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DEVELOPMENT DESIGN OF OUTSOURCING STRATEGIES: THE CASE OF SLOVENIA

The purpose of this research is to provide an understanding of the influence of outsourcing decision processes on the design of development policy, especially in terms of organisations' operations optimisation. The subject of this article is outsourcing, which is considered to be an important component of development policy of organisations. By including external service providers in its business activities, the organisation obtains the resources, knowledge and, most importantly, the competitive advantage. This research provides an empirical analysis from a survey of 266 representatives of Slovene organizations. More specifically it examines the characteristics of the market of logistics services and IT solutions and by analysing statistical data finds sector promising growth. The results of the research provide a considerable number of possibilities for judgement and guidelines which can help the organisations to ease the assessment of their own medium-term strategies and objectives set. Having included the external service providers

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into the processes, i.e. the activities, organisation's core competencies become more comprehensive and, at the same time, strengthen their programmes. Outsourcers can fill the gaps in the development policy, especially the ones, which an organisation is not capable to fill by itself due to the lack of needed resources. The decision about outsourcing should not affect a company's core competencies, deemed as a basis for long-term competitiveness and business performance.

Key terms: outsourcing, core competencies, company development policy, Slovenia

Introduction

In a global and, by the level of economic development, diverse environment, outsourcing is becoming one of organisations' core strategies in developed areas. The scientific literature in outsourcing is growing rapidly (Mantel et al, 2006; Ketchen and Hult, 2007; Robinson et al., 2008; Bidwell, 2009; McIvor, 2010; Marshall et al 2015), despite this growth little attention has been given to the organization policy dimension of outsourcing. Outsourcing is often regarded as a political act as it directly impacts the power structures within the organizational hierarchy (Marshall et al 2015).

Outsourcing is nothing new for Slovenian companies. In the period between the two World Wars, the beginnings of the industrialisation were based on the transfer of the production from more developed countries (textile industry, steel industry, chemistry, etc.). That was the reason why Slovenia was developed above average in the former Yugoslavia. Consequently, Slovenia had significant economic advantages (through national currency disparities, so-called foreign currency rights, a large and protected market and similar). A significant share of Slovenian export was based on the modalities, which were similar to outsourcing (the production of components, materials and similar for foreign manufacturers) within the so-called wage labour (German *Lohnarbeit*). In addition of its own knowledge and capital, many of these relations have become equivalent, and they are considered to be the basis for today's global business.

Economic situation and constantly changing influences from the environment require from organisations to react quickly and specifically, including the adaptation of medium-term plans, or assessing the sustainability of development policies. The assessment should include the definition of development goals, potential adaptations of a business model, strategies and purposes, as well as provide the answers to the questions regarding structural arrangement and provision of

resources. Outsourcing has a strong and direct impact on the shaping and further conduct of development policy. By including external service providers in its business activities, the organisation obtains the resources, knowledge and, most importantly, the competitive advantage. Defined reasons and circumstances clarify the fact why the organisations resort either to the strengthening of core activities or to the abandonment and their replacement with new ones. In other words, in the design phase of development policy, sustainability pertaining to the worthiness of other activities from business portfolio is assessed, which might – in the concept of comprehensive core competencies – not achieve the desired economic effects. In the phase of design of development policies – when shaping the business models – the organisations increasingly include the possibility of business activities, outsourcing to external service providers. Palugod and Palugod (2011, 13) conclude that outsourcing in the production of goods and services is indeed quite a usual business approach. However, the majority of organisations are not vertically integrated enough, and therefore they do not achieve the comprehensive linking between the needs of a process and business needs. Active vertical integration and careful inclusion of external service providers into business processes, therefore, in most cases, also mean the bidirectional role of a particular organisation. This applies to the organisations that outsource certain business activities to third organisations, and, at the same time, perform business activities through their mission and by applying the business model. With this approach, the organisations tend to cut the costs of business processes performance and achieve long-term financial stability, which implies the increase of competitive advantage, consequent sustainable growth, and, last but not least, the satisfaction of all included stakeholders.

In addition, the development of telecommunication, information and logistics technologies enable outsourcing activities.

The following sections discuss the theoretical background on interdisciplinary of outsourcing, organizations policies and the global tendencies in provision of logistics and IT services; research methods; a discussion of the finding: and the paper concludes with suggestions and areas for further research.

Defining theoretical backgrounds and the problem addressed

The conceptualization and interdisciplinarity of outsourcing

The consequences of the economic crisis, political instability and new centres of economic power on a worldwide basis have an important impact on the changed habits of customers. These consequences further reflect the influential

circumstances that require quick, sustainability-oriented and rational adaptation of business models from organisations. However, the redefinition of a business model in response to the impacts of business environment for an organisation imply the design of core competencies within a clear future-oriented development policy. When referring to this, Dean (2011, 4–7) warns against the emphasised importance of a timely decision about cooperation with external service providers. On the one hand, a delayed inclusion of an external service provider could mean an inhibition of growth and a too slow development of the organisation as well as the overload of existing resources and a too slow responsiveness to customers. Of course, the revenues of a particular organisation follow this paradigm, and, according to a logical sequence, the organisations decide to include cost-effective measures when designing the development policy. The achievement of the business operation set goals is conditional on the search for synergies among existing and new business processes, as well as on the exact defining of phases within business processes, the performance of which is not justified from an economic point of view. Cummings and Worley (2013) emphasise that an organisation can adapt best to the influences from the environment by an appropriate and planned strategic restructuring. At the same time, it can acquire new knowledge and improved efficiency.

