

ROLE OF INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONS IN OBTAINING SPONSORSHIP FOR ACADEMIC INITIATIVES

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Abstract:

In the modern economy mutual cooperation is more beneficial for each organization than continuous competition. Currently, newer forms of cooperation and competition (cooperative competition) are being fashioned. One of these forms is inter-organizational relations, which will be discussed in detail in the article, in terms of acquiring sponsorship for a variety of academic initiatives. Organizations consistently recognize that a long-term competitive advantage in today's market can only be achieved through a structured relational capital. Therefore, the modern requirements of all interest groups on local, national or international markets focus their attention on creating different initiatives, both business and academic ones, with the cooperation of many individuals and organizations.

Keywords: inter-organizational relations, sponsorship, academic initiatives, coopetition.

1. INTRODUCTION

The remarkably dynamic growth of the market prompts increased competition among enterprises. It leads to stiff struggle between competitors. On the whole, firms are forced to continuous struggle for a customer, and thus to quest for new forms of promotion. One of these forms is sponsoring. On the other hand, education, and thus higher education institutions face the task of attracting sponsors. The measure of their success in this determines the advancement of higher education institutions, and hence their survival on the market of education services, as well as development of the local labour market and creation of local growth of the given territory.

As companies collaborate with one another the traditional transactional arrangements have become more complex and, in some ways, more risky. Companies now share more information with their partners than before, opening up the possibility of sensitive business data ending up in the wrong hands and creating significant issues around trust. In addition, corporate cultures may clash, as companies extend their business networks across different regions, management styles and languages. As a result, companies must think very carefully about the types of partnerships that make the most business sense, and how best to manage the development of these relationships to ensure success (Report, 2008, p. 6)¹.

The purpose of this article is to show the role of inter-organizational relations in gaining sponsorship for academic initiatives in Poland in XXI century - in the era of uncertainty and turbulent environments, at the level of theoretical and practical issues - in the form of own research.

2. INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONS IN LOCAL AND REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

It should be pointed out inter-organizational relations, as its subject name suggests, is concerned with relationships between and among organizations. “IOR”, in this article, refers to the name of the field – i.e. inter-organizational relations – and “IORs” refers to these inter-organizational relationships. The study of IOR is concerned with understanding the character and pattern, origins, rationale, and consequences of such relationships. The organizations may be public, business or non-profit and the relationships can range from dyadic, involving just two organizations, to multiplicitous, involving huge networks of many organizations (Copper, Ebers, Huxham & Smith Ring, 2010, p. 4).

To create any initiatives on the market it is always necessary to have the help of local partners which is why many organizations look for partnerships to develop such diverse sectors as business, educational or public.

There have always been inter-organizational (and inter-sectoral) relationships and joint working in local and regional development. In particular, the public sector (in its many roles as planner, regulator, provider of resources and factors of production such as land) has always worked closely with private sector interests: developers, financial institutions, and employers. At the same time, the interests of communities and social groups have been taken into account, primarily but not only through the institutions of representative democracy.

¹Report “The collaboration advantage. Customer-focused partnerships in a global market”, Economist Intelligence Unit Limited London, New York, Hong Kong 2008, access on-line (12.03.2011), p. 6.

However, in many countries, these inter-organizational relationships have been increasingly overlain by the development of more institutionalized forms of partnership. One key distinction between traditional collaboration and partnership is that, while in the former the normal pattern was a core-periphery model, in the latter, at least in principle, the model is of a number of partners collaborating with each other, without (in principle at least) any assumption of primacy by one partner (Geddes, 2010, pp. 204–205).

Although the broad principle of local partnership is now becoming increasingly generalized across the globe, partnership takes many forms. Partnership vary in relation to:

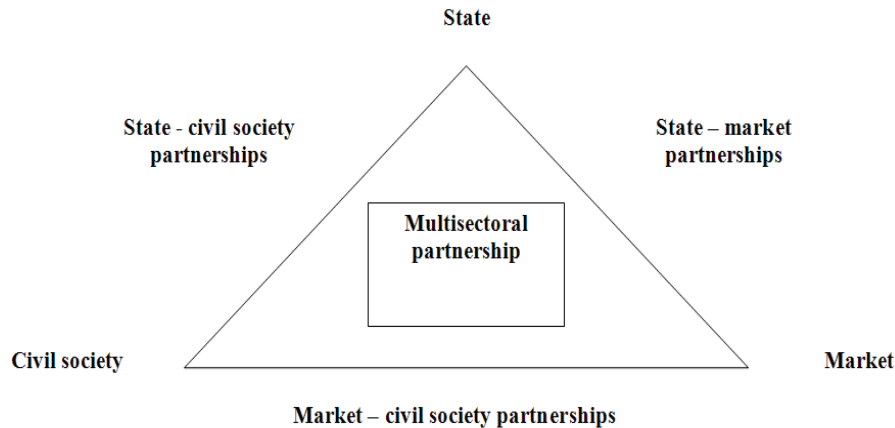
- their remits, responsibilities, and resources;
- the spatial scale at which they operate;
- the organizations and interests which are partners;
- and in the broad form which collaboration takes (Geddes, 2010, p. 209).

LRD (local and regional development) partnerships exhibit considerable variety in the organizations and interests within the partnership. The 'partnership space' in this context can initially be defined as that of the intersection between the three spheres of the state (and the public sector), the market (including both business and trade union interests), and civil society (including NGOs – non-governmental organizations and community groups). This can help to identify a number of ideal-types (Picture 1):

- Partnerships at the centre of this space, involving partners from all three spheres. There are many partnerships of this kind, often with multidimensional remits. Such multi-partner partnerships are promoted by a wide range of state programmes of the EU, many EU member states including the UK, and by federal or state governments in Australia for example.
- Partnership primarily between state and market partners. Not surprisingly, such partnerships are often concerned with economic development or labour market issues.
- Partnerships primarily between state and civil society partners. There are distinctions in this type between those where the civil society partners are community organizations and interests, and those where the partnership is between state agencies and NGOs. In parts of the developing world, large transnational NGOs often play a lead role in development partnerships.
- A fourth ideal-type, partnerships primarily between market and civil society actors, is much less common, and although examples do exist, this is an indication of the dominant role of the state in urban and regional development partnerships.

