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T. Kulinich,
PhD in Economics, Associate Professor, Associate Professorof the Department of Management of Organizations, Lviv Polytechnic National University
ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0110-7080

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STRATEGIC ALLIANCES AND NETWORKS AS DRIVERS OF BUSINESS RESILIENCE

Т. В. Кулініч,
к. е. н., доцент кафедри менеджменту організацій, Національний університет "Львівська політехніка"

СТРАТЕГІЧНІ АЛЬЯНСИ ТА МЕРЕЖІ ЯК ДРАЙВЕРИ СТІЙКОСТІ БІЗНЕСУ

In conditions of growing competition, market uncertainty, and accelerated technological changes, the issue of ensuring business resilience becomes particularly relevant. This is due to the fact that traditional approaches to managing initiatives aimed at creating value for consumers increasingly fail to provide owners or participants with the desired efficiency, stability, and long-term competitiveness, which necessitates the search for new strategic tools to ensure business resilience. One of these tools is strategic alliances and network forms of collaboration. The purpose of the article is to provide a comprehensive examination of the role of strategic alliances and network-based forms of cooperation in enhancing business resilience, and to identify the mechanisms that enable these partnerships to effectively strengthen enterprises' capacity to adapt, develop, and withstand both external and internal challenges. The results of the study indicate that strategic alliances and network forms of collaboration play a key role in enhancing the resilience of modern businesses, providing enterprises with the ability to effectively adapt to changes in the external environment, optimize resources, reduce risks, and implement innovations. An analysis of current research confirms that participation in partner networks creates opportunities for access to knowledge, technologies, and market prospects, shapes flexible and adaptive business models for participants, and contributes to the development of long-term sustainable ecosystems. The effective impact of strategic alliances and networks on enterprises' ability to adapt, grow, and withstand external and internal challenges is realized through a set of interconnected mechanisms. These include: systematic knowledge and information exchange; joint use of scarce resources; coordination and joint planning of actions; equitable risk distribution; collaborative work on research, development, and technology implementation; enhancing the flexibility and adaptability of business models; and the formation of resilient ecosystems and long-term partnerships. The systematic interaction of these mechanisms creates a synergistic effect that allows enterprises to maintain stability, grow, and retain competitive positions even in a turbulent and highly competitive market environment.

В умовах зростання конкуренції, невизначеності ринкового середовища та прискорених технологічних змін питання забезпечення стійкості бізнесу стає особливо актуальним. Це пов'язано з тим, що традиційні підходи до управління ініціативами зі створення цінності для споживачів дедалі частіше не забезпечують власникам і учасникам бажаної ефективності, стабільності та конкурентоспроможності у довгостроковій перспективі. У результаті виникає потреба у пошуку нових стратегічних інструментів для забезпечення стійкості бізнесу. Одним із таких інструментів є стратегічні альянси та мережеві форми співпраці. Відтак метою статті є комплексне дослідження ролі стратегічних альянсів та мережевих форм співпраці у підвищенні стійкості бізнесу, а також визначення механізмів, що забезпечують їх ефективний вплив на здатність підприємств адаптуватися, розвиватися та протистояти зовнішнім і внутрішнім викликам. За результатами дослідження констатовано, що стратегічні альянси та мережеві форми співпраці відіграють ключову роль у підвищенні стійкості сучасного бізнесу, надаючи підприємствам можливість ефективно адаптуватися до змін зовнішнього середовища, оптимізувати ресурси, знижувати ризики та впроваджувати інновації. Аналіз сучасних досліджень підтверджує, що участь у партнерських мережах створює умови для доступу до знань, технологій та ринкових можливостей, формує гнучкі та адаптивні бізнес-моделі діяльності учасників, а також сприяє розвитку довгострокових

стійких екосистем. Ефективний вплив стратегічних альянсів та мереж на здатність бізнесу адаптуватися, розвиватися та протистояти зовнішнім і внутрішнім викликам реалізується через сукупність взаємопов'язаних механізмів. Серед них: системний обмін знаннями та інформацією; спільне використання дефіцитних ресурсів; координація та спільне планування дій; справедливий розподіл ризиків; спільна робота над дослідженнями, розробками та впровадженням технологій; підвищення гнучкості та адаптивності бізнес-моделей; формування стійких екосистем та довгострокових партнерств. Доведено, що системна взаємодія цих механізмів створює синергетичний ефект, який дозволяє підприємствам підтримувати стабільність, розвиватися та зберігати конкурентні позиції навіть в умовах турбулентного й висококонкурентного ринкового середовища.

