

Strategic Changes in Transnational Corporations as an Adjustment to the Challenges of the 21st Century

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The article aims to discuss the direction of changes in the strategies of the most powerful transnational corporations (Top-TNCs) as a result of adjustments to the new challenges created by the evolving global economy – an attempt to identify the fundamental, universal pillars of the strategy the Top-TNCs.

Research Design & Methods: The paper, apart from literature review and its critique, presents the results of a survey among 252 TNCs. The author conducted in-depth studies – using the Multidimensional Statistical Analysis, the Strategic Analyses, as well as the Grounded Theory Method.

Findings: The changes in the strategies of the Top-TNCs proceeded according to a uniform scheme – the authorial Model of Business Integration was presented as the standard for TNCs adjusting to further challenges posed by the evolving global economy. Based on the survey, the author identified universal pillars of the Top-TNC strategy: glocalization, business networking, orchestration and cooptation.

Implications & Recommendations: TNCs desiring to engage in the most efficient system for creating international competitiveness should apply the following tactics: link globalization and regionalization, build a multi-level relationship system, creatively combine various types of organizational and social structures, simultaneously employ cooperation and competition.

Contribution & Value Added: The work sought to provide evidence that regardless of the area of activity, the pillars of strategy for Top-TNCs are the same in terms of the core, but are often implemented in different forms. The author proposes the original concept for assessing the competitiveness of network enterprises – the Synthetic Indicator of Creation of Added Value.

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INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, the global economy has undergone dynamic changes. It resulted in new challenges for companies – requiring the combination of internationalization, integration, entrepreneurship, innovation and sustainable development (Rosińska-Bukowska, 2016; Hagen, Denicolai & Zuchella, 2014). Thus, the most powerful transnational corporations (Top-TNCs) have been forced to create the basis of multi-layered network structures in order to build their competitiveness – therefore creating the model of Global Business Network (GBN) in stages.

The main objective of the article is to discuss the direction of changes in the strategies of the most powerful transnational corporations (Top-TNCs) as a result of adjustments to the new challenges created by the evolving global economy – an attempt to identify the model of transformations taking place in transnational corporations (TNCs). On the basis of the concept of Grounded Theory Method (GTM), the fundamental pillars of the strategy which can be considered as universal attributes of modern corporations that are the leaders of individual industry sectors have been indicated.

The paper, apart from literature review and its critique, presents the results of a survey conducted among the Top-TNCs which were classified in the *Top 100 TNCs* in the UNCTAD's World Investment Reports of 1991-2013. When selecting from 252 TNCs listed in the rankings, the Multidimensional Statistical Analysis (MSA) was used – the original Synthetic Indicator of Creation of Added Value (SICAV) of the author's own invention. The ranking of TNCs in selected industry sectors was made by the linear ordering method (by SICAV). Then, for the 3 leaders in each of the sectors, in-depth studies were conducted. Based on the concept GTM, test results for the TNC-leaders of all sectors were juxtaposed four pillars of strategy identified, which can be considered universal indicators of modern corporation development.

The analytical model is based on an assumption that changes in the global economy have forced changes in corporations – the intensification of cooperation on many levels, international entrepreneurship, the creation of multi-level network structures. This study assumes that the creation of value added to the current standard emerges through the use of a multi-layer GBN capital. For the purpose of the analysis of company business systems, they have been divided into the following subsystems (Rosińska-Bukowska, 2012): market (KRn), financial (KFn), innovative (KInn), organizational (KOrg) and institutional (KIns). Thus, the analysis becomes multidimensional and enables both an analysis of internal conditions (relationships established among the various subsystems) and external ones (the principles of harmonizing with the surroundings).

