

Means for Satisfaction of Stakeholders' Needs and Interests

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The paper focuses on satisfaction of stakeholder through carrying out comprehensive stakeholder analysis including identification and prioritization of stakeholders, understanding and harmonizing their needs and interests, as well as integrating stakeholder needs into organization's performance plans. Many business leaders acknowledge the fact that organizations have their stakeholders though the dynamism and interdependence of relationships between organization and stakeholders are not explored enough. Every organization has its unique stakeholders and their groups. Stakeholders can be internal or external and their interests are closely interrelated with organization's wealth. They share a common risk, a possibility of gaining benefits or experiencing losses or harms, as a result of organization's operations. The stakeholder concept of the organization implies that favorable relationships and linkages with stakeholders, both internal and external, are important assets of the company. Indeed, they are part of its current wealth and its capacity to generate more wealth in future.

Total quality management only raises the problem but does not provide any solution. Though the nature of total quality management implies the emergence of stakeholders and satisfaction of their needs because realization of it gives positive impact to all organization's stakeholders – good quality products provide benefit and delight to customers, richer organizations make richer society, establish new work places, implementation of new technologies allows to save resources and herewith provides positive ecological effect. Positive influence on society or community improves organization's goodwill and gives permission to organization to act and operate in the same way. From this point there is one drawback in scientific literature that there are no wider discussions or references how to pursue that. Quite often constructive cooperation with stakeholders is missing; unsatisfactory alignment of interests emerges and all that impedes satisfaction of stakeholder interests and reduces organization competitiveness. People and organizations are apt to keep relationships when this corresponds to their interests. Organizations could want to start cooperation with stakeholders in order to gain trust and keep the costs low in execution of their plans, in order to improve their good-will when satisfying stakeholders' expectations and needs. During initial stage interests of stakeholders are identified but later a more difficult process comes where consensus is sought from the long-range perspective. Three different notions could be distinguished on how to harmonize and satisfy differing interests: accommodation of interests, alignment of interests, and balancing

of interest.

It is necessary to achieve a high level of stakeholder satisfaction having in mind that the most important stakeholder group is customers and through satisfaction of their interests, other stakeholders' interests could be satisfied. Stakeholder satisfaction is vital for organizations in order to get license to operate and produce output, to gain resources and trust and therefore to be competitive and successful from the long-term perspective.

Keywords: *stakeholder satisfaction, harmonization of stakeholder interests, stakeholder analysis, organization's competitiveness.*

Introduction

Management science and research evidence that more viable and successful are those organizations that recognize the importance not only of customers' satisfaction but also take into account other influential stakeholders and satisfaction of their needs. Understanding of customer needs is important, but not the only one factor stimulating organization's success (Ackermann 2001; Steger, 1998; Conti, 2003). It is vital to integrate key stakeholders' needs and thereby to gain their trust and support.

Organizations should see their stakeholders as an integral part of their business environment and this part should be managed so as to ensure benefit (Beaulieu, 2002; Conti, 2003). From this aspect stakeholder management can be viewed as a part of strategy where important stakeholders are involved.

Analyzing theory of stakeholder management and relationships different methods can be found for identification of stakeholders. All these attempts try to give answer to the question "Who are our stakeholders and how much attention does each stakeholder or a group of stakeholders deserve or require?" It is impossible for all stakeholders to have the same interests and needs. Once organizations have identified their stakeholders, it is necessary to clear up the importance of satisfaction of their needs to organization: which stakeholder needs should be satisfied absolutely and which needs should be ignored for some time. There will be always stakeholder needs that could be left unsatisfied and negative influence avoided. Therefore the problem of prioritization arises and encompasses different factors. The problem can be solved expanding the paradigm of customer and satisfaction if its needs by converting it into paradigm of stakeholders and satisfaction of their needs, i.e. organization's customers should be considered all important stakeholders and their needs

should be satisfied in the way as not to violate their interests. However the wide range of stakeholders brings together different interests which harmonization aspects are not analyzed enough by scholars and there is no consensus of opinion how to incorporate different interests into organization's goals and how satisfying customer needs to satisfy important stakeholder needs.

