

## EXTERNAL SOCIAL CAPITAL OF ENTERPRISES IN POLAND

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**Abstract:** The article aims to analyse the external social capital of Polish enterprises and to assess whether external social capital is related to internal social capital and the declared results of enterprises. To the author's knowledge, a separate measurement of external social capital in enterprises in Poland has not been carried out before, which is a novelty. It continues and complements previous research on internal social capital. The model Westlund and Nilsson proposed was the theoretical basis for the empirical analyses. The research was based on the results of a survey conducted on a sample of 650 micro, small, medium and large companies in Poland. Descriptive statistics, non-parametric testing methods and classification methods using the CHAID method were used in the study. Aggregate measures were also used to determine the level of social capital. The main results are: that age, the size of firms and the nature of the market are characteristics that statistically significantly differentiate enterprises due to the level of external social capital; external social capital is positively and statistically significantly correlated with internal social capital and with declared enterprises' performance.

**Keywords:** Enterprise social capital, external social capital, trust, Poland

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### Introduction

Contemporary competitive advantages are built based on intellectual capital - human capital, knowledge capital or social capital. The last of these influence the creation of these advantages in two ways. Firstly, the social capital of the region (local community) where the organisation operates may allow it to obtain a unique benefit through the rent of social capital. Secondly, an organisation influences its competitiveness by shaping and managing its social capital.

Social capital refers to the network of relationships, shared norms and values, and trust. Social capital is a collective resource of collaboration, trust, and a sense of mission among organisation members. Initially, social capital was analysed mainly in sociological, economic and political sciences, but with time the importance of this capital was also noticed in the sciences of business administration. This concept began to be applied to organisations, including enterprises.

The enterprise's social capital is a particular case of organisational social capital (OSC). Leana and Van Buren (1999) define organisational social capital "as a resource reflecting the character of social relations within an organisation. OSC can

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be considered an asset that can create positive effects for the organisation itself and the people that are part of it. Inkpen and Tsang (2005) define organisational social capital as the aggregate of resources embedded within, available through, and derived from an individual or organisation's network of relationships. Organisational social capital is usually considered to develop due to ethical and motivational factors within an organisation. ("Organisational Social Capital,").

Numerous studies indicate that shaping organisational social capital brings various positive effects. Among these effects, the following are most often indicated: social capital in the organisation reduces transaction costs, positively affects the internal learning of the company, promotes the creation of a network of partner relations, facilitates the creation of the company's intellectual capital, results in increased credibility, facilitates the exchange of resources with other entities, facilitates knowledge management in the company, enables the development of leadership in the company, entering new markets, affects product innovation, improves the company's results and increases the stability of the organisation, and ultimately enables obtaining a sustainable competitive advantage (Felício et al., 2014; Grudzewski et al., 2009; Jędrych et al., 2018).

External social capital has been analysed in various studies but not in Polish conditions. It was studied mainly in Asian countries - China, Taiwan, South Korea, and Hong Kong. The impact of this capital (often both internal and external) on the achievements of companies was mainly analysed, but also their impact on other organisations (crowdfunding projects, public schools or organisations of local initiatives). The most frequently discussed topic was the relationship between this capital and innovation. Most often, the relationship between external social capital and effects was positive.

Research Duodu and Rowlinson (2020) conducted using 135 survey responses from managers in construction contractor firms in Hong Kong shows that internal and external social capital has direct benefits for both exploratory and exploitative innovation. A study conducted on 197 South Korean companies indicated that SME internal social capital positively influenced marketing innovation, whereas external social capital positively influenced foreign distributors' marketing innovation (Rababah et al., 2022). The relationship between social capital (internal and external) and innovation was also the subject of research among French companies. François et al. (2021) focused on the relational dimension of social capital and differentiated between internal and external social capital. They analysed the perceived utility of resources received from the networks of innovative nascent firms in their first six years of existence. The results indicated that nascent firms' external social capital was a powerful resource for growth during the early years. Research conducted among Finnish electronics companies in the 1990s suggested that the level of internal and external social capital positively affects the knowledge intensity of a TBNF (technology-based new firms). The study's authors supported a positive relationship between external social capital and TBNFs' foreign market knowledge (Yli-Renko et al., 2002). Cuevas-Rodríguez et al. (2014) analysed the role of internal and external

relational social capital as determinants of radical product innovation in the example of 142 Spanish companies. The research results indicate that of the two types of social capital analysed, internal social capital is the most relevant predictor of RPI concerning either technological or market dimensions. The influence of external social capital is not as strong as the internal one.

