

## **ZNACZENIE ZARZĄDZANIA RELACJAMI Z INTERESARIUSZAMI DLA OPERATORÓW LOGISTYCZNYCH**

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**Streszczenie:** Celem pracy jest analiza znaczenia zarządzania relacjami z interesariuszami dla operatorów logistycznych w województwie śląskim. W pracy wykorzystano takie metody i techniki jak: analiza literatury dotyczącej teorii interesariuszy, badania ankietowe oraz macierz interesariuszy. W artykule zostały przedstawione oryginalne wyniki badań ankietowych przeprowadzonych na próbie 40 firm działających w obszarze logistyki w województwie śląskim na temat sposobów zarządzania relacjami z interesariuszami oraz identyfikacji kluczowych grup interesariuszy. Z badania wynika, iż duża liczba operatorów logistycznych nie prowadzi systematycznych działań związanych z interesariuszami. Warto jednak zauważyć, że zdecydowana większość firm widzi korzyści w zarządzaniu relacjami, które głównie związane są zaletami zrównoważonego rozwoju.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Interesariusze, kapitał relacyjny, operator logistyczny

## **THE ROLE OF STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT FOR LOGISTICS OPERATORS**

**Abstract:** The aim of the article is to analyze the importance of stakeholder relationship management for logistics operators in the Silesian Voivodeship. The work uses methods and techniques such as: analysis of the literature on stakeholder theory, survey research and a stakeholder matrix. The article presents the original results of a survey conducted on a sample of 40 companies operating in the field of logistics in the Silesian Voivodeship on the methods of managing relations with stakeholders and identifying key stakeholder groups. The study shows that many logistics operators do not carry out systematic actions related to stakeholders. It is worth noting, however, that most companies see benefits in managing relationships, including benefits related to sustainable development.

**Keywords:** Stakeholders, relational capital, logistics operators

## **1. Introduction**

Contemporary enterprises cooperate with many other businesses and organizations to fulfill the mission and vision of a given activity. Business goals differ from each other, and the way to achieve them can take many forms. An inseparable element of the implementation of strategic goals of companies is the identification and analysis of stakeholders. Developing appropriate ways of managing relations with stakeholders helps to increase the company's competitiveness on the market and improves its image. Stakeholder relationship management represents an innovative approach for logistic operators by shifting the focus from solely operational excellence to building collaborative relationships, enhancing customer satisfaction, promoting sustainability, and allows them to adapt to evolving customer demands. Due to the growing awareness of companies in the field of stakeholders, it is necessary to undertake more detailed research on managing relations with stakeholders and logistics operators. The aim of the article is to analyze the importance of stakeholder relationship management for logistics operators in the Silesian Voivodeship. For this purpose, the following methods and techniques were used during the research: literature analysis on stakeholder theory, surveys, and the stakeholder matrix. A survey was created in which 40 companies from the logistics area in the Silesian Voivodeship took part. The research was conducted remotely in February and March 2023. Special attention should be paid to the innovativeness of the conducted research related to the importance of relations with stakeholders for logistics operators in the Silesian Voivodeship. Thanks to the conducted analysis, it will be possible to identify the main stakeholder groups of logistics operators and to analyze the benefits and difficulties resulting from managing relations with them.

## **2. Literature review**

The term "stakeholder" was first used by the Stanford Research Institute in 1963. This term referred to groups that had a real impact on the company and without which a given economic activity would not have a chance to exist and stay on the market. In the 1980s, stakeholder theory was researched by R.E. Freeman and D.L. Reed, who proposed a new definition considering the broader and narrower meaning of the concept. In a broader sense, stakeholders are any group of people or individuals who influence the achievement of the company's goals or who are influenced by the organization in achieving its goals. In the narrow sense, stakeholders mean any group of people or individuals on whom the survival of the organization depends (Freeman, Reed 1983).

Stakeholder theory is not one unified idea. There are 4 main types of stakeholder theories in the literature (Andriof, Waddock, 2002). The first type of theories are descriptive theories, which indicate that enterprises and/or managers behave in a certain way and refer to managerial behavior and organizational behavior. The second stakeholder theory is called the instrumental theory, which indicate that certain results can be achieved with greater probability if managers act in certain ways; analyzes refer to competitive behavior and refer to relationships, transactions, and relational contracts. The third stakeholder theory is the normative theory that managers should behave in a certain way; analyzes may concern system-oriented principles (theories of utilitarianism, libertarianism, social contract theories), organization-oriented principles. The fourth type of stakeholder theories are metaphorical theories, where metaphors are created about how stakeholders create and exchange value; the units of analysis are the participants of organizational processes (Marcinkowska, 2001).

The number of stakeholder groups depends on the specifics and size of the enterprise. Each of the stakeholders will have a main goal and the resulting expectations. RE. Freeman proposed a division of stakeholders into first- and second-level stakeholders. First-level stakeholders are individuals and organizations that have formal contacts with the enterprise. According to this division, the first-level stakeholders include: shareholders, owners, employees, customers, suppliers, and state and local authorities (Hąbek, 2009). This group of stakeholders has the greatest impact on the existence and development of the company, therefore it requires special attention and appropriate actions when conducting business relations. Second-level stakeholders are understood as organizations and individuals who do not conduct any transactions with a given company but can influence or remain under its influence of the company. An example of stakeholders belonging to this group are the media and local society (Nieradzik, 2017).