Research problem: quite often constructive cooperation with stakeholders is missing; unsatisfactory harmonization of interests emerges and all that impedes satisfaction of stakeholder interests and reduces organization's competitiveness.

Research goal: to find solution how to achieve a high level of stakeholder satisfaction having in mind that the most important stakeholder group is customers and through satisfaction of their interests other stakeholders' interests could be harmonized and satisfied.

Research objectives to systematize criteria for stakeholder identification and prioritization that would precondition the harmonization of stakeholder needs and their integration into organizational performance; to specify the abstract concept of interest harmonization and to offer possible solutions in strive of interest harmonization.

Research methods: scientific literature review, the analysis of analytical and empirical studies.

Revision of steps for execution of stakeholder analysis

Many business leaders acknowledge the fact that organizations have their stakeholders though the dynamism and interdependence of relationships between organization and stakeholders are not explored enough. Every organization has its unique stakeholders and their groups (Rolling, Wage-maker, 1998; Jones, 1995). Stakeholders can be internal or external and their interests are closely interrelated with organization's wealth. They share a common risk, a possibility of gaining benefits or experiencing losses or harms, as a result of organization's operations.

The competitive stakeholder analysis is a good method for identification of stakeholders, their prioritization and can influence the situation and get the output that creates additional value (Boutelle, 2004; Radder, 1998; Jensen, 2000; Sveiby, 1997). Stakeholder analysis can be executed by identification of them and defining them according to the attributes, interaction and interests in relationship with the dealt issue (Rawlins, 2006; Edvinsson, 1997). These are the steps for stakeholder analysis:

1. Identification of stakeholders.
2. Prioritization of stakeholders.
3. Understanding stakeholder needs and interest.
4. Integrating stakeholder needs into organization's performance plans.

Researches in the stakeholder field differ in their worldview on stakeholder concepts, but most of them acknowledge Freeman's (Freeman, 1984) concept. However, the author does not point any criteria for stakeholder identification therefore anybody can be treated as stakeholder. Due to this stakeholder concept

could lose analytical meaning for theorists and applicable meaning for businesses. Without clear stakeholder definition, it is difficult to decide who are organization's stakeholders and whose needs should be satisfied. According to majority of definitions competitors, thieves could be identified as stakeholders whose interests are opposite to organization's ones. The statement that organizations should cooperate with these stakeholders for mutual benefit will sound absurdly. This definition is not good for total quality management as well, because we project customer and satisfaction of its needs concept into stakeholder concept, we get mutual interdependence that stakeholders depend on realization of organization's goals, and organization depends on stakeholders' support in pursue of its mission and goals achievement. This mutual relationship demands to treat stakeholders as customers i.e. stakeholders are expanded concept of customers. Therefore there is a need for revision of stakeholder concept and new definition is offered in the research: stakeholders are important natural or legal persons or their groups that are closely related to organization's setting, its business processes and/or contribute to its wealth creating capacity, therefore are its potential beneficiaries and/or risk bearers.

According to different academic literature and to the offered stakeholder definition in this research following criteria could be distinguished for identification of stakeholders:

- relative importance of every stakeholder (Freeman, 1984; Freeman, Gilbert, 1987);
- they supply resources that are critical to the success of the organization (Kochan and Rubenstein, 2002);
- they place something of value at risk; that is, their own welfare is directly affected by the fate of organization (Grimble, Wellard, 1996; Sveiby, 1997);
- character and intensity of relationships (Freeman, 1999; Bryson, 2002);
- being in the setting and under influence of organization.

General experience and research reveal that the importance of different stakeholders vary according to the issues that organization has to deal:

- Customers are the most important when quality of products are discussed.
- Employees when safety at work is discussed.
- Community or government – environmental problems.

Some issues are important to one stakeholders and some issues to other stakeholders. Priorities have tendency to change; new stakeholder groups emerge in reaction to changing circumstances.

