Magdalena Rajchelt-Zublewicz

Wrocław University of Economics
e-mail: magdalena.rajchelt@ue.wroc.pl

ORCID: 0000-0002-4176-6243

Estera Piwoni-Krzeszowska

Wrocław University of Economics
e-mail: estera.piwoni-krzeszowska@ue.wroc.pl

ORCID: 0000-0001-6900-768X

Małgorzata Matyja

Wrocław University of Economics
e-mail: malgorzata.matyja@ue.wroc.pl

ORCID: 0000-0002-2167-718X

TANGIBLE AND INTANGIBLE RESOURCES AND THE FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF POLISH SOCIAL COOPERATIVES

MATERIALNE I NIEMATERIALNE ZASOBY A WYNIKI FINANSOWE POLSKICH SPÓŁDZIELNI SOCJALNYCH

Summary: The purpose of the article is to determine the relationship between the level of competitiveness of resources and the financial performance of social cooperatives. In the preliminary analysis, based on the results of survey, we use the data provided by 57 respondents. For in-depth analysis we involve the data from the EMIS Intelligence database of 20 Polish social cooperatives. Using the Spearman's rank correlation we investigate the relationship between the rating of the level of competitiveness of tangible (physical, technological, financial) and intangible (human, relational, knowledge) resources and the cooperatives' financial performance, i.e. the rating of profitability and revenues. Initially, the research results proved that there are average relationships between the rating of profitability and the rating of competitiveness of tangible (0.38) and intangible (0.42) resources. However in the in-depth analysis, based on objective data, even a weak correlation between either tangible or intangible resources and the revenues was not found. The article also discusses the obtained results along with identifying the likely causes of this situation.

Keywords: social cooperatives, tangible resources, intangible resources, financial performance, competitiveness.

Streszczenie: Celem artykułu było określenie związku pomiędzy poziomem konkurencyjności zasobów a wynikami finansowymi spółdzielni socjalnych. We wstępnej analizie, opartej na wynikach badań ankietowych, wykorzystano dane uzyskane od 57 respondentów. W analizie pogłębionej skorzystano z danych pochodzących z bazy EMIS Intelligence, obejmujących 20 polskich spółdzielni socjalnych. Korzystając z korelacji rangowej Spearmana, zbadano związek między oceną poziomu konkurencyjności zasobów materialnych (fizycznych, technologicznych, finansowych) i niematerialnych (ludzkich, relacyjnych, wiedzy) a wynikami finansowymi spółdzielni, tj. oceną rentowności i przychodami. Początkowo wyniki badań wykazały, że istnieje przeciętna korelacja między oceną rentowności a oceną konkurencyjności zasobów materialnych (0,38) i niematerialnych (0,42). Jednak w pogłębionej analizie opartej na obiektywnych danych nie stwierdzono nawet słabej korelacji między zasobami materialnymi lub niematerialnymi a przychodami. W artykule przedyskutowano także uzyskane wyniki wraz z identyfikacją prawdopodobnych przyczyn takiej sytuacji.

Słowa kluczowe: spółdzielnie socjalne, zasoby materialne, zasoby niematerialne, wynik finansowy, konkurencyjność.

1. Introduction

The recent development and growth of social business is an seemingly surprising phenomenon for standard economic theory. Research on social cooperatives is scarce (Becchetti, and Pisani, 2015). The vast majority of them are reports, additionally based on subjective data and the feelings of respondents. Some claim that studies on the economic performance of social cooperatives are lacking due to their complexity and the impossibility of applying traditional frameworks, such as those related to for-profit organizations (Moore, 2000; Austin, Stevenson, and Skillern, 2006; Carini, and Costa, 2013). However, in the authors' opinion the output of the existing literature can also be used to analyse these entities, but with a specific consideration of their specificity.

Our approach follows the strategic analysis of the internal environment of social cooperatives in Poland. Taking into account that human and material capital are the main internal development factors (Kawa, and Grzybek, 2018), we focus on the resources analysis. It is the available resources that determine the choice of the form of social business (Wildmannová, 2017), so their role is crucial. Moreover, we introduce the approach of competitiveness of both cooperatives and their resources into the analysis, because we find it an important background for the assessment of cooperatives' performance.