The literature also distinguishes the division of stakeholders into internal and external stakeholders (Rybak, 2004). Internal stakeholders are directly related to the organization. This group of stakeholders includes shareholders, owners, management, and employees. The main expectations of this group will include an increase in the value of the company and, in the case of employees, the quality of work and professional fulfillment. The second group consists of external stakeholders, that is those who are not directly involved in the functioning of the company, but they influence it and have expectations regarding the way it operates. Examples of stakeholders in this group include customers, media, local communities, local and state authorities, competitors, and suppliers. Each of these entities has different expectations towards the organization, which should be analyzed and adequately addressed by taking the necessary actions. Customers will expect their needs to be met in terms of services or products offered by a given company. This type of stakeholders will pay special attention to the features and functionality of products, the way of maintaining customer relations and the company's image (Nita, 2016).

M.A. Rodriguez and J.E. Ricart proposed a division of stakeholders into three main groups: sub-constituent, contractual and contextual stakeholders (Rodriguez, Ricart, 2002). Stakeholders of sub-constituents mean people who are key from the perspective of the company and who have a special impact on the organization. This group of stakeholders includes company shareholders (owners) and employees. The next group is the group of contractual stakeholders, which include entities formally or informally related to the enterprise. This group of stakeholders includes cooperators, suppliers, customers, competitors, and financial institutions. The last group of stakeholders are contextual stakeholders. This group includes social organizations and state, regional and local authorities. Each of the above-mentioned stakeholder groups have different goals and expectations, which are presented in Table 1. The company's task is to properly analyze the expectations of stakeholders and adequately respond to these expectations (Adamczyk, 2009).

**Table 1.**  
*Stakeholder groups, goals, and expectations*

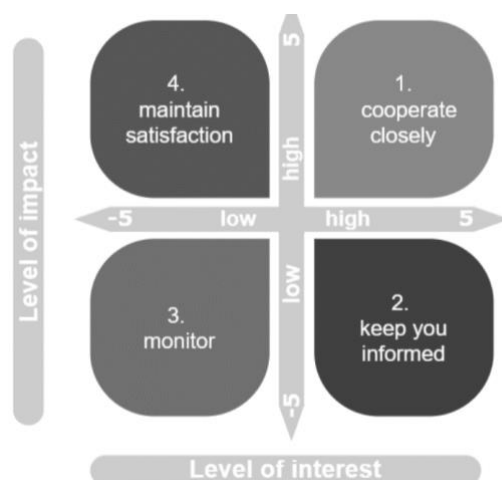
Stakeholder	Main goal	Expectations
Sub-constituting stakeholders		
Shareholders (owners)	Increase in the value of the company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increase in company value</li> <li>• maximizing share value</li> <li>• complete and accurate information</li> <li>• compliance with the principles of corporate governance</li> <li>• competent governing bodies</li> <li>• shaping the company's image</li> </ul>
Employees	Quality of life and professional fulfillment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• satisfactory salary</li> <li>• fulfilling obligations</li> <li>• complete and accurate information</li> <li>• job satisfaction</li> <li>• the possibility of self-development</li> <li>• Occupational Health and Safety</li> <li>• efficient company management</li> </ul>
Contractual stakeholders		
Partners, suppliers	Survival and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• partner's financial credibility</li> <li>• fulfilling obligations</li> <li>• economic profitability</li> <li>• action ethics</li> <li>• culture and professionalism of operation</li> <li>• the quality of the communication process</li> </ul>
Customers	Satisfying needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• product features</li> <li>• product functionality</li> <li>• product quality assurance</li> <li>• satisfactory purchase/customer service process</li> <li>• personification of the relationship with the client</li> <li>• positive image of the company</li> </ul>
Competitors	Compliance with market rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fair rules of competition</li> <li>• transparency and legibility of competition activities</li> <li>• culture of business activities</li> <li>• ethical competition behavior</li> </ul>

Financial institutions	Risk minimization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• profits on borrowed capital</li> <li>• reliable financial results</li> <li>• fulfilling obligations</li> </ul>
Contextual stakeholders		
Government and social institutions	Economic growth, prosperity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• compliance with legal standards</li> <li>• support for the local government and the state</li> </ul>
Communities (national, regional, local)	Justice, certain future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• job creation</li> <li>• running a safe business</li> <li>• environmental Protection</li> <li>• infrastructure co-financing</li> <li>• sponsorship of cultural events,</li> <li>• sports and science</li> </ul>

Source: Adamczyk, J. (2009). Społeczna odpowiedzialność przedsiębiorstw. Teoria i praktyka. PWE. p. 87.

Knowing the importance of stakeholders and their impact on the functioning of the organization, appropriate actions should be taken to manage relations with stakeholders. The literature distinguishes many forms and ways of managing relations with stakeholders. Managing relations with stakeholders includes four stages (Misiach, Serwach, 2016). The first stage involves the identification of stakeholders in the organization. The number and type of organization's stakeholders will depend on the specifics of the company's operations. In the case of logistics activities involving multimodal transport, stakeholders such as logistics centers, logistics operators, infrastructure managers, financial institutions, human capital, and other entities that have an impact on organizations can be identified (Kramarz et al., 2021).