Analyzing different thoughts of scholars several prioritization criteria can be identified: according to attributes and by relationship to the situation (Rawlins, 2006; Stone, 2000). Therefore stakeholder list for every organization does not remain the same and is very dynamic.

This is how stakeholder prioritization model could be defined:

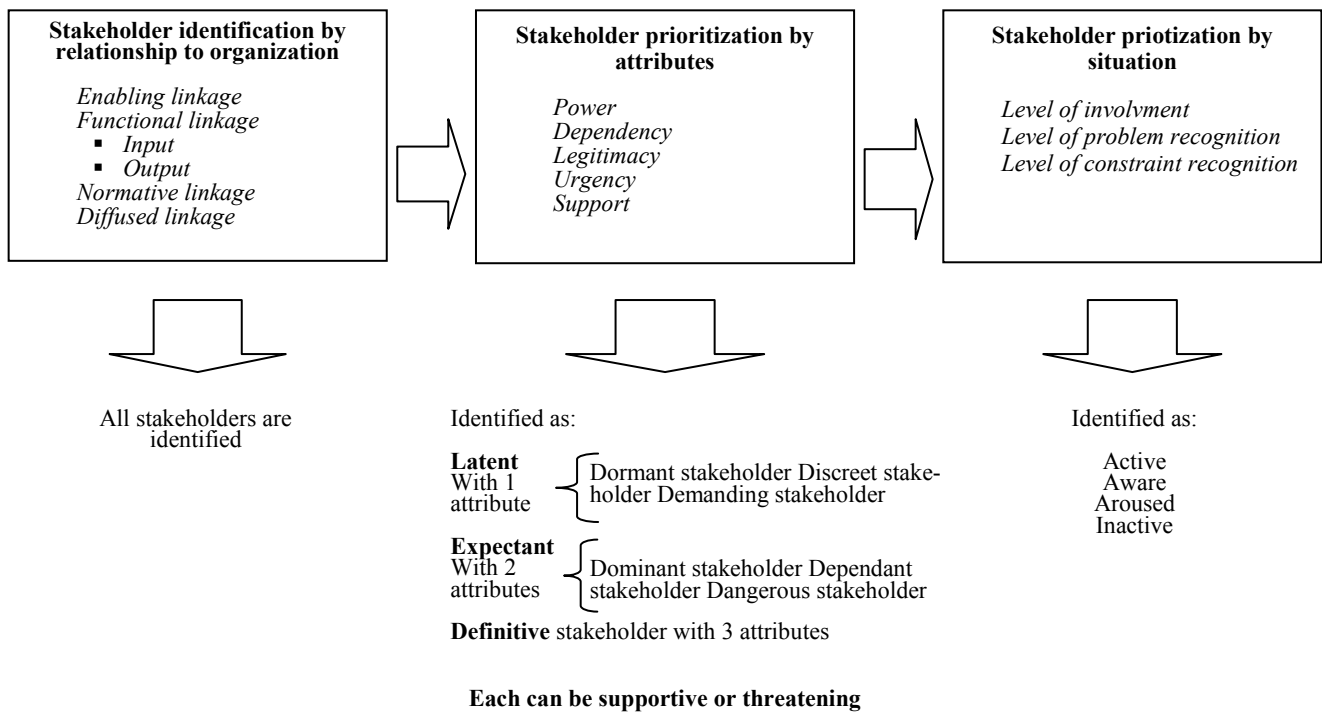


Figure. Stakeholder prioritization model (according to Rawlins, 2006)

These three steps to stakeholder analysis are to identify stakeholders, classify them into meaningful groups, and prioritize them. The research adds a new point to stakeholder prioritization model and emphasizes one more important attribute of stakeholders, i.e. their support or threat to organization's operations. This attribute is very important in taking care of interest harmonization and consequently in the establishment of meaningful and successful collaboration with the stakeholders.