This triangular partnership space between state, market, and civil society is one of the main characteristics which distinguishes the 'new' urban and regional partnerships from either collaborative relationships within the state/public sector (either between different tiers of the state, or between various sectoral state agencies), or from the corporatist model of partnership in which the three poles were the state, business, and trade unions. It is interesting to note, however, that new versions of essentially corporatist partnership, widened to include participation from employment-related NGOs such as those delivering training and employment placement services, are emerging around local and regional labour market issues (Andersen & Mailand, 2002).

Picture 1: Partnership ideal types



Source: Andersen & Mailand, 2002.

J. L. Crompton described inter-organizational relations between the public sector and the commercial sector for the purpose of building recreational facilities. He developed three categories of relationships: a) using existing commercial facilities; where the local government leases commercial building instead of developing/building their own; b) facilitating new commercial projects; where the local government motivates capital commercial investment by producing minimal public resources; and c) joint development with the commercial sector, where the local government matches resources with the commercial sector towards the development of facilities (Crompton, 1989, pp.107–121). In another study, Crompton investigated forces affecting the public sector when privatizing recreation services and programs. Four reasons for privatizing were outlined:

“(1) frustration with the inflexibility and relatively high cost inherent in the traditional approach of direct service delivery, (2) the convergence of political agendas from both the conservative and liberal wings of political spectrum, (3) recognition of the inherent inefficiencies associated with the monopolistic supply of services, and (4) awareness of the distinction between service provision and production” (Crompton, 1989, p. 89).

3. REASONS FOR INVOLVEMENT IN INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONS AND PARTNERSHIP FOR ACADEMIC INITIATIVES

There are many reasons for entering partnerships with other organizations, especially when we talk about academic initiatives for local and student communities. Determining these reasons becomes the first step towards establishing sufficient partnerships and outcomes. The reasons for involvement in inter-organizational relationships differ from one organization to the next, according to the organization's needs. However, commonalities have been found in the motives behind partnerships. Oliver has uncovered six determinants or motives for establishing alliances with other organizations. These determinants are: reciprocity, efficiency, stability, legitimacy, necessity, and asymmetry (Oliver, 1990, pp. 241–256). Even though these determinants are described separately, their influence and interaction on one another is essential to note. Organizations have many reasons for being involved in partnerships. When explaining the following reasons for involvement, it is important to acknowledge that some of these reasons overlap.

a) Reciprocity

Reciprocity describes an organization's motives to cooperate, collaborate and coordinate with potential partners (Oliver, 1990, pp. 241–256), creating a certain interdependence with potential partners. The concept of reciprocity occurs when both partners are pursuing the

same goals and interest. To improve the community welfare and leisure opportunities for all community members is one reason why the local government and community organizations join their efforts for example to create academic initiatives supporting universities with financial sources.

b) Efficiency

Efficiency, is linked to an organization's needs to increase and improve its "input/output" by controlling environmental and organizational resources (Oliver, 1990, pp. 241–256). In time when resources are scarce and competition is high, it becomes essential for an organization to be more efficient in its operation. The search for external resources is viewed by many authors as the primary reasons for establishing partnerships and is used to analyze inter-organizational relations, defining it as the resource dependency framework. It is better to support academic initiatives in local area because it can bring much more profits in the future and effective results by education of high-qualified community.

c) Stability

Stability is related to the need by an organization to control environmental uncertainty (Oliver, 1990). In order to obtain a better control over the environment, partnerships are created. Organizational environment is defined as "everything outside an organization's boundaries" (Robbins, 1990, p. 206), while environmental uncertainty is defined as "the degree of heterogeneity and concentration among environmental elements" (Robbins, 1990, p. 219).

d) Legitimacy

Another reasons for involvement is the need for legitimacy. It represents the need for an organization to conform to societal norms, values, rules, and expectations (Oliver, 1990, pp. 241–256). In some instances, one partner may need or wish to establish a partnership with another organization for the credibility and reputation of the partner-organization. It has been process (Rourke, 1984) have been identified as key resources. Political advocacy, legitimization and legislative policy process are all related to an organization's ability to establish strong relationships with politicians and legislators, consequently leading to its acceptance and success in the community. Gaining community legitimacy is perceived as essential in the development of community programs. Supporting academic initiatives by different partners in the local area should be written into special sections of the budget of each organization.

e) Necessity

Another determinant for establishing partnerships is by necessity. Necessity is defined as the need for establishing linkages "in order to meet necessary legal or regulatory requirements (Oliver, 1991, p. 243). This reason for involvement is not relevant to the purpose of this study, given local governments and community organizations are not forced in entering partnerships with one another. Even though the establishment of partnerships is sometimes perceived a need for these partners in order to deliver some public services, both partners are voluntarily involved in the partnership process, for example by sponsoring of the organization of seminars, conferences, workshops by local higher institutions.

f) Asymmetry

Finally the last reason for involvement in the establishment of partnerships is asymmetry. Asymmetry is described as the exercise of power and control of one organization over another for its resources (Oliver, 1990, pp. 241–256). For the purpose of this study, the asymmetry

element is not applicable due to the mandate of the public sector. This reason may not be relevant given the fact that local governments tend to assume a facilitator role when entering partnerships as opposed to a directive role (Vail, 1992). In most cases, local governments enter partnerships in order to maintain the same level of public services accessible to their community without any tax increase (Thibault et al., 1999, pp.124–141). Local governments have not intention in taking over a service or an organization.

From the research reviewed in the previous part of the paper, it is clear that the establishment of linkages with community organizations, non-profit or the commercial sector, is now perceived favourably and widely used by universities as a strategy to fulfill the needs of creating academic initiatives for the good of local, students and teachers society.

