
17.	project co-ordinator (R ₁₇)	a company operating in the area of electronics and electricity
18.	chairman (R ₁₈)	a company performing activities in the area of design, production, assembly of components and equipment for the power industry
19.	manager (R ₁₉)	a training company
20.	manager (R ₂₀)	a business consultancy
21.	manager (R ₂₁)	a company operating in the field of energy
22.	CEO (R ₂₂)	an IT company
23.	owner (R ₂₃)	a construction and maintenance company

Source: own study.

Analysing the profile of the respondents and the entities they represented, it can be concluded that the interviewees represented the strategic areas of the economy. Importantly, most of the experts hold senior managerial positions such as chairman or CEO.

¹ The respondents were marked with the letter R with the addition of another ordinal number in the subscript.

In order to facilitate the discussion, the following in-depth questions were prepared:

- who do you consider as stakeholders of the organisation you represent?
- why did you indicate the named individuals or stakeholder groups?
- what resources do your identified stakeholders have that are important to your organisation?

The interpretation of the answers to the above questions was proposed as a result of the semantic field analysis carried out post interviews. It should be noted that this type of analysis is applicable to research papers representing management and quality sciences (Szymańska, 2022). The research led to recognise how reality was created by respondents in the process of assigning meanings to selected categories of concepts (Warmińska, Urbaniak, 2017). In the primary material, respondents' statements related to the term stakeholder, stakeholder groups and stakeholder resources were identified. This procedure made it possible to conduct an analysis of the semantic field. This analysis is derived from the theory of the semantic field, which is based on the assumption that „language is a system consisting of elements - words, interconnected by a network of semantic relations, building specific categories (groups, maps) of meaning” (Pacek, 2015, p. 22). This method „provides an opportunity for researchers and initiators of change to communicate it in a non-invasive way, tailored to practitioners' perceptions of social reality – that is, those actors in social life on whom the existence (or not) of social change will ultimately depend” (Dudkiewicz, 2015, pp. 160-161). In order to realise the research objectives, it was considered necessary to assign the coded statements to categories in relation to their function².

The purpose of the semantic analysis was to reconstruct the experts' thinking on the term „stakeholder”. The researchers attempted to outline the perception of stakeholders by the interview participants. For this purpose, the following networks of meanings were identified (Warmińska, Urbaniak, 2017):

- equivalents (synonyms; what is the subject/term identified with?),
- descriptions (what is the subject/term like? what are its characteristics?),
- associations (what is the subject/term associated with? what is it associated with? what accompanies it?),
- oppositions (what is the subject/term opposed to? what is its opposite?),
- a description of the subject's activities (what does it do? what effects does it have?),
- a description of actions towards the subject (what actions can be taken towards him?).

In the course of the research, networks of meanings related to the term „stakeholder” were identified and confronted with the literature on the studied subject. Analysis of the semantic field of the term „stakeholder” made it possible to outline the positions of experts on the issues covered by the study.

² The research was guided by an open-ended approach within the framework of the adopted convention.

4. Results obtained

The following research areas were adopted: criteria for listing a stakeholder group, reasons for identifying stakeholders and stakeholder groups, and resources held by stakeholders. These areas formed the integral axes of the research and set the research framework. The answers obtained during the interviews allowed the researchers to build answers to the research questions which are closely based on the professional experience of the interviewees and derive from the activities carried out by the organisations they represented (Gruszka, Manczak, 2022). During the interviews the experts gave free statements and presented spontaneous opinions, taking into account other thoughts that only emerged during the meeting (Denzin, Lincoln, 2017). Moreover, the research participants were able to experience situations in which all individuals discussed dynamically the subject of the research, and notify how group dynamics processes support or inhibit discussion during the course of a given meeting. The added value of the completed interviews was not only presenting respondents' thoughts and developing them, but confronting them with the point of view of other interviewees (Worek, 2001).