The second stage of stakeholder relationship management involves identifying the interests and expectations of endorsers. During this stage, a map of stakeholders is created, which will consider the level of impact of a given stakeholder group and the level of interest. When creating the stakeholder matrix, scales from -5 to 5 are used to assess the level of influence and interest of individual stakeholders on the company. The stakeholder matrix is presented in Figure 1. (Johnson, Scholes, 1999).



**Figure 1.** G. Johnson's and K. Scholes's matrix.

Source: Styk K., Bogacz P., A Method for Stakeholder Mapping in Connection with the Implementation of a Development Project, *Energies Journal* 2022, 15(4)

After assessing the stakeholders in the matrix, they can be divided into four key groups. Each group consists of different stakeholders, for whom the company develops strategies to act in accordance with their expectations (Styk, Bogacz, 2022).

The first group consists of the most important stakeholders, i.e. "players". This group includes stakeholders who have a high level of influence and interest. They can influence and introduce significant changes in the company. The enterprise should regularly engage and consult its activities with this group of stakeholders. The second group consists of the so-called "active viewers", who are characterized by a high level of interest and a low level of influence on the company. In the case of this group, information activities should be undertaken and the expectations of this group of stakeholders should be met. The third group of stakeholders consists of the so-called a 'crowd' that has both a low level of influence and a low level of interest. For this group, measures should be taken to constantly monitor their needs and possible changes in the level of influence and interest. The fourth group of stakeholders is the so-called "arbitrators", who are characterized by a high level of influence on the company and a low level of interest. The company should take steps to increase the interest of this group of stakeholders. It is also important to take initiatives to maintain a sufficiently high level of satisfaction of this group of stakeholders.

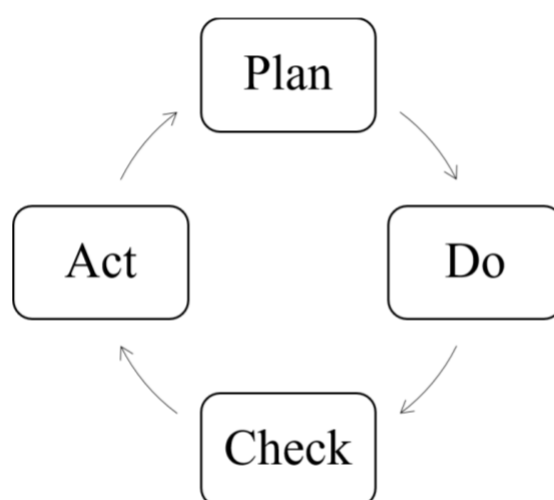
During the third stage of stakeholder relations management, a strategy should be created that will meet the expectations of the stakeholder groups identified at the earlier stage. Proper communication with stakeholders is of the greatest importance in this respect. Stakeholder relationship management strategies may focus on contact seeking (ex-ante strategies) or focus on response processes (ex-post strategies) (Banks, Vera, 2007).

The ex-ante strategy is related to the phase of deciding on entering contacts with a given stakeholder. During this strategy, the company collects information about the new stakeholder, ways of communicating with them and using the available knowledge on how to create relationships with the stakeholder. Ex-ante strategies can be divided into exploitation and exploratory strategies. The exploitation strategy is related to the development of existing relationships with stakeholders and the search for relationships with a high degree of certainty and is characterized by a long period of implementation. The exploratory strategy concerns the search for new relationships with new stakeholders and is implemented in the short term.

The ex-post strategy concerns the activities that the company performs after determining the method of contact and the type of relationship with the stakeholder. This strategy is divided into proactive and reactive actions. Proactive actions are taken by the enterprise before the emergence of visible problems and difficulties in relations with stakeholders. In this strategy, the organization encourages the stakeholder to cooperate and build trust based on cooperative activities. On the other hand, the reactive strategy is based on eliminating problems in relations with stakeholders when they occur. This strategy is characterized by minimizing cooperation with stakeholders and limiting initiatives in building relationships with stakeholders (Szymaniec-Mlicka, 2016).

The last stage of managing relations with stakeholders is the implementation of the strategy. It is worth noting that the process of implementing the strategy is a continuous process, during which appropriate contact with a given group of stakeholders should be always maintained. The implementation process also uses the PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) method by W.E. Deming (Anuszkiewicz, Marona, 2012). During the "plan" stage, the company's management determines how it intends to implement the strategies and meet the expectations of individual stakeholder groups. As part of the second "implement" stage, the company's management should define procedures for managing relations with stakeholders. In a situation where there are difficulties in the process of communication with a given group of stakeholders, or when the objectives of these relations are not met, the management board should implement remedial actions. During the third stage, the effectiveness of the actions taken is checked. During this stage, there is a dialogue with stakeholders regarding the fulfillment of their expectations regarding the company's operations. During the last stage of strategy implementation, the currently functioning stakeholder relations management system should be improved. At this stage, there is also a continuous update of the assessment of the level of effectiveness of the adopted strategy towards a given group of stakeholders. Diagram of the Deming cycle used during the implementation of the stakeholder relationship management strategy is presented in Figure 2.