It is very important to emphasize that macro factors (economical, political, ecological etc.) are constructive for the power of TNCs. It seems reasonable to identify the key macro challenges, such as: linking globalization and regionalization (glocalization), building a multi-level relationship system (global network), a creative combination of various types of organizational, managing and social structures (orchestration), simultaneous cooperation and competition allowing for a replacement of operation with exploration (coopetition). These ideas are fundamental and appear to be pillars of strategy for some of the most powerful TNCs. These challenges are included in the analysis of institutional capital of corporations and networks to which they belong to – as inseparable elements of strategic planning of corporations today.

The proposed approach focuses on the role of knowledge and innovation (behavioural concepts, theories innovation, key competencies), the possibility of exploring the capacities of the global environment potential through internationalization (the concept of international entrepreneurship, theory of economic integration, international-by-stages) and the ability to build appropriate relations and structures (theories of agglomeration, mergers and acquisitions, organization and management). The concept is an attempt to present the model for the assessment of competitiveness of TNCs as the combination of positional and resource streams, taking into account the importance of the international context.

The first part of the paper includes the review of the literature on the shaping of views on the essence of corporations as well as on the causes and directions of changes in their strategies resulting from the adjustments to the new challenges. The second section discusses the methodological assumptions of the empirical studies, including the hypotheses, the research design, the analysis diagrams and the rules governing the selection of objects. The third section elaborates on the results of the empirical research as well as the conclusions and suggestions regarding further studies.

New challenges posed by the global economy have determined appropriate behaviours of corporations. An adequate competitive strategy requires the development of networks with numerous internal and external stakeholders, including competitors, customers, employees, non-profit organizations as well as the national and local government in the home and host countries. The foundation of corporation effectiveness is the ability to adapt to new requirements. On the basis of the research, it can be said that changes in the strategies of Top-TNCs proceeded according to a uniform scheme – described via the MBI concept. Consequently, Top-TNCs developed universal pillars of strategies, which are: glocalization, business networking, orchestration and cooperation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review regarding the shaping of notions on the essence of corporations and the bases of their successful expansion should begin at an early point, in order to determine the most crucial pillars of the corporate strategies generating highest success. The description of corporations as specific forms of organization is observable in the works of Kaldor (1934), who stressed the matter of a dynamic development of corporate structures as a basis for an unlimited, higher-than-average development. In his later works, he also emphasized that corporations are, above all, coordinating structures and therefore, their actions do not fall into the scope of the paradigm applied to the traditional (typically private) companies (Kaldor, 1960). It evidently indicates the necessity of transferring the focus point during the TNC analysis from the study of production structures to the study discovering the management mechanisms. In the research on TNCs, the works of Coase (1937) are also of highest importance, as it was him who described enterprise as a system of relations and correlations aiming to organize a specific transaction thread and not always based on the rules of trade contracting.

For the purpose of this study, the work of E. Penrose (1959) was of utmost importance. She emphasized that the strength of TNCs is based on the organization and coordinating skills used to create an adequate resource collection adjusted to meet the requirements of the neighbouring environment. These resources constitute the essence of the existence of corporations. They comprise tangible and intangible assets, including human resources.

The key role of the organization is creating a satisfactory system of the available resource usage. It seems a legitimate assumption that combining this theory (developed by P. Selznik) with the classic Ricardian notion of comparative advantage resulted in the creation of the theory that is the base of the modern perception of the essence of corporate strategy – the Resource Based View (RBV). The RBV concept accentuates the role of the soft resources, that is the informal knowledge or skills, human resources, relations with the stakeholders (clients) and image in building a comparative advantage.