Regarding their interaction effect, external social capital reduces internal social capital's positive effect on RPI's market dimension. Other studies examining the impact of internal and external social capital on the role of knowledge absorption capacity on project innovation were conducted in China on a group of 46 companies (Kanwal et al., 2019). The direct link between absorptive knowledge capacity and project innovativeness was substantially positive. Nevertheless, internal and external social capital negatively moderates said relationship as they attain a value higher than their mean level. According to research conducted on a group of 398 entrepreneurs in China (Yang et al., 2022), external social capital has a significant and positive effect on the decision to start a venture, while risk perception partly mediates this relationship. In China, the results of crowdfunding projects were also analysed (Liao et al., 2015). Research results for 862 projects indicated that external social capital significantly affects crowdfunding performance alone.

An investigation conducted among Taiwanese teams showed that the external social capital of these teams contributes to their flexibility (Chang et al., 2011). Research on external and internal social capital's influence on business performance was also conducted in Nigeria among female-owned small- and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) in the informal sector (Olamide and Ogbechie, 2021). These research findings prove the existence of a positive and significant influence of internal and external social capital on business performance, but external social capital had a more substantial effect. Positive results of external social capital have been noticed not only in enterprises. The positive impact of both external and internal social capital has been noted in research on the performance of public schools in the USA (Leana and Pil, 2006), analysing data from 88 public schools from teachers, principals, parents, and students. Conclusions were received that both internal social capital (relations among teachers) and external social capital (connections between the principal and external stakeholders) predict student achievement in mathematics and reading. Another study examines the impact of internal and external social capital on the success of self-organising community initiatives in a developing country (Shrestha, 2013). It was noted that Communities with higher internal social capital and higher external social capital are more likely to succeed in obtaining agency funding for their projects. In addition, communities face trade-offs between internal and external social capital. These dimensions of social capital are not perfect substitutes. Exchange profits are maximised when a balance is maintained between internal and external social capital.

Both described elements - the region's social capital and the organisation's social capital interact. In particular, the links between external social capital and the social

capital of the environment are strong. The region's social capital brings extraordinary rent for the enterprise; their social capital also benefits its environment. The research indicates that the level of Poles' social capital is low compared to other countries and may be associated with worse economic effects (Czapiński, 2008; Fidrmuc and Gërxhani, 2008; Mihaylova, 2004; Młokosiewicz, 2009; Paldam and Svendsen, 2001; Raiser et al., 2002; Wallace and Pichler, 2007). Research on the capital of Polish enterprises is still relatively scarce. The studies conducted concern family businesses (Marjański et al., 2019), the energy sector (Jędrych et al., 2022), water supply companies (Jabłoński and Jabłoński, 2020), the packaging sector (Lizak, 2011), large companies (Bylok et al., 2019) and evaluation of trust levels exhibited by Polish and Ukrainian employees of Polish organisations (Kowalczyk et al., 2018). Efforts have also been made to measure the social capital of enterprises (Bylok et al., 2018). Polish companies' trust in the context of innovation was also analysed (Krot and Lewicka, 2020; Sankowska, 2013; Skawińska and Zalewski, 2018) in the context of the development of cooperation networks (Wasiluk and Sadat Saadatyar, 2020) or the context of the company's level of development (Kukowska, 2011). However, a broader diagnosis of the state of this capital – in particular, external social capital - is still lacking.

Raising the level requires conscious management, including diagnosis of the existing state, problems and directions for improvement. This causes the need for research on the social capital of organisations, in particular enterprises. This article aims to fill this research gap by analysing and assessing the external social capital of Polish enterprises. It continues and complements previous research on internal social capital (Markowska-Przybyła, 2022).

The work attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. How is the external social capital of enterprises in Poland shaped?
2. Are there statistically significant differences between companies of different sizes and ages in other markets regarding external social capital ?
3. Is there a relationship between the external and internal social capital?
4. Is external social capital related to organisational performance?

In work, two hypotheses were put forward by the researchers:

1. Internal social capital has a positive relationship with external social capital.
3. External social capital is positively related to organisational effects.

### **Research Data and Methodology**

The paper analyses the external social capital of enterprises, understood as the capital based on the enterprise's involvement in relations with customers and suppliers and other entities in the environment. Both the structural, relational and cognitive dimensions were analysed, but without separating them into separate components. Both formal ties (membership in an organisation) and informal ties (quality of relations with suppliers, customers, cooperators and competitors) were analysed. The values companies follow in relations with external stakeholders and the perceived

impact of the organisation's social capital on the company's performance were also analysed.