From the company's perspective, effective stakeholder relationship management increases the value of relational capital. Relational capital means the set of all market relations, power and cooperation of an enterprise (Capello, Faggian, 2005). In many definitions, relational capital is closely related to knowledge and the benefits of being part of business relationships. Relational capital is also inextricably linked to the benefits for the company, which can take a tangible and intangible form thanks to the accession of a given company to a business network system (Smolska, 2016).



**Figure 2.** PDCA diagram

Source: Anuszkiewicz K., Marona T., Rola interesariuszy w rozwoju przedsiębiorstwa odpowiedzialnego społecznie, Rynek, Społeczeństwo, Kultura 2012 no. 1.

Despite the high importance of relational capital, there are difficulties in measuring it in enterprises. This is mainly due to its intangible dimension, which translates into the need to look for appropriate measures to assess it. When managing relations with stakeholders, it is worth using three main categories of metrics for evaluating relational capital: quantitative, qualitative, and valuable. The measurement of relational capital should particularly concern such groups of stakeholders as customers, suppliers, competitors, and social organizations. The greatest problem is caused by value measures that translate individual relationships into specific values and profits for the company. Examples of measures used to assess relational capital are presented in Table 2. Thanks to the use of measures, a company can assess the current effectiveness of its stakeholder relationship management strategies. (Smolska, 2016).

**Table 2.**  
*Examples of meters of relative capital evaluation*

<b>Relations</b>	<b>Quantitative measures</b>	<b>Quality measures</b>	<b>Valuable measures</b>
Customer relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- number of regular customers</li> <li>- number of new customers</li> <li>- number of repeat customers product purchases/ services (retention rate customers)</li> <li>- frequency of transactions</li> <li>- duration of cooperation (length of the relationship)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- previous experience</li> <li>- opinions issued company by customers: customer trust, customer satisfaction, loyalty customer,</li> <li>- degree of satisfaction customer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- sales revenues obtained</li> <li>- costs of obtaining revenues from sale</li> <li>- generated profit from sales</li> </ul>
Supplier relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the number of regular suppliers</li> <li>- the volume of deliveries</li> <li>- duration of cooperation</li> <li>- number of new suppliers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- timely deliveries</li> <li>- quality of deliveries</li> <li>- possibilities in the scope meeting new customer needs</li> <li>- supplier loyalty</li> <li>- trust of suppliers</li> <li>- our degree of satisfaction</li> <li>- opportunities to develop new products/services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- total costs of supplies</li> </ul>
Competitors relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- number of potential competitors (direct, indirect)</li> <li>- intensity level competition</li> <li>- number of projects implemented jointly with the competition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- assessment of company behavior competitive</li> <li>- degree of satisfaction with current relationships with the competition</li> <li>- the level of the company's competitive tools</li> <li>- degree of satisfaction project clients carried out jointly with the competition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- sales level compared to competitors</li> <li>- company share in the market against competitors</li> </ul>
Relations with the local community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- number of entities, with whom we maintain cooperation</li> <li>- the duration of the cooperation</li> <li>- number of completed projects together</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- degree of satisfaction from the current relationship with the local community (frequency and quality contacts)</li> <li>- degree of social support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- sales revenue</li> <li>- value of co-financing from EU programmes</li> </ul>

Source: Smolska M., Zarządzanie relacjami z interesariuszami, czyli jak kreować kapitał relacyjny w przedsiębiorstwie, ZN WSH Zarządzanie 2016, no. 3.



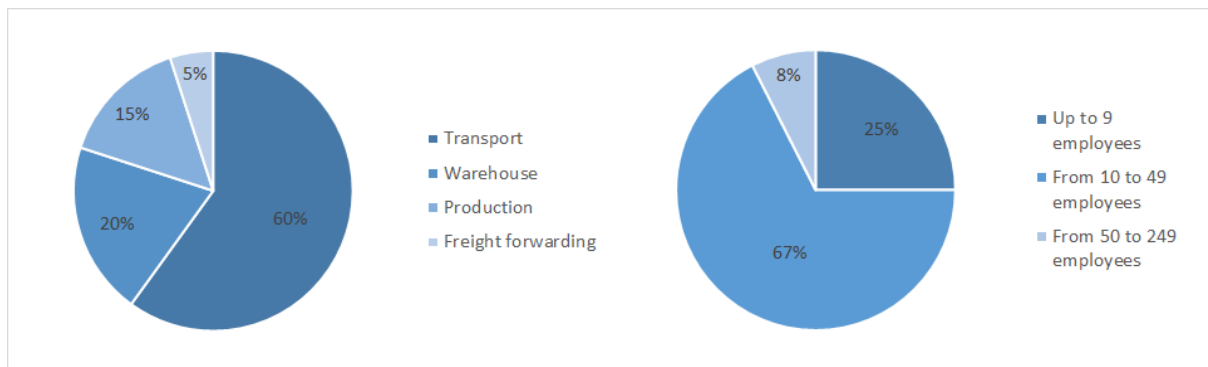
In more recent publications on stakeholder theory, the concept of RDT (The Resource Dependence Theory) appears. The RDT focuses on how stakeholders accomplish their goal, whereas the stakeholder theory is concerned with identifying various groups (Haleem et al., 2022). According to the resource dependence hypothesis, there are two categories for stakeholder impact tactics. To change the behavior of the corporation, stakeholders might either withhold resources (withholding approach) or impose usage restrictions on their supply (usage strategy). On the other hand, stakeholders can either act via an ally who handles the manipulation (indirect techniques) or directly manage the flow of resources to the firms themselves (Bailey et al., 2023).