Yet another crucial observation indicates that the essence of corporate strategy includes the transformation of non-specific resources (mostly the financial capital) into specific resources constituting unique and crucial competencies (Hamel & Prahard, 1990). At the same time, it needs to be emphasized that generally the assets of a given subject, understood as specific resources, have a limited capability of adapting to changes, and the individual market participants have an additionally limited knowledge about the requirements and directions of changes on the global market. In the corporate model of network layouts, it is possible to limit the transaction costs and, therefore, gain the comparative advantage as, among others, the effect of the synergy of resources. The combination of various types of specific resources presents the TNCs with better adaptative skills. Additionally, thanks to their global arrangement, it is possible to learn from inner experiences by transferring knowledge and experience between the network members. The improvement in the decision-making rationality is related to the wider access to knowledge about the specificities of particular market zones. The restriction of opportunistic behaviours occurs thanks to the creation of an entangled organization, working as a system of joined vessels (Khandwalla, 1972; Williamson, 1991; Håkansson & Snehota, 1995; Rosińska-Bukowska, 2012; Barczak, 2016). As a result, the crucial elements of the modern business model include cooptation and orchestration, that is the abilities to organize and combine competition and cooperation as well as market and hierarchy. It should be mentioned that the concept of combining competitiveness and cooperation could be already found in the work of Alchian and Demsetz (1972), wherein the authors deem enterprise as both the specialized market structure and the substitute of the market within the scope of organized transactions. The enterprise collects and processes market data in order to effectively organize a collective production of goods and services using various resources of numerous administrators. The concept of orchestration is the collection of processes serving to create values thanks to the unique ability of the effective usage of various resources of numerous subjects (Dhanaraj & Parkhe, 2006; Czakon, 2012, pp. 196-210).

Referring to all the above-mentioned concepts aims to substantiate the later selection of titles characterizing the pillars of the development strategies in modern corporations. The selected elements have a fundamental meaning in the modern model of business, although they are not exactly innovative.

In conclusion, the strategy of corporations in this text is presented from the evolutionary perspective – as an adjustment to the global changes. The state of balance is a moment in which a TNC is optimally incorporated into the requirements of the environment (Hodgson & Knudsen, 2006). Therefore, the model of organization and management (international enterprise), the rules of expanding onto new markets (internationalization), the approach towards dealing with the complexity of the inner and outer environments (balanced development) assumed by the TNCs are of crucial importance.

The role of the selection of an adequate strategy concept, which would contribute to a long-term development of organizations and match numerous categories of stakeholders, is still a subject of discussion. Researchers have provided various evidence on how different factors facilitate or constrain the success of certain companies. Individual researchers focus on their preferred approaches e.g.: the role of the internationalization process (Daszkiewicz & Wach, 2014); the role of intellectual capital and the innovation model (Sveiby, 2015; McCutcheon, 2008; Bounfour, 2003); the role of entrepreneurship in the context of internationalization and globalization (Wach, 2015) and so on. Others seek to create holistic approaches – the management based on an effective implementation of the concept of sustainable development (Pike & Roos, 2000; Viedma, 2001).

In this article, the main references are to: the concept of phased economic integration based on Balassa's model (the internationalization concept for TNCs – the Model of Business Integration); the models based on the concept of incremental accumulation and implementation of knowledge (the behavioural theory of the firm); the concept of international entrepreneurship (the interdisciplinary theory of the firm). Therefore, the approach combines at least four research domains/theories of: entrepreneurship, international business, global economy and international management (Cavusgil, 1980; Andersson, 2003; McDougall, Oviatt & Shrader, 2003; Zucchella & Sciabini, 2007; GBN around the Top-TNCs which become orchestrators of this system (Rosińska-Bukowska, 2012; McDougall-Covin, Jones & Serapio, 2014; Vahlne & Ivarsson, 2014; Coviello, Jones & McDougall-Covin, 2014).

The classical competitive perspective of internationalization has been explained by the author. The internationalization process is incremental (international-by-stages), members accumulate knowledge and experience (Wickramasekera & Oczkowski, 2006). Therefore it uses the ideas of so-called models of learning and the concept of learning by export (Wach, 2015, pp. 37-42; Wąsowska, Obłój & Ciszewska-Mlinarič, 2016). The Top-TNCs go through various stages of internationalization as a 6-phase process of excellence. This is the Model of Business Integration (Rosińska-Bukowska, 2015) – the concept shows that companies pass through following stages of creating competitiveness using new methods developed as a result of experience gained. The last phase comprises the creation of the GBN around the Top-TNCs which become orchestrators of this system (Rosińska-Bukowska, 2012).