People and organizations are apt to keep relationships when this corresponds to their interests (Mitchell et al., 1997; Susskind, 1987; Ramirez, 2000). Organizations could want to start cooperation with stakeholders in order to gain trust and keep the costs low in execution of their plans, in order to improve their good-will when satisfying stakeholders' expectations and needs (Windsor, 1999; Elias and Cavana, 2000; Boutelle, 2004; Svendsen, 1998). During initial stage interests of stakeholders are identified but later a more difficult process comes where consensus is sought from the long-range perspective.

However stakeholder theory does not present any prerequisites how to achieve balance between stakeholder interests. Since there are no clear criteria for this organizations are left to decide themselves what to do. This allows some kind of lawlessness because it is not enough to know that it is important to harmonize stakeholder interests. Harmonization of stakeholder interests is an abstract and broad concept therefore this research offers narrower concepts in relation with interest harmonization. Three different notions could be distinguished on how to harmonize and satisfy differing interests:

Accommodation of interests suggests that supply of benefits meets or exceeds demand for benefits. Interest accommodation takes place through long-term expansion of benefits. Since each stakeholder class gains something relative to the present, and there are fixed proportions

over time, there should be no interest conflict.

Alignment of interests suggests that interest move in the same general direction. This depicts an organization that has both a strategic direction or plan and its members are aligned with the direction.

Balancing of interests preserves the possibility of competition among interests that must be reconciled without full resources to do so. Some tradeoffs must be achieved.

Such integrated solutions offer alternative to domination and compromise because compromise cannot be successful from long-term perspective as stakeholders wait for their chance to excel and dominate. Compromise is not good too as all the stakeholders do not get what they want and the conflicts may arise. Successful relationships allow to achieve common agreement because stakeholders become interdependent and though retaining their identity seeks to gain common benefit. It is not easy to harmonize all the interests but harmonization of them offers creative approach to issues.

The biggest benefit of stakeholder analysis is that organizational plans are more likely to get acceptance. By conducting stakeholder analysis early in the process, and getting some feedback on the plans, the stage is set for the plans to gain acceptance within organization. Furthermore by spending time understanding stakeholder needs and interests, recommended solutions are more likely to be in tune with business requirements and goals.

Research findings and conclusions

1. After academic literature review and prevailing viewpoints there it is apparent that it is not enough to identify organization's stakeholders. It is necessary to perform comprehensive stakeholder analysis, which must examine and comprise:

- Stakeholder identification according to the relationship to organization (enabling linkages,

functional linkage, diffused linkage, and normative linkages).

- Prioritization of stakeholders according to attributes (power, urgency, legitimacy) and to relationship to the situation (level of involvement, of problem recognition, of constraint recognition).
- Understanding of stakeholder interests and their integration into organization operation's plans.

But this analysis cannot be comprehensive because one dimension of stakeholder attribute missing is whether the stakeholder group is supportive or threatening. Stakeholder strategies would be contingent on the level of support. Neglect of this attribute can undermine success of organization's strategies towards stakeholder relationships.

2. After performance of stakeholder theory analysis in academic literature, it became clear that theoretical approach is missing on how to find harmony between stakeholder interests. Obvious criteria are absent therefore it can capacitate some kind of organizational lawlessness. Therefore quite abstract notion of interest harmonization is offered to split into three narrower categories concerning satisfaction of stakeholder needs:

- Accommodation of interest.
- Alignment of interest.
- Balance of interests.

3. Stakeholder analysis is a very effective mechanism for bringing other needs and interest into the planning process and consequently into organization's performance.

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Suinteresuotųjų šalių poreikių ir interesų tenkinimo priemonės

Santrauka

Moksliniai tyrimai rodo, jog gyvybingesnės ir perspektyvesnės yra tos organizacijos, kurios, orientuodamosios į vartotojų poreikių tenkinimą, rūpinasi ir kitomis turinčiomis įtaką organizacijos veiklai suinteresuotosiomis šalimis. Vartotojų poreikių supratimas yra būtinas, tačiau ne vienintelis veiksnys, darantis įtaką organizacijos sėkmei. Reikia integruoti ir kitų suinteresuotųjų šalių poreikius ir sulaukti situacijos, kad suinteresuotosios šalys netrukdytų, paremtų ar padėtų būtinomis priemonėmis organizacijos sėkmei.

