

THE ROLE OF INCLUSIVITY IN BUILDING ORGANISATIONAL RESILIENCE

Alicja WINNICKA-WEJS

The University of Economics, Department of Organizational Management; a.winnicka-wejs@ue.katowice.pl,
ORCID: 0000-0001-8263-8064

Purpose: Increasing knowledge about the inclusivity of companies towards their stakeholders and the significance of inclusion in building organizational resilience.

Design/methodology/approach: A qualitative study based on the scenario of interviews with managers, developed as part of an interdisciplinary research project titled "The Role of an Inclusive Approach in Building Organizational Resilience: A Case Study of the TSL Sector (2023-2025)".

Findings: Corporate inclusivity is usually demonstrated towards employees. Its benefits include resource diversity acceptance, increased engagement, stronger identification with the company, higher levels of trust and loyalty, better cooperation, positive image, improved market responsiveness, talent acquisition and retention, which contributes to shaping and development of organizational resilience. Inclusivity is manifested in the inclusion policy and diversity management. Specific procedures and regulations help define the boundaries of inclusivity. Global operations and multiculturalism often necessitate an inclusive approach towards stakeholders. Most respondents believe that greater inclusion of company stakeholders in planning and conducting other activities builds company resilience. This allows for the utilization of diverse experiences, broader perspectives, better cooperation, and flexible actions. Better relationships with various groups increase company's resilience. Inclusivity is a key factor on which the resilience of businesses to unforeseen events depends.

Research limitations: The data derives from specialists and managers of large companies, which exhibit a higher level of inclusivity compared to small and medium-sized enterprises. Their senior staff is better prepared for inclusive management.

Practical implications: The findings are useful to managers interested in building organizational resilience through the inclusion of various stakeholders.

Social implications: Raising awareness of inclusive practices towards stakeholders and highlighting inclusion as a key factor in building corporate resilience during crises.

Originality/value: The article contributes to the development of management and quality sciences.

Keywords: inclusion, resilience, organization, diversity management, stakeholders.

Category of the paper: Research paper.

1. Introduction

Previous studies on inclusion have primarily focused on its positive impact on organizational employees, such as their attitudes, behaviors, and intentions. However, there is a lack of research on the impact of social inclusion on other stakeholders (Dudek, 2023).

A previous systematic literature review on the inclusive approach of organizations in relation to their main stakeholders—employees and customers—revealed a wealth of diverse key concepts and types of inclusion. In the case of employees, these include: workplace inclusion, social inclusion, inclusive growth (development), financial inclusion, inclusive labor market, inclusive leadership, inclusive work environment, and inclusive human resource management. For customers, relevant concepts include stakeholder inclusion, financial inclusion, inclusive customer experience, inclusive marketing practices, and social inclusion (Winnicka-Wejs, Burgiel-Szewc, Mercik, 2024).

A research gap has been identified, noting the lack of studies linking inclusion with organizational resilience. The topic of including employees, customers, and suppliers in corporate activities has been explored further in the context of building organizational resilience. The aim is to determine how and to what extent an inclusive (participatory) approach enables organizations to overcome barriers in their environment and strengthens their resilience. It is assumed that inclusivity can be a method for building organizational resilience, based on engaging all stakeholders in this process. Inclusivity is understood as a model of participation involving both internal and external stakeholders in achieving organizational resilience (Winnicka-Wejs, Burgiel-Szewc, Kos-Łabędowicz, Mercik, Trzęsiok, Zwolińska, Kamińska, 2023). Resilience refers to the ability to withstand internal and/or external shocks, respond to them, and recover after their occurrence (Annarelli, Nonino, 2016).

The concepts of inclusivity, resilience, preparation and reaction to crises are becoming critical and prospective research topics, which are worth focusing on (see Cooke et al., 2020).

From the perspective of sustainable development and social changes, inclusivity turns into a megatrend in the global scale (Sidor-Rządkowska, Sienkiewicz, 2023, p. 31). For example, inclusive engagement is crucial for building a resilience model in response to natural disasters (see Rauhaus, Guajardo, 2021). Even though the significance of inclusive business models has been previously discussed in the literature (Teneta-Skwiercz, 2016; Komańda, 2016), it seems that currently it requires further exploration and updating, especially in terms of stakeholder inclusion which balances in time the needs, interests and expectations of important stakeholders in the best interest of the organization (Phaswana, Pelsler, 2021).