On the basis of a 6-stage model of building a single economic and political organism (according to Balassa), the personal concept of the Model of Business Integration (MBI) was built, which depicts 6 stages of integration development adequate for businesses (Rosińska-Bukowska, 2015, pp. 139-145). Each subsequent stage is to achieve a higher level of organizational sophistication and reflects the improving model of acquiring knowledge, developing skills and competence of a given entity. MIB is a flow diagram of the companies that can be considered as reflecting the essence of the changes made in the integration of the classical model (countries). MIB it is the idea which applies a well-known and widely accepted scheme in order to determine the sequence of integration activities of enterprises. The concept allows for staging and department development, describing the subsequent phases of exploitation of resources, skills and competences (including the under-built integration structure). Companies accumulate knowledge and experience during the integration process, which is a progressed internationalisation

considered an incremental process. The following stages of the corporation development are related because of the incremental deepening of the process of internationalization. It can be described using the constructed Model of Business Integration, which refers to the most popular economic integration model by B. Balassa.

Gradual changes help improve the position in the global economy by implementing innovative concepts of international entrepreneurship as a combination of innovative and proactive behaviours, as well as those directed at risk-taking, which cross national borders and aim to create values (Knight, 1921; Drabik, 2016). However, it needs to be emphasized that currently it is more about the ability of TNCs to create socially-useful values. Top-TNCs function as social structures with high survival rates thanks to upholding their institutional continuity and the multi-layer, multi-directional transfer of knowledge and experience.

In conclusion, the development of TNCs is one of the most important processes of social and economic changes in the global economy. The strategy selected by the TNCs turned out to be the perfect form of organization, capable of a flexible adjustment to new challenges (Waśniewski, 2011, pp. 48-50). TNCs have the ability to divide the risk associated with demanding projects and are able to create the added value systematically. These qualities allowed them to dominate on the international market (Friar & Meyer, 2003) and set the pace of technological changes, investments and economic development (Weidenbaum & Jensen, 1991; Astebro, 2003). As a result, they are organizations which continuously need to include: the complicated collective decision-making processes, the moderation of inner conflicts, the complicated and dynamic relationship with the external environment and reconciling the interests of many diverse members of the system. The research question is: to what extent can these requirements be contained within the scope of universal strategic pillars common to all corporations? Or, rather do different corporations show qualitatively varying patterns of behaviour and is there no single perfect model of activity?

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The main objective of the study is to discuss the direction of changes in the strategies of the most powerful transnational corporations (Top-TNCs) as a result of adjustments to the new challenges posed by the evolving global economy and determine the main pillars of their development strategies.

The research hypotheses tested in this research study were as follows:

- H1:** Transnational corporations, in order to be able to adjust to the next challenges of the evolving global economy, implement the phased process of adjustment, which can be described using the constructed Model of Business Integration. The following stages of the corporation development are related because of the incremental deepening of the process of internationalization.
- H2:** The universal pillars for the development of the most powerful corporations can be identified, because even though they worked in various sectors, they have been subjected to the same factors requiring an adequate conduct. Requirements for the leaders of business networks have a cross-sectorial nature, as they reflect the trends of universal character – related to the challenges of the evolving global economy e.g. the sustainable development requirement.

The Top-TNCs were selected on the basis of the *Top 100 TNCs* UNCTAD (1991-2013). The sample contained 252 TNCs. They have been divided (by the author) into 9 sectors: automotive, petrochemical, electronics, telecommunication and media, chemical-pharmaceutical, consumer, industrial goods and services, public services and holdings. Only the corporations classified in the ranking for at least a decade were included in the study.