We investigate both tangible and intangible resources, as well as internal and external (relational) whose mix is used in commercial activities in order to satisfy the social dimension, while preserving the financial and economic sustainability (Bontis, Ciambotti, Palazi, and Sgro, 2018). The aim of the article is to determine the relationship between the level of competitiveness of tangible and intangible resources and financial performance of social cooperatives. This paper makes two

major contributions to the literature. Firstly, it joins the debate on the impact of tangible and intangible resources on an organization's performance, especially in the context of competitiveness, and secondly it analyses this problem in social cooperatives, taking into account their specificity.

2. The importance of the competitiveness of social cooperatives' resources – theoretical background

Cooperatives, although they are not profit oriented they focus on satisfying social needs, have to compete for buyers of their products or services to survive on the market. The improvement of enterprises competitiveness, which compete in a given region of the country, in the future will result in increasing the competitiveness of the economy of the whole state (Blair, 2004).

Competitiveness is perceived differently. In a market economy, it can generally be assumed that it is an enterprise's ability to be profitable and maintain a dominant market position (Lombana, 2006). In this case the external environment is a principle of competitiveness. Such a point of view is connected with the theories of competitiveness in the industry, based on the studies of Porter (1985). However, adopting such a perspective in the case of cooperatives seems to be not entirely appropriate. For cooperatives, competitiveness is rather the ability to continuously provide added value to stakeholders (Dwyer, and Kim, 2003). In this context, the theory of territorial competitiveness is the most important (Storper, 1997; Cooke, 2001). According to this theoretical approach the local community and their actors in an integrated way are looking for ways to solve their problems. Together, they identify and use their potential and compete for a place on the market (Cox, 1997). In this context, it could be assumed that the basis of cooperatives' competitiveness are the resources.

E. Chamberlin was the first to investigate the impact of diversifying resources on competition and generating profits (Chamberlin, 1933). E. Penrose also described the way in which a company's development is created through the use of existing resources (Penrose, 1959). The significant impact of resources on competitiveness was emphasized by many authors who deserve to be mentioned Wernerfelt (1984), Prahalad and Hamel (1990), Barney (1991), Grant (1991), Hall (1992), and Peteraf (1993).

There are two type of resources: tangible and intangible (Barney 1991). From the accounting point of view, resources are called assets and therefore in the literature these terms are used interchangeably. Physical and financial assets are the two main groups of tangible resources (Barney, 1997). According to International Financial Reporting Standards No. 38, and an intangible asset is defined as: "An identifiable non-monetary asset without physical substance" (IAS 2004). It should be noted that there is a plethora of terminologies used by researchers in discussing the field of intangible assets field, e.g. "intangible capital" (Tomer, 2008), "intellectual assets"

(Bismuth, and Tojo, 2008), "knowledge resources" (Grover, and Davenport, 2001), and finally "intellectual capital" (Lev, 2001), who defined it as "non-physical sources of value generated by innovation, unique organizational designs, brands, and human resources" (Lev, 2001). Comparing the definition of Lev and the International Financial Reporting Standards, it can be concluded that the definitions of "intellectual capital" have a broader meaning than in the prevailing accounting standards. Due to the fact that there is not a general definition of what is "non-monetary, without physical substance", the source of enterprises' competitiveness and performances, in our opinion, it can be assumed that intellectual capital, intangible assets and intangible resources (Bontis, Dragonetti, Jacobsen, and Roes, 1999) are synonyms and they are: "all the assets/resources, elements and capacities that are attributed to an organization and contribute to the delivery of the organizational strategy, which are not currently recognized and disclosed in the balance sheet" (Steenkamp, and Kashyap, 2010). From this point of view we assumed that human, relational and knowledge capitals are the three main groups of intangible resources.

"Companies can achieve sustainable competitiveness not only by difficult-to--duplicate assets (e.g. knowledge) but also by unique dynamic capabilities" (Zhihong, Dazhao, Hua, and Kangkang, 2008). These dynamic capabilities are "the bridge between the present and future" (Schoemaker, Heaton, and Teece, 2018) and they are exceptionally important in a VUCA world (the acronym VUCA: volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity; Wharton's Mack Institute for Innovation Management, Philadelphia, PA, USA). In this VUCA world, dynamic capabilities are inseparably connected with the application of technological solutions. For this reason, in our opinion, technological resources determine the competitiveness of currently operating enterprises. From this point of view we assumed that physical, financial and technological resources are the three main groups of tangible resources.

Based on the presented theoretical background we conclude that the six following groups of internal factors: human, relational, knowledge (intangible resources) and physical, financial and technological (tangible resources) are antecedents of the financial performance of Polish social cooperatives. Table 1 presents examples of the understanding of these resources.