Organizacijos turi žvelgti į savo suinteresuotųjų šalių ratą kaip į neatskiriamą jų aplinkos dalį, ir ši dalis turi būti valdoma tokiu būdu, kad užtikrintų naudą. Tad suinteresuotųjų šalių vadyba yra organizacijos strategijos dalis, į kurią įtraukiamos organizacijai svarbios suinteresuotosios šalys.

Tyrinėjant suinteresuotųjų šalių teoriją, suinteresuotųjų šalių vadybą, ryšius, galima aptikti įvairių būdų pagrindinėms suinteresuotosioms šalims identifikuoti. Visų šių pastangų esmė yra atsakyti į klausimą „kurios yra suinteresuotosios šalys ir kiek reikia skirti dėmesio kiekvienai suinteresuotųjų šalių grupei?“ Visos suinteresuotosios šalys negali turėti tuos pačius interesus ir reikalavimus. Kai organizacijos nustato savo suinteresuotąsias šalis, būtina išsiaiškinti jų poreikių patenkinimo svarbumo organizacijos veiklai lygį: kurių suinteresuotųjų šalių poreikius būtina patenkinti visiškai, o kurių tik

kai kuriuos poreikius. Visada bus tokių suinteresuotųjų šalių poreikių, kurių nepatenkinimas niekaip nepaveiks organizacijos veiklos. Iškyla prioritetų suteikimo problema, apimanti įvairius veiksnius.

Šią problemą būtų galima spręsti išplečiant vartotojo bei jo poreikių tenkinimo paradigmą ir pereinant prie suinteresuotųjų šalių ir jų poreikių tenkinimo paradigmos, t.y. vartotojais reikėtų laikyti organizacijai svarbias suinteresuotąsias šalis, o pastarųjų poreikius derinti bei tenkinti taip, kad nebūtų pažeisti kurios nors interesai. Tačiau, esant plačiam suinteresuotųjų šalių ratui, susiduria įvairūs, dažnai labai skirtingi interesai, kurių derinimo aspektai mokslinėje literatūroje nėra pakankamai išnagrinėti, yra gana abstraktūs ir nėra prieita prie bendros nuomonės, kaip integruoti skirtingus interesus į organizacijos veiklos tikslus, kaip, tenkinant vartotojų poreikius, patenkinti ir kitų organizacijai svarbių suinteresuotųjų šalių poreikius.

Tyrimo problema: gana dažnai pasigendama konstruktyvaus bendradarbiavimo su suinteresuotosiomis šalimis derinant interesus, o tai neigiamai veikia suinteresuotųjų šalių poreikių tenkinimą ir sumažina organizacijos konkurencines galimybes.

Tyrimo tikslas: rasti būdų, kaip siekti suinteresuotųjų šalių patenkinimo, tenkinant tokią svarbią suinteresuotųjų šalių grupę kaip vartotojus, o jų poreikių patenkinimo, siekti kitų suinteresuotųjų šalių interesų derinimo ir poreikių patenkinimo.

Tyrimo uždaviniai: susisteminti kriterijus suinteresuotosioms šalims identifikuoti ir prioritetams nustatyti, kas sudarytų sąlygas suderinti suinteresuotųjų šalių interesus ir integruoti juos į organizacijos veiklą, sukonkretinti abstrakčią interesų derinimo sąvoką ir pasiūlyti galimus sprendimus siekiant interesų suderinimo.

Kompetentinga suinteresuotųjų šalių analizė tinka joms identifikuoti, suteikti prioritetus ir taip daryti poveikį situacijai bei gauti rezultatą, suteikiantį galimybę sukurti papildomą vertę (Bardach, 1998). Suinteresuotųjų šalių analizė nėra sunku atlikti, tai nereikalauja daug laiko, ypač jei lyginsime su galimais nuostoliais to nepadarius (Lynn, 1996; Bardach, 1998). Suinteresuotųjų šalių analizė yra gyvybiškai būtina tiek dėl vertų įgyvendinti idėjų iškėlimo, tiek dėl viešosios politikos plėtojimo siekiant bendros gerovės (Van Horn, Baumer ir Gormley, 2001; Bryson, Cunningham ir Lokkesmoe, 2002).