4.1. Equivalents

At the beginning of the analysis and with the view to understand the meaning of the term „stakeholder” the equivalents were identified. The literature indicates that the elements of the semantic field are closely linked to what, for the interlocutors, is the equivalent of the concept under analysis (Warمیńska, Urbaniak, 2017). The experts offered a plethora of terms that according to them equiva the „stakeholder” term (Table 2). Some of the equivalents refer to the Freeman's stakeholder classification (1984). Importantly, this category of meaning, i.e. „equivalents” was the most abundant.

Table 2.
Equivalents identified

Categories	Examples
Equivalents	<i>firms (R₄, R₅, R₁₃), suppliers (R₁, R₃, R₄, R₆, R₁₂, R₁₅, R₁₆, R₁₇, R₁₈), owners (R₆), state (R₂₂), national authorities (R₁), government (R₃, R₁₄, R₁₅, R₂₁), ministry (R₉), local authorities (R₁), municipalities (R₄, R₆), board of directors (R₃, R₁₇, R₁₈, R₁₉, R₂₂), co-owners (R₁₈), actioners (R₃, R₅), shareholders (R₇, R₁₀, R₁₇), market regulators (R₁₀, R₁₁, R₁₂), European institutions (R₁₁), investors (R₁₅, R₁₆), visitors (R₂), tourists (R₂, R₄), employees (R₃, R₄, R₅, R₆, R₇, R₈, R₉, R₁₀, R₁₂, R₁₅, R₁₆, R₁₇, R₁₈, R₁₉, R₂₀, R₂₂), clients (R₃, R₅, R₆, R₇, R₁₂, R₁₄, R₁₆, R₁₇, R₂₀, R₂₂), certifying authorities (R₁₈), environmental institutions (R₂₁), industry associations (R₂₃), recipients (R₁₀, R₁₅), passengers (R₈), media (R₁₇), universities (R₆, R₇, R₁₂), competitors (R₆, R₁₁, R₂₁), financial creditors (R₃), scientific institutions (R₁₇), banks (R₁₇, R₁₈, R₁₉), social organisations (R₁₂), environmental organisations (R₂₃), institutions (R₁₃), financial institutions (R₃), neighbourhood (R₁), cultural organisations (R₁, R₃), cultural and educational organisations (R₁), NGOs (R₂, R₂₁), intermediaries (R₃), seniors' organisations (R₁), central authorities and services (national and municipal police) (R₁), sovereign (R₁₀, R₁₁), spectators (R₁₁), parents (R₉), schools (R₂), pupils/students (R₉), children with disabilities (R₃), controlling institutions (R₁₇), local community (R₄, R₅, R₇), municipality (R₂)</i>

Source: own study.

Respondents' answers take into account the different stakeholder groups distinguished by Freeman (1984). These stakeholders include internal stakeholders such as *employees, owners, management, co-owners* or *shareholders*. External stakeholders include such entities as *suppliers, customers, state, national authorities, government, ministry, local authorities, municipality, market regulators* and *European institutions*. According to respondents, external stakeholders also include *competitors, financial creditors, banks* or *media*. *University and scientific institutions* also appeared among the responses. A stakeholder group frequently mentioned by respondents was the local community and environmental organisations: *community organisations, environmental organisations, cultural institutions, cultural and educational institutions, senior organisations, children with disabilities, local community, neighbourhood, and environmental institutions*. Respondents' comments coincided with the assumptions of the five-dimensional innovation system which characterises economies funded on the knowledge economy concept (Carayannis, Campbell, 2011). The model distinguishes helices that work together and allow an exchange of knowledge and resources in order to create a sustainable system in which organisations from various sectors form networks that help develop and thrive. This contributes to the overall economic growth and enables the smooth functioning of all entities in a system. The components of the model are three helices (the triple helix) represented by the private sector, the public sector, universities and other R&D organisations, all of which have an impact on increasing the stock of knowledge, number of innovations and commercial applications. Those helices also enter into a balanced relationship with the social and natural environments (Leydesdorff, Smith, 2021). The networks built as a result of the collaboration between the helices are fundamentals of modern and democratic economies which function in a smart and sustainable manner, including fostering social inclusion.