The main research method for the non-experimental quantitative research, which was applied in this research project, comprised of the collection of comparable data (from international reports, annual reports of corporations, rankings and statistics) with the intent to process them with the MSA and generalize the sample results to a population. In order to gather empirical material, the author used primarily *Top 100 TNCs* (when needed, the data was supplemented by: *Forbes Global 2000* 1990-2014, *Fortune Global 500* 1990-2014, and the annual reports of surveyed corporations).

Assuming that creating the GBN requires from corporations to have an adequate development potential, the author created SICAV to assess elements of the economic and intellectual capital of Top-TNCs. The constructed SICAV is designed to reflect the ability of the corporation to create added value through the power of connecting all categories of capital held within the network. The parameters taken into account in the design of the synthetic indicator were chosen in such a way, as to reflect the impact of each layer of capital on the competitiveness of TNC. A set of five diagnostic indicators was used for the construction of the indicator.

Within the proposed concept the element reflecting the state of the economic capital of the company is Return On Equity, which combines elements describing the area of finance, production and sales. This indicator considers the impact on the profitability of committed capital of three important factors: operational efficiency, expressed by return on sales, efficient use of acquired assets, and leverage, reflecting the impact of the involvement of foreign capital to increase profit per equity unit: equity multiplier.

Four indicators illustrate the state of intellectual capital¹:

- share of intangible assets in the creation of the value of sales $[(MV-SE)/S]$ – the impact on sales of standard factors not measured directly, i.e. soft stimulants of competitiveness; an attempt to quantify the hidden factors increasing the competitive potential related to intellectual capital (Marr & Roos, 2005, pp. 28-41),
- cost of research and development per employee $[(R\&D)/E]$ – the technological advancement of the production system against competitors, the ability to create new standards and value added (Andelin, Karhu & Junnila, 2015),
- indicators of assets (the share of foreign assets in total assets) $[AF/A]$ and employment (the share of foreign employment in total employment) $[EF/E]$ – the internationalization of the organizational system; the ability to derive potential from the multicultural human capital, build creative international teams and arbitrate is highlighted, resulting from the investment of assets outside the home country; the skilful following of trends, including the movements of the competition and building creative international teams.

The calculations of SICAV were made using Microsoft Office Excel and numerical taxonomy (Kolenda, 2006). Via the methods of linear ordering MSA (Mikulec, 2011, pp.

¹ MV – Market Value, SE – Shareholder's Equity, S – Sale Value, E – Employment, EF – Employment Abroad, A – Assets, AF – Foreign Assets, R&D – Research and Development Costs.

93-101) on the basis of SICVA, TNCs ranks in all sectors were established. As a result, 3 leaders emerged in every sector – these corporations were further tested. The in-depth qualitative analyses included the examination of: the path of internationalization – the stages of the MBI; the creation of networks – diagrams of strategic analysis; the guidelines for development strategies – the study of records in the annual reports of the TNCs. The last phase of the study comprised the use of the GTM methodology to indicate the pillars of corporation strategy, universal for modern TNCs.

The MBI is the author's original concept using the Balassa's integration concept to explain the changes in corporations resulting from the adjustments to the changes in the environment (Rosińska-Bukowska, 2012). The author performed the study to confirm the passage of the sectors' leaders through the described MBI path (the history of building relationships, creating structures) – for TNCs-leaders in each sector.