Many researchers have investigated the direct relationship between tangible and intangible resources and the performances of enterprises. The results of the studies confirm that an enterprises' financial performances are positively affected by their physical and financial resources (Piercy, Kaleka, and Katsikeas, 1998), human capital (Hatch, and Dyer, 2004; Hsu, Lin, Lawter, and Wu, 2007), structural capital (Appuhami 2007; Olavarrieta, Friedmann 2008) and customer capital (Appiah-Adu, and Singh, 1998) as well as by different combinations of the components of intellectual capital (Chen, Cheng, and Huang, 2005; Wu, Tsai, Cheng, and Lai, 2006) and intellectual capital as an integrated construct (Bontis, 1998). Research show also that intangible resources are vital for achieving a competitive advantage (e.g. Hitt, Bierman, Shimizu, and Kochhar, 2001; Wu et al., 2006).

Table 1. The division of resources

Intangible	human	Employees' • level of education • professional skills • professional experience • qualifications and hard skills • soft skills and social skills • commitment to work • ability to maintain contact with client • managerial staff: • management skills • leadership skills	Hofer and Schendel 1978; Barney 1997; Edvinsson and Malone 1997
	relational	relationships with: • local/central authorities • people creating opinions in a given community • clients • local community • other entities from the environment • foreign cooperation with cooperatives around the world	De Castro et al. 2004; Joshi et al. 2013
	knowledge	• access to informal information • databases • know-how • the length of the cycle of creating a new product • tacit knowledge	Grover and Davenport, 2001
Tangible	physical	• fixed assets • technical facilities • equipment related to customer service • location of customer service points	Barney 1997; de Wit and Meyer 2010
	technological	modern: • technological solutions • communication channels • security systems • knowledge storage systems, • software	Schoemake et al. 2018; Harasim 2009; Flak and Głód 2012; Hofer and Schendel 1978
	financial	• financial reserves • equity capital • liabilities	Barney 1997

Source: own study.

Moreover, the study of Bontis et al. (2018) identified significant indicators, useful to explain the impact of intellectual capital (IC) components on the economic and mission-based performance of social cooperatives in Italy. They investigate among others if the IC sub-dimensions (i.e. human capital, relational capital and

structural capital) affect the financial performance of social cooperatives. The result of their work provides no support for the belief existing in literature on the positive relationship of all IC sub-components with performance outcomes.

In this context it is critical for managers of Polish cooperatives to know which intangible resources components are important to achieve their financial performance. There is also a lack of information and knowledge of what is the level of tangible and intangible resources competitiveness of Polish cooperatives and whether there is a relationship between the level of tangible and intangible resources competitiveness of cooperatives in Poland and their financial performance. This study attempts to fill these gaps.

Measuring the determinants of social cooperatives' performance is problematic (Becchetti, and Pisani, 2015). The assessment of the economic-financial performance of social cooperatives also brings difficulties, however it is important and necessary as it helps to ensure if social cooperatives are able to satisfy in a continuous, durable and autonomous way the social purpose they have been created for (Magnanelli, Radi, and Sacchi, 2016; Bontis et al., 2018). It must not be forgotten that although social cooperatives are non-profit organizations, they must earn an income in order to be able to run their own business, thus realizing their social goals. However, because they are social-value oriented, their performance should not be assessed on the basis of traditional financial indicators or by market share (Austin et al., 2006).

Czetwertyński (2017) assumes that a good economic condition is one in which a social cooperative self-finances itself from activities carried out on the free market and at the same time fulfils its statutory goals. In this approach there are three possible situations:

1) bad economic condition, when a social cooperative is unable to balance its economic activity, i.e. it makes losses,

2) satisfactory economic condition, when a social cooperative is able to balance its economic activity, making zero profit,

3) good economic condition, when a social cooperative makes a surplus (profit) from economic activity, which is devoted to the implementation of social goals.

It can be said that the profitability of cooperatives enables them to fulfil their mission of achieving social goals. In this context the profitability of cooperatives, although strongly criticized in literature (see e.g. Lerman, and Parliament, 1991), could be the one of the financial performance measures.

Some studies utilize more sophisticated indicators of social cooperatives' financial performance, e.g. (1) profit (or loss)/turnover; (2) turnover/total operating expenses; (3) equity/total assets; and (4) fixed assets/total assets (Costa, and Carini, 2015) or a regression model based on ROA (Bontis et al., 2018). However, in the authors' opinion it is also important to determine the cooperatives' ability to generate revenues, which show the business potential of a social cooperative and give evidence of how it performs in economic, competitive conditions.