This is the reason why the objective of the research, based on the sample of included organisations, was to verify the success of organisations in the design of future strategic focus, as well as of short-, medium- and long-term business decisions. This way we wanted to define, among other things, the industries that would be attractive for business operation of organisations, and, at the same time, those that would be most prospective considering the operating income.

Among numerous theories and paradigms that explain outsourcing as one of possible applicable solutions, we have chosen three of them, namely: transaction cost theory, theory of market impacts and theory of core (key) competencies. The chosen theories are argued in the following lines:

- *Transaction Cost Theory* (Williamson, 1975) – the search for a satisfactory management and cooperation solutions between opportunity and hierarchy costs;
- *Theory of Market Impacts* (Porter, 1980) – a consideration of dynamic balance between marketing stakeholders' influences (more than outsourcing, it is the overall relation between influences) on the solution to be chosen in the range between management and cooperation;
- *Theory of Core (Key) Competencies* (Penrose, 1959; Hamel and Prahalad, 1994) – core competencies are an integrative concept: all the components and synergic combinations of a policy component, which have a significant impact on the effective operations of companies; consideration of outsourcing, particularity regarding economic categories and cooperation synergies.

The importance of outsourcing has increased considerably worldwide and in Slovenia in the last two decades. More and more companies decide either for outsourcing or insourcing, the scope of which has increased considerably, both with regard to the number of activities and to their complexity. At the same time, it is worth emphasising the interdisciplinarity of outsourcing, which includes knowledge in the following areas:

- *economics:* transaction costs, economies of scale – productivity, economy (Williamsons 1975; Dyer 1997);
- *organisational sciences:* hierarchy or market, overcoming complexities with simplification (Chapman and Andrade 1998);
- *social sciences:* organisation as an instrument for goals achievement – organisation as a community based on interests of stakeholders (Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995);
- *management sciences:* managing the organisation, organisation's policy considered as goals and strategies to achieve the goals (Barney 2001; McIvor 2010);
- *exchange and marketing sciences:* distributive, unilateral marketing – cooperative, network marketing; marketing between organisations in backward integration (Lei and Hitt 1995).

At outsourcing and its inclusion in the business processes of organisations, we can actually refer to the concept of business elements structure, since, because of its notional qualities and impacts, it requires a tight interlacement of all included stakeholders and processes within organisations on both sides. Suitability assessment and the final decision on the outsourcing implementation approach require certain activities when designing development policy of an organisation, and, consequently, implies further impact on the business model.

Different authors define the essential meaning and theoretical explanation about what the outsourcing actually reflects, either from technological, economic or from environmental point of view as well, or they explain it as an element that should not be overlooked at the very same phase of the design of development policy. Cepec and Logožar (2010) consider outsourcing a method of company specialisation for a business activity performance, achieving competitive advantages this way. The focus on so-called core capabilities and outsourcing of support activities, for instance, logistics, increases the efficiency of company's business operation. McIvor (2010) concludes that outsourcing has become a strategic need, especially at a time when organisations tend to cut the costs and specialise for a limited number of core capabilities. Indeed, in order to cut the costs, the organisations are increasingly seeking for solutions oriented beyond traditional limits of entrepreneurial logic, and especially out of the range of their own organisation's competen-

cies. Of course, with the above-mentioned, they want to achieve the improvement and productivity increase, and finally, a comprehensive business performance.

WNS (2015) defines the reasons of organisations, which do not use outsourcing and they would do it for the first time, as described in the following lines:

- the tendency to control the increasing costs, i.e. to cut the existing costs;
- the optimisation of usage of available own resources, which, at the same time, facilitates an organisation to focus on the activity or activities set as core ones;
- a higher quality of services;
- a shorter time in the process from the development of sales products to the company's final entry on the market;
- a short-term and long-term availability of specific knowledge and skills that are not available within the organisation;
- a competitive advantage reflected in synergies of cost efficiency, availability of specific knowledge and faster responsiveness to market impacts.

Global tendencies in provision of logistics and IT services

Eichelberger (2013) concludes that the year 2012 was the watershed year for a significant number of organisations that outsource services in logistics industry. In his trends forecasts for 2013 and for the following years, he expects that the outsourcing in the logistics industry will see a steady growth, and its evolution will be reflected in the heightening of the cooperative relation between partners across the whole supply chain. He also emphasises (idem) that the factors, such as technology, innovations and business cooperation transparency, will significantly affect the logistics services industry in the years to follow. In addition, because of the instability of oil by-products, market and increasingly restrictive environmental legislation, the adaptation for the use of natural gas as an alternative motor fuel will require more attention.