The study of the process of unifying smaller subjects that comprise TNCs (the free trade zone; the agglomeration model) was conducted via the MBI. It has been tested whether consolidation (an equivalent of a customs union – the creation of “national monopolists” or trade oligopolists) is present on the level of the home country. The question of how did TNCs undertake trade and investment-production expansions into the international market was asked. Common undertakings (regional ones as well as the undertakings within a given sector) with foreign partners and the models of stepping outside of the home trade (or region) were studied. A list and models of *joint venture* agreements (both vertical and horizontal in nature) as well as the models of the “ageing” of cooperation were identified. The issue of whether they concern only the trade and production aspects or, also, the flow of technology and the intellectual resources, was studied together with the question of how many of them lead to changes in ownership (mergers and takeovers). The next stage (of the currency union) comprised the analysis of the rules of building a portfolio of brands – the purchase of shares, a takeover by the exchange of shares, another *joint venture* and the identification of the appropriate strategies of a brand. Reaching the highest level of GBN maturity consists of TNCs noticing the necessity of cooperating with the competitors in creating standards, innovative solutions and solving global problems etc. It is enabled by the indication of changes in the strategies confirming the functioning of TNCs based on the principals of social responsibility and sustainable (balanced) development.

The confirmation that a given TNC has built a GBN was the basis for further studies. Using the methodology of strategic analyses (Obłój, 2014), a study (via the PARTS study, the value chain, strategic groups) was conducted, serving to identify the base assumptions of the development strategies of the TNC leaders of sectors (3 TNCs in each sector – 27 TNCs which are representative for main trends in the current global economy). Then, on the basis of the GTM methodology, or discovering the theory from experience (Götz & Jankowska, 2014), development priorities were determined by the systematic identification of the crucial elements of the strategies applied by the studied corporations. Subsequently, by the development and verification of the theoretical concepts emerging on the basis thereof, the 4 following pillars of strategy comprising the bases of Top-TNCs development were distinguished: coopetition, glocalization, business networking and orchestration.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The stage models of internationalization – companies which are not interested in operating on the international market (Kalinic & Forza, 2012) or “born globals” (Rennie, 1993) or “born regionals” (Sui, Yu & Baum, 2013) have been discussed critically. In addition, the legitimacy of the following statement by Waśniewski has been challenged: “in the same macroeconomic environment, even in the same culture, different corporations present qualitatively different behaviour patterns – there is no single, ideal pattern of activity”. Many researchers criticized stage models and juxtaposed them with the accelerated or rapid internationalization models. It is doubtful whether the models dubbed as falsifying contradict stage learning and development. The companies which are not interested in operating on the international market usually make sub-products or offer services for big businesses from the very beginning – the pace of their internationalization is in general higher than average. Others, “the born regionals” – those conducting their business in the given region, can be considered internationalized from the beginning, although their scope concerns mainly the markets of neighbouring countries. Clearly, not every business passes through all the stages of the integration chain. Some stages take place while other are omitted (Cannon & Willis, 1981). In most cases – including the most powerful corporations – the consecutive model collecting experience and implementing the acquired knowledge works. As a result, they fulfill the integration step by step, with possible shifts between the phases, by fulfilling the whole range of requirements before reaching the stage of full maturity (GBN).

In this approach the author made an attempt to combine the macro- and microeconomic approaches – by presenting the model for the strategy of the competitiveness of TNCs that combines the strength of a merging of positional and resource streams (Gorynia & Dzikowska, 2012), taking into account the importance of the international context and the challenges it presents. To conclude, the triad of entrepreneurship for modern corporations constitutes: the orchestrator of the Global Business Network as a key factor in the internationalization of the corporation; the internal and external environment comprising the system capital of the corporation and the corporation’s pillars of strategy which determine the directions of the entrepreneurial process. The developed pillars of the strategy of modern TNCs, which allowed them to become leaders in particular sectors because they are a response to the challenges of the current phase of globalization, are universal. They are adequate for the new requirements of building competitiveness in the international market, identical for all industries.

During the study, various types of relationships between the units in the networks of individual corporations (owned – PW, strategic – PS, cooperative – PK) were distinguished and analysed; additionally, a detailed characterization of the layers of the capital (KRn, KFn, KInn, KOrg, KIns) was conducted. The characterization of the system of relationships between the units in the network of a given corporation – an orchestrator – and the elements building the individual layers of the GBN capital, assured a correct interpretation of the recordings regarding the priority directions of development strategies included in the annual reports of the corporations.