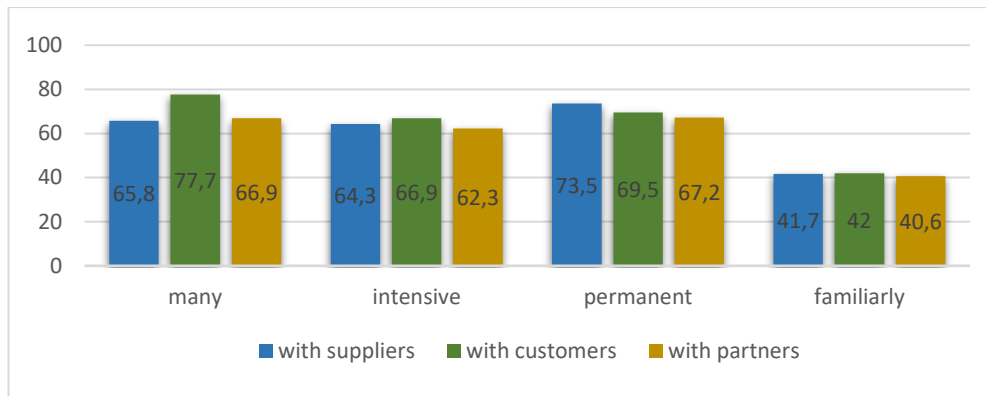
In the diagnosis of social capital resources of enterprises in Poland, the results of surveys conducted among 650 enterprises in Poland were used - companies of various sizes, origin of capital (domestic, foreign, mixed), status (headquarters, branch, independent company), location (large cities, medium-sized, small, villages) and various industries. One hundred forty large companies, 140 medium-sized companies, 170 small companies and 200 micro-companies were surveyed. The research was carried out in November 2021. The model presented by (Westlund and Nilsson, 2005) was used in the analysis of internal and external social capital. Various dimensions of this capital (structural, relational and cognitive) were also explored (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998).

This work aims to present a diagnosis of the state of external social capital and preliminary findings on the relationship of this capital with the internal social capital and enterprise effects of the activity. For this purpose, descriptive statistics, aggregate measures, non-parametric testing methods (Chi<sup>2</sup> independence test), classification methods using the CHAID, and techniques were used.

### **Results and Discussion**

Formal association ties of the surveyed companies are rare: only 1.2% of the surveyed organisations belong to and actively operate in some organisation (one to which membership is not obligatory, e.g. associations, unions). 98% of the surveyed organisations do not belong to any organisation; the remaining 0.8% belong passively.

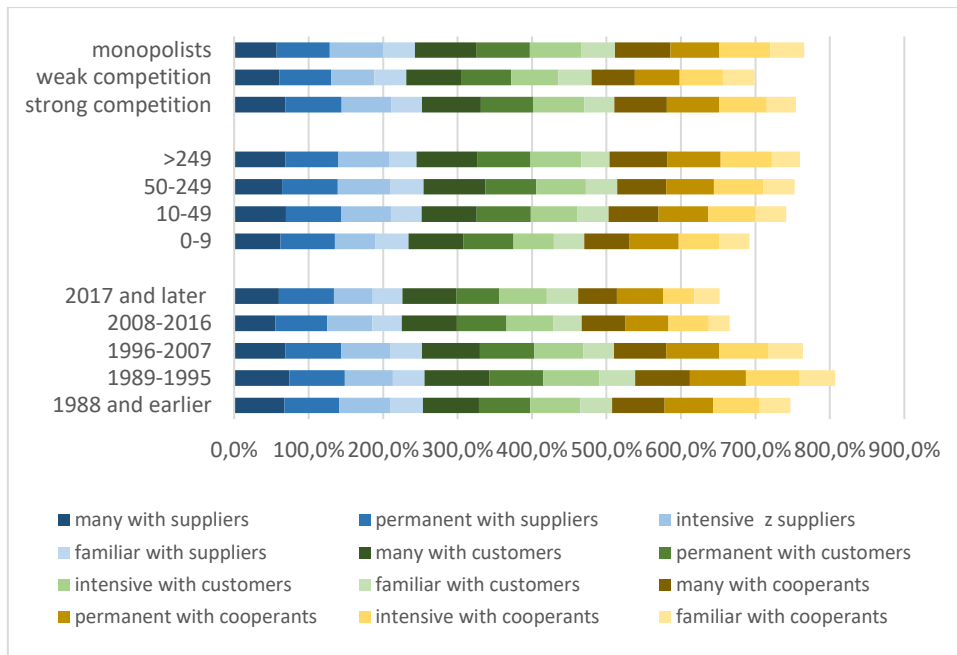
The quantity and quality of relations with stakeholders - customers, suppliers and partners - were examined. The density, durability, intensity and familiarity of these relationships were analysed. Answering the question about the nature of the relationship, respondents indicated the option that, in their opinion, more accurately describes the nature of the organisation: many – few, permanent – impermanent, intensive – low intensity, familiarly – only formal.