4. SPONSORSHIP OF HIGHER EDUCATION – AN ATTEMPT OF GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Education, notably higher education institutions, quite frequently face the task of attracting sponsors. The measure of their success in this largely determines the advancement of the institution, and hence their viability on the education services market. As indicated in the survey conducted by GUS (Central Statistical Office), the sector of higher education institutions is continually growing , though in recent years the growth has been less dynamic (Report GUS, 2009, p. 25). The market thus is not lacking rivalry for purchasers of their services, that is the students. To meet the challenges and increased competition level educational institutions are somehow forced to undertake such measures as finding an appropriate sponsor. After all, it is a commonly held opinion that the government purportedly seeks savings in the education sector, which engenders the conviction that the only chance for development of higher education facilities lies in individual support provided by sponsors.

When striving to systemize sponsorship of higher education facilities, it is crucial to take a closer look at areas concerned and characterize briefly each of them.

It is clear that sponsorship of the institution may be concerned with multiple spheres of its functioning, namely as being:

- equipment and specialized research facilities;
- scholarships for students;
- scholarly conferences;
- scientific research (experiments);
- research visits abroad;
- other academic initiatives (Datko, 2003, p. 53).

One of the essential issues related to sponsoring is equipment. A sponsor may allocate money for the purchase of necessary furnishings or directly deliver necessary equipment. The furnishings may comprise a number of elements, among others, desks, chairs, blackboards, computers or other multimedia equipment. Further, a sponsor may deliver his services to the higher education institution. The fit-out and construction services are ingreatest demand. However, the manner of providing the assistance is an individual decision made by potential sponsors, and they in effect have a wide array of options at their disposal.

Specialized research equipment is another important sphere for sponsoring higher education. Sponsors are particularly welcomed within this group. And in this case the sponsor's provision may be threefold. The most common form includes pecuniary form when a sponsor

funds the purchase of the equipment. No less beneficial is direct delivery, that is contribution in-kind. Moreover, provision of services is also of tremendous significance. A sponsoring entity may take charge of technical aspects of the research equipment, providing support and maintenance services to the institution.

Scholarships represent another area of sponsoring. It is an issue particularly apposite for the group of the best talented students. In this case sponsorship takes on the pecuniary form. A sponsor takes under his wings one, or a few of the best performing talents that stand out from others in some manner, and disburses a certain amount of money on a monthly basis. Such scholarships funded are particularly attractive due to their fiscal amounts. They allow the best talents to focus on their studies and self-improvement, whereas sponsors to identify the most gifted students and offer them employment in their own companies following graduation from the studies.

Conferences provide the least opportunities for potential sponsors, and notably international ones where everything needs to be of highest quality. A sponsoring entity has to take care of financial matters, paying organizational costs. He may also exploit contribution in-kind, which certainly includes delivery of essential materials, e.g. food. Rendering of services has proved a form of sponsorship which is much in demand. In this case they are connected with catering services, or accommodation, thus such services that directly relate to an organization staging the conference as well as taking care of invited guests.

On the whole, scientific research implies considerable capital expenditures. Higher education institutions are not capable of financing them, and that holds out a great opportunity for sponsors. As there is nothing more prestigious as being associated with an invention or discovery. In reality, Polish students and scholars are tremendously creative and effective in this regard, which yields many opportunities for frequent sponsorship activity.

Research visits abroad, like scholarships, may serve as a form of advertisement for a sponsor as well as helping to reach the best performing students. In the future these persons may give a boost to staff employed in the sponsor's company. And having such a cosmopolitan creative and resourceful person in their teams is definitely a huge asset to the employer. At this phase sponsoring aid is chiefly based on purely pecuniary performances.

Other academic initiatives are deemed as cultural events as well as contests and competitions among others. Young people certainly need entertainment as respite from studies and this may be ensured by active sponsors financing the organization of a cultural event. As regards competitions and contests, the sponsor's role primarily focuses on funding awards through direct financing or awards in-kind.

4.1. Participants in sponsoring

This section will render a portrayal of the participant in sponsoring higher education as well as a presentation of the role to be fulfilled by them.

Predominantly, the participants in sponsoring higher education institutions should be classified into three groups:

1. Sponsored entities;
2. Sponsoring entities;
3. Persons performing sponsored activities (Stecki, 2000, p. 436).

Particular attention should be drawn to the third group, as it is most often passed over, and therefore their full potential tends to be disregarded. Later, each group has been characterized.

Within the first group it is necessary to separate smaller sets of sponsored entities (Ibidem). On the one hand, sponsorship of higher education institutions may merely regard individuals. Then, this sub-group may include individual persons such as: students, employees or scholars (Gromadzka, 2011). Specifically, it is plainly linked to individual sponsoring that was mentioned in the previous section. Yet, sponsorship of higher education institutions is not only sponsoring centred on individual persons, as there is also institutional sponsoring, which is thus sponsoring being geared to institutions (Ibidem). It is these that form a separate group of sponsored entities. Institutions should be interpreted as varied higher education institutions – starting from vocational through to academies and universities.

Moving to another group of sponsoring participants, namely to sponsoring entities, it should be emphasized that just stating affiliation of legal-economic entities as well as individuals is insufficient (Stecki, 2000, p. 436). The issue of the sub-group examined is fairly complicated. However, it is absolutely beyond doubts that in essence each individual may become a sponsor. It does not require in-depth elucidation. In contrast stands sponsoring by legal-economic entities. Above all, it is essential to distinguish between direct and indirect sponsoring. The direct form raises no doubts, as opposed to an indirect form. It should be highlighted that direct sponsorship occurs when a sponsor personally and overtly earmarks money, contributions in-kind or merely provides services to the sponsored entity (Stecki, 2000, p. 437).

The last group of participants involved in sponsoring higher education institutions include persons performing sponsored activities. It is a group largely ignored as it is widely held that there are no more participants except of subjects of such sponsoring. Yet some sponsorship performances, mostly the highly specialized ones, require involvement of third parties. The cooperation with these persons takes place on the basis of the relevant agreement, concluded with the sponsored entity. These may include a contract of mandate, a contract to perform a specific work, or contract of lease, or tenancy. Yet, the reverse situation never takes place, when activities to be executed by the sponsored entities are concerned. The performances by the sponsored entity rely on the principle of personal execution. It is of importance in view of the fact that the sponsor entering into sponsorship relationships and selecting the entity, is guided by the reputation which may translate into the benefits delivered, and more precisely into their dimension.