Key words: changes in the external environment, resource optimization, risk reduction, implementation of innovations, business models, sustainable business.

Ключові слова: зміни зовнішнього середовища, оптимізація ресурсів, зниження ризиків; впровадження інновацій; бізнес-моделі; стійкий бізнес.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

In the context of increasing competition, market uncertainty, and accelerated technological changes, the issue of ensuring business resilience has become particularly relevant. This is due to the fact that traditional approaches to managing initiatives aimed at creating value for consumers increasingly fail to provide owners or participants with the desired efficiency, stability, and long-term competitiveness, thereby necessitating the search for new strategic tools to ensure business resilience. One such tool is strategic alliances and network forms of collaboration, as they enable economic actors to combine resources, competencies, and innovative potential, allowing them to grow despite the impact of internal and external changes, crises, risks, and uncertainties.

It should be noted that in Ukraine, there are currently over 610 networks, business communities, and alliances (or associations) that operate with the aim of enhancing business resilience. In particular, there are specialized business associations and unions representing companies and entrepreneurs, including communities, sectoral associations, chambers of commerce and industry, and others. There are also sectoral or regional associations that help companies survive crisis periods. For example, during the war, business associations acted as a "bridge" between entrepreneurs, donors, and government authorities.

Network forms of collaboration also exist, functioning as platforms for knowledge exchange, rapid coordination of actions, and joint value creation. For instance, IT clusters in many regions of the country demonstrate the effectiveness of the network approach: they bring together companies, universities, and government bodies, facilitating joint educational, innovative, and export-oriented projects. Similarly, agricultural, logistics, creative, and manufacturing clusters operate in ways that help businesses adapt to market shocks, gain access to international support programs, optimize supply chains, and implement innovations.

The formation of strategic alliances, partnerships, and business networks has become a key mechanism not only for expanding market opportunities but also for strengthening the long-term resilience of enterprises. At the same time, the practical aspects of creating and ensuring the effective functioning of such entities remain insufficiently studied, highlighting the need for a comprehensive analysis of their role as drivers of business resilience.

ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

Issues related to enhancing business resilience have been examined quite systematically by Tsyhanenko O., Zubko K., Samus H. [8], Bystriakov I. K. [1], and Semenog A. Yu. [6]. These scholars, in particular, emphasize the need to develop adaptive organizational structures, implement modern risk-management tools, increase the digitalization of business processes, and create mechanisms that enhance the strategic flexibility of enterprises under conditions of uncertainty.

However, the role of strategic alliances and network-based forms of cooperation in strengthening business resilience has not received adequate attention in the scholarly literature. The absence of comprehensive research in this area generates a number of methodological and practical challenges.

First, there is no integrated theoretical model that explains the mechanisms through which strategic alliances influence enterprise resilience in turbulent environments. This hampers the development of clear criteria for assessing the effectiveness of such partnerships.

Second, practical recommendations concerning the creation, management, and evaluation of alliances remain fragmented, limiting businesses' ability to use network forms of cooperation effectively to minimize risks and ensure continuity of operations.

Third, insufficient attention to interorganizational interaction within the context of resilience leads enterprises to focus predominantly on internal anti-crisis management tools, while underestimating the potential of collective resilience.

FORMULATION OF THE ARTICLE'S OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the article is to provide a comprehensive examination of the role of strategic alliances and network-based forms of cooperation in enhancing business resilience, and to identify the mechanisms that enable these partnerships to effectively strengthen enterprises' capacity to adapt, develop, and withstand both external and internal challenges.