In its outsourcing annual report for the year 2013, data analytics company Ernst & Young (2013, 12–18) concludes that the outsourcing segment will keep growing steadily. The cooperation between respondents from eight participating countries has provided the feedback that organisations on average expect and forecast the growth of outsourcing by approximately 31.4%. We consider important as well the finding according to which the advisory company (idem) emphasises the new driving force or, in other words, a new strategic trend in outsourcing. The only or the main objective of pioneers among outsourcing ordering entities

was the costs cutting of business operation. That element and, at the same time, reported savings in the performance of business processes are, nowadays, completely implicit in outsourcing. Indeed, besides that evident leverage, ordering entities in outsourcing are seeking for additional leverages to develop the relation with the external service provider. They expect from them a partnership relation and a more detailed knowledge of transferred activities, and, at the same time, the cooperation in the development and achievement of transferred activity effectiveness. The trend is oriented towards the higher level of confidence to the extent in which the organisations in the role of ordering entities will assign to the external service providers also those activities that, until recently, have been defined as core activities and, therefore, impossible to exclude from the framework of their own performance. Recent ordering entities could significantly increase their capacities at the expense of the transfer of a considerable share of their activities and responsibilities into outsourcing.

Logistics services can definitely be classified as one of the most flexible industries. This industry requires a constant and especially quick adaptation to ordering entities, in order to meet the needs of end consumers. For external service providers of logistics services, ever-new and personalised products are future trends of business activities focusing and, at the same time, demanding challenges. Based on the findings from our research, the trends of Slovenian logistics industry have been more specifically defined in the empirical part. However, there are no discrepancies in comparison with the trends set on the European level. The trends in Slovenian logistics industry are defined according to Lofvers (2013):

- *approach to the customers' needs*. European logistics services providers define the approach, achievement and meeting the customer's needs as the most important tendency and challenge in the industry;
- *net economy*. In the present times of economic stringency, the concept of independency and autonomy of external logistics services providers is not enough to achieve the efficient business operation anymore. In order to accomplish the goals set, the organisations are forced to integrate upwards and downwards through the whole supply chain. The organisations have to overcome the mindset of a particular market player and replace it with the mindset of networking;
- *costs pressures*. By approaching to increasingly demanding clients and by providing extremely specific business solutions, the costs of logistics services cannot be as low as it used to be in the past. Lofvers (*idem*) concludes that the costs of logistics services reach from 4% to 6% of organisations' revenues. On the other hand, he further concludes that these costs increase and, at producer organisations, reach up to 8% of revenue;

- *shortage of suitable personnel*. The research to which Lofvers refers has indicated that the main challenge on the level of all geographical regions and industries of ordering entities in outsourcing in the coming years will be exactly the availability of a sufficient number of suitable trained personnel in logistics. The shortage of personnel is currently reflected on the level of both operational functions and functions of planning and supervision.
- *sustainable development orientation*.

Like in the case of logistics services, the segment of providing IT solutions indicates a significant transfer of activities to external service providers. Moreover, these two industries are interconnected more than it seems at first sight, and Lofvers agrees with this as well (2013). Indeed, he opines that the capability of mass data processing and analysis or so-called big data will also be an important competency of the cooperation with the logistics industry. Even 60% of organisations, which participated in the research conducted by the organisation BVL International (2013, 9), agree that growth of the aforementioned segment will continue in the following five years.

Besides the cloud computing, ensuring data capacities or so-called data centres also indicate to have a very important role and market potential in the future. From the perspective of the data access globalisation, there are no cross-border obstacles in practice. It means that any of Slovenian organisations could successfully place the service of providing data centres capacities on international market. Tendencies, i.e. the growth of external outsourcing of IT solutions, differ among ordering entities from industry to industry. The estimated annual growth of outsourcing in this business activity depends on the level of technological development of the ordering entity, their portfolio of services and products life cycle, etc. The highest estimated growth is indicated in the consumer-oriented industry and retail sale, as well as in public sector industries or public services. These industries dispose of poorer IT support. Therefore, their demand to seek solutions in external service providers is at higher level.

Designing development policy by including external service providers

Outsourcing is the component of control over the company, and the core problem of control is the complexity of companies and environments in which they operate. Medium-term development policy includes harmonised development goals and development strategies of particular programmes and company as a whole.

Development strategies include medium-terms orientations of programmes (design, production, and marketing), medium-term tasks of programmes' hold-

ers (programme units, specialist support services, companies) and a medium-term schedule of tangible and intangible assets for the operation of company's units. The harmonisation of a company's development goals and development strategies, as well as its programme units is conducted/performed/coordinated with the cooperation of administrators of particular programmes of the company and top management. When designing the development policy, the administrators deliver their vision of programme development and scheduling of company's competencies. By applying applicable criteria, top management judge on the level of harmonisation of particular propositions and the vision, purposes and company's core focus, and evaluate the potential contribution at

- achieving the set standards of effectiveness,
- the development of existent core competencies, and
- generating new core competencies of organisation.

Company development policy includes a range of connected components of the activity (creation of knowledge, core competencies, and products) for the future, and activities for company medium-term survival and performance. The activities include medium-term programmes and a concept of activities for their implementation, which may the company perform either independently or in cooperation with other companies. Designing a business model therefore includes recognition of possibilities to implement existing programmes on the market and in other exchange relations, as well as recognition of predominant values and stakeholders' consequent future needs for the design of new programmes. The two most important short-term objectives are regular effectiveness and efficiency of the company in the implementation of programmes, based on the company core competencies, as well as efficient and successful gradual achievement of core competencies designed within a medium-term policy of company.