Through the research it was determined that among the Top-TNCs there is a high concurrence of developmental priorities in all sectors. This undermines Waśniewski’s

claim that TNCs present qualitatively varying patterns of behaviour despite being subjected to the same stimuli of the macro environment. The strategic models have displayed similarities in developmental priorities in all studied examples (leaders of each sector). This paper presented the results of a survey conducted among all of the most powerful transnational corporations which were classified in the Top 100 TNCs in the UNCTAD's World Investment Reports (WIR) of 1991-2013. The total number of objects tested was 252 TNCs. The corporations were divided into 9 sectors and then the Multidimensional Statistical Analysis was used to organize the corporations listed in the WIR-rankings. The ranking of Top-TNCs in selected industry sectors was made via the linear ordering method (by the original Synthetic Indicator of Creation of Added Value – SICAV of the author's own invention). The SICAV was calculated for all of the 252 TNCs. The economic and intellectual capital (reflecting the impact of each layer of capital on the competitiveness of a TNC) was therefore rated for all of the 252 Top-TNCs. All five diagnostic indicators which were used for the construction of the SICAV were calculated for all TNCs. On the basis of SICVA, referring to the methods of linear ordering, it was established which corporations are constantly the most powerful in global economy. In every sector three leaders were chosen – also in-depth qualitative analyses were conducted for 27 corporations. These in-depth qualitative analyses included the examination of: the path of internationalization – the stages of the Model of Business Integration; the creation of networks – diagrams of strategic analysis; the guidelines for development strategies – the study of records in the annual reports of the TNCs. TNCs which were further tested are representative for all sectors and for global economy, because these corporations create patterns for the other participants of the international business. It should be underlined that the top three companies in all sectors were selected to show results as case studies. Based on the concept of Grounded Theory Method using the methodology of strategic analyses – the PARTS study, the value chain study and the strategic groups analyses were conducted, serving to identify the base assumptions of the development strategies in the 21st century.

The aspiration to improve the condition of the economic capital by putting pressure on the increase in assets and profitability indexes – KFn – and the growth of structures for acquiring the local resources – KRn have been observed. All Top-TNCs have accentuated the role of the intellectual capital as a multiplier of the economic capital value. Although specific attributes of TNCs were described as a driving force of the development, their main purposes were, in fact, identical. The key, repeating priorities were: the multicentre R&D systems – the development of KInn; the reorganization of the management, the increase in the scope of internationalisation, the development of the portfolio of brands – KOrg; the development of institutional networks with a diverse group of stakeholders – KIns. It was observed that the phenomenon of repeating priorities occurs regardless of the sector, although its range varies depending on the maturity of the integration process of the business network surrounding a given TNC. The scope of filling in individual ideas, ordered by sectors is presented in the table 1.

It has been established, through the use of the GTM, that the pillars of development of Top-TNCs (on the basis of the analysis of the records in the strategies) are generally cohesive and comprise of:

- business networking – building a multi-level global network; ownership, strategic, cooperative relationships on the level of economic and intellectual capital,

- glocalization – the distribution of activities on the global scale, while establishing the competency centres of given areas; appreciating the social capital of local areas,
- coopetition – combining competitiveness with cooperation; appreciating all stakeholders; creating the value added to the continuously growing standard resulting from the inner interactions of all subsystems within a global structure,
- orchestration – the regulation model; multiple possible types of organizational and management structures, brand strategies, distribution and resource management; the notion of coherence – innovativeness, balanced development, the inclusion of diversity and its creative nature.