4.2. Descriptions

Examples of descriptions were analysed through the prism of emotions (emotional emphasis) (Dudkiewicz, 2015). A simplified approach was used, which assumes the division of the expressed views into positive, negative, ambivalent and neutral (Warمیńska, Urbaniak, 2017). As a result of the analysis carried out, it was found that among the offered descriptions of the term „stakeholder” there was a predominance of those with a positive tinge, which demonstrated what the subject under study was like (Table 3). The examples of the answers were as follows: *stakeholders determine the development strategy of each organisation, make key decisions, fund day-to-day operations, are able to help fund large scale projects, implement and execute projects, take care of customer relations, or outline the idea we use*. The descriptions with a positive tinge include: *has intellectual resources from the R&D area*. According to one interviewee, *stakeholders allow us to develop. We use their laboratories, their knowledge base ... we make available our products to them, our staff and current topics as research topics for students*. The views expressed by the respondents help build

an interpretation how the stakeholders are perceived by the interviewed parties. The research indicates that one of the most important characteristics of the stakeholders is the R&D activity and their knowledge base (Growiec et al., 2022). Moreover, the responses demonstrate that the knowledge exchange between stakeholders and organisations is two-way, the stakeholders share their knowledge and the infrastructure with the organisations but also the organisations make available their knowledge and resources to their stakeholders.

Table 3.
Descriptions identified

Category	Examples
Descriptions	<i>stakeholders have different opinions and voices (R₈), determine the development strategy of each organisation (R₁₅), outline the idea we use (R₁₃), outline the direction (R₁₇), make key decisions (R₁₇), fund day-to-day operations (R₁₇), are able to fund large scale projects (R₁₀), control (R₁₇, R₁₈), assess the operations (R₁₇), have intellectual resources in the R&D (R₂₁), implement and execute projects (R₁₇), take care of customer relations (R₁₇), take care of relations with the suppliers (R₁₇), regulate taxes (R₁₄), a group of teachers must be committed, creative, open to developing themselves, open to treat students we have individually (R₉), allow us to develop. We use their laboratories, their knowledge base..... we make available our products to them, our staff and current topics as research topics for students (R₁₇)</i>

Source: own study.

One of the respondents, a school representative provided the following statement: *a group of teachers must be committed, creative, open to developing themselves, open to treat students we have individually*. One expert also stated that „stakeholders have different opinions and voices”. The way the stakeholders were described correspond with the literature indicating the involvement of employees (internal stakeholders) into organisations which is vital for organisational success (Sobocka-Szczapa, 2022).

4.3. Associations

The associations with the term „stakeholder” point to the activities taking place by the organisations represented by the interviewees (Table 4). Among others the respondents provided information on activities carried out by stakeholders which are related to *environmental protection*. Furthermore, they indicated *support for people with disabilities* which can be understood as one of the activities within the corporate social responsibility. There were also views which referred to knowledge and organisational learning: *deepen the knowledge, continuous learning or too a number of resources in the form of, first of all, knowledge and way of doing things, which also expands our way of doing things and our knowledge, and with each customer we learn different things*. The interviewees acknowledged stakeholders’ engagement in activities enhancing development of the organisations: *stakeholders give opportunities for expansion into external markets*.

Tabel 4.*Associations identified*

Category	Examples
Associations	<i>environmental protection (R₁₃), environment (R₅), we run various projects with us (R₁₃), support for people with disabilities (R₁₄), loyalty (R₁₄), deepen the knowledge (R₁₄), a number of resources in the form of, first of all, knowledge and way of doing things, which also expands our way of doing things and our knowledge, and with each customer we learn different things (R₂₂), opportunities for expansion into external markets (R₁₇), feedback but also constructive criticism and positive feedback (R₂), verify if the school meets its obligations (R₉), fund operations of the company, pay our salaries, pay for possible development (R₁₀), It is better to cooperate with us, despite the fact that they bear some costs (R₁₁), impose obligations on us that we must fulfil (R₁₂), organisational culture, a brand that allows us to grow (R₁₅), healthy competition (R₁₅), strong cooperation, which involves the development of common standards (R₂₁), we try to discuss, have the opportunity to influence and discuss, to participate in the legislative process (R₂₃), getting employees at every level of management is becoming more and more difficult, and it's getting harder to see the future in a positive way (R₇)</i>

Source: own study.