Research methodology

The aim of this research was to verify whether there was an interest to outsource the logistics and IT services in Slovenia. The findings described in the following lines will indicate which elements of development policy in the medium-term period will be affected by factors of business environment of 3PL (third party logistics) and IT solutions industries, and which policy adaptation should be performed.

The research was conducted in order to verify the market potential of logistics and IT services. By means of data analysis, we wanted to obtain an argued

answer to the research question, which was formulated as follows: *"Is there any interest among organisations in Slovenia to outsource logistics and IT services, and how the findings would affect the design of organisation's development policy?"* The purpose of the research was also to investigate the particularities of outsourcing and the importance of such an approach to business processes control – for the design of development policy of a particular organisation. Within this context, we wanted to obtain the information on potential consequences for the adaptation and optimisation of the business model linked to the level of tendency to outsource the logistics and IT services, and exclude them from the framework of the company's own processes implementation.

We wanted to verify these definitions through a detailed data analysis based on the information obtained in the conducted research, as well as by taking into consideration the results of verification of the hypotheses set. We set the following two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1*: The need to outsource logistics and IT services among organisations in Slovenia is present.*

Hypothesis 2: *The importance of particular services varies from organisation to organisation, taking into consideration a particular segment to which the organisations belong.*

Research process

The research was conducted by means of a survey questionnaire. The respondents accessed the questionnaire through the web-based tool 1KA. We sent the cooperation invitation containing the web link to the questionnaire to the e-mail addresses of respondents. The questionnaire included the questions of a closed type and, in most cases, the respondents provided their answer with the evaluation of attitudes on the scale from 1 to 5 (completely disagree – completely agree or completely irrelevant – very relevant). Before we sent the cooperation invitations, in the test environment of the same web-based tool, we checked the reliability of the entire questionnaire. For the purposes of invitation for cooperation, we presented the substantial value and survey results usefulness to the relevant persons at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia (GZS) and the Chamber of Craft and Small Business of Slovenia (OZS). With this action we achieved a larger size and, especially, geographical and industry dispersion of the sample. The sample included the organisations, which, besides their geographical dispersion and equal representation in number provided also equal representation in a particular

industry and regarding the size of organisation as well. The objective – to include in the sample at least 3000 organisations with the help of GZS and OZS – was achieved. By means of the database of both associations of undertakings, we invited 6201 organisation to complete the survey. The invitation reached 5626 organisations due to the unavailability of certain organisations, which is considered as definite sample of the research. In total, 295 respondents completed the survey and 266 respondents completed the questionnaire correctly and entirely. Therefore, the actual responsiveness was 4.7%. When giving the answers to the exposed problem and at the formulation of proposals, we collected the data by our own resources.

We supposed that the organisations would response with a desired, i.e. high level of, interest for cooperation in the research because of the economic situation in the country, the awareness of the needs for timely adaptation of business models, and, last but not least, the possibility of self-reflection on their own position in the industry. We also opined that a majority of organisations that participated in the research would like to be informed about the results of the survey because of information usefulness. In fact, only 47 organisations asked for the feedback. This can be explained as the lack of interest to adapt the development policy, i.e. the reluctance against potential consequent activities.

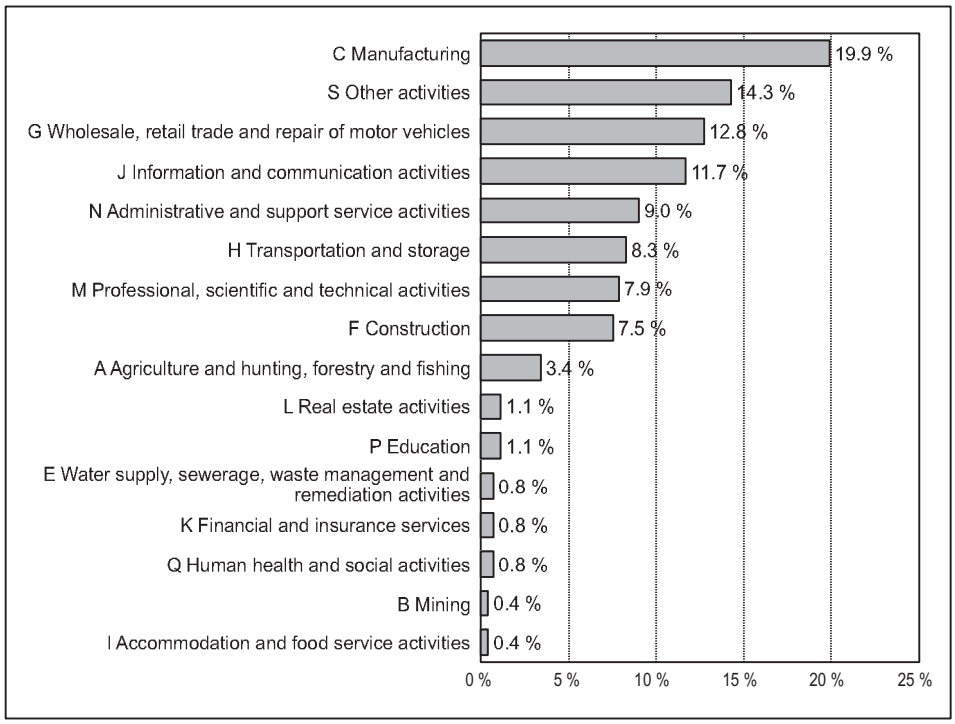
On a higher accuracy level, it is not possible to define the scope and number of organisations in which the business activities – in part or in their entirety – are outsourced to the external service providers. Indeed, it is a fact that data about particular organisations is impossible to obtain, being treated as a business secrets and not to be publicly disclosed. The same applies to organisations in role of external service provider. Because of the above-stated more attention will be paid to the organisations whose data are publicly available and, at the same time, are an example of a balanced and successful business model.