In the face of the development of modern technologies, there is a possibility of using artificial intelligence for efficient and effective management with the stakeholders of a given organization. A company must determine how much the AI will accommodate the phenomenon by which constrained self-interest drives reciprocal conduct and firm performance before deciding to allow the technology to engage with its stakeholders. (Bosse et al., 2023). If the AI system could directly perceive the stakeholder's expectations for justice, perceptions of justice, and resulting action, this would be more simple than traditional stakeholder relationship management solutions. By analyzing vast amounts of data and employing natural language processing techniques, AI can identify and understand stakeholders' preferences, concerns, and expectations. This enables organizations to tailor their communication strategies, address issues promptly, and build stronger relationships. AI-powered sentiment analysis helps gauge stakeholders' sentiment towards specific initiatives or decisions, allowing for targeted interventions. Moreover, predictive analytics algorithms assist in forecasting stakeholder behavior and anticipating their needs, enabling proactive measures. AI's role in stakeholder management is invaluable, enhancing transparency, fostering trust, and enabling organizations to make informed decisions to meet stakeholder expectations effectively (Montez, 2022).

A key aspect of modern approaches is a shift from a transactional mindset to a more holistic and collaborative approach (Dimitriopoulos et al., 2021). Organizations are focusing on sustainable practices and corporate social responsibility, aligning their values with those of stakeholders and actively working towards shared goals. By embracing these modern approaches, organizations are not only building stronger relationships but also fostering trust, enhancing reputation, and driving long-term success. Managing and identifying the main groups of stakeholders in a logistics company is crucial for several reasons (Kervall et al., 2023). Firstly, it allows the company to understand and prioritize the interests and expectations of different stakeholder groups. Understanding the main stakeholder groups enables the logistics company to anticipate potential risks and opportunities. By considering the interests and concerns of stakeholders, the company can proactively address issues, mitigate risks, and seize opportunities for collaboration or partnership (Waheed et al., 2022).

### 3. Research methodology

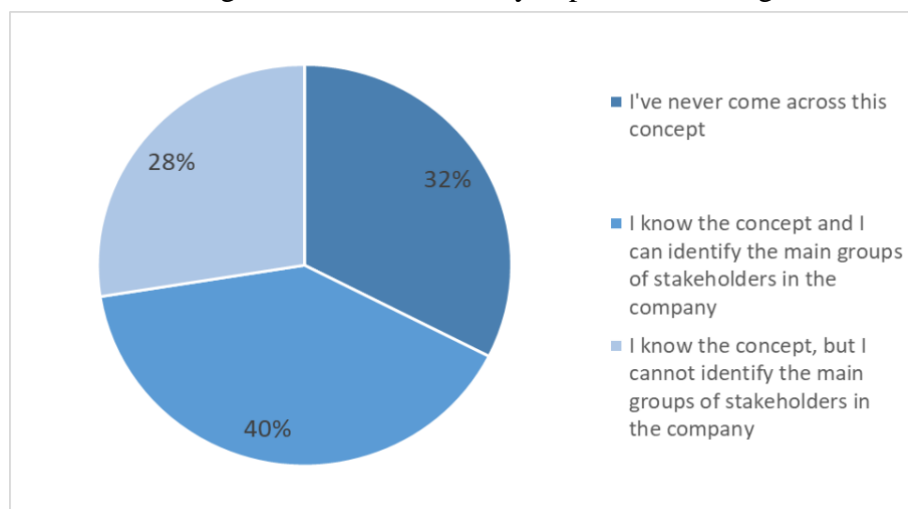
In order to analyze the importance of stakeholder relationship management for logistics operators, a survey was conducted among a sample of 40 companies operating in the field of logistics in the Silesian Voivodeship. During the study, special attention was paid to the level of knowledge of enterprises on the theory of stakeholders, ways of managing relations with stakeholders, as well as the benefits and problems perceived by enterprises. The survey was conducted online between February and March 2023. The research was carried out mainly in transport companies, but also in companies dealing with forwarding, production, and storage. Information on the respondents of the survey is presented in Figure 3.



**Figure 3.** Information on the respondents

Source: own study

During the survey, participants had to answer several questions about the level of relationship management in their companies. The first question concerned knowledge of the concept of stakeholder. 32% of the respondents did not know this concept, 40% knew the concepts, while 28% could not identify the stakeholder groups in the company. Information about respondents' knowledge of stakeholder theory is presented in Figure 4.