The respondents viewed the presence of stakeholders and their participation in ongoing projects through the prism of organisational relationships: *loyalty, healthy competition, impose obligations on us that we must fulfil*. The associations illustrated various aspects related to the process of creating this kind of relationship. Importantly, the costs of cooperation were also pointed out *it is better to cooperate with us, despite the fact that they bear some costs*. According to the respondents, the stakeholders *fund operations of the company, pay our salaries, pay for possible development* or *run various projects with us*. One of the experts highlighted the aspect of the organisational culture and bigger brand value as a result of the relationships built with the stakeholders: *organisational culture, a brand that allows us to grow*. The school representative noted that parents as stakeholders *verify whether the school is fulfilling its obligations*.

An important observation offered by a respondent was related to setting common standards and influencing the decision making and legislative processes: *strong cooperation, which involves the development of common standards, we try to discuss, have the opportunity to influence and discuss, to participate in the legislative process*. One of the interviewees highlighted a common challenge: *getting employees at every level of management is becoming more and more difficult, and it's getting harder to see the future in a positive way*. It indicates that regardless the type of organisation the common issues arise and by developing effective networks it is easier for managers to overcome difficulties of this type. The associations also referred to concepts such as sustainable development (Mensah, 2019), organisational learning (Lenart-Gansiniec, 2019), continuous learning (Olejnik, 2022), corporate social responsibility (Zboroń, 2022) or even organisational relations (Sachpazidu et al., 2022).

4.4. Oppositions

The oppositions represent views of the respondents related to what the term 'stakeholder' is opposed to. Based on the analysis of the primary data, several expert statements were identified that fall within the conceptual scope of this semantic category (Table 5). One of the

experts provided an observation associated with decisions that can be made by the state understood here as a stakeholder they design *policies that will exclude the organisations on the market*. This statement related to the state interventionism, and how the state stakeholder can be perceived by the organisations (Noviello, 2021).

Table 5.
Oppositions identified

Category	Examples
Oppositions	<i>policies that will exclude the organisations on the market (R₁₄), It's not necessarily organisations linked to culture or leisure (R₂), If their interests were not satisfied, then ... I would not be able to meet the shareholders' expectations (R₃), the resources they have facilitate or hinder the company's operations (R₂₁)</i>

Source: own study.

One of the views *If their interests were not satisfied, then ... I would not be able to meet the shareholders' expectations* proves that the effectiveness of an organisation is evaluated from the perspective of stakeholders' expectations, which should be taken into account already at the stage of creating and consolidating strategic actions (Kaplan, Norton, 1992). One of the views offered within the oppositions indicated that *organisations related to culture or leisure* should not be called a stakeholder.

4.5. Description of the subject's activities

To identify activities of the subject the following questions should be answered: what does it do? what effects does it have? (Table 6). One of the respondents recognised the role media (as a stakeholder) play: *the media educate our customers. There was also an opinion indicating employees' involvement in an organisation. It can be interpreted as the organisational empowerment „employees have an impact on the quality of production”*. According to one of the experts, stakeholders *also helps us grow*. In addition, the description of activities indicated relationships between the stakeholders that enhanced knowledge sharing and companies efficiency and effectiveness: *increase the efficiency, mutual learning (with the client), build a system for development and efficiency or share knowledge*.