Sample description

The organisations the respondents were coming from were registered in the region *Osrednjeslovenska* (45.5%), followed by the *Gorenjska* region (10.5%), and the lowest number of respondents was from regions *Spodnjeposavska* (1.4%) and *Zasavska* (1.0%). The organisations from the manufacturing industry (19.9%) form the largest share of participating organisations, followed by the organisations from other industries (14.3 %), and from wholesale, retail trade and repair of motor vehicles industry (12.8%).

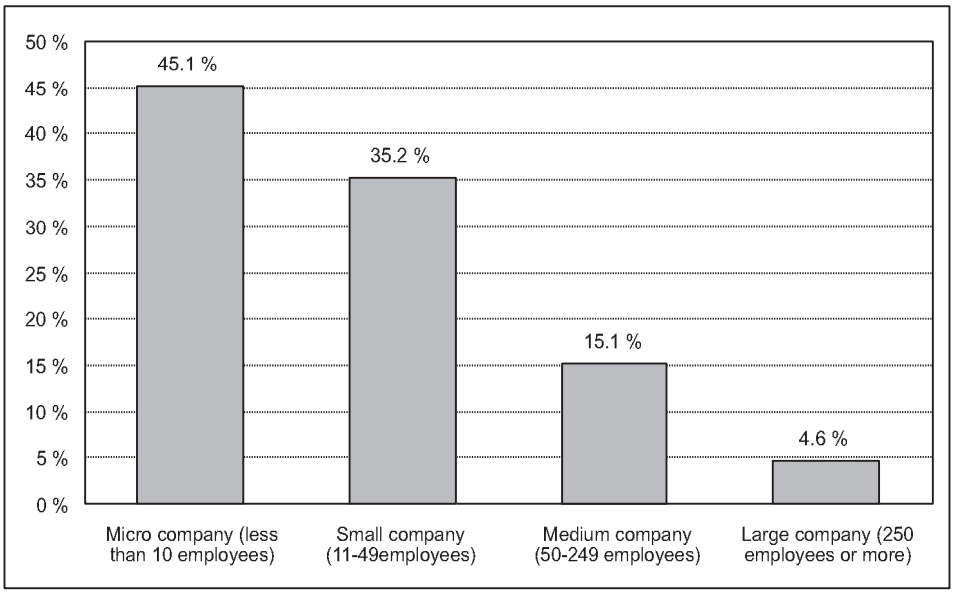
Figure 1:

THE INDUSTRIES IN WHICH THE PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS DO BUSINESS



Prior to the preparation of the survey questionnaire, we assessed whether it would be appropriate to ask the organisation about the achieved volume of revenues, or to formulate the question in light of defining their scopes. What we wanted to obtain was the insight into the potential of logistics and IT services market. However, we concluded that the revenues definition approach would imply quite a significant risk as far as answers reliability is concerned. The reason for this is that even persons who are neither competent to answer these kinds of questions nor familiar with the issues could end up answering them. Based on the answers, we concluded that most respondents (45.1%) were from micro companies, followed by small companies (35.2%).

Figure 2:



Testing set hypotheses

By the use of applied methods, we wanted to achieve the stated purposes set and to accomplish the research goals. By the use of empirical findings, we analysed the state, verified the problem situation and obtained the information on strategic forecasts from the organisations included in the sample. These forecasts refer to the transfer of logistics and IT services related activities to the external service providers. We also obtained the answer to the research question, which clarified whether, among organisations in Slovenia, existed an interest to outsource logistics and IT services, and how the findings would affect the design of development policy.

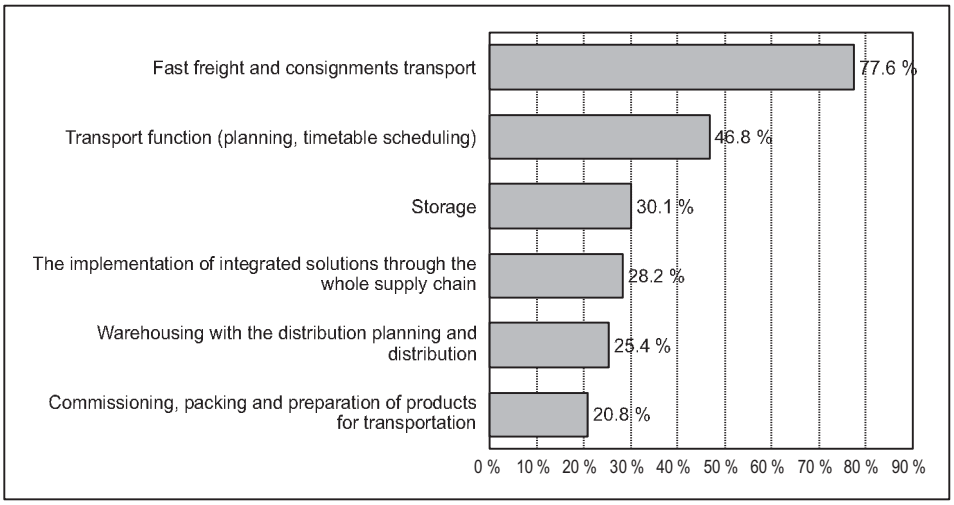
We had verified the reliability of the survey questionnaire before we proceeded with the survey by the use of Cronbach's coefficient α. The reliability verification ensures the same results obtained in different moments in time and with the same questionnaire used at the same units (by same respondents). We can affirm that the questionnaire is reliable, provided the value of the coefficient is $\alpha = 0.7$ or above (Field 2009, 673–675). At the first set of questions referring to the use of logistics services, Cronbach is $\alpha = 0.818$, which indicates a high reliability of this set. The set about the use of IT services is also highly reliable ($\alpha = 0.802$), while the exclusion of any the statements would not increase the reliability.