4.2. Relations between sponsoring participants

Legal relations prevailing between sponsoring participants stirs many doubts. They are fundamentally a result of the emergence of the third group. In this group the focus was brought to relations that occur both in individual sponsorship as well as institutional.

The situation as to the first case is quite clear as there is only a sponsor and a sponsored entity. A sponsored entity is practically the only person performing contractual activities unless there are opportunities to delegate their performance to other persons. But in such an event the sponsor's consent is required which certainly simplifies the procedures.

More complex relations come into play in the case of institutional sponsoring. In this event the agreement is made between a sponsor and an institution, that is a specific higher education

institution. As illustrated the participants of this relationship include a sponsor and the institution concerned. Yet, at this juncture the problem arises as to the provision of contractual performance. All of this due to the fact that an institution may not provide individual performances, only the persons working or learning there (Stecki, 2000, p. 441). Moreover, a contractor may be a person delegated on behalf of the higher education institution, provided that he is not legally related to the institution on a permanent basis. Also, some light should be shed on relationships between a sponsored individual, and persons expected to provide performances. If these persons come from the organizational structure of such institution, so the relationships between them are usually determined by a contract of employment. In the case of the person from outside the internal structure, the relationship begins at the moment of commissioning the execution of the specific activity. Conclusion of the contract of mandate or the contract to perform a specific work constitutes a basis for such a relationship (Gromadzka, 2011).²

For the purposes of formality it should be highlighted that the financial aspect proves to be the same for both cases. To put it briefly, a sponsored unit is obliged to spend money obtained for the purpose being in compliance with the contract.

4.3. Performances of sponsoring participants

Sponsoring performances have been mentioned in brief while analysing sponsoring areas. In this instance, a summary will be featured and information marshalled in this respect.

It is evident that such performances may be threefold, that is, to be precise, they may include money, contributions in-kind, or services. The sponsor has all these forms at his disposal, and its selection is made at his discretion. However, all this has to be in line with the contract concluded. Pecuniary performances prove to be the most popular, based on the allocation of a specific amount of money. It is typically allocated to a purpose, definitely specified, which restricts the freedom of the sponsored entity in administrating the money. Frequently performances rendered by the sponsoring entity are based on providing aid in the purely material form, namely equipment starting from classroom furnishings through computers to research apparatus. Sponsors eagerly harness the latest form of performances such as services. Performances consist in active participation in the organization of a venture, e.g. a conference. In the domain outlined there are quite well known cases of developing models of classes for students that later are made available to the opposite party.³ An interesting example is exemplified by setting up and financing faculties which may be established with a view to the demand for specialists in a certain discipline in a sponsor's company. It is also worthwhile distinguishing sponsoring scholarships which today prove to be particularly trendy and interesting performances.

Overall, the fact that a sponsor is provided with immense opportunities when selecting his form of activity in the sphere of higher education institutions. At the core is the initiative and sincere willingness to bring aid for a significant and considerable purpose.

Performances rendered by the other party, that is the sponsored, look quite untypical. At the heart lies compliance with a contract concluded. By concentrating on individual sponsorship it may be noticed that performances of students or scholars rely on execution of contractual

² Ibidem.

³ L. Stecki, *Sponsoring*, op. cit., p. 444.

activities. Depending on the individual case it may involve a launch of research, or self-improvement.

Whereas the opposite applies to the performances from the sphere of institutional sponsorship. Principally they are rendered by employees or students from the higher education institution and consist of organizational works. In essence performance of the contract requires, for example, organization of a conference or any course.

Equally important is that the most characteristic form of performances in the sphere of education is a permit to exploit intellectual property. It often constitutes a determinant of involvement in sponsorship activities (Sponsoring w oświacie, 2011).

Despite all sponsoring forms detailed above, there may be other performances. It is vital for two parties to precisely specify them prior to signing the contract. What is certain is that sponsoring performances in relation to higher education institutions are typically continuous and long-term in their character. This fact results from the specifics of the related domain.

4.4. Risk related to sponsoring higher education institutions

All operations in day-to-day life are burdened with some risk. Merely its intensity may be changed. And it is the scale of risk that should receive some consideration. After all, the issues of occurrence of the risk in sponsorship of higher education institutions, similarly as in all sponsoring efforts, is beyond any doubt.

It is an adequate statement that sponsorship of higher education institutions is accompanied by risk at an average level (Stecki, 2000, p. 443). It appears in larger proportions in the case of learning, and to a lesser extent in education. Obviously, this phenomenon should be examined twofold as different perils will arise on part of the sponsor and the sponsored.

Tremendous significance related with the sponsored entity is attached to the risk of effectiveness. The concluded contract encompasses performances of both parties. In sponsorship of higher education institutions, particularly individual sponsoring it is not certain that the sponsored will manage to achieve an objective intended. As the fact of initiating scholarly research does not have to predestine its success. It is only one of the examples that may be repeatedly multiplied (Gromadzka, 2011).

Additionally, views on the morality of such activities come to surface. Certainly, they originate from the concern for young and talented people. Actually, such people are treated as partners in business, yet students are young people but on the threshold of adulthood, and sponsoring provides them with great opportunities. The only threat is posed by the question of whether they exploit that chance in a proper way. Sponsoring may have an adverse impact on their psyche as performance for their benefit may change their way of thinking. The scholarship received, instead of bolstering self-improvement, may rein in this process, triggering deliberations on their uniqueness after earning such great mention.

Impact of sponsoring on autonomy of researchers has a considerable significance and is undoubtedly connected with certain level of risk (Stecki, 2000, p. 443). A person running an experiment needs concentration as well as tranquillity and freedom in making decisions. And this freedom may be hindered by the sponsor. Rights and obligations of both parties to the relationship give the sponsor the privilege to submit his objections and the sponsored is

obliged to respect them (Sznajder, 1996, p. 134). Therefore, it is no wonder that the sponsor desires to use this right as this may affect the success of the whole operation. It is a kind of downside as the sponsored is the only person sufficiently competent to make correct decisions. Definitely, an issue of intervention by the sponsor should be regulated in the contract concluded.