**Figure 1: Nature of the relationship with suppliers, customers and partners**  
Source: Author's research

The nature of relations with external stakeholders is presented in Figure 1. There are visible differences between groups of enterprises due to their size, age and the market in which they operate due to their relations with suppliers, customers and partners. Figure 2 shows the cumulative frequency of responses on the quality (maturity) of relations with suppliers, customers and cooperators (numerous, permanent, intensive and familiar ties). Being aware that this is only an approximate and imperfect measure of relationship assessment, it can be observed that companies established at the beginning of the transformation have the most numerous, lasting, intimate and intense relationships in general. This aligns with expectations - these companies have been on the market for three decades and have developed these relationships. Interestingly, older companies do not have these relationships more developed. They are probably companies founded in different system conditions, which may affect the companies' specificity. The younger the company, the less mature these relations are, which is also quite natural.

The company's size, in many cases, statistically significantly distinguishes companies in terms of their relationship with the environment. Synthetically speaking, the company's size is directly proportional to the quality of the relationship. However, when analysing relations with suppliers, customers and cooperators separately, it can be concluded that the most developed relations with suppliers have small and medium-sized companies, with recipients - medium-sized and large companies. Large companies have the best-developed cooperation relations (Figure 2)



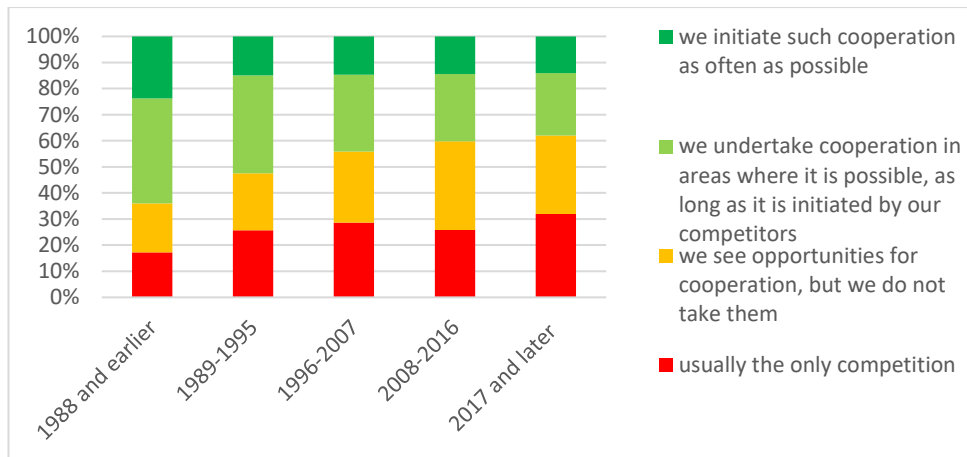
**Figure 2: Maturity of the relations with suppliers, customers and the age, size of the enterprise, and the nature of the market**  
Source: Author's research

The most developed relationships (numerous, lasting, intense and intimate) are presented by monopolists. However, as in the case of the company size factor - contacts with suppliers, recipients and cooperators, they are varied (Figure 2).

The most developed relations with suppliers have entities operating on the market with intense competition, monopolists - with cooperators and recipients. This is unsurprising, considering that 85.7% of the surveyed companies describing themselves as monopolists were founded before 2008. Such companies have regular customers, and relations with them are lasting. However, it should be noted that their links with cooperators are also relatively well-developed.

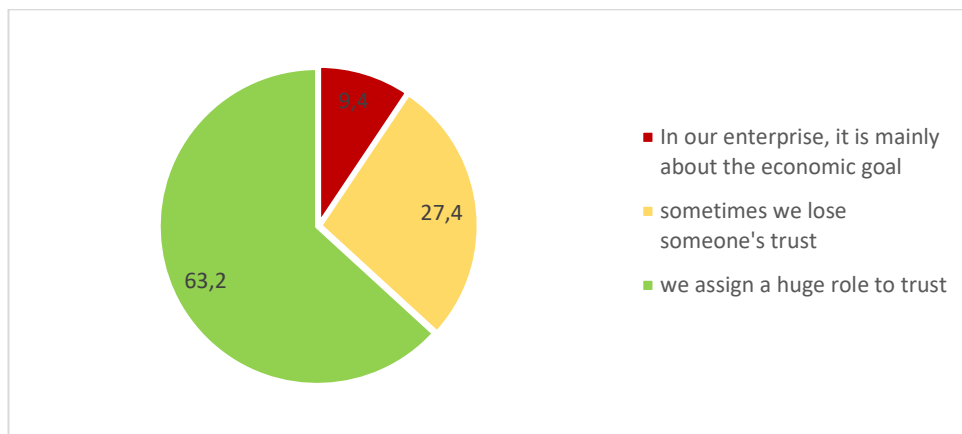
The study analysed the principles followed by the respondents in their relations with competitors.

25.7% of the surveyed companies do not cooperate with competitors in areas where such cooperation is possible. However, older companies (especially those established before the transformation) see the advantages of cooperation with competitors (Figure 3).