In the hypothesis 1 (H1) we assumed: *The need to outsource logistics and IT services among organisations is present.*

In order to verify the hypotheses H1, we merged the results of respondents who had confirmed they had been using or had an intention to use a particular service (evaluation 4), or had completely agreed (evaluation 5). At logistics services, 77.6% of respondents agreed or completely agreed that they were using (or would like to use) services of fast freight and consignments transport, and less than half of respondents (46.8%) indicated that they were using (or would like to use) the transport function.

Figure 3:

AGREEING WITH THE INTENTION TO USE THE PRODUCTS WITHIN LOGISTICS SERVICES



68.5% of respondents agreed or partially agreed with the statement that they were using or would hire the software equipment with the support included, 63.1% of respondents completely agreed with the option of the implementation of customised integrated solutions, while 62.1% opted for e-archive and data protection. Slightly less than half of respondents has hired or would hire hardware with the support included (49.6%) and has used or would use the services of additional system capacities (47.0%).

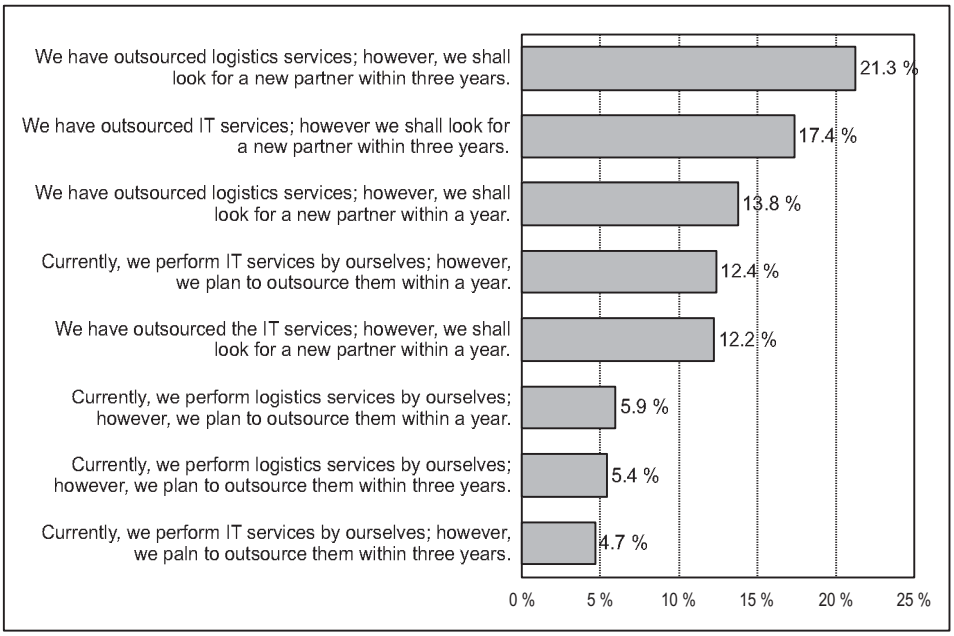
According to our findings, in logistics services, approximately half of respondents or, more exactly, above half of respondents indicated the demand for two out of six services, and, in the case of IT services, five out of seven services offered. Therefore, at approximately or more than half of respondents, there is a demand

for seven out of thirteen services in total, which is more than half of total services offered. Based on the results, we can conclude that the demand for outsourcing logistics and IT services is present at organisations. Accordingly, we *confirmed* the hypothesis H1.

It is interesting that more than two-thirds of respondents (77.4%) answered that their organisation outsources business activities to external service providers. Among organisations that have already outsourced their business activities to external service providers, most of them use logistics services (73.9%), following by IT services (62.6%). Most of respondents answered that they already have outsourced their logistics business activities, but that within three years they would search for a new partner (21.3%), followed by the respondents who answered the same for IT services (17.4%). The lowest share consists of respondents who perform the logistics services on their own, but intend to outsource them within a year (5.9%), and respondents who perform logistics services on their own, but intend to outsource them within three years (5.4%). There are also the respondents who perform IT services on their own, but intend to outsource them within three years (4.7%).