The sponsor's risk is comparable. As we know, one of motives driving the sponsor is to build a positive image and enhance popularity. There is however no certainty whether these actions will deliver the desired target. One of the reasons is marginal attention drawn by media to sponsoring education. (Sponsoring w oświacie, 2011).

And even if the sponsor will be finally mentioned in press, radio or TV, the success seems still to be uncertain. Such situations result from the fact that the field discussed does not attract such a wide group of those interested as for example sporting events or other cultural events. Thus, the entity being involved in sponsoring efforts of education have to be patient as one-off "aid" will not certainly produce many benefits. His activities need to be intense and long-term, and even then some luck will be necessary.

5. SPONSORSHIPS AND ACADEMIC INITIATIVES – OWN RESEARCH STUDIES

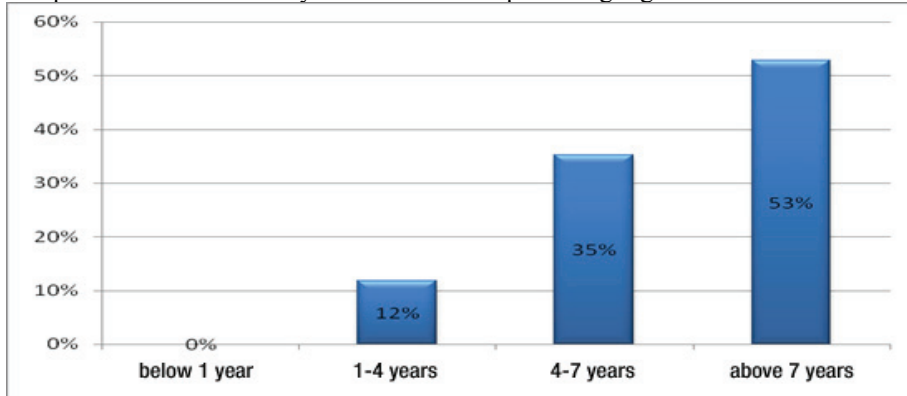
The overarching objective of the research was to answer the question of whether sponsoring exerts an impact on academic initiatives. To make it easier, specific objectives were also raised such as:

- identifying the degree of impact the sponsoring exercises on academic initiatives;
- assessing openness of people to sponsorship of initiatives undertaken by higher education institutions;
- assessing defects and merits of this form of financing.

The persons being directly involved in sponsoring the academic initiatives in Mazowieckie province that expressed their eagerness to participate, were put under survey. Selection of the sample was random and was predicated on opportunities of reaching out potential respondents. The study group comprised 30 persons from various institutions in the province examined. Women represented a more numerous group constituting 65 % of the respondents. The most numerous group were persons at the age 31–40 years which accounted for as many as 76 % of all respondents, whereas 12 % of those researched included persons at the age 41–50 years. Only 6 % from among all respondents were represented by those at the age 24–30 as well as those over 50 years.

Most of the respondents were the persons with considerable experience in the field of sponsorship of higher education. It is evidenced by the period during which they performed activities related with sponsoring academic initiatives (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Experience of those surveyed in the field of sponsoring higher education



In order to analyze findings of the questionnaire, few aspects were identified which facilitated interpretation. Questions were categorized in terms of the following subject blocks:

- scale and manner of impact that sponsoring has on academic initiatives;
- openness of people to sponsoring higher education;
- defects and merits of sponsoring higher education.

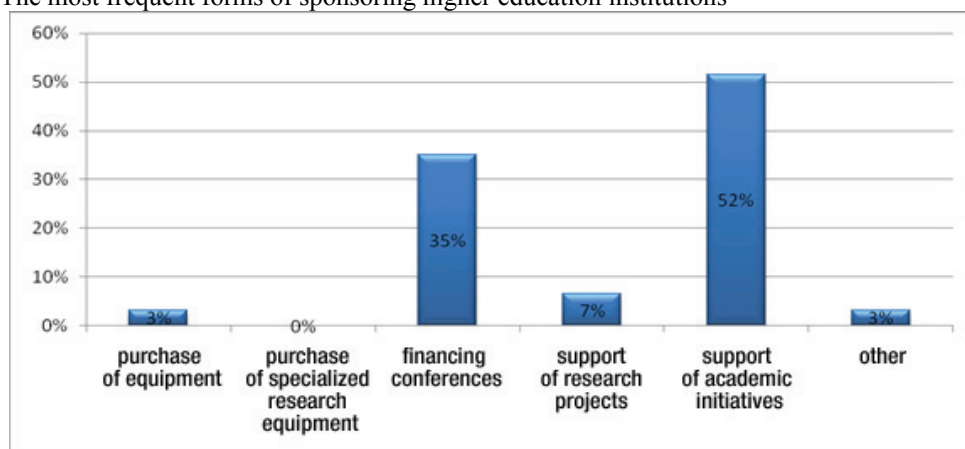
5.1. Scale and the manner of impact that sponsoring has on academic initiatives

To explore the impact exerted by sponsoring on academic initiatives, the questionnaire contained a few fundamental questions of which the findings are presented below.

The question of whether sponsoring is an important form of supporting academic initiatives was answered positively by 100 % of respondents. Therefore the validity of deploying such form of financing the operations run by higher education institutions is fully confirmed.

The presented situation illustrates the importance of diversity of forms of financing the initiatives in the higher education institutions. It is unlikely to indicate the more and less important among them. As evidenced, both sponsoring performances as well as own ones (by the institutions), and provided by varied funds, are essential form of financing of all initiatives launched by higher education institutions.

Figure 3: The most frequent forms of sponsoring higher education institutions



Another question concerned the most frequent forms of sponsoring higher education institutions. The question raised in such a way 52 % of answers pointed to supporting other academic initiatives. Whereas 35 % of all replies pertained to financing of conferences. Few

answers, only 7 %, designated supporting of research projects. Also, the answers provided included purchase of equipment and other forms identified by the respondent. Both variants received 3 % if all answers given. Yet, nobody marked the purchase of specialized research equipment (Figure 3).