Table 6.
Identified activities of the subject

Category	Examples
Description of the subject's activities	<i>the media educate our customers (R₁₇), also help us grow (R₁₇), give access to funds and ensure liquidity (R₁₈), increase the efficiency, mutual learning (with the client) (R₂₂), build a system for development and efficiency (R₂₂), share knowledge (R₁), employees have an impact on the quality of production (R₆), IT companies, thanks to which ...we reduce the number of employees by implementing ... computer programs that are compatible with our needs, which in many cases save on labor costs (R₄), Often our customers provide us with their technology and give us a new idea (R₁₈)</i>

Source: own study.

The experts acknowledged that some stakeholders offered solutions which helped build competitive advantage in the market: *IT companies, thanks to which ...we reduce the number of employees by implementing ... computer programs that are compatible with our needs, which in many cases save on labor costs.* Other interviewees added that the stakeholders *give access to funds and ensure liquidity, increase the efficiency, mutual learning (with the client), build a system for development and efficiency.* There was also an observation offered by one of the respondents that the stakeholders played an important role in the innovation process by sharing technological knowledge and providing ideas: *often our customers provide us with their technology and give us a new idea.*

The listed examples of activities run by stakeholders fit with the concept of organisational empowerment (Rothman et al., 2019). Furthermore, the analysis allowed the researchers to identify stakeholders' activities which refer to process management (Bartkowiak, Grabowska, 2019), co-management (Carlsson, Berkes, 2005) or creation of a competitive advantage. (Švárová, Vrchota, 2014). The interviewees identified specific situations that illustrated the importance and potential of their stakeholders for their organisations.

4.6. Description of actions towards the subject

The description of actions towards the subject illustrates the actions undertaken by the organisations towards the stakeholders (Table 7). The following activities were mentioned *we identify the needs, mutual trust or strong cooperation which means the development of common standards.* The answers indicate that there is a healthy competition (co-opetition) between the organisation and their stakeholders which may have a positive impact on both parties (Klimas, Radomska, 2022). One of the respondents pointed out to aspects related to Corporate Social Responsibility as an important driver in relations between the organisation and its stakeholders *it is key to us that our business partners act according to general CSR principles* (Zboroń, 2022).

The experts referred to activities related to human resources management (Matwiejczuk, 2022). They listed the actions undertaken towards the internal stakeholders i.e. employees: *fair recruitment or we conduct employee satisfaction surveys.* Volunteering was also mentioned *we engage in employee volunteering or a project ... around support for higher education sector, through scholarship programmes* (Dylus, 2022).

Table 7.
Identified actions towards the subject

Category	Examples
Actions towards the subject	<i>fair recruitment (R₂₀), we identify the needs, mutual trust (R₂₀), strong cooperation which means the development of common standards (R₂₁), it is key to us that our business partners act according to general CSR principles (R₅), we conduct employee satisfaction surveys (R₅), we engage in employee volunteering or a project ... around support for higher education sector, through scholarship programmes (R₅), we introduced cards made 85% from the recycled plastic (R₅), Activation of the local community in terms of the usefulness in the labour market (R₄), we engage a lot in discussions which aim at mitigating the consequences of disrupted supply chains (R₁₀)</i>

Source: own study.

One of the respondents paid attention to actions taken towards the local community with the view to support the development of the labour market: *Activation of the local community in terms of the usefulness in the labour market*. Furthermore, the interviewees carry out discussions with the stakeholders to overcome challenges present in the current business reality *we engage a lot in discussions which aim at mitigating the consequences of disrupted supply chains* (Kotzab et al., 2023).

5. Conclusions

In conclusion, it can be said that the respondents offered a variety of observations that exemplify the perception of their stakeholders. The following conclusions emerge:

- the experts have a good understanding of their organisation's stakeholders and consciously interact with them;
- the identified stakeholder groups represent a variety of subjects (including industry, government, science, social environment);
- only one respondent included environmental organisations among his organization's stakeholders; it can be assumed that those included in the environmental stakeholder group are the least represented of all the stakeholders listed;
- trade unions were not identified as stakeholders of any organisation during the interviews.