3. Research methodology

Our analysis is based on data collected by the survey method. The questionnaire was previously used by the authors. Detailed information on the validity and reliability of the questionnaire can be found in Rajchelt (2017). The questionnaire was addressed to the leaders of social cooperatives operating in Poland. It was sent in electronic form and reached 721 recipients. However, only 57 respondents replied by completing the questionnaire (total rate of responses' return was 8%). Additionally, for in-depth analysis the data on total revenues (in PLN thousand) of surveyed cooperatives was obtained from the EMIS Intelligence database. To show the cooperatives' ability to generate revenues, the largest values of revenues in one fiscal year were selected from the period 2012-2017.

Unfortunately, due to limited data availability, in the in-depth analysis the number of entities in the research sample decreased to 20. All of these cooperatives were founded after 2013. They operate mainly in gastronomy (7), construction (3), and educational (3) sectors, but also in health and beauty, advertising, care services, and cleaning services. Most of them provide their services locally – 65%, and only 20% offer their services nationwide. This may be due to the fact that social cooperatives have operated on the Polish market relatively briefly and have not yet developed enough to provide their services nationwide. Thus 13 respondents declared that they employ at least two groups of people in a difficult life situation. Their beneficiaries in terms of working possibilities are mainly people over the age of 50 who have difficulties to find another job (10), people with disabilities (8), people without education (5) and people after imprisonment (4).

The resources of the surveyed cooperatives were divided into two leading groups: intangible and tangible (according to Table 1). Each resource was evaluated by the respondents in comparison to their market competitors. In this way, the level of competitiveness of individual resources was assessed. The respondents ranked the level of competitiveness of resources on the following scale – compared to my competitors my resource is:

1 – definitely worse,
2 – a bit worse,
3 – comparable,
4 – a bit better,
5 – definitely better.

In the first step of the research the authors asked the respondents to evaluate the current profitability (profit generation) of their cooperatives. They ranked it on the scale of:

1 – very bad,
2 – bad,
3 – average,
4 – good,
5 – very good.

In the second part of the analysis the authors decided to include revenues as the main financial performance measurement in social cooperatives. They were expressed on the quantitative scale, and therefore enhance the objectivity and credibility of the results.

The relationship between the analysed variables was verified by Spearman's rank correlation because the descriptive statistics showed no normal distribution. An additional argument for using a non-parametric test was the fact that in the case of the level of competitiveness of resources, the variables were evaluated on the ordinal scale. To interpret the obtained results the following scale of correlation was adopted:

$|r| = 0$ – no correlation,
$0,0 < |r| \leq 0,1$ – very weak,
$0,1 < |r| \leq 0,3$ – weak,
$0,3 < |r| \leq 0,5$ – average,
$0,5 < |r| \leq 0,7$ – strong,
$0,7 < |r| \leq 0,9$ – very strong,
$0,9 < |r| < 1,0$ – almost full,
$|r| = 1$ – full.

The preliminary analysis was aimed at checking whether there are positive relationship between the level of competitiveness of intangible and tangible resources owned by social cooperatives in Poland and the rating of their profitability. The obtained coefficients (Table 2) showed that there is an average correlation of the profitability rating with the rating of human resources (0.44), knowledge (0.31), physical (0.36) and financial (0.41). In generalizing, the results proved that there are average relationships between the rating of profitability and the rating of competitiveness of tangible (0.38) and intangible (0.42) resources.

Table 2. Spearman's rank correlation coefficients for resource and profitability rating of the social cooperatives (p < .05000)

Resources	**Profitability**
Human	0.44
Relational	0.14
Knowledge	0.31
Intangible	**0.42**
Physical	0.36
Technological	0.16
Financial	0.41
Tangible	**0.38**

Source: own study.

The results of the preliminary analysis convinced the researchers of the legitimacy of conducting the second part of research, based on checking the relationship between the rating of tangible and intangible resources held by a given cooperative and the revenues which it achieves. Therefore, in the effect of the first part of research the following hypothesis was formulated:

H1: There are average relationships between the level of competitiveness of tangible and intangible resources and revenues achieved by Polish social cooperatives.

4. The relationship between level of competitiveness of resources and revenues

An overview of the classification of resources available in the literature allowed the selection of resources that are necessary to achieve revenues by social cooperatives. The list of resources constructed on this basis became the basis for this research. In the study, respondents were asked to rate the level of competitiveness of their cooperatives' resources compared to their competitors. In Table 3 the most important descriptive statistics for each group of researched resources are synthesized.