This article seeks to address the following research questions regarding inclusion and resilience: What does corporate inclusivity towards stakeholders entail, and which stakeholder group is the most important (employees, customers, suppliers)? Should companies involve employees and customers in their activities, and is such an approach beneficial for them?

Do companies have an inclusive approach towards employees and customers, and how is it manifested? How important is it for companies to include various stakeholder groups in the planning and execution of activities to build resilience? Can inclusion be a key factor determining corporate resilience in the face of crises and unforeseen events?

The answers to these questions were provided by practitioners, which allowed for discovering new aspects of reality and integrating data with theory (Bansal, Corley, 2012).

2. Description of Methodology and Characteristics of Respondents

For the purposes of this study, and based on the literature on the subject, a scenario for interviews with managers was prepared in the second quarter of 2024. This was part of the interdisciplinary research project "The Role of Inclusive Approaches in Building Organizational Resilience: A Case Study of the TSL Sector", which won the "Beyond Barriers" competition (Winners of the 2nd Edition of the Competition, 2023; Winnicka-Wejs, Burgiel-Szewc, Kos-Łabędowicz, Mercik, Trzęsiok, Zwolińska, Kamińska, 2024).

Participants included attendees of the postgraduate studies program "Manager's Academy" at the University of Economics in Katowice (6th edition, academic year 2023/2024). On June 29-30, 2024, 41 individuals provided complete responses to 22 substantive questions on inclusivity and resilience, as well as 6 demographic questions.

The structure of respondents is presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Structure of respondents by gender, year of birth, management level, work experience, company size, industry

Diagnostic category		Response Distribution
Gender	Female	26
	Male	15
Position	Managerial	23
	Executive	7
	Specialist	10
	Other: Business owner	1
Work experience in managerial positions	No experience	10
	Less than 1 year	3
	1-4 years	17
	5-8 years	4
	9-12 years	5
Company size	Over 12 years	2
	Micro (up to 9 employees)	1
	Small (10-50 employees)	5
	Medium (51-250 employees)	6
	Large (over 250 employees)	29

Cont. table 1.

Industry	Administration	1
	Banking	2
	Construction	2
	E-commerce	1
	Energy	1
	Financial and insurance	5
	Gaming	1
	Retail	3
	HR & Payroll / Accounting, Payroll outsourcing	2
	IT	4
	Logistics	3
	Marketing	1
	Medical	2
	Automotive	5
	Real estate	1
	Waste management	1
	Packaging	1
	Legal	1
	Production	4
Years the company has been operating in the market	Up to 10 years	7
	11-20 years	7
	21-30 years	11
	31-40 years	5
	41-50 years	1
	Over 50 years	9
	No data	1

Source: Own elaboration based on the empirical research.

The analysis of the data in Table 1 shows that 63.4% of women and 36.6% of men took part in the survey. More than a half of them (56.0%) work in managerial positions, followed by specialist positions (24.3%) and executive positions (17.0%). Only one person is a business owner. These individuals are characterised by varying managerial experience, with most of them (41.4%) indicating a time span of 1-4 years.

Majority are people from large companies (70.7%), from the following industries: finance and insurance, automotive, IT, trade and logistics. These companies have been operating on the market for several to several dozen years. In the 'over 50 years' category, there were five organisations with market experience of 100 years or more.

For the purpose of this article, the content of the responses to only six questions selected from the interview scenario was analysed (see Table 2). A research procedure typical of qualitative research was followed, coding the data, interpreting them and formulating research conclusions in terms of theory and practice (see Czernek, 2020), remembering to include quotations (Czernek, 2014).