All the elements of the five-dimensional innovation system model were mentioned by the respondents and those elements fit with the components indicated in the quintuple helix where each of the elements interact with each other to exchange knowledge and resources. The system built in such way has an impact on the socio-economic development of the regions and countries. The respondents' statements also prove that they are aware of the interdependencies that exist between their organisations and their stakeholders.

The reasons why the experts identified specific stakeholders included the resources they possessed which were key for the operation of the organisations in question. The strategic resources included among others knowledge, feedback, constructive criticism, financial resources and technologies. It was observed that the investigated companies acquired knowledge, funding, access to technology or innovation from the stakeholders as a result of networks they belong to and cooperate within. Furthermore, the organisations co-create products with the stakeholders for a mutual benefit. By cooperating they create synergies that foster the creation of shared added value. Thus, unique solutions can be created by the involved parties and this has an impact on product, process or even social innovations. Such external partnerships foster the creation and implementation of new ideas and lead to the creation of new business models which open up new opportunities and strengthen the organisation's

competitive position. However, those business models require new management mechanisms in order to be properly operated and managed.

In the expert opinions, the business openness allows the parties to grow and learn from each other which is one of the main characteristics of the knowledge-based organisations. According to them the organisations strive to meet stakeholders' expectations which can be consistent and complementary but at the same time contradictory (Dabrowska, Ferreira de Faria, 2020). The diversity of expectations can therefore generate a diverse impact on the cooperation undertaken. Therefore, it is key to manage the cooperation with the stakeholders from a very beginning by setting common goals while planning strategies and building performance measurement systems.

Taking into account the above observations and in order to ensure effective cooperation with the stakeholders, the development of an appropriate management framework and mechanisms for exchanging resources seems not only necessary, but even essential. Thus, the concept of the co-management is becoming more and more important in the current economic contexts, especially for organisations which want to demonstrate more than only a financial success. Those organisations want to meet various stakeholders' expectations to demonstrate a wider impact they generate on the society and the environment. By doing this, the organisations contribute to building the modern knowledge economy.

Acknowledgements

The publication was financed from the subsidy granted to the Krakow University of Economics – Project no. 59/ZZH/2022/POT.

References

1. Bartkowiak, P., Grabowska, I. (2020). Implementacja zarządzania procesowego – studium przypadku przedsiębiorstwa produkcyjnego. *Przegląd Organizacji*, 2, pp. 10-19. doi: 10.33141/po.2020.02.02.
2. Bonnafous-Boucher, M., Rendtorff, J.D. (2016). Stakeholder Theory: A Model for Strategic Management. *Springer Briefs in Ethics*, pp. 1-20. doi: 10.1007/978-3-319-44356-0_1.
3. Carayannis, E.G., Campbell, D.F.J. (2011). Open Innovation Diplomacy and a 21st Century Fractal Research, Education and Innovation (FREIE) Ecosystem: Building on the Quadruple and Quintuple Helix Innovation Concepts and the Mode 3 Knowledge