The most frequent form of sponsorship of higher education institutions is support of other academic initiatives which may include: knowledge competitions, contests, cultural events, as well as workshops and other projects. This fact may result from diversity of options for involvement into sponsoring such vent as sponsor's performances may be threefold. In such circumstances an issue of finding an entity willing to collaborate appears to be far easier.

Financing of conferences is also a considerable form. Beyond doubt, the prestige of such event is essential. At the conferences a variety of renowned persons are in attendance which stokes the interest among the sponsors. In this case a sponsoring entity is also unconstrained in choosing performances offered.

5.2. Openness of people to sponsoring higher education

Openness of people is central to undertaking any activities by them. The same applies to sponsorship of academic initiatives where human openness and good intentions as well as relations nurtured are crucial.

The question on the approach of today's people to sponsoring was answered by as much as 65 % of respondents as rather negative. The remaining 35 % of the surveyed affirmed that it is rather positive. No extreme answers were given.

The most popular reply is rather negative as from respondents' viewpoints people only reluctantly become engaged in sponsoring and these are usually incidental actions. However, a substantial portion of respondents tend to describe their attitude to sponsoring as positive, because if they apply to a potential sponsor they usually gain approval. Nobody, though, defined it as unequivocally positive or unequivocally negative.

The next question related to the manner by which the surveyed generally acquire sponsors. 65 % replied as "through connections". The remaining 35 % of the surveyed declared that they themselves seek out potential sponsors and present a specific proposal. There were no answers indicating, as the most frequent way of winning sponsors, that sponsors come in with an offer. Nobody provided another variant of the answer.

As revealed by the research, a significant majority of the respondents believe that it is necessary to make use of their personal connections to find a sponsor. The prevailing conviction is that everything may be organized, but mostly through "connections".

It was noticed that the sponsorship relations most frequently spotted by those under survey are medium-term. It implies that the most of sponsors following the completion of one venture is persuaded to pursue other sponsoring efforts, but it cannot be epitomized as systematic in this case. To put it briefly, the duration of the relationship is largely contingent on the sponsored himself, who needs to motivate the sponsor so as to urge him to initiate subsequent actions.

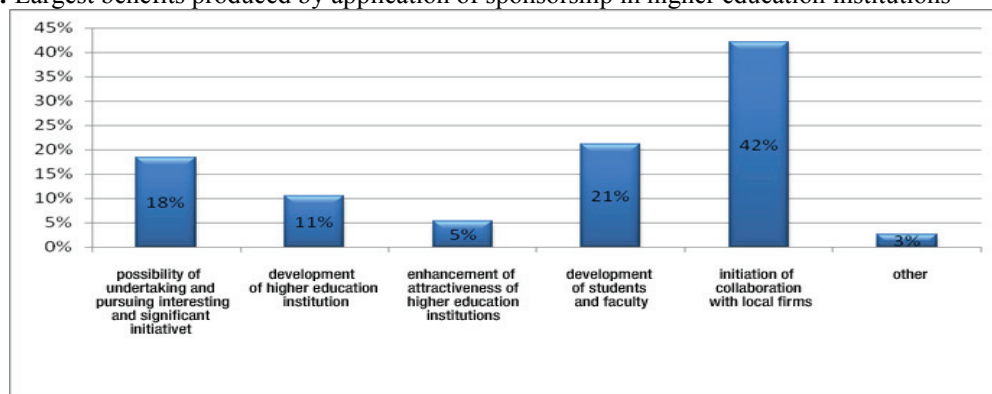
As regards long term relationships, the situation is slightly different as most of sponsors after accomplishing one venture continued to run a systematic collaboration with the education centre.

Short term sponsoring turns out to be the least popular when following the fulfilment of the contract, the sponsor definitely finishes the collaboration.

5.3. Shortcomings and merits of sponsoring higher education

When asked about the benefits resulting from employment of sponsoring in higher education institutions (Figure 4), the respondents had 5 variants of answers at their disposal, and additionally they could provide their own suggestions. Among all answers given, 42 % include answers showing that the largest benefit is establishing collaboration with local companies. Development of students and faculty received 21 % whereas slightly less, that is 18 % for an opportunity of undertaking and pursuing interesting and significant initiatives. Another variant, which is development of the higher education institution obtained 11 %. Enhancement of attractiveness of the higher education institutions was declared by few persons, and thus the variant received 5 % of all votes given.

Figure 4: Largest benefits produced by application of sponsorship in higher education institutions



The establishment of collaboration with local companies appears to be the largest benefit for the respondents, produced by application of sponsorship in higher education institutions. The contact with the local community in some ways helps preparation to further Professional life. Due to such forms of financing of academic initiatives, students may hope to be noticed which in the future will be useful when seeking a job.

Sponsoring as in the case discussed also facilitates accomplishment of numerous fascinating and significant initiatives, especially those non-didactic ones which could have not been afforded by higher education institutions.

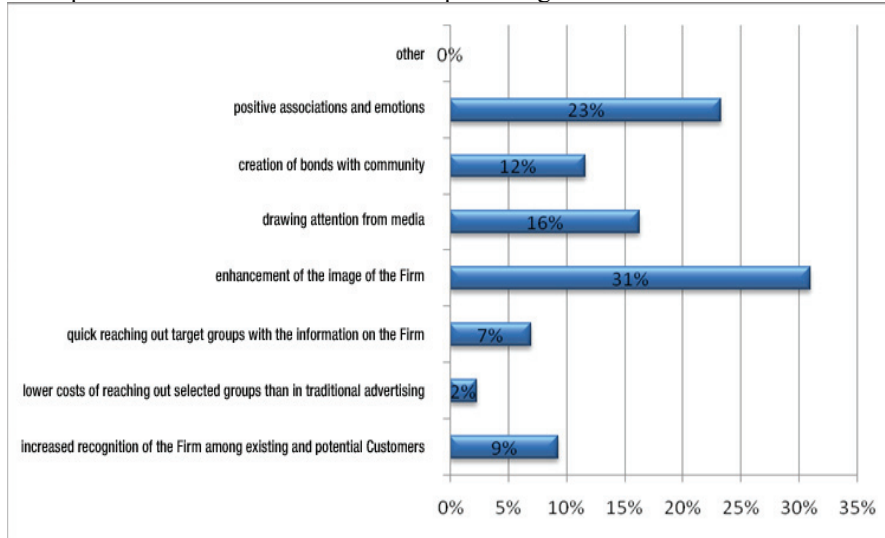
According to those surveyed, another key benefit yielded is development of the students and faculty. All ventures launched by the higher education institutions aim to directly or indirectly increase competencies of both students as well as employees. It is also obvious that sponsoring in many cases is perceived as a means central to realization of projected ventures.