Figure 4:

STRATEGIC FOCUSES LINKED TO THE TRANSFER OF ACTIVITIES TO EXTERNAL SERVICE PROVIDERS



In the hypothesis 2 (H2) we assumed: *"The importance of particular services varies from organisation to organisation, taking into consideration a particular segment to which organisations belong."*

When classifying the respondents in groups, we noticed that respondents differ, i.e. they can be classified into two groups depending on their demand for logistics and IT services – the respondents who need outsourced services to a larger or to a smaller extent. In order to verify the hypotheses H2, we used the t-test. In this way, we wanted to examine the presence of statistically significant differences as far as the importance of a particular service was concerned. We concluded that the differences between groups are not statistically significant at two logistics services – transport function and fast freight and consignments transport, and at one IT service – hiring the software equipment with the support included. The differences between segmentation groups are statistically significant with all other services. Given that there are statistically significant differences with ten out of thirteen services, we the hypothesis H2 can be *confirmed*.

In light of organisations acting in the role of outsourcers and their adaptation to the demand, we have also checked which three services had the highest agreement level regarding the question about the use of services. In all industries, the respondents evaluated the fast freight and consignments transport as the most important service, and only in the industry of information and communication activities evaluated the transport function as the most important. At all activities, they assigned the second place to the transport function, and only in the industry J, they assigned it to the fast freight and consignments transport.

Table 1:

THREE MOST IMPORTANT LOGISTICS SERVICES BY INDUSTRY

Industry	The first	The second	The third
C Manufacturing	Fast freight and consignments transport (M = 4.0)	Transport function (planning, timetable scheduling) (M = 2.8)	Implementation of integrated solutions through the whole supply chain (M = 2.7)
F Construction	Fast freight and consignments transport (M = 3.5)	Transport function (planning, timetable scheduling) (M = 3.0)	Implementation of integrated solutions through the whole supply chain (M = 2.4)
G wholesale, retail trade, and repair of motor vehicles	Fast freight and consignments transport (M = 3.8)	Transport function (planning, timetable scheduling) (M = 3.0)	Storage (M = 2.9)
H Transportation and storage	Fast freight and consignments transport (M = 4.4)	Transport function (planning, timetable scheduling) (M = 3.7)	Implementation of integrated solutions through the whole supply chain (M = 3.7)
J Information and communication activities	Transport function (planning, timetable scheduling) (M = 3.4)	Fast freight and consignments transport (M = 3.3)	Implementation of integrated solutions through the whole supply chain (M = 2.6)
M Professional, scientific and technical activities	Fast freight and consignments transport (M = 4.6)	Transport function (planning, timetable scheduling) (M = 3.1)	Implementation of integrated solutions through the whole supply chain (M = 2.2)
N Administrative and support service activities	Fast freight and consignments transport (M = 4.3)	Transport function (planning, timetable scheduling) (M = 3.1)	Warehouse with the distribution planning and distribution (M = 3.1)
S Other service activities	Fast freight and consignments transport (M = 4.4)	Transport function (planning, timetable scheduling) (M = 3.3)	Commissioning, packaging and preparation of products for transportation (M = 3.1)

Respondents evaluated the implementation of customised integrated solutions as the most important activity in industries C and H, in the industries F, N, and S that was hiring of software equipment with the support included. In the industry G, the best evaluated was the option including e-archive and data protection, and in the industries J and M, services of providing additional system capacities.

Table 2:

THREE MOST IMPORTANT IT SERVICES BY INDUSTRY

Industry	The first	The second	The third
C Manufacturing	Implementation of customised integrated solutions (M = 3.7)	Hiring of software equipment with the support included (M = 3.7)	E-archive and data protection (M = 3.6)
F Construction	Hiring of software equipment with the support included (M = 3.9)	Implementation of customised integrated solutions (M = 3.7)	Hiring of hardware equipment with the support included (M = 3.7)
G wholesale, retail trade, and repair of motor vehicles	E-archive and data protection (M = 4.3)	E-consignments and other documentary material (M = 3.7)	Implementation of customised integrated solutions (M = 3.7)
H Transportation and storage	Implementation of customised integrated solutions (M = 4.0)	Hiring of software equipment with the support included (M = 4.0)	E-archive and data protection (M = 3.8)
J Information and communication activities	Services of providing additional system capacities (M = 4.0)	Hiring of hardware equipment with the support included (M = 3.8)	Hiring of software equipment with the support included (M = 3.6)
M Professional, scientific and technical activities	Services of providing additional system capacities (M = 3.6)	Hiring of software equipment with the support included (M = 3.4)	E-archive and data protection (M = 3.3)
N Administrative and support service activities	Hiring of software equipment with the support included (M = 3.8)	Implementation of customised integrated solutions (M = 3.6)	E-archive and data protection (M = 3.4)
S Other service activities	Hiring of software equipment with the support included (M = 4.2)	Implementation of customised integrated solutions (M = 4.1)	E-archive and data protection (M = 3.8)

Discussion, conclusions and suggestions

By means of this research, we wanted to obtain the answer to the research question. We have also set two hypotheses. In the H1, we assumed that the need to outsource logistics and IT services among organisations was present. We concluded that the total demand for outsourcing services (including both logistics and IT services) was indicated in seven out of thirteen statements, which is more than half statements. Therefore, we confirmed the hypothesis H1. In the hypothesis H2 we assumed that the importance of particular services varies from organisation to organisation, taking into consideration a particular segment to which the organisations belong. We concluded that the statistically significant differences between the two segmentation groups are indicated at all services, except at the transport function, fast freight and consignments transport, and at hiring of software equipment with the support included. Therefore, we confirmed the hypothesis H2.