**Figure 3: The cooperation with competitors and the age of the enterprises**  
Source: Author's research

The examined aspect of companies' external social capital was also trust. It seems to be an essential value for the surveyed companies: 63.2% of companies declare that they put particular emphasis on being trustworthy company (Figure 4).

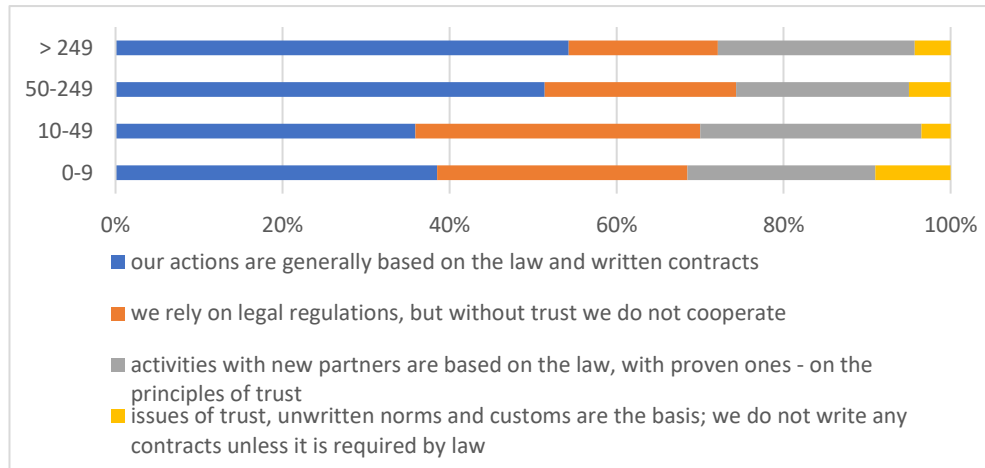


**Figure 4: Trustworthiness as a priority of the enterprise**  
Source: Author's research

An important manifestation of trust in business contacts is the form of concluding contracts. 44% of companies base their activities on written agreements and legal regulations (the larger the company, the higher the percentage of those declaring such a way of operating). 5.7% do not write down any contracts unless it is required by law and act based on unwritten norms and customs. Laws and formal agreements are insufficient or unnecessary for 56% of the surveyed companies. The size of the company statistically significantly differentiates companies due to this variable - large and medium-sized companies, more often than small and micro companies,



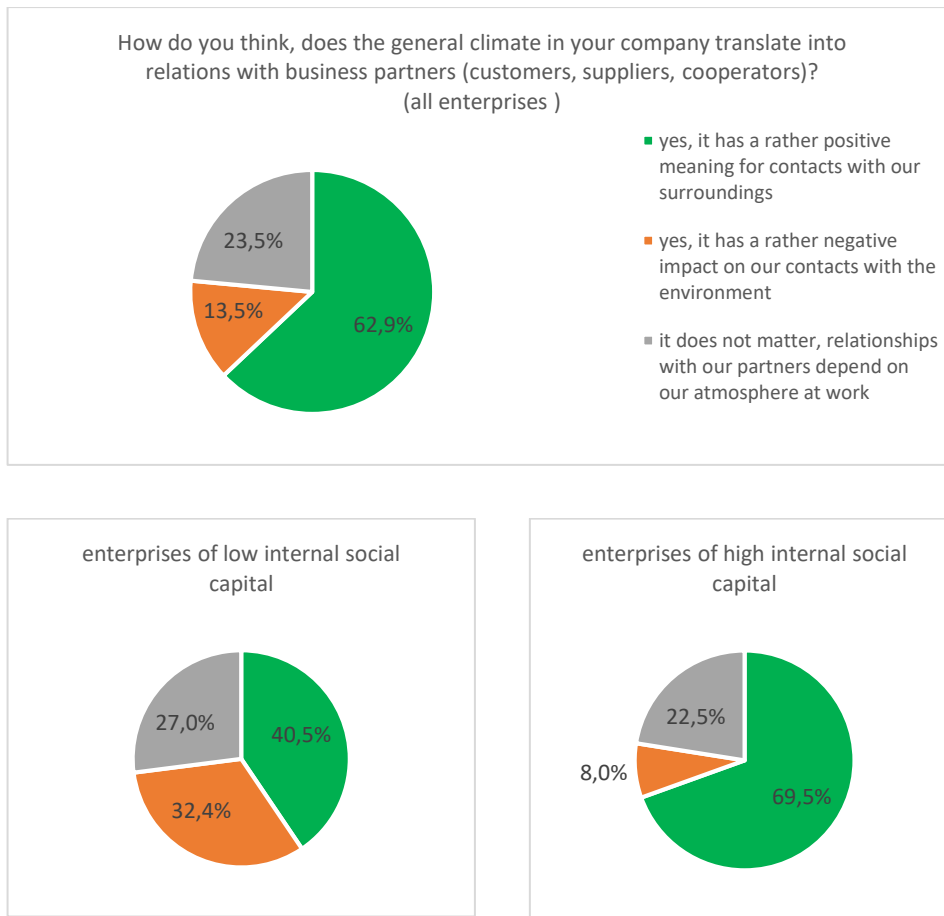
operate based on written contracts and legal regulations, micro - more often than others based on unwritten norms, customs and trust, which is a reasonably expected dependency (Figure 5).