Table 2.*Selected questions from the interview scenario with managers.*

Question Number	Question Content
1.	Have you encountered the concept of inclusivity in corporate activities?
2.	If yes » What, in your opinion, is the nature of corporate inclusivity towards its stakeholders: employees, customers, suppliers? Which of these groups is the most important? If no » Inclusivity is understood as a model of engaging both internal and external stakeholders of a company in achieving its resilience.
3.	Is inclusivity a good idea, or is it just a new fad and trend? Should the company involve employees and customers in its activities? Is such an inclusive approach beneficial for the company? If yes » Why? How can the company do this? If no » Why not?
4.	Does your company have an inclusive approach towards its employees? What about towards its customers? If yes » How is it manifested? If no » Why not?
5.	In your opinion, what factors does the resilience of a company to crises/unforeseen events depend on? Which of these factors are crucial? (Resilience refers to the ability to anticipate and respond to crises and difficulties, as well as to adapt and recover after their occurrence. The goal is not only survival but also growth and innovation, based on learning from experiences). Hint: What role do internal and external relationships, development strategy, resource management, organizational culture, competition strategy, organizational structure, leadership, prior experiences, established procedures, and business models play in building resilience?
6.	How important is greater inclusion of different stakeholder groups in planning and conducting activities for building the company's resilience? Hint: For example, collaboration with the fire department to secure infrastructure, collaboration with customers to streamline returns processing.

Source: Own elaboration based on (Winnicka-Wejs et al., 2024).

3. Results of the Empirical Study and Conclusions

3.1. Concept of Inclusivity and Its Perception

Out of the 41 respondents, 29 had encountered the concept of inclusivity in corporate activities before, while 12 responded negatively. Table 3 shows how company inclusivity was understood, along with its manifestations towards stakeholders, i.e., employees, customers and suppliers, according to the respondents who answered question 1 affirmatively, leaving their comments in question 2.

Table 3.*Company inclusivity towards stakeholders according to respondents*

No.	Respondents' answers to question no. 2*
1	Acceptance of diversity, lack of exclusion based on various characteristics/factors.
2	Equal treatment, equal opportunities, transparent communication, dialogue with stakeholders, ethics policy.
3	Employing individuals with disabilities, openness to diverse customers.
4	I don't deal with customers or suppliers, but for employees, this is visible during recruitment, annual reviews, and promoting diversity.

Cont. table 3.

5	Openness, business expansion, freedom, focus on development.
6	In the service sector, in company-client relationships.
7	How it is manifested: employees – building mutual understanding among diverse groups, fostering a positive organizational culture. Customers, suppliers – no discrimination, shared values on inclusivity.
8	Internal regulations state that no one should be excluded. They focus on employees.
9	Inclusivity in my company is manifested by accepting people as they are, but also by giving everyone the opportunity to present ideas or comments about the company's operations, both in HR matters and in those related to projects.
10	Organizing workshops, talks with experts (panels), support groups for diversity & inclusion, support marches, community meetings.
11	It is manifested through awareness-raising activities, training, and even dismissing individuals for discrimination or racism. Inclusivity involves engaging and respecting people's culture, religion, and personality.
12	It is manifested towards employees.
13	Accessibility adjustments, providing access for people with physical difficulties or disabilities, hiring competent people regardless of their abilities (or lack thereof), race, nationality, etc. Offering employees the opportunity to purchase shares.
14	Openness to different groups, nationalities, values, opinions.
15	Building organizational culture, feedback culture, managing through relationships.
16	Inclusivity is most important for employees.
17	Mainly in the area of disability. Including them regardless of gender, age, religion, disability, private life, children, etc.
18	Openness to diversity, tolerance, variety.
19	Respect for different cultures, differing opinions, drawing inspiration from diversity.
20	Everyone is accepted and appreciated regardless of age, gender, background, or beliefs.
21	Engaging people with disabilities, e.g., employing them. As for customers, adapting to their needs. Suppliers, on the other hand, are not excluded based on the disability of the owner or employees.
22	All groups are important, and the inclusivity policy should be skillfully designed to encompass all stakeholders.
23	The most important group is employees. This then resonates with other entities and company activities.
24	Tolerance of beliefs, background.
25	Supporting LGBTQ+ and minorities.
26	The workplace is accessible to everyone regardless of age. High positions are held by both women and men.
27	For example: educating employees on diversity, campaigns saying "we are all equal," adjusting the work environment.
28	Everyone is important. Work and cooperation as a whole.
29	In my company, employees – we want them to know that what matters is not their age, background, children, or tattoos, but their competence and engagement.