THE PAPER MAIN BODY

Within the framework of the study, the author highlights that in contemporary management theory and economic interaction, strategic alliances and networks are viewed as forms of interorganizational cooperation grounded in long-term partnership relations, shared resources, complementary competencies, and collective innovation potential. These collaborative arrangements aim to generate mutual benefits and strengthen the competitive positions of participating entities. More specifically, strategic alliances involve formalized cooperation between two or more economic actors who join efforts to pursue shared strategic objectives-ranging from new product development to market expansion or the optimization of production processes. Network-based forms of collaboration, in turn, are characterized by a broader array of participants, more flexible relationships, and multidirectional interaction. Such features enable the creation of resilient economic and innovation ecosystems.

Historically, the emergence of strategic alliances and networks has been linked to globalization, the scientific and technological revolution, and the intensification of international competition at the end of the 20th century. These processes radically transformed not only competitive conditions but also approaches to business resilience [4].

First, the rapid acceleration of scientific and technological development-particularly in microelectronics, biotechnology, information systems, and new materials-led to a significant increase in the cost and complexity of research and development activities. This created a need for sharing risks and resources among partners, which became a key factor in business resilience [4].

Second, the globalization of markets and production resulted in the formation of multi-level international value chains, where efficiency depended on the ability to integrate into networks of suppliers, innovation centers, partners, and distributors. Competition shifted from a "company versus company" paradigm to a "network versus network" paradigm, increasing the importance of interorganizational resource pooling and maintaining stable and adaptive business models in complex market conditions [8].

Third, the increasing pace of change and the shortening of product life cycles required firms to be flexible and to have rapid access to new technologies and market knowledge. The ability to quickly integrate new knowledge and technologies into operations became critical for maintaining resilience and competitiveness.

Fourth, the intensification of international competition-particularly due to the rise of strong new players from Asia (Japan, South Korea, Taiwan [4]) — forced Western corporations to revise their management models while simultaneously enhancing their resilience to global market shocks and strategic risks.

Thus, we concur with Voskoboyev O. and Romashchenko [2] that, during this period, corporate structures began to recognize that sustainable development-encompassing long-term competitiveness, innovation, and financial stability-could not be achieved solely through internal resources. Notably, the first practices of fostering sustainable development within strategic alliances emerged in high-tech industries such as aerospace, electronics, and pharmaceuticals, where the cost of innovation, rapid technological change, and the complexity of research processes necessitated inter-firm cooperation.

Simultaneously, practices supporting sustainable development also began to take shape within network structures, as enterprises increasingly regarded external connections as a critical factor in creating value and ensuring both flexibility and stability in business operations.

In the contemporary context, strategic alliances and business networks should be regarded as key drivers of business resilience. According to recent studies on the impact of such formations on business resilience conducted by leading international consulting firms, including McKinsey & Company, Boston Consulting Group (BCG), Deloitte, PwC, and KPMG, they provide a range

Advantage 1. Enhancing enterprise adaptability *

This refers to the development of the ability to respond rapidly to changes in the external environment and to redistribute risks among partners. It is achieved through:

- rapid access to knowledge and information;
- shared use of resources and technologies;
- coordination of actions and risk distribution;
- collective implementation of innovations and modifications to business models.

Advantage 2. Shared access to resources, knowledge, and innovative solutions **

This refers to the acceleration of technology adoption and process optimization, which is particularly critical during periods of instability. It is achieved through:

- exchange of best practices and expert knowledge;
- cooperative use of financial, technological, production, and human resources;
- joint participation in research and development activities.

Advantages of alliances and business networks

Advantage 2. Market expansion, development of new business models, and cost reduction ***

This refers to the corresponding benefits resulting from coordinated actions and economies of scale. It is achieved through:

- Access to new geographic or segment markets;
- New business models and coordinated actions to achieve economies of scale.