**Figure 5: Manner of action: Legal norms or trust and customs?**

Source: Author's research

The paper hypothesises that internal and external social capital are related. The declarations of the respondents can confirm this hypothesis: almost 70% of companies of high internal social capital declare that the general atmosphere of the organisation translates positively into business contacts with stakeholders (40,5% - of enterprises of low internal social capital). 8% of enterprises with high internal social capital declare that this influence is negative. Enterprises of low internal social capital claim negative power 4 times more frequently (32,4%)(Figure 6).



**Figure 6: Internal social capital vs external social capital (high and low internal social capital according to formula (1), low social capital below the median, high internal social capital – above the median)**

Source: Author's research

A correlation analysis was performed between internal and external capital to confirm this hypothesis further. Based on the analysed components of social capital, synthetic variables were created as aggregate measures - internal social capital (ISC) and external social capital (ESC).

$$ISC = \sum_{1}^{8} x_i \quad (1)$$

$x_1$  – relations among employees (1 = mainly of a business nature; 2 = relations between the superior and the subordinate are official, the others are less formal, loose; 3 = they are mainly informal, everyone knows each other and maintains close contacts)

$x_2$  – cooperation (1 = we act rather separately, individually; 2 = there is a climate of cooperation)

$x_3$  – common goals (1 = there are individual goals that hinder the company's success; 2 = most employees are involved in achieving the company's goals)

$x_4$  – trust (1 = there is rather a climate of distrust, suspicion; 2 = there is a general climate of trust)

$x_5$  – communication (1 = communication and information exchange is difficult; 2 = communication and information exchange is easy)

$x_6$  – attitude towards mistakes (1 = making a mistake is associated with fear; 2 = making a mistake is a science for everyone and is not associated with negative consequences on the part of management)

$x_7$  – advice (1 = you have to deal with yourself; 2 = you can count on support, advice from others)

$x_8$  – solidarity (1 = there are pathological situations, abuses, discrimination, and dishonesty; 2 = in the organisation, we often meet with solidarity and sacrifice among employees)

$$ESC = \sum_{i=1}^4 x_i \quad (2)$$

$x_1$  – organisation affiliation (1 – no, 2 – passive membership, 2 – active membership)  
 $x_2$  – relations with suppliers, customers, partners: average of relations with suppliers (s), customers (c), partners (p), where s, c, p are the sum for answers about relations: 0 = few, impermanent, only formal, low intensity, 1 = many, permanent, familiarly, intensive).

$x_3$  – Is being a trustworthy company among your priorities? (1 = it is primarily an economic goal; 2 = sometimes we lose someone's trust, 3 = yes, we put a lot of emphasis on that)

$x_4$  – Does your organisation establish cooperative relations with competitors? (1 = usually just competition; 2 = we see opportunities for cooperation, but we do not take them, 3 = we undertake cooperation in areas where it is possible, as long as the other party initiates it; 4 = we initiate such cooperation as often as possible)

The correlation analysis indicates statistically significant relationships between the surveyed organisations' internal and external social capital (Table 1). These relationships are also crucial for correlations with the effects perceived by organisations. The higher the level of social capital, the more often companies notice the positive impact of social capital on their organisation.

**Table 1. Correlations between internal social capital, external social capital and perceived impact social capital on organisation**

		External social capital	Internal social capital	Do you think the general atmosphere at work, the existing atmosphere of trust, willingness to cooperate, and commitment impact the development of your organisation?
External social capital	Pearson Correlation	1	0,319**	0,317**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<0,001	<0,001
	N	646	646	646
Internal social capital	Pearson Correlation	0,319**	1	0,487**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<0,001		<0,001
	N	646	650	650
Do you think the general atmosphere at work, the existing atmosphere of trust, willingness to cooperate, and commitment impact the development of your organisation?	Pearson Correlation	0,317**	0,487**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<0,001	<0,001	
	N	646	650	650

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The issue of “advice” most distinguishes companies in terms of perceived organisational effects. Over 75% of companies experiencing positive effects are companies where you can count on the support and advice of others (an element of internal social capital described and analysed in the work (Markowska-Przybyła, 2022)). Being a trustworthy company as a priority and the importance attached to trust are other critical differentiating criteria. 329 out of 650 companies (50.6%) indicating that the general atmosphere at work, willingness to cooperate and commitment have a positive impact on the development of the organisation are companies where you can count on the support and advice of others, are those that

at the same time attach great importance to the trustworthiness and emphasise the huge role of trust (Figure 7).