Suinteresuotųjų šalių analizė apima daugelį metodų joms identifikuoti ir apibūdinti pagal jų požymius, sąveiką bei interesus, siejant su svarstoma problema. Prieš pradėdama analizę, organizacija turi nusistatyti tikslą. Mokslinėje literatūroje minimos įvairios galimos prielaidos suinteresuotųjų šalių analizei atlikti:

- empiriškai nustatyti egzistuojančius suinteresuotųjų šalių tarpusavio ryšius (Grimble ir Wellard, 1996);
- analitiškai patobulinti intervenciją (Engel 1997);
- kaip vadybos priemonė politikai kurti (Rolling ir Wagemakers, 1998);
- suprasti pagrindines suinteresuotąsias šalis bei įvertinti jų interesus (Grimble ir kt., 1995);
- ieškoti suderinamumo tarp organizacijos tikslų ir suinteresuotųjų šalių interesų (Freeman ir Gilbert, 1987);
- kaip interesų derinimo ir nesutarimų prevencijos priemonė (Engel 1997).

Freeman ir Gilbert (1987) vietoj suinteresuotųjų šalių analizės vartoja sąvoką „suinteresuotųjų šalių vadyba“, taip akcentuodami jau anksčiau šiame darbe minėtą partnerystės ryšių svarbą, jų vadybą, o ne ryšių valdymą. Suinteresuotųjų šalių analizė yra kaip įrankis skirtingų pasaulių sintezei ir užtikrina, kad jų interesai bei poreikių tenkinimas būtų suderinti su verslo interesais, ir įgyvendinti (Boutelle, 2004). Sistemingai tyrinėjant skirtingus interesus, galima rasti problemų sprendimus ir pašalinti bent jau didžiąją dalį prieštaravimų, kylančių dėl skirtingų interesų ir reikalavimų.

Galima pasiūlyti tokią suinteresuotųjų šalių analizės eigą:

1. Identifikuoti organizacijos suinteresuotąsias šalis.
2. Suteikti prioritetus suinteresuotosioms šalims.
3. Suprasti suinteresuotųjų šalių interesus ir poreikius
4. Integruoti suinteresuotųjų šalių poreikius į organizacijos veiklos planus.

Organizacijos paskiria atsakingą asmenį (asmenis), kurie, remdamiesi kriterijais ir atsižvelgdami į sprendžiamą klausimą, identifikuoja suinteresuotąsias šalis. Suinteresuotosioms šalims svarbu būti pastebėtomis ir „turėti balsą“ (čia iškyla tokios suinteresuotųjų šalių kriterijų kategorijos kaip galia, pagrįstumas ar skubumas sprendžiant problemą). Bet kuriuo atveju suinteresuotosios šalys yra neatskiriama vadybos strategijos dalis. Ši koncepcija padeda žmonėms susitarti dėl bendrų tikslų, dalyvavimo, ribų ir naudingumo, t.y. lanksčiai planuoti savo veiklą (Rolling ir Wagemaker, 1998; Jones, 1995).