Advantage 3. Supporting the viability of companies during crises ***

This refers to mutual support, mobilization of collective experience, and the creation of resilient ecosystems. It is achieved through:

- Risk sharing among participants;
- Prompt response to changes in the external environment;
- Identifying new market opportunities even during crisis periods.

Figure 1. Advantages that make strategic alliances and business networks worth considering as drivers of business resilience

Note:

* This is the process of enhancing an organization's ability to respond quickly and effectively to changes in both the external and internal environment while maintaining operational stability, competitiveness, and growth potential. In other words, adaptability reflects flexibility, agility, and the capacity to transform business models, processes, resources, and strategies in response to new market, technological, economic, or social conditions

** This is an organized form of interaction among companies within strategic alliances or business networks, which ensures the collective use of material, financial, technological, and informational resources, as well as the exchange of expert knowledge, technological developments, and innovative practices.

*** These are the key economic and strategic outcomes of companies' activities within strategic alliances and business networks, which ensure the expansion of business scale, adaptation of business models to new conditions, and optimization of resource use.

**** This is a set of measures and strategies aimed at ensuring business continuity, maintaining financial and operational stability, and adapting to extreme market conditions or internal challenges.

Source: created by the authors based on [1; 3; 6—7].

of critically important benefits (see Figure 1), including [1; 3; 6]:

— enhanced adaptability of participants;

— shared access to resources, knowledge, and innovative solutions, as well as opportunities for market expansion;

— development of new business models;

— cost reduction and the maintenance of participants' viability during crises.

Therefore, strategic alliances and business networks should primarily be seen as drivers of business resilience, as they enhance companies' adaptability, allowing them to respond quickly to changes in the external environment and efficiently redistribute risks among partners [3]. This is achieved through the exchange of relevant information and knowledge, joint planning of production and marketing strategies, coordinated actions during crises, and the allocation of financial, technological, and logistical resources within the network. Such collaboration reduces individual companies' dependence on market fluctuations and unforeseen events. For example, during the war in Ukraine, the business association UCCI (Ukrainian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs) and other regional business associations supported business relocation, the search for new suppliers, and the establishment of logistics chains and sales channels — enabling companies to maintain or restore operations and safeguard jobs.

Secondly, strategic alliances and business networks play a key role in driving business resilience, as they provide shared access to resources, knowledge, and innovative solutions, accelerating technology adoption and optimizing business processes [1]. This is achieved through the exchange of best practices and experience, coordination of research and production projects, joint use of technological infrastructure and training platforms, and collective problem-solving in response to production or market instability. For example, within the Kyiv IT Cluster and Kharkiv IT Cluster, companies collaborate on software development, share access to educational and testing laboratories, implement R&D projects, and enhance workforce skills. As a result, they can adopt innovations faster, adapt to market changes, and sustain business stability even in turbulent periods.

Thirdly, strategic alliances and business networks play a crucial role in driving business resilience, as they provide opportunities for market expansion, the development of new business models, and cost reduction through coordinated actions and economies of scale [6]. This is achieved by combining distribution channels, jointly entering new geographic and segment markets, sharing logistical and production resources, and implementing collective marketing and innovation strategies. For example, within the Ukrainian

Cluster Alliance (UCA), small and medium-sized enterprises gained shared access to international markets and resources, allowing them to enter foreign markets more effectively, reduce logistics and development costs, and develop joint innovative products — thereby strengthening their resilience in an unstable economic environment.

Finally, alliances and networks play an important role in supporting the viability of companies during crises — through mutual support, mobilization of collective experience, and the creation of resilient ecosystems [7—8].

The outlined advantages highlight the mechanisms that enable strategic alliances and business networks to effectively enhance their participants' ability to adapt, grow, and respond to external and internal challenges. A mechanism is a set of interconnected elements, processes, or actions that bring about a specific effect, function, or outcome. In other words, a mechanism explains how a process unfolds or a goal is achieved. In the context of strategic alliances and business networks, mechanisms take the form of concrete methods or tools-such as knowledge sharing, joint use of resources, coordination of actions, and risk distribution-through which partnerships strengthen companies' adaptability, resilience, and competitiveness. Among these mechanisms, the following stand out [1—2; 5]:

— Systematic knowledge and information exchange among participants (e.g., sharing market, technological, and managerial data, best practices, and expert insights).