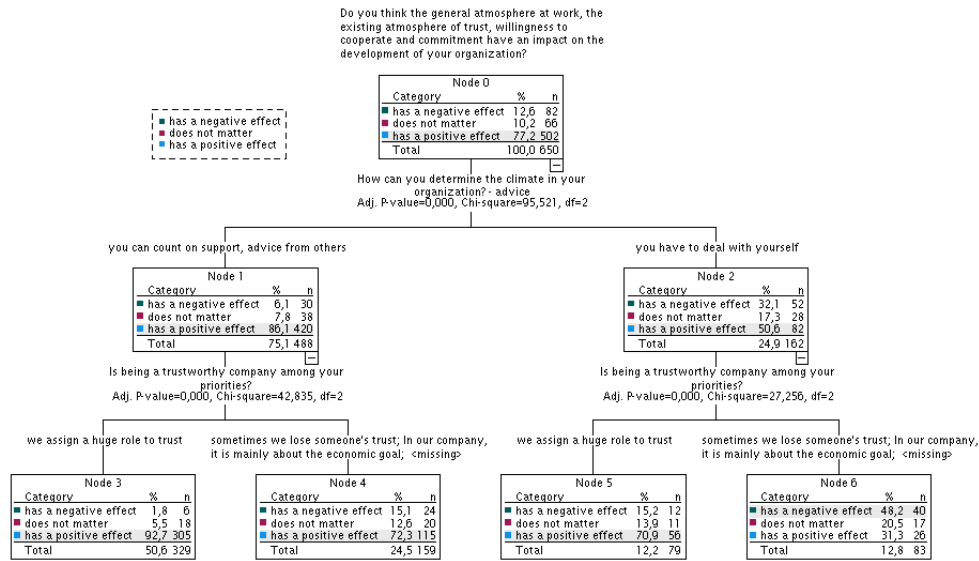


Figure 7: CHAID tree - segmentation of the characteristics of the organizational social capital affecting the development of the organization

Source: Author's research

Most surveyed enterprises in Poland declare that they attach great importance to trust, the pillar of social capital. Only 9.4% declare that the main goal of their activity is profit. Research indicates that the level of social capital is, in a sense, a function of time - older companies have more mature relations with stakeholders - they are more durable, denser, more intense and more familiar. Older companies are also more likely to see the benefits of collaborating with competitors. The type of relationship also depends on the size of the company (in large companies, they are more formalized and based more often on legal regulations than on trust) and the market competition level.

Almost 63% of the surveyed companies admit that the general atmosphere in the organization (internal social capital) positively impacts external relations. Companies with low internal social capital are four times more likely to indicate that it harms relations with the environment. The surveyed organisations' external and internal social capital is positively and statistically significantly related to each other. The level of this capital is also positively correlated with the perceived benefits for the company's development. The key issues distinguishing companies that see the positive impact of social capital on the organisation's development from those that do not see it or see a negative impact are support for employees within the organization and attaching a large role to trust.

Comparison with previous research results for Poland is impossible due to the lack of a separate approach to external and internal social capital. The conclusions of the above-presented research are largely consistent with research carried out worldwide - in most of them, a positive relationship is noticed between internal and external social capital and organizational performance of various types ((Cuevas-Rodríguez et al., 2014; Duodu and Rowlinson, 2020; Liao et al., 2015; Olamide and Ogbechie, 2021; Rababah et al., 2022; Yli-Renko et al., 2002)).

### **Conclusion**

The paper diagnoses the external social capital of companies in Poland. According to the author's knowledge, this is the first work on this subject concerning Poland. The existing ones have not analysed the external social capital of enterprises. Two hypotheses were verified, and answers to four research questions were sought. Answering the first two research questions - how is the external social capital of enterprises in Poland shaped and whether there are statistically significant differences between companies with different characteristics, it can be concluded synthetically that:

- Relationships with suppliers, recipients and customers are determined by market factors, the scale of activity, and the period of existence; their development seems to be a derivative of needs, necessity and the result of the company's development over time. Most of the results of the analysis are not surprising:
  - The surveyed companies had the most numerous, intensive and intimate relations with their customers. The most permanent, however, with suppliers;
  - companies established at the beginning of the transformation are more likely to have numerous relationships with suppliers, and younger companies less often;
  - more innumerable contacts with suppliers are observed in the market with intense competition, fewer with the monopolistic and weak competition;
  - the most numerous relations are with customers. Medium and large companies most often declare them as numerous, slightly less often micro and medium-sized companies;
  - most often, numerous, intensive, lasting and close cooperation with cooperators is reported by companies from the beginning of the transformation and less frequently (statistically significant) by younger companies established after 2008;
  - the size of the company - in a synthetic approach - is directly proportional to the quality of the relationship. The larger the company, the more often the connections are numerous, lasting, intense and familiar;
  - large companies have the best-developed relations with cooperators

- the most developed relationships (numerous, lasting, intense and familiar) are presented by monopolists - especially with cooperators and recipients
- older companies (especially those established before the transformation) see the advantages of cooperation with competitors the most
- Formal association ties (membership to an organisation) are scarce
- Over 63% of the surveyed companies stated that being a trustworthy company is their priority
- 44% of companies base their activities mainly on written contracts and legal regulations (the larger the company, the higher the percentage of those declaring such a way of operating), and more than 50% of companies include the necessity of trust in contact with the legal standard. 5.7% of companies declare that trust alone is enough.