* see content of the question in Table 2.

Source: own elaboration based on empirical survey.

As per the respondents' comments, inclusivity was seen as an organizational approach that allows employees to participate and contribute fully to various areas of the company's operations (cf. Miller, 1998). It was also viewed as a practice that recognizes diversity and the new meanings that participants bring to creating a work environment that encourages the effective use of diverse potentials and skills (cf. Burnett, 2003), and as a means to promote fairness, integrity, and complete involvement at both personal and collective levels, ensuring that individuals from diverse backgrounds are not only granted the same opportunities, the right to make their own choices, and the chance to take on leadership roles, but are also explicitly recognized and valued for their distinct perspectives. (cf. Holvino et al., 2004).

Respondents also highlighted the practical implementation of DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) concept more in the area of "people" rather than "technology" or "space" (cf. Marciniak-Madejska, 2024). They emphasized the context of workplace inclusion and inclusive climate (cf. Li, Perera, Kulik, Metz, 2019), as well as inclusive HRM (cf. Jonsen, Point, Kelan, Griebel, 2021).

When asked about which stakeholder group is the most important, not everybody responded and made a direct indication. 14 respondents identified employees as the most significant stakeholder group, while 3 persons chose customers ("The most important of all is the customer, the company strives to always make them feel eagerly awaited, appreciated and fulfilled"), 2 persons selected suppliers, and the remaining 2 persons indicated no specific group priority.

Interestingly, all respondents, regardless of whether they had encountered the concept of inclusivity in corporate activities before or not, agreed that inclusivity is a good idea and beneficial for companies. Only four respondents expressed some reservations in their generally positive replies: "It's beneficial, however, it may also bring about threats"; "It depends, it's worth including and supporting the minority, but it should be done with care so that it doesn't end up discriminating against the majority"; "Good idea, but it shouldn't be the guiding principle of the company"; "Yes, but it should be done in a very careful way".

The benefits of involving employees and customers in corporate activities, as listed by respondents, included acceptance of resource diversity, increased engagement, stronger identification with the company, higher levels of trust and loyalty, better cooperation, positive company image, improved responsiveness to market changes as well as talent acquisition and retention. In general, respondents described inclusivity as a good idea that could enable further development of the company (cf. Table 4).

Table 4.

Benefits of corporate inclusivity – respondents' answers to question no. 3, categorized*

Categories	Respondents' answers to question no. 3*
Acceptance of resource diversity/ Reduced perception of discrimination and inequality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Inclusivity enriches the company by employing everyone regardless of limitations. Such actions help build fundamental values that unite the company's community. – Accept diversity, support, and create supportive policies. – Somewhat a trend, but also a real need for a certain group of people. It's beneficial, as everyone feels accepted. – Yes, because every person is accepted regardless of cultural differences. – By promoting equality, regardless of age, gender, etc. – Yes, it's about diversity and openness in actions. – Yes, this allows disabled people to participate in social and professional life. – Yes, I think it positively impacts the sense of acceptance and safety among employees, customers, and suppliers.

Cont. table 4.