— Joint use of scarce resources (e.g., shared production facilities, laboratory equipment, or logistics infrastructure within industrial clusters).

— Coordination and joint planning of actions (e.g., aligning marketing campaigns and production schedules within industry alliances).

— Fair risk distribution among participants (e.g., joint project insurance or sharing financial losses in case of unforeseen market changes).

— Collaborative research, development, and technology implementation (e.g., joint development of new products or software in science and innovation hubs).

— Enhancing flexibility and adaptability of business models (e.g., quickly adjusting production to new orders or shifts in demand through partner cooperation).

— Creation of resilient ecosystems and long-term partnerships (e.g., establishing clusters or business associations that ensure long-term collaboration and collective development).

Table 1. Mechanisms ensuring the effective impact of strategic alliances and networks on companies' ability to adapt, grow, and respond to challenges

Impact mechanism	Features ensuring the effective impact of strategic alliances and networks	Impact outcomes
Systematic knowledge and information exchange among participants	Networks enable participants to quickly access relevant market, technological, and competitive data, and to share best practices and expert insights	Accelerated strategic decision-making
Joint use of scarce resources by participants	Cooperation within the alliance provides opportunities to allocate resources and reduce costs	Increased overall business resilience
Coordination and joint planning of participants' actions	Alliances and networks allow coordination of production, marketing, and innovation strategies	Coordinated response to changes in the external environment
Fair risk distribution among participants	Network participants share financial, operational, and market risks among themselves	Effective management of crises and unforeseen events
Acceleration of innovation and technological development	Collaborative work on research, development, and technology implementation	Adoption of innovations and creation of new products or services
Enhancing the flexibility and adaptability of participants' business models	Network connections provide access to different market segments, partners, and distribution channels	Rapid adjustment of business models in response to external or internal challenges
Creation of resilient ecosystems and long-term partnerships	Network structures foster mutual dependence and trust among participants	Conditions for sustainable development of all participants and collective competitive advantage

Source: created by the authors based on [1—2; 5; 8].

A more detailed overview of these mechanisms is presented in Table 1.

It should be noted that strategic alliances and business networks have the greatest impact on participants' ability to adapt, grow, and respond to external and internal challenges when all the outlined mechanisms operate systematically. This synergy ensures cost minimization, process optimization, and maximum operational efficiency, as well as resilience to financial, operational, and market shocks.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that strategic alliances and network forms of collaboration are crucial for enhancing the resilience of modern businesses, enabling companies to adapt effectively to changes in the external environment, optimize resources, mitigate risks, and implement innovations. Recent research further confirms that participation in partnership networks provides access to knowledge, technologies, and market opportunities, fosters flexible and adaptive business models among participants, and supports the development of long-term, resilient ecosystems.

It has been established that the effective impact of strategic alliances and networks on companies' ability to adapt, grow, and respond to external and internal challenges occurs through a set of interconnected mechanisms. These include systematic knowledge and information exchange; joint use of scarce resources; coordination and joint planning of actions; fair risk distribution; collaborative research, development, and technology implementation; enhancing the flexibility and adaptability of business models; and the creation of resilient ecosystems and long-term partnerships.

It has been demonstrated that the systematic interaction of these mechanisms produces a synergistic effect, enabling companies to maintain stability, grow, and sustain competitive positions even in turbulent and highly competitive market environments.

Future research prospects lie in a deeper examination of the conditions and factors that determine the effectiveness of strategic alliances and networks across different industries and regions, as well as in the development of methodologies to assess the synergistic effect of mechanism interactions for enhancing business resilience in the context of rapidly changing economic and technological dynamics.

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