- Production System. *Journal of the Knowledge Economy*, 2(3), pp. 327–372. doi: 10.1007/s13132-011-0058-3.
4. Carlsson, L., Berkes, F. (2005). Co-management: concepts and methodological implications. *Journal of Environmental Management*, 75, pp. 65-76. doi: 10.1016/j.jenvman.2004.11.008.
 5. Cukras-Stelągowska, J. (2021). Wywiady eksperckie z przedstawicielami elit – możliwości i ograniczenia w badaniach nad grupami o statusie mniejszościowym. *Przegląd Badań Edukacyjnych*, 34, pp. 115-131. doi: 10.12775/PBE.2021.022.
 6. Czernek, K. (2015). Wprowadzenie do badań jakościowych w naukach o zarządzaniu. In: W. Czakon (ed.), *Podstawy metodologii badań w naukach o zarządzaniu* (pp. 167-188). Warszawa: Oficyna a Wolters Kluwer business.
 7. Dąbrowska, J., Ferreira de Faria, A. (2020). Performance measures to assess the success of contemporary science parks. *Triple Helix Journal*, 7(1), pp. 40-82. doi: 10.1163/21971927-bja10006.
 8. Denzin, N.K., Lincoln, Y.S. (2017). *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications.
 9. Döringer, S. (2021). The Problem-Centred Expert Interview. Combining Qualitative Interviewing Approaches for Investigating Implicit Expert Knowledge. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 3(24), pp. 265-278, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2020.1766777>.
 10. Dudkiewicz, M. (2015). O korzyściach płynących z wiedzy, co myślą ludzie: wykorzystanie metody pola semantycznego w projektach systemowych. In: B. Fatyga (ed.), *Praktyki badawcze* (pp. 159-176). Warszawa: Instytut Stosowanych Nauk Społecznych Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego.
 11. Dylus, A. (2018). Wolontariat pracowniczy: partycypacja w społecznej odpowiedzialności przedsiębiorstwa czy nowa forma wyzysku? *Annales. Etyka w życiu gospodarczym*, 21(2), pp. 29-42. doi: 10.18778/1899-2226.21.2.02.
 12. Freeman, R.E. (1984). *Strategic Management. A Stakeholder Approach*. Boston: Pitman.
 13. Geisler R. (2013). Zastosowanie metod badań jakościowych w analizach rodzin osób bezrobotnych. *Family Forum*, 3, pp. 41-54.
 14. Glińska-Neweś, A., Escher, I. (2018). Analiza treści w badaniach zjawisk społecznych w organizacji. Zastosowanie programu IRAMUTEQ. *Studia Oeconomica Posnaniensia*, 6(3), pp. 73-94. doi: 10.18559/SOEP.2018.3.4.
 15. Growiec, J., McAdam, P., Mućk, J. (2022). Are Ideas Really Getting Harder To Find? R&D Capital and the Idea Production Function. *Collegium of Economic Analysis SGH - Working Papers*, 71. doi: <http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12182/1128>.
 16. Gruszka, I., Manczak, I. (2022). Innowacje w turystyce w dobie pandemii COVID-19 – perspektywa ekspertów. *Horyzonty Polityki*, 13(43), pp. 215-230. doi: 10.35765/HP.2226.

17. Hackley, C. (2019). *Qualitative research in marketing and management: doing interpretive research projects*. London: Routledge.
18. Kaplan, R., Norton, D. (1992). The Balanced Scorecard—Measures That Drive Performance. *Harvard Business Review*, January-February, pp. 71-79.
19. Klimas, P., Radomska, J. (2022). Coopetition and Open Strategy – Common Roots and Shared Strategic Dilemmas. *Problemy Zarządzania*, 20, 2(96), pp. 197-214. doi: 10.7172/1644-9584.96.10.
20. Kotzab, H., Bäumlner, I., Gerken, P. (2023). The big picture on supply chain integration – insights from a bibliometric analysis. *Supply Chain Management*, 28(1), pp. 25-54. doi: 10.1108/SCM-09-2020-0496.
21. Lenart-Gansiniec, R. (2019). Organizational Learning in Industry 4.0. *Problemy Zarządzania*, 17, 2(82), pp. 96-108. doi: 10.7172/1644-9584.82.4.
22. Leydesdorff, L., Smith, L.S. (2021). Triple, quadruple, and higher-order helices: historical phenomena and (neo-)evolutionary models. *SSRN*. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3817410>.
23. Maisson, D. (2022). *Jakościowe metody badań społecznych. Podejście aplikacyjne*. Warszawa: PWN.
24. Manczak, I., Gruszka, I. (2021). Przeciwdziałanie skutkom pandemii COVID-19 w turystyce - analiza pola semantycznego. *Prace Komisji Geografii Przemysłu Polskiego Towarzystwa Geograficznego*, 35(3), pp. 164-176. doi: 10.24917/20801653.353.10.
25. Matwiejczyk, R. (2022). From Competency-based Human Resources Management to Competence-based Strategic Management. *Zeszyty Naukowe. Organizacja i Zarządzanie*, 155. Politechnika Śląska, pp. 365-374. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.29119/1641-3466.2022.155.22>.
26. Mensah, J. (2019). Sustainable development: Meaning, history, principles, pillars, and implications for human action: Literature review. *Cogent. Social Sciences*, 5(1), 1653531. doi: 10.1080/23311886.2019.1653531.
27. Moroz, S.A., Buka, I.S., Moroz, V.M., Manczak, I. (2021). Стейкхолдери забезпечення якості вищої освіти: тлумачення змісту категорії та персоналізація суб'єктів. *Вісник Національного технічного університету «ХПІ». Серія: Актуальні проблеми розвитку українського суспільства*, 2, pp. 39-48. doi: 10.20998/2227-6890.2021.2.05.
28. Nartey, L.J., Henisz, W.J., Dorobantu, S. (2023). Reciprocity in Firm–Stakeholder Dialog: Timeliness, Valence, Richness, and Topicality. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 183(2), pp. 429-451. doi: 10.1007/s10551-022-05063-8.
29. Noviello, M. (2021). Wpływ interwencjonizmu państwowego w XX wieku na współczesną kondycję gospodarczą regionów włoskich. *Prace Komisji Geografii Przemysłu Polskiego Towarzystwa Geograficznego*, 35(4), pp. 227-248. doi: 10.24917/20801653.354.14.