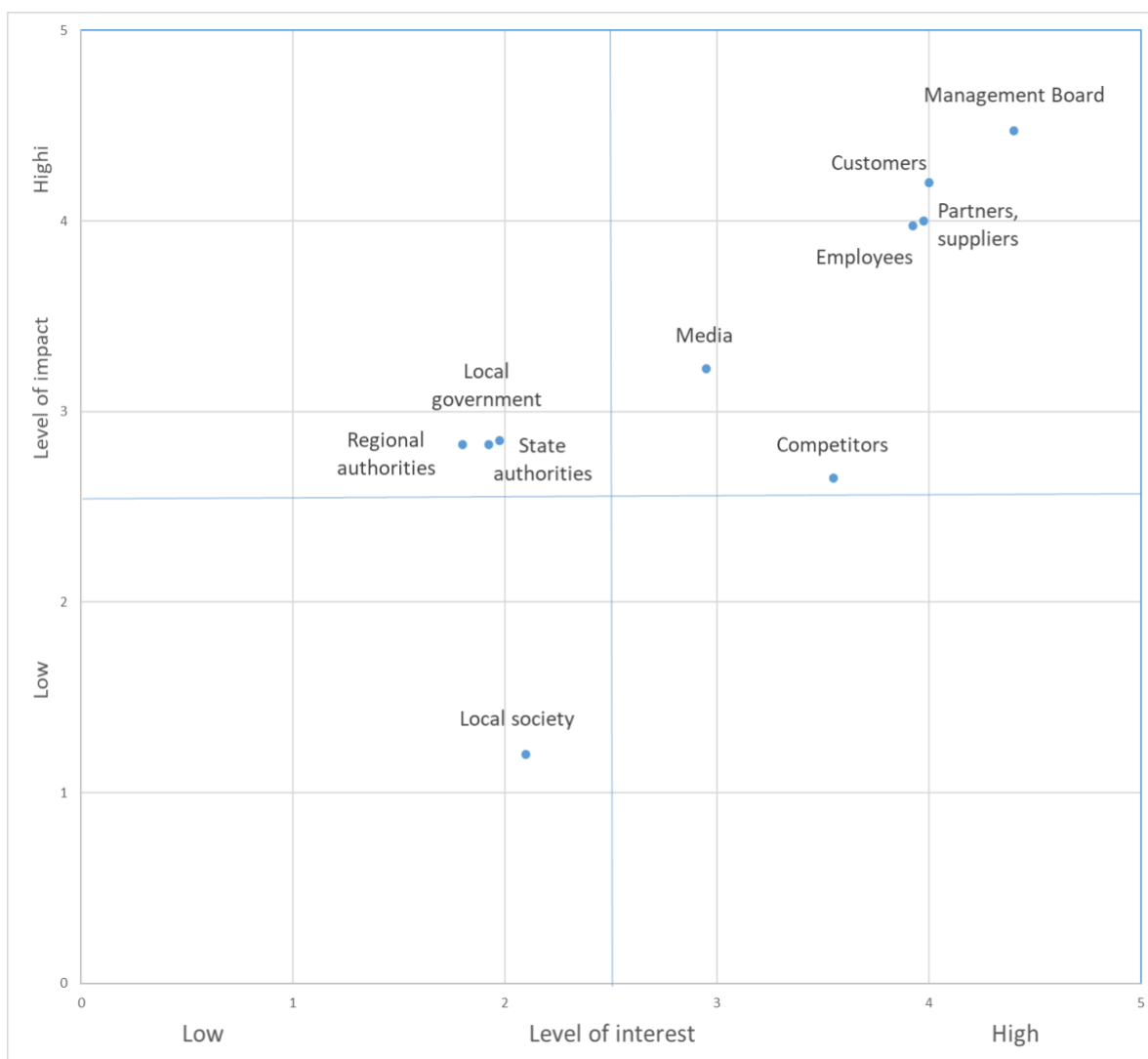


**Figure 4.** Information on the respondent's knowledge of stakeholder theory

Source: own study

## 4. Results

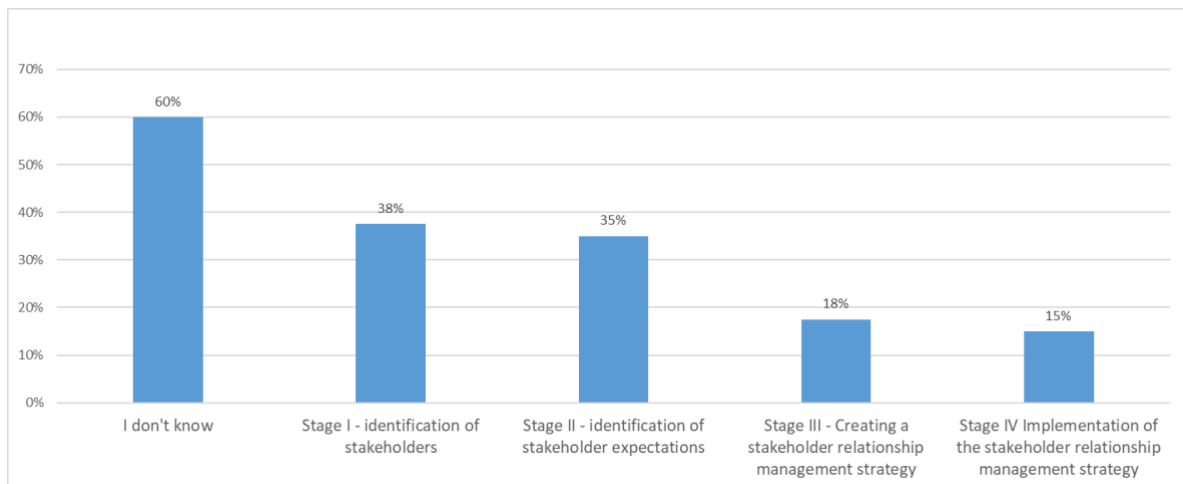
During the survey, logistics operators had to assess the level of influence and involvement of individual stakeholders. The results of the map of stakeholders are presented in Figure 5. The assessment was made in a 5-point scale. Based on the average results, a stakeholder map was created. The highest rating in terms of the level of influence and level of commitment was given to the company's management board. It is also worth noting the high levels of influence of stakeholders such as customers, partners, suppliers and employees. The local community received the lowest score. Using the average results obtained from the survey, strategies for cooperation with individual stakeholder groups can be adopted. For