Analizuojant ir jungiant mokslininkų mintis šia tema, galimas prioritetų suteikimas remtųsi šiais kriterijais: suinteresuotųjų šalių požymiai ir santykis su situacija. Taigi suinteresuotųjų šalių sąrašas, jų svaris ir prioritetai, kiekvienai konkrečiai organizacijai negali visą laiką išlikti toks pat, tai turi būti labai dinamiška schema. Klausimų, problemų svarba su atitinkamomis suinteresuotosiomis šalimis svarba keičiasi atsižvelgiant ir į laiko faktorių. Vadovams svarbiausia yra, kad suinteresuotųjų šalių interesai ir prioritetai yra skirtingi ir dinamiški, tad suinteresuotųjų šalių vadybą reikėtų suvokti kaip nuolat besikeičiantį procesą, į kurį turi būti lanksčiai ir adekvačiai konkrečiai situacijai reaguojama. Trys suinteresuotųjų šalių analizės etapai leidžia jas identifikuoti, suklasifikuoti į prasmingas grupes ir išskirti prioritetingas suinteresuotąsias šalis. Palankių ryšių su suinteresuotosiomis šalimis plėtojimas organizacijai yra būtinas. Jei organizacija neturi išskyrusi prioritetinių suinteresuotųjų šalių, gali būti švaistomos jėgos ir laikas ne tiems ryšiams palaikyti. Naudodamos čia aprašytus suinteresuotųjų šalių prioritizavimo etapus organizacijos įgyja sisteminių ir išsamų požiūrį į savo suinteresuotąsias šalis.

Žmonės ir organizacijos yra linkusios bendradarbiauti, kai tai atitinka jų interesus. Organizacijos gali norėti užmegzti partnerystės ryšius su suinteresuotosiomis šalimis, kad įgytų pasitikėjimą ir sumažintų sąnaudas vykdydamos savo planus, kad pagerintų savo reputaciją, tenkindamos suinteresuotųjų šalių lūkesčius ir pan. Kai organizacijos pripažįsta, kad jų interesai gali būti pasiekti bendradarbiaujant su kitais, ir kai savus interesus praplečia atsižvelgdamos į kitus interesus, žymiai išauga noras bendradarbiauti. Planavimas ir tarpusavio projektų įgyvendinimas yra daug efektyvesnis, kai suinteresuotoji šalis turi aiškiai suformuluotus tikslus, vertybes, savo lyderius ir bendravimo su kitais struktūrą, kuri padeda išlaikyti pusiausvyrą tarp suinteresuotųjų šalių reikalavimų ir kompensacijos. Tačiau suinteresuotųjų šalių teorija nepateikia bendrų konceptualių nuostatų, kaip surasti suinteresuotųjų šalių interesų pusiausvyrą. Kadangi nėra aiškių kriterijų, organizacijoms paliekama pačioms spręsti, o tai gali sudaryti sąlygas ir savivalei. Norėdami palaikyti ilgalaikį sėkmingą bendradarbiavimą, partneriai privalo surasti abipusiškai tenkinančius sprendimus nesutarimams spręsti. Nepakanka vien sakyti ar žinoti, jog būtina derinti įvairių suinteresuotųjų šalių grupių interesus, nes derinimas yra abstrakti, plati sąvoka. Šiame tyrime siūloma derinimo sąvoką išskaidyti į tris siauresnes kategorijas, susijusias su poreikių tenkinimu: interesų pri(si)taikymą, interesų vienijimas ir interesų subalansavimas.

Tyrimo išvados: nepakanka tik identifikuoti suinteresuotųjų šalių, būtina atlikti išsamią suinteresuotųjų šalių analizę, kuri turi apimti:

- suinteresuotųjų šalių identifikaciją pagal ryšį su organizacija (teisiniai, funkciniai, normatyviniai, nutolę ryšiai),
- prioritetų suteikimą joms pagal požymius (galia, svarbumas, pagrįstumas) ir pagal santykį su situacija (išitraukimo, problemos suvokimo, apribojimo suvokimo lygis),
- interesų supratimą bei jų integraciją į organizacijos veiklos planus.

Tačiau ši analizė nebus išsami ir pakankama, jei neatsižvelgsime į suinteresuotųjų šalių požiūrį į organizaciją ir jos veiklą, nes tai lemia suinteresuotųjų šalių paramą ar trukdymą (priešpriešą) organizacijos veiklai. Šio požymio ignoravimas gali pakenkti organizacijos sėkmei formuojant suinteresuotųjų šalių bendradarbiavimo strategijas.

Raktažodžiai: *suinteresuotųjų šalių patenkinimas, suinteresuotųjų šalių interesų harmonizavimas, suinteresuotųjų šalių analizė, organizacijos konkurentabilumas.*

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