In our definitions of outsourcing trends, we have also stated the conclusions of Eichelberger (2013), who, after the watershed year of 2012, forecasted the steady growth of outsourcing logistics process in the years to come. Based on the results of our research, we can confirm the forecasts of this author, since the share of organisations who have already outsourced their activities to logistics services external service providers has already reached the 73.9%. In addition, further interest has also been indicated. 21.3% of organisations, which participated in survey, considered searching for a new partner for logistics services within three years as an viable option, and additional 5.4% of organisations would outsource their activities for the first time. Eichelberger also emphasises (idem) that the factors, such as technology, innovations and business cooperation transparency, will definitely mark the logistics services industry. Based on the answers provided by respondents in our research, we can completely agree with the author's definition of influence factors. When asked which qualities the aforementioned organization of the author of this article should have so that they would be ready to cooperate with it, the respondents answered that they would accept the cooperation because of technological compatibility, competencies of adaptation to customer's needs and because of mutual confidence.

The results of our research provide a considerable number of possibilities for judgement and reflection, as well as further appropriate answers, which can be quite useful for organisations interested in the sustainability of a business model (programme of activities and, in a broader context, it refers also to the development policy). We consider that it is even more important that the research provides many guidelines, in addition to the analytically supported answers. These guidelines can help the organisations to ease the assessment of their own medium-term strategies and objectives set. Having included the external service providers into the processes, i.e. the activities, organisation's core competencies become more comprehensive and, at the same time, strengthen their programmes. Outsourcers

can fill the gaps in the development policy, especially the ones, which an organisation is not capable to fill by itself due to the lack of needed resources. This synergy mainly consists of the provision of the required knowledge, sufficient number of appropriately educated employees and, frequently, it refers to finance resources as well.

The research has also indicated that, in the market, there exists a true and a significant interest for transfer, i.e. for procurement of logistics services and implementation IT solutions offered by external service providers. By identifying areas of interest in various industries, the findings primarily provide useful information for logistics services outsourcers, as well as the outsourcers of IT services. Besides the information on evidenced interest, based on the indicated elements and services' particularities, the organisations can now adapt all elements of development policy accordingly and appropriately. According to the answers provided by respondents, we believe that the attention should be paid to the programme of business activities and, as far as the supply of assets is concerned, it makes sense to assess with more detail the suitability of existing structures of organisations.

The research results forecast the growth of researched industries and confirm the forecasts for the economic growth in general. Even 21.3% of organisations, which participated in the survey, considered that, within the following three years, they would search for a new partner for logistics services, and additional 17.4% of organisations would outsource their IT services. However, these forecasts should be interpreted in two ways. The first one probably indicates that organisations from logistics and IT services industry can expect the growth of the scope of operation and business revenues. The second one indicates, with a high degree of certainty, that there is the possibility of the arrival of new niche players and strong competition. Because of the globalisation processes, data accessibility and ever-more feasible communication channels, the cases in which strong international organisations would enter the market should not be overlooked and excluded. Such organisations, through their scope of operation, achieve better cost-effectiveness and required quality.

For organisations, outsourcing can be a crucial development and strategical decision, both for those that outsource their activities and for the outsourcers. It is important that organisations consider their decisions regarding outsourcing carefully and that they analyse the potential processes and results, as well as implied risks and benefits. At decision-making, the management should not pay attention only to short-term benefits, but mostly to long-term consequences of outsourcing and long-term efficiency and effectiveness of company operation.

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OBLIKOVANJE STRATEGIJA *OUTSOURCINGA*: SLUČAJ SLOVENIJE

Sažetak

Svrha je ovog istraživanja pružiti razumijevanje utjecaja outsourcing procesa na projektiranje razvojne politike, osobito u pogledu optimizacije poslovanja organizacija. Tema ovog članka je outsourcing, koji se smatra bitnom komponentom razvojne politike organizacija. Uključivanjem vanjskih pružatelja usluga u svoje poslovne aktivnosti, organizacija dobiva resurse, znanja i, što je najvažnije, konkurentsku prednost. Ovo istraživanje pruža empirijsku analizu putem upitnika provedenog među 266 predstavnika slovenskih organizacija. Točnije, ispituju se karakteristike tržišta logističkih usluga i IT rješenja i analizirajući statističke podatke pronalazi sektor s obećavajućim rastom. Rezultati istraživanja daju znatan broj mogućnosti za prosudbe i smjernice koje mogu pomoći organizacijama olakšati procjenu vlastitih srednjoročnih strategija i ciljeva. Nakon što su uključeni vanjski pružatelji usluga u procese, odnosno aktivnosti, ključne kompetencije organizacije postaju sveobuhvatne i, u isto vrijeme, osnažuju svoje programe. Korisnici outsourcinga mogu popuniti praznine u razvojnoj politici, osobito onih organizacija koje to nisu u stanju ispuniti same, zbog nedostatka potrebnih resursa. Odluka o outsourcingu, koja se smatra temeljem za dugoročnu konkurentnost i uspješnost poslovanja, ne bi trebala utjecati na ključne kompetencije nekog poduzeća.

Ključne riječi: outsourcing, ključne kompetencije, razvojna politika poduzeća, Slovenija