The respondents notice that sponsoring leads to advancement of the institution itself. Thanks to a variety of ventures undertaken the institution becomes more competitive. If development of students and faculty was underlined before, then their progress definitely translates into the advancement of the higher education institution.

All foregoing answers reveal another quality of sponsoring higher education, namely enhancement of the attractiveness of such an institution.

Among other advantages engendered by sponsoring efforts indicated by the respondents is the opportunity of creating an added value to studies and educational process. Actually this benefit is particularly important for students who are keen on changing the college life.

Figure 5: The core sponsor’s benefits achieved due to sponsoring academic initiatives



Following the question with regard to the merits brought by sponsoring an academic initiative to the higher education institution, further inquiries concerned the benefits of the other party, namely the sponsor. Enhancement of the image of the Firm received 31 % of all answers. Positive associations and emotions were given 23 % and 16 % to drawing attention from media. The core benefits attained by the sponsor included building social bonds which obtained 12 %. Slightly less, namely 9 % were given to the variant stressing increased recognition of the Firm among existing and potential Customers. A further 7 % went to quickly reaching target groups with information about the Firm. The least, that is only 2 % of all given answers received lower costs of reaching out selected groups than in traditional advertising.

In the opinion of the respondents, the core benefits on which the sponsor may count include enhancement of the image of the Firm as well as positive associations and emotions. Both variants mutually combine. Through sponsorship of higher education, the sponsor builds the standing of its Firm which begins to evoke positive emotions among in the society. Therefore, the overall image of the enterprise is boosted.

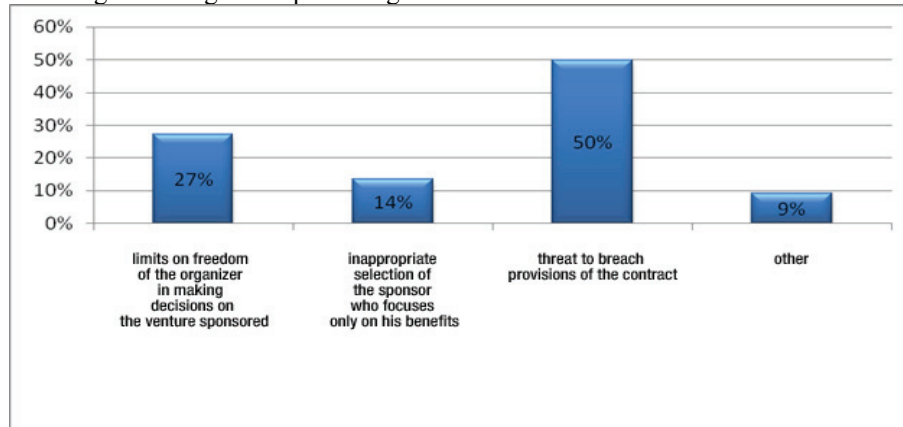
Sponsorship of higher education also draws the attention of the media. It is an excellent and low-cost form of promotion.

Sponsoring activities allow the sponsoring entity to quickly reach out to the selected target groups with the information about the Firm. In this case it is essential to align the enterprise’s profile to the specifics of the sphere sponsored.

The least number of the respondents pointed to cost effectiveness (low budget) of this form of promotion in relation at least to traditional advertising.

None of the surveyed extended the set of variants examined.

Figure 6: Shortcomings resulting from sponsoring academic initiatives



The last question dealt with shortcomings stemming from sponsoring academic initiatives. The answers received were distributed over all variants of answers. The threat of the breach of the provisions of the contract as one of the downsides received a half of all votes, that is 50 %. A further 27 % were given to limits on freedom of the organizer in making decisions on the ventures sponsored, and 14 % to inappropriate selection of the sponsor. The variant with a possibility of adding own answer obtained 9 %.

The biggest shortcoming spurred by sponsorship of academic initiatives, in respondents' views, is the threat of breaching the contract. Evidently, the sponsoring contract is confined by numerous stipulations of which complete fulfilment is most unlikely.

There are quite frequent cases of confining the organizer's freedom in making decisions on the venture sponsored. This is particularly reprehensible in the case of sponsoring higher education.

Inappropriate selection of the sponsor is another threat produced by sponsoring activities. Such selections should be carefully thought out.

With regard to the question "other", two downsides were demonstrated. The first of other shortcomings included excessive "commercialization" in the image of the higher education institution. Another response specified abandonment of collaboration in a future time and forming a habit in the institution of exploiting forms of sponsorship.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the survey questionnaire fully confirmed the gist of the sponsoring as a form of reinforcing academic initiatives. The question why it is like that remains open. Such a situation is the consequence of several aspects. First, due to sponsoring, the public higher education institution may fulfil statutory requirements which is establishing contacts with local community. This is a situation desired, also from the viewpoint of students who through contacts with the potential employers are better prepared for future professional career. Second, the public higher education institution complies with the legal provisions which require to seek out forms of external financing.

A slightly different situation applies to non-public higher education institutions. The sponsoring chiefly fosters the creation of added value for studies and the educational process.

Thus, sponsoring is merely supportive for students who then may pursue their passions and varied ideas.