The above descriptive statistics of each category of resources show that the highest rating have human and physical resources. In turn, the respondents find their knowledge and financial resources the least competitive. However, referring directly to the adopted hypothesis it is also very important to look at the results taking into account the division into two groups: tangible resources (physical, technological and financial) and intangible resources (human, relational and knowledge). By giving the higher rating to the competitiveness of intangible resources (3.19), the respondents stated that they are slightly more competitive than their tangible resources (2.94).

In addition to the averages, it is also important to analyse the range between respondents' responses on the competitiveness of the resources (Table 2). The analysis of the obtained ranges shows that respondents rate the level of competitiveness of their human and relational resources in a more consistent way and provide the most diverse answers in terms of physical, technological and financial resources. It can be also observed that the surveyed entities agree more with the rating of their intangible rather than tangible resources.

The descriptive statistics of revenues are presented in Table 4. The revenues are in the range of 65 to 1,803 PLN thousand. The average result is 509.30, and the median is 312.50. The indicator of skewness indicates the skewness of the results distribution to the right. In regard to this variable the parametric tools cannot also be used.

In connection with the results obtained in the preliminary analysis, the authors decided to investigate the relationship between the competitiveness of the resources owned by cooperatives and their revenues. The correlation results

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for all groups and categories of analysed resources

Resources	Average	Median	Min	Max	Range	Standard deviation	Skew-ness
Human	3.44444	3.44444	2.22222	4.77777	2.55555	0.69529	0.51550
Relational	3.11666	3.00000	2.00000	4.57142	2.57142	0.68284	0.30642
Knowledge	2.98947	3.00000	2.00000	4.80000	2.8000	0.79295	1.29285
Physical	3.23333	3.12500	1.75000	5.00000	3.25000	0.89655	0.54924
Technological	3.00000	3.00000	1.40000	4.80000	3.40000	0.95806	0.07022
Financial	2.49122	2.33333	1.66666	4.66666	3.00000	0.79635	1.00627
Tangible	**2.93958**	**2.87500**	**1.77222**	**4.40555**	**2.63333**	**0.01183**	**0.62504**
Intangible	3.18925	3.09629	2.37566	4.50899	2.13333	0.61759	1.02605

Source: own study.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics on the revenues of social cooperatives (PLN thousand)

	Average	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Skewness
Revenues	509.3000	312.5000	65.00000	1,803.000	1,738.000	1.670585

Source: own study.

Table 5. Spearman's rank correlation coefficients for resources rating of the social cooperatives and their revenues ($p < .05000$)

Resources	Revenues
Human	–0.176050
Relational	0.191090
Knowledge	–0.093808
Intangible	**0.093233**
Physical	–0.181546
Technological	–0.344146
Financial	0.325670
Tangible	**–0.022556**

Source: own study.

presented in Table 5 show that the H1 hypothesis should be rejected in favour of its alternative. This means that there are no average relationships between the level of competitiveness of tangible and intangible resources and revenues achieved by Polish social cooperatives. For intangible resources there can be observed the very weak positive correlation with the revenues. On the other hand, tangible resources of social cooperatives are very weak and negatively correlated with the revenues. Analysing the results in more detail, it can be seen that a negative average correlation

occurs between technological resources and revenues and an average positive between financial resources and revenues.

5. Findings

Social cooperatives operate in a competitive environment similar to profit-based sectors. Therefore they are constantly competing for survival and development. Their competitive advantage on the market is determined by the level of their resources' competitiveness. It is considered that in a knowledge-based economy, intangible resources are the primary source of sustainable competitive advantage (e.g. Teece, Pisano, and Shuen, 1997; Roos, Pike, and Femstrom, 2005; Bismuth, and Tojo, 2008) because these resources tend to be actually valuable, rare, not replicable and not substitutable (Barney, 1991). Our findings are in line with this view. They show that according to the respondents' opinions, the intangible resources of their social cooperatives are more competitive than their tangible resources. Moreover, human resources are the most competitive and financial resources are the least competitive. These results are consistent with Veltri's and Bronzetti's (2015) point of view that people play a fundamental role in enterprises, and Bontis et al. (2018) saying that "human capital is one of the most important resources for social cooperatives". The respondents' subjective assessment of financial resources as the least competitive may be related to the perception of the main goal of every cooperative, which is not profit maximization but satisfying social needs.