local, regional and national authorities, the use of satisfaction maintenance will be recommended, for the local community, satisfaction monitoring, and for other stakeholders involved in the enterprise's activities, close cooperation is recommended.



**Figure 5.** Stakeholder matrix for logistics operators in Silesian Voivodship

Source: own study

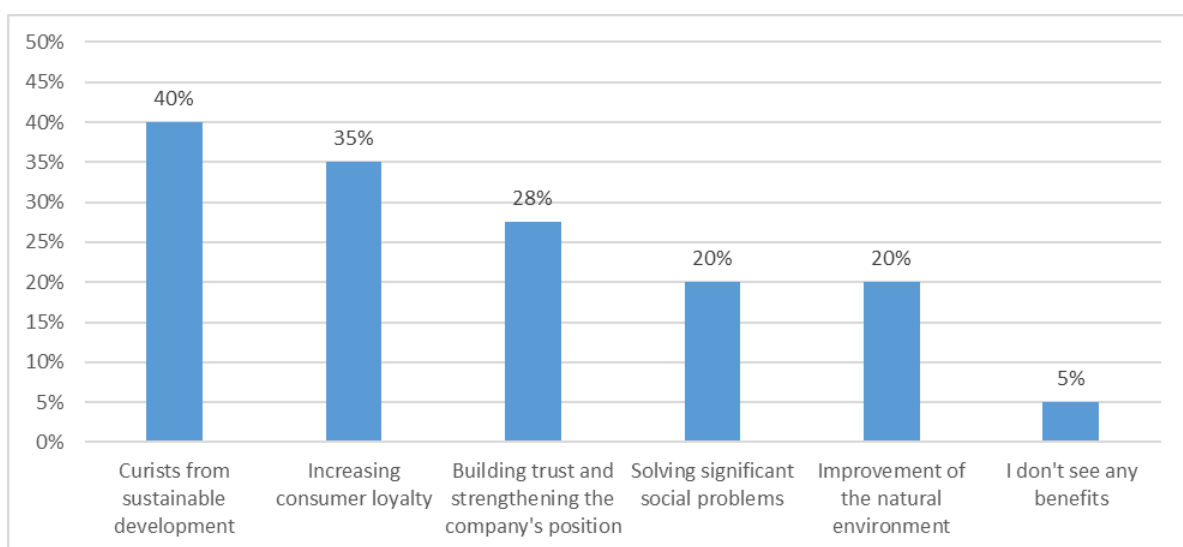
Based on the results of the survey, it should be noted that as many as 60% of respondents do not know whether the company has implemented any activities related to the stakeholder relationship management strategy. 38% of the surveyed logistics companies declare that they have carried out stakeholder identification, while only 15% have implemented strategies for managing relations with individual stakeholder groups. The results of the analysis of the strategy implementation stages are presented in Figure 6.