Increased engagement and job performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Yes, this can lead to greater engagement of all employees in their work. – It teaches employees and stakeholders engagement in the organization. Collecting ideas from employees. – Yes, it's a good idea because it includes everyone's ideas, increasing engagement and the number of (good) ideas. – It's beneficial because it builds trust and a sense of security in the work environment for diverse groups, thus increasing engagement. How can it be done? Organizing events targeted at each group, inclusive communication, preparing managers to apply inclusivity in practice. – It's beneficial because it involves employees in the company's activities, strengthening their position and identity. – The company should include its stakeholders in inclusivity because this will increase employee engagement, as they will feel part of the company.
Stronger identification with the company and its success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Greater attachment and identification with the company. It allows employees and customers to influence actions according to their own beliefs. – Yes, it's a good idea. Including all employees is beneficial; it builds responsibility and a sense of belonging to the company. – Yes, by including employees and customers, the employer activates a mechanism of attachment and belonging to the entire organization.
Increased loyalty and trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Yes, it builds trust, satisfaction, and certainty. – A good idea, because it builds trust and relationships, impacting the atmosphere. The company can involve employees and customers in its activities. – Yes, when employees, customers, and suppliers are included in the company's activities, they feel that their presence and opinions matter, and they become more loyal as a result.
Improved cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Yes, it positively influences cooperation, atmosphere, and organizational culture. – Better mutual understanding leads to better cooperation in crisis situations. – It's rather a good idea, especially for employees, to work together.
Positive image	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – It's beneficial from the perspective of building a positive image. – It may be beneficial, creating space for developing areas that were not previously sufficiently addressed, expanding the offer, and supporting good Employer Branding.
Better market responsiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Inclusivity is not only a good idea but a necessity in today's world. It leads to better decisions, better reputation, increased motivation and engagement, and better market understanding. – Yes, I cannot imagine managing a company without including employees in at least some processes. For customers, this can be done to a limited extent. This allows for real-time market trend monitoring and adjusting the company's operations accordingly.
Talent acquisition and retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Yes, because this helps companies attract and retain the best employees.
Good/developmental idea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Yes, the company should include employees. – Yes, because they view the company's operations from a different perspective. They also have a different approach to the company, which can be valuable. – A good idea, it leads to development. – Yes, it's a good idea. Employees have knowledge that can help. – Yes, it's important to raise awareness and train employees. Inclusivity should be part of the company's culture. – It's necessary if the company wants to grow. – Inclusivity offers great potential for organizations; it allows for knowledge and inspiration, provided full acceptance is present. – Yes. It seems that this trend is not only a contemporary fashion but the future. The generation which enters the labor market will force these changes. – Yes.

* see content of question in Table 2.

Source: Own elaboration based on empirical research.

The information listed in Table 4 confirms previous empirical findings on the benefits that diversity management and inclusion can bring to organizations (Gross-Gołacka, 2022).

3.2. Inclusive Approach Towards Employees and Customers

When answering question 4 (see Table 2), only one fifth of respondents stated that their company did not have an inclusive approach towards its employees and customers. Among the answers to the question "If not » why not?" were: "No", "No. I suspect an overly ossified management model", "No, decisions are up to the management and employees have to accept them", "No, there isn't. I don't know why not", "No, outdated stereotypes", "No. The company has a high turnover of employees. It happens that 20/30 people will leave", "No, it's company policy".

The remaining 80% of respondents observed an inclusive approach to employees and clients in their company practices, particularly in the general inclusion policy and diversity management. Specific procedures and rules that regulate the limits of inclusivity are also important. In some cases the global scale of operations and cultural diversity enforces an inclusive approach towards various stakeholders. Respondents noted also inclusive leadership, support for employing people with disabilities, and identification and personalization of customer needs (see Table 5).

Table 5.

Inclusive approach towards employees and customers – positive responses to question no. 4, categorized*

Categories	Affirmative responses to question no. 4*
Inclusion policy/ Diversity management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes, it is open to employees, their individuality, and welcomes their ideas. - Yes, based on no exclusion and understanding needs. - Yes, the company where I work has an inclusive approach to employees and customers, manifested mainly through dialogue. - Yes, because diversity and difference are appreciated. - The company does not exclude individuals who may socially deviate from the standard (living standard, lifestyle, clothing). In fact, they are very open to unique individuals. - Yes, employees – during recruitment, training on DEI, listening in one-on-one meetings and setting goals. Yes, customers – we sell to everyone, study the market and expectations. - Employees – everyone can express their views and feedback. Regarding diversity support, in our company, we organize small integration events (twice a month) where we engage in activities proposed by employees to get to know each other better and learn who likes what. - Engaging in EB activities, celebrating various occasions regardless of religion and culture, e.g., instead of Christmas, we celebrate Star Wars Day to maintain neutrality and ensure everyone enjoys themselves at the company. - Yes, through the acceptance of diversity. Demonstrating that everyone can have a different threshold of acceptance. - It is expressed through tolerance for differences. The main customer also demands such an approach and conducts social audits emphasizing tolerance. - Yes: flexible working hours, organizational culture, marketing communication, more engaged team. - Considering needs based on different cultures and beliefs. - Yes, training. - Yes, a lot of additional events are organized. The company's offer changes frequently, depending on market needs. - For employees, yes, for customers – I don't know. There are webinars and meetings on inclusivity.