Table 1. Synthetic summary of the test results – the sectorial approach

Sector	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
PW	++	+++	++	+++	+	+	++	++	+
PS	+++	++	+++	++	++	+++	+	++	+
PK	++	+	++	+	+++	++	+	+	++
KFn	++	+++	++	+++	+	+	++	++	+
KRn	+++	+	++	++	++	+++	+	++	+
KInn	+++	+++	+	+++	++	+	+	+	+
KOrg	++	+	+++	+	+++	+++	+	+++	+
KIns	+	+	++	++	+++	+++	++	+++	+
business network	+++	+++	++	+++	++	+++	+	++	+
coopetition	+++	+++	+++	+++	+	++	++	+	+
glocalization	+++	+++	+++	+++	++	+++	+++	+++	++
orchestration	+++	+++	++	+++	++	+++	+++	+	+

Sectors: (1) automotive, (2) petrochemical, (3) electronics, (4) telecommunication&media, (5) chemical-pharmaceutical, (6) consumer goods&services, (7) industrial goods&services, (8) public services, (9) holdings.

Meaning: + basic, ++ significant +++ key factor, paramount importance.

Source: own elaboration based on the own study.

In conclusion, the pillars of strategy of Top-TNCs comprise of: business networking, coopetition, glocalization and orchestration. The implementation of these notions in the TNC strategies can take on different forms, since they were carried out using the individual attributes of each TNC. The in-depth analysis of the TNC strategies of all sectors has indicated that they are convergent in essence. The highest level of fulfilment of the indicated sectors is presented in the TNCs of the following sectors: automotive, petrochemical, telecommunications, consumerist and electronic. Studies have shown that these subjects instituted a similar programme of strategic changes – the further changes of MBI as a path assuming the increase in the internationalisation in order to meet the next developmental challenges (confirmation of the H1 hypothesis). As a result, despite the TNCs relying on their original attributes, their strategies ultimately evolved so that the key notions/pillars are almost identical (confirmation of the H2 hypothesis).

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the article was to determine the key changes occurring in the strategies of modern corporations. The research findings suggests that Top-TNCs have developed a model of adjusting to new challenges posed by the evolving global economy.

The model of adjustments turned out to be convergent to the concept of economic integration. On the basis of the studies it can be determined that Top-TNCs, regardless of the sector, have implemented the Model of Business Integration, striving for the creation of a system of multi-level connections – the GBN. This evolution was a result of the necessity to fulfil the requirements of building the international competitiveness – it required crucial re-evaluations of their developmental strategies.

The studies determined, on the basis of the GTM methodology, that the key universal pillars of Top-TNC strategies are: business networking, cooptation, glocalization and orchestration. These pillars of strategy allow the Top-TNCs to continuously interact with all formal and informal “institutions” as well as the networks that include them and create the value added to the still-evolving global standards. However, the advancement level of the process of implementation of these rules varies. Further tests will be designed to determine to what extent it is related to the level to which a given corporation fulfils the requirements of individual attributes determining the development advancement of corporate strategy.

To conclude, companies desiring to engage in the most efficient system for creating international competitiveness, under the conditions created by the global economy in the 21st century, should understand the leading ideas ruling the system. It seems reasonable to identify the key challenges, such as: linking globalization and regionalization (glocalization), building a multi-level relationship system (global network), creative combination of various types of organizational, managing and social structures (orchestration), simultaneous cooperation and competition allowing for a replacement of operation with exploration (cooptation). These ideas are fundamental, so the author has proposed the original concept for assessing the competitiveness of network enterprises – the SICAV. The indicator is based on quantitative indicators (measurable and comparable), which, properly configured, allow to take into account the key qualitative requirements determining the building of competitiveness.

In the future, I would like to draw upon more scientific fields in order to increase the interdisciplinary nature of this research stream – to increase the depth of research and attempt to lower the research limitations. In this paper I tried to show the ideas which are fundamental and appear to be pillars of strategy for some of the most powerful TNCs. However, the advancement level of the process of implementation of these rules varies in each economic sector. I attempted to find out if a level of development of strategy matches the attributes which describe corporations. Further tests will be designed to determine to what extent it is related to the level to which a given corporation fulfils the requirements of individual attributes determining the development advancement of corporate strategy.

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