**Figure 6.** Stages of stakeholder relationship management for logistics operators

Source: own study

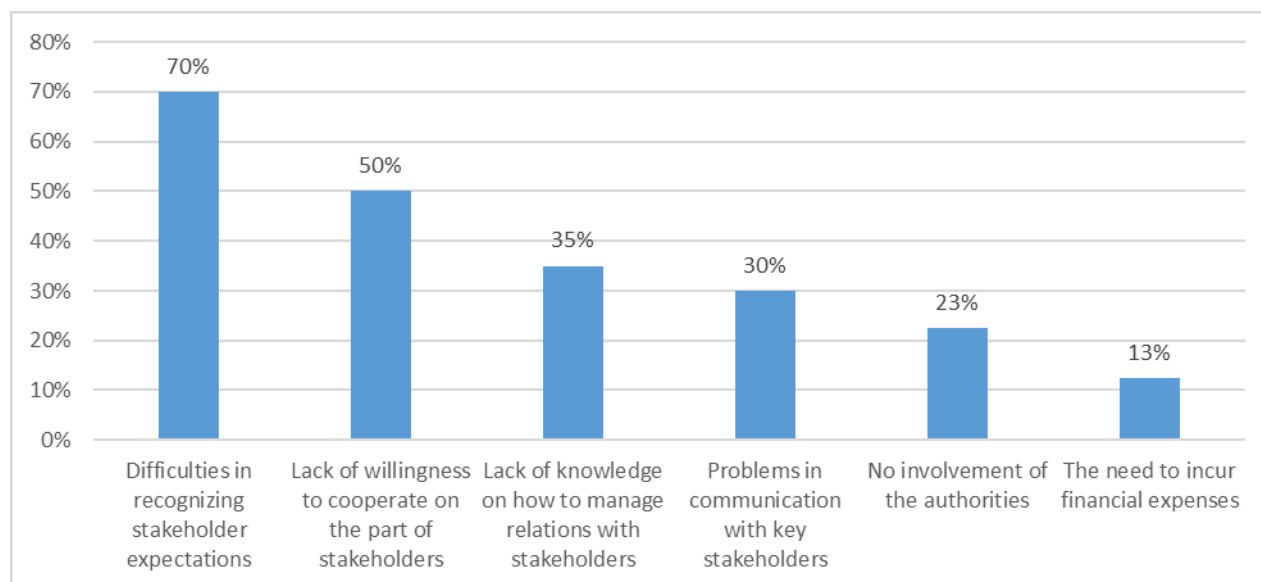
Among the surveyed logistics companies, the vast majority notice the benefits of using stakeholder relationship management strategies. Multiple choice was used in this question. The most frequently perceived benefits include benefits from sustainable development, increasing customer loyalty and building trust and strength of the company. It should be noted that only 5% of respondents will not see any benefits from implementing a stakeholder relationship management strategy. The advantages for the enterprise are presented in Figure 7



**Figure 7.** Advantages for logistics operators from stakeholder relationship management

Source: own study

Special attention should also be paid to the difficulties associated with managing stakeholder relations for logistics companies. Among the most frequently mentioned are problems with recognizing the expectations of individual stakeholders. Respondents also complain about the lack of willingness to cooperate on the part of stakeholders. The results of this part of the study are presented in Figure 8.



**Figure 8.** Difficulties for logistics operators from stakeholder relationship management

Source: own study

## 5. Conclusions and implications

Based on the conducted research, it can be concluded that the purpose of the articles has been achieved. The article considers the theoretical and practical aspects of stakeholder relationship management. In the theoretical context, attention was drawn to the multitude of stakeholder theories. Theoretical issues related to the main stakeholder groups, their goals, and aspects related to relational capital were presented. The article also presents the methods of stakeholder classification using the stakeholder matrix, which were used in practical research. The growing importance of the development of artificial intelligence in the context of obtaining opportunities and increasing the efficiency of managing relations with them was also emphasized. In the practical aspect, the research focused on surveys in which the importance of stakeholder relationship management for logistics operators in the Silesian Voivodeship was analysed. A survey was created in which 40 companies from the logistics area in the Silesian Voivodeship took part. The research was conducted remotely in February and March 2023. The level of knowledge of stakeholders as well as the main benefits and problems for logistics operators have been determined.

The survey shows that a large part of logistics operators do not carry out systematic activities related to stakeholder relationship management and have not taken steps to implement a stakeholder relationship management strategy. It is crucial for logistics operators to recognize the strategic value of stakeholder relationship management, invest in the necessary resources and capabilities, and foster a culture of proactive engagement with their stakeholders. By doing so, operators can unlock the advantages associated with strong stakeholder relationships. Based on research results it is worth noting, that the vast majority of enterprises see the benefits of relationship management, such as the benefits of sustainable development, increasing customer loyalty and building the company's position against the competition. Overall, effective stakeholder relationship management offers logistic operators a competitive edge, improved operational performance, and a stronger position in the market, ultimately contributing to their long-term success and sustainability. The article also draws attention to the most important stakeholders from the point of view of the logistics operator, such as: company management, employees, partners, suppliers, and customers. Enterprises point to many difficulties in managing relations with stakeholders, such as difficulties in recognizing stakeholders' expectations and lack of willingness to cooperate. To overcome these difficulties, effective stakeholder relationship management requires a proactive and inclusive approach, emphasizing open communication, active listening, collaboration, and a commitment to understanding and addressing stakeholders' needs and concerns.

It should be noted that the conducted research may be the basis for exploring the problems and finding reasons for the difficulties in managing relations with stakeholders of logistics operators in this region of Poland. The results obtained regarding problems in managing logistics operators' stakeholder relations can be further used to create a stakeholder relationship management model for logistics operators, which would assume the operators' pursuit of sustainable flows. This is directly related to the main benefits perceived by logistics operators. The assumed model could also include ways and methods of communication with key stakeholder groups identified during surveys. The modernity and innovativeness of the conducted research should also be emphasized. In this region of Poland, there was no previous study of the importance of stakeholder relationship management for logistics companies. It is worth mentioning, however, that despite the many advantages of the conducted research, they are also associated with several limitations, such as a narrow research sample of only 40 logistics operators. In addition, attention should be paid to the short study period. In the future, it is necessary to conduct additional research to create opportunities for logistics operators to further implement stakeholder management strategies in practice and eliminate problems in communication between them.

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