Cont. table 5.

Inclusion regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – We have procedures, regulations, and rules for everything. Some are open to inclusivity, others are very restrictive. – Yes, internal regulations. Even without them, people treat each other with respect. There is significant awareness in this area within my company. – I believe the company probably applies this, but only in theory.
Multiculturalism and interculturality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – It is also expressed towards customers. We are open to foreign markets, diverse nationalities, and often invite customers to the company. We try to get to know the customer, their values, and beliefs. We don't judge. – Yes, the same rules apply to customers and employees. We have customers from all over the world, so multiculturalism is one of our pillars, and thus inclusivity. Manifestations: respecting differences, training on intercultural differences, business ethics in such an environment, and applying human-oriented values. – Yes, we are a global, multicultural company. This enforces an inclusive approach.
Inclusive leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Yes, towards employees. Through managers' approach to employees. – I encourage employees to take actions and make independent decisions, assuring them that if problems arise, I will stand up for them.
Inclusion of people with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Yes, I know a person who has a degree of disability but realizes themselves in my company, working 7 hours a day. – We are working on inclusivity for people with disabilities.
Personalization of customer needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Yes, towards customers by identifying and personalizing their needs.
"Yes" responses without detailed comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Yes (5 responses) – Yes, but it's hard to specify. – If yes, it is unconscious.

* See the content of the question in Table 2.

Source: Own elaboration based on empirical research.

3.3. Inclusivity as an Important Factor in Building Organizational Resilience

A vast majority of respondents believe that greater inclusion of various stakeholder groups in planning and conducting activities is important for building organizational resilience. Only 7 out of 41 respondents left question no. 6 (see Table 2) unanswered/ without a comment, while one respondent said "I don't know".

The respondents indicated that inclusivity may be a key factor in enhancing resilience of an organization. Their contributions have been grouped according to specific thematic categories (see Table 6).

Table 6 shows that the majority of people rated the importance of including different stakeholder groups to build company resilience by noting that it will result in broader action prospects, faster response, better cooperation and obtaining a specific market position. It should be emphasized that their rating was very high (e.g. "Very!", "Very important"). Some of them directly stressed the importance of inclusiveness from the perspective of building resilience, also in crisis situations. There were also examples of the inclusion of particular individuals and institutions in company activity.

Table 6.

"How important is the greater inclusion of various stakeholder groups in planning and conducting activities for building the company's resilience?" – positive responses from the respondents, categorized

Categories	Positive responses to question no. 6
Assessment of importance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Very! The more groups involved, the more diverse the perspectives and better-tailored the solutions and risk assessments. – Very important, stakeholders and their opinions, feedback help build a stronger position and organization. – Very important, they are additional resources that help build our value and development. – Involving various groups in planning and conducting activities is very important, it influences integration and clear goal setting. – Very important, as it streamlines work in the company, allowing for securing appropriate areas. – Openness and transparency allow for a flexible work schedule. – People can have different experiences and ideas, which is always valuable. – Very important, broader perspective of needs, support, introducing new solutions, faster reactions, better cooperation. – The company should function as a whole. From my perspective, involving different groups is important. – What's very important is cooperation with the customer, their openness to new products and solutions. – I think it's important, but not necessarily crucial. – It is a key aspect because each person in the organization has different experiences and knowledge. – Very important. It develops the company and adjusts it to the current situation. – No individual (nor any company) is an island. There are always dependencies, without which goal achievement is impossible. Therefore, a network of cooperation should be built wherever it positively influences company operations. – Better adjustment, alignment, shared goal. – Very important. Thanks to this, we can consider factors we would not have considered otherwise. – It is important because we can draw from and base decisions on the knowledge and experience of other groups and stakeholders. – On a scale of 1-5, it's a 4, as a variety of perspectives is beneficial, assuming an appropriate number of different groups. – Very important, it allows for work optimization. – Openness to changes allows for development. – Very important (4 responses without elaboration).
Better resilience building (including in crisis situations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A company functions in a specific environment. The better and faster the relationships with diverse groups, the stronger the resilience. – I believe it is very important because in crisis situations customers can be more understanding. However, it also has advantages in everyday work, improving processes. – The more stakeholders, the more support in building resilience. – Very important. It helps build resilience. – It is important to maintain good relations with companies that can help when a crisis or a problem arises.
Examples of inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Collaboration with schools and universities to conduct internships – selecting good employees. – Cooperation with suppliers, law firms, recruitment agencies, IT support, network maintenance, and cybersecurity. – The County Employment Office – training systems, availability of employees. Environmental Protection Office – legal regulations – knowing and following them. – Building collaboration between company departments and external bodies for smooth crisis response.