It is necessary to look at the picture of sponsorship of higher education. Very often it is described as exceptionally unattractive. This statement is not fully true as sponsorship of higher education may be remarkably attractive. Predominantly, it depends on the originality and uniqueness of initiatives launched by the institution. It is worthwhile considering the strict marketing perspective on the issues discussed. Above all, the selection of the sponsor should be well considered. It is vital to adjust the sponsor's profile to the profile of the venture projected. The higher education institution should think over whether it may offer the potential sponsor anything in exchange, and whether this will be attractive enough for him to become involved in the collaboration. Unfortunately, it appears that public institutions are not adequately groomed to think in this manner.

Meanwhile, sponsoring non-public higher education institutions may prove unattractive, though only and exclusively in the event when the provisions regulating this type of institutions are not familiar. The issue is that such institutions are often perceived in the categories of a private company. From this viewpoint, for the potential sponsor the collaboration with the institution may not seem appealing. It is of great significance to take care of the sponsor and possibly to define them as a co-operator.

Another aspect which should be addressed is formalization of the sponsoring contract. Undoubtedly, this is an arduous task, especially with new sponsors. The educational sector is governed by many other regulations and their ignorance causes extra difficulties for the sponsor. However, the public higher education institutions also experience problems due to the fact that their operations are restricted within the law. The sponsor obviously counts on commercial benefits, and the higher education institution needs to take into consideration its image. Therefore, finding a common ground is not always an easy task. It often happens that public higher education institutions when attempting to avoid such formalities, such as tendering, which is a mandatory part of the sponsoring process, signs only a memorandum of understanding with smaller sponsors, hence replacing standard sponsorship contracts. There are situations when the sponsors exclusively reimburse receipts issued, which releases the institution from organizing the tender as money does not pass through the "hands" of the institution.

In the case of the non-public higher education institutions, finalizing the sponsorship contract is not so complicated as in the illustration above. It is underlined however that fulfilment of the contract 100 per cent rarely occurs.

While analyzing the sponsorship of higher education it is worthwhile mentioning the benefits yielded or rather to whom they are related. Viewing this issue from the perspective of the public institution, it should be stressed that the benefits achieved concern all parties; employees, students, as well as the institution itself. What differs is their scope. It principally depends on the sponsor or at least on the venture undertaken. Without sponsorship, the institution would be at the same level. Specifically, it would be hard to arrange only the extra, non-didactic ventures.

Sponsorship of the non-public higher education institution produces benefits only to academic community. The cause of such situation lies in the size of sponsoring performances which

usually range from 500 up to 2,000 zlotys and their allocation. For this reason, without sponsorship, the non-public institutions would also be at the same level as at present.

The use of sponsorship entails the threat of excessive constraint of freedom in making organizational decisions on part of the sponsor. Such a situation is however extremely rarely faced, both in the case of public as well as non-public institutions. Clear presentation of the offer allows for averting further disputes. Depending on which brand is stronger, of the institution or the sponsor, this party may impose more when settling the agreements.

Both types of the higher education institutions have a permanent group of sponsors. Their number is determined by a variety of factors, as the number of companies in the specific area, which is then a consequence of the size of the city where the institution is located. Largely these include small groups of sponsors, mostly coming from private acquaintances.

It should be stressed that the higher education institutions despite occurring in the role of sponsored entity, themselves take on the role of the sponsor, albeit the public ones more rarely. Public higher education institutions become involved in social campaigns being in line with the mission pursued by the institution. In addition, they sponsor e.g. special publications, and film cycles. Whereas non-public institutions become engaged in for example; creation of the image of the city, funding standards for primary schools, and other pro-social activities.

The studies of the reference literature as well as the findings of the research conducted allowed for formulation the following conclusions.

First, sponsorship affects the operation of higher education institutions in a positive manner. It facilitates fulfilment of statutory requirements such as establishing relations with a local community. Sponsorship helps to comply with regulations obliging public higher education institutions to searching external forms of financing. Sponsoring performances, together with institutions' funds and those obtained from various funds constitute the basis for financing the academic initiatives. The most frequently sponsored ventures in the institutions include conferences and other initiatives such as cultural events, workshops and knowledge competitions. The degree of their impact should be assessed as high. Yet, the sponsorship of the higher education takes on the greatest importance in the case of non-didactic initiatives.

Unfortunately, the sponsorship of education, including the higher education, is seen by the sponsors as unappealing. This situation is an effect of the specifics of the educational sector. Huge influence is exerted by ignorance education institutions, notably these non-public ones which are treated as private firms by the sponsors. The truth is very different though. The sponsorship of higher education is a beneficial activity for both parties, though it often, to a large extent, depends on the attractiveness of initiatives undertaken by the institutions, as well as on the appropriate selection of a partner for these operations. Central to the successful collaboration is alignment of the profile of the venture with the profile of the sponsoring firm. Unfortunately, the institutions, particularly the public ones are not sufficiently well groomed to accomplish that.

It appears that some people rather reluctantly become involved in sponsorship. However, usually individual requests are approved. Primarily, personal contacts are the most instrumental in finding a sponsor. Situations when the sponsor himself articulates his intention to initiate a sponsoring action scarcely ever takes place. Therefore, the formulated conclusion holds that people are not open enough to sponsorship of higher education. Co-sponsorship is the most widespread type of sponsoring because costs for the venture are

distributed among the sponsors. Sponsoring performances principally take on the pecuniary form. Contributions in-kind most seldom occur. Following the completion of one venture most sponsors are easily persuaded to other activities, yet they cannot be counted as a permanent sponsors.

The largest benefit yielded by exploitation of the sponsorship in higher education institutions is entering into collaboration with local firms. Among the benefits obtained for the sponsor most importance is attached to enhancement of the image of the Firm due to positive associations and emotions. The largest downside resulting from the sponsorship of academic initiatives is the threat of breaching the provisions of the contracts. The sponsorship contract is strictly confined with numerous stipulations whose total fulfilment is most unlikely.

It happens very frequently that public higher education institutions in the attempt to avoid many formalities, such as: tendering, which is a mandatory part of the sponsoring process, signs only a memorandum of understanding instead of standard sponsorship contracts. The ultimate content of the contract is conditional on the strength of the brand, namely which brand is more powerful, that of the sponsor or the institution.

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