The conducted analyses allow for a positive answer to the next two research questions. There are dependencies between internal social capital and external social capital. They have the nature of positive correlations. The synthetic variables "ISC" and "ESC" correlate positively and statistically significant. In addition, almost 63% of companies declare that the general climate of the organisation translates into business contacts with stakeholders; more in enterprises with high internal social capital than with low one. This confirms hypothesis 1.

External social capital is positively and statistically significantly correlated with indications that the general atmosphere of trust, commitment and willingness of cooperate contributes to the positive impact of company development. Companies that notice the positive impact of social capital on their results are companies where you can count on the support and advice of others, which focus primarily on trustworthiness and attach a huge role to trust. This allows for answering the fourth research question and for positive verification of hypothesis no. 2.

The research shows that external social capital is coupled with internal capital and positively relates to organisational effects. Similar conclusions were reached in earlier studies on other countries, as described in the introduction. Further research is required to answer what these feedbacks look like, whether we are dealing with the impact of the organisation's social capital on organisational effects, and if so, what channels of influence are. Existing research indicates that this happens by stimulating innovative and cooperative behaviours (Krot and Lewicka, 2020; Sankowska, 2013; Wasiluk and Sadat Saadatyar, 2020). However, these studies only refer to trust.

Further research using empirical data on organisational effects, not only declarative data, is recommended. Only this data source is a limitation of the above studies. Future research could eliminate these limitations by using other methods - e.g. observation, experiment, and confronting more people's responses in one company.

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### ZEWNĘTRZNY KAPITAŁ SPOŁECZNY PRZEDSIĘBIORSTW W POLSCE

**Streszczenie:** Celem artykułu jest analiza zewnętrznego kapitału społecznego polskich przedsiębiorstw oraz ocena, czy zewnętrzny kapitał społeczny jest powiązany z wewnętrznym kapitałem społecznym i wynikami przedsiębiorstw. Według wiedzy autora osobnego pomiaru zewnętrznego kapitału społecznego w przedsiębiorstwach w Polsce nie przeprowadzono dotychczas, co jest nowością. Badania są kontynuacją i uzupełnieniem wcześniejsze badania nad wewnętrznym kapitałem społecznym. Teoretyczną podstawą analiz empirycznych był model zaproponowany przez Westlunda i Nilssona. Badania oparto na wynikach ankiety przeprowadzonej na próbie 650 mikro, małych, średnich i dużych firm w Polsce. W badaniu wykorzystano statystyki opisowe, nieparametryczne metody testowania oraz metody klasyfikacji z wykorzystaniem metody CHAID. Do określenia poziomu kapitału społecznego wykorzystano również miary agregatowe. Główne wyniki są następujące: wiek, wielkość firm i charakter rynku to cechy, które statystycznie istotnie różnicują przedsiębiorstwa ze względu na poziom zewnętrznego kapitału społecznego; zewnętrzny kapitał społeczny jest dodatnio i istotnie statystycznie skorelowany z deklarowanymi wynikami przedsiębiorstw oraz wewnętrznym kapitałem społecznym.

**Słowa kluczowe:** kapitał społeczny przedsiębiorstw, zewnętrzny kapitał społeczny, zaufanie, Polska.

## 波兰企业外部社会资本

**摘要：**文章旨在分析波兰企业的外部社会资本，评估外部社会资本是否与内部社会资本和企业申报业绩相关。据笔者所知，波兰企业外部社会资本的单独测算以前从未进行过，这是一个新鲜事物。它延续并补充了之前关于内部社会资本的研究。Westlund 和 Nilsson 提出的模型是实证分析的理论基础。该研究基于对波兰 650 家微型、小型、中型和大型公司样本进行的调查结果。研究中使用了描述性统计、非参数检验方法和使用CHAID方法的分类方法。综合措施也被用来确定社会资本的水平。主要结果是：年龄、企业规模和市场性质是根据外部社会资本水平在统计上显著区分企业的特征；外部社会资本与内部社会资本和申报的企业绩效呈正相关且在统计上显著相关。

**关键词：**企业社会资本，外部社会资本，信托，波兰