* See the content of the question in Table 2.

Source: Own elaboration based on empirical research.

It appears that a company's resilience to a crisis or unforeseen events may depend on an inclusive approach. This may be evidenced by some of the statements to question 5 (see Table 2), pointing to inclusiveness as a key factor: "Inclusiveness creates loyalty and in a crisis it is important to be able to count on each other. Relationships that are too intimate can cause difficulties. However, the basis must be the same values and strategic goals"; "It is not possible to foresee all the crises that may occur, so procedures can only help to a certain extent. In my opinion, organizational culture, relationships within the organization and diversity make it possible to overcome a crisis more easily and learn lessons for the future"; "From the flexibility of managers. Building teams of people with a diverse cross-section of ages", "Key factors are external relationships (customers with orders), internal relationships (employees), development strategy, resource management".

4. Conclusion

The article, based on qualitative empirical research, provides a new perspective on the surveyed reality and can therefore be considered socially relevant. The findings expand existing knowledge on the subject of inclusivity and resilience, encouraging further scientific exploration.

Firstly, we know that over 70% of respondents have encountered the concept of inclusivity in corporate activities before. In their view, inclusivity is primarily manifested in the aspect of the human factor, through the implementation of the DEI concept. They mention employees more frequently than clients which may indirectly state that they are the most important stakeholder group. Direct indications also put employees first.

Secondly, all respondents—whether or not they had encountered the concept of inclusivity in company activity before — agreed that it is a good idea and that an inclusive approach is beneficial for companies. Benefits such as increased engagement, higher trust and loyalty, and better cooperation could be useful in improving companies' responses to market changes and building organizational resilience.

Thirdly, an inclusive approach towards employees and customers is most often manifested in the general policy of inclusivity and diversity management. It may be driven by internal regulations or multiculturalism present within global organizations. Inclusive leadership also plays an important role in this process.

Lastly, a vast majority (80%) of respondents believe that greater inclusion of various stakeholder groups in corporate planning and other activities is important for building resilience, allowing for the utilization of diverse experiences, broader perspectives, better cooperation, and more flexible operations. The better and faster the relationships with diverse groups, the better the resilience of companies. Some respondents identified inclusivity as a key

factor in determining corporate resilience to unforeseen events, alongside a well-prepared crisis strategy and effective management.

Although the findings confirm the inclusive approach of companies towards their stakeholders and highlight the role of inclusivity in building resilience, it is important to note that the empirical data mainly comes from large companies. This could be a limitation of the study, as managers in large organizations are keen on and better prepared for inclusive management (see Szydło et al., 2023) and one of their desirable competences is inclusivity (see Juchnowicz, Kinowska, Krzyżanowska-Celmer, 2024).

Given the above, in the further stage of the research, which will adopt a quantitative approach, a more diverse company structure will be considered, including a broader range of employment sizes. The perspectives of operational employees and institutional customers will also be included. Further research will focus on a specific industry (the Transport-Forwarding-Logistics (TFL) sector) and will aim to identify dimensions or features of resilience that require particular involvement of employees and customers in the resilience-building process.

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