30. Olejnik, I. (2022). The Concept of Lifelong Learning - Managers' Expectations and Youth Attitudes. *Zeszyty Naukowe. Organizacja i Zarządzanie/Politechnika Śląska*, 159, pp. 337-349. doi: 10.29119/1641-3466.2022.159.27.
31. Pacek, J. (2015). Pole semantyczne książki w tekstach normalizacyjnych i prawnych. *Praktyka i Teoria Informacji Naukowej i Technicznej*, 4, pp. 20-31.
32. Rothman, L., De Vijlder, F., Schalk, R., Van Regenmortel, M. (2019). A systematic review on organizational empowerment. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, 27(5), pp. 1336-1361. doi: 10.1108/IJOA-02-2019-1657.
33. Sachpazidu, K., Klimas, P., Stańczyk, S. (2022). Relationship quality as inter-organizational relationships feature. *Organizacja i Kierowanie*, 1, pp. 115-129.
34. Sobocka-Szczapa, H. (2022). Employee Involvement and the Efficiency of the Organization. *Przedsiębiorczość i Zarządzanie*, 23(1), pp. 9-22.
35. Stempień, J. R., Rostocki, W. A. (2013). Wywiady eksperckie i wywiady delfickie w socjologii – możliwości i konsekwencje wykorzystania. Przykłady doświadczeń badawczych. *Przegląd Socjologiczny*, 62(1), pp. 87-100.
36. Švárová, M., Vrchota, J. (2014). Influence of competitive advantage on formulation business strategy. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 12, pp. 687-694. doi: 10.1016/S2212-5671(14)00394-3.
37. Szymańska, A. (2022). Sharing economy w okresie pandemii COVID-19 – analiza pola semantycznego. *Prace Komisji Geografii Przemysłu Polskiego Towarzystwa Geograficznego*, 36(4), pp. 132-147. Doi: 10.24917/20801653.364.9.
38. Thomas, D. R. (2006). A general inductive approach for analyzing qualitative evaluation data. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 27(2), pp. 237-246. doi: 10.1177/1098214005283748.
39. Warmińska, K., Urbaniak, A. (2017). Czym jest Kraków? Analiza pola semantycznego, *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Krakowie*, 3(963), pp. 87-102. doi: 10.15678/ZNUEK.2017.0963.0306.
40. Worek, B. (2001). Analiza wyników zogniskowanych wywiadów grupowych w badaniach marketingowych. *ASK*, 10, pp. 25-47.
41. Zboroń, H. (2022). Koniec idei CSR. Nowy początek? *Ruch Prawniczy, Ekonomiczny i Socjologiczny*, 2, pp. 163-176. doi: 10.14746/rpeis.2022.84.2.11.