Moreover, research by Cheng et al. (2010) showed that intangible resources have a significant impact not only on competitive advantage, but also on financial results. However, our findings show that there is a positive correlation between the level of competitiveness of both the tangible and intangible resources ranked by cooperatives managers and the level of profitability ranked by them too. It should be emphasized that these are the subjective opinions of respondents, that have not been confirmed in the study of the dependence between the level of a tangible and intangible resources competitiveness ranked by cooperatives managers and the revenues obtained by cooperatives. Due to the very restricted sample size the research results cannot be generalized but the findings may suggest that objective indicators should be used in further, extended research, because respondents' opinions may be too optimistic compared to the actual results. It should be discussed in more detail what indicator should be used to assess the financial performance of cooperatives, and whether it should be an indicator of profitability or revenue. This is an unresolved question. It seems that revenue is a better indicator of cooperatives financial performances because in the case of social cooperatives, profit in itself is somewhat meaningless, while revenues provide evidence of how a socially oriented cooperative perform in economic, competitive conditions. Furthermore, revenue shows the business potential of a social cooperative enterprises.

Considering the results in more detail, the respondents assess their human and relational resources in a more consistent way, and provide the most diverse answers in the field of physical, technological and financial resources. This information, combined with the results of the respondents' perception of human resources as the most competitive, can form a statement that the respondents base building their competitive advantage on human resources. The respondents also assess comparatively the level of their relationship resources competitiveness, and the results based on their subjective options indicate that there is no correlation between the level of their relationship resources competitiveness and the level of their profitability. A similar result is found in the case of the relationship study between the level of their relational resources' competitiveness and their revenues. There is no correlation between them. This is a very interesting result because the specificity of the cooperative's activities and objectives would suggest a relationship between the level of their relationship resources' competitiveness and their financial performance. It seems to be a particularly interesting area to find reasons for this situation, especially in the context of the research results obtained by Bontis et al. (2018). The findings show that the relational capital of social cooperative enterprises affects their mission-based performance and does not affect their economic performance (Bontis et al., 2018). Our findings also show that there is no correlation between the level of technological resources' competitiveness and the profitability level of cooperatives and the indifferently negative correlation between the level of technological resources competitiveness and cooperatives revenues. The reason for this situation may be the fact that the cooperative's activity is usually not based on innovation but even sometimes on handicrafts. Moreover, the following question arises of whether the application of technology does not result in the loss of the image of the products/services offered by cooperatives and consequently the loss of customers. Last but not least is the finding that there is a positive correlation between the level of financial resources' competitiveness and the profitability level of cooperatives and their revenues. This result confirms that social cooperative enterprises, despite their non-profit mission, realize that financial resources determine their duration on the market, and in this context Polish cooperatives are the same as other enterprises operating on the market.

6. Conclusion

This paper is the first step in starting a discussion about linkages between tangible and intangible resources and financial performance in social cooperative enterprises in Poland. The empirical research has shown that there are lots of problems to explore in this field in the future and extended studies are needed.

The main limitation of our empirical research is represented by the small sample size, thus our research is in fact of a pilot nature. Therefore the obtained study results cannot be generalized but they are a contribution to an in-depth discussion

in this area. Moreover, there are no well-established tools and methods to measure a linkages between tangible and intangible resources and financial performance in social cooperative enterprises. A certain solution to this problem was proposed by Bontis et al. (2018), and perhaps replication of their research would be justified.

In our opinion further research requires taking on several challenges. Firstly, there is a need to discuss the competitiveness of social cooperative enterprises, because this is an important sector in the economy of every country. However, this sector has been excluded from the academic discourse for many years, especially by researchers from post-communist countries, including Polish. The reason for this situation was the connection of cooperatives with the communist economy and treating this sector as unattractive in a market economy. But nowadays, in the period of understanding the significance of corporate social responsibility, it seems that cooperatives are becoming an interesting research object again. On the other hand, social cooperative enterprises need current knowledge in order to develop. The knowledge about linkages between their tangible and intangible resources and financial performance seems to be the most important for their duration. For this reason, the second challenge is to develop shared tools and methods of measurement of tangible and intangible resources' competitiveness of cooperatives and an evaluation of their financial performance. Then it will be possible to study dependencies between the level of tangible and intangible resources' competitiveness in social cooperative enterprises and their financial performance. Furthermore, it will be possible to compare the competitiveness of the cooperatives' resources and their financial results between countries, including between Poland and the other European countries.

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