Summary

Contemporary corporate groups increasingly operate as complex multi-entity structures in which formal ownership relationships coexist with relational and network-based mechanisms of cooperation. Although the concept of synergy is widely discussed in management literature, previous research has primarily focused on synergy achieved through organizational integration and hierarchical coordination mechanisms. However, there is still limited knowledge regarding the mechanisms of generating operational synergy in networked corporate groups, which are characterized by greater autonomy of participating entities, the use of market-based mechanisms, and a relational approach to cooperation.

The main objective of this dissertation was to identify and describe the components of an operational synergy model in a networked corporate group and to develop a procedure enabling the generation of operational synergy effects within such organizational structures. To achieve this objective, a literature review was conducted covering corporate group management, network organizations, and operational synergy.

The empirical study was conducted using the action research methodology in the form of insider action research. The research process was carried out within the Capital Group of the Industrial Development Agency (Agencja Rozwoju Przemysłu S.A.) as part of the Synergy Project. The study comprised eight iterative research cycles during which synergy initiatives among the group's entities were identified and implemented. The adopted methodology enabled both the exploration of the investigated phenomenon and the practical testing of developed solutions in a real organizational environment.

As a result of the conducted research, a model of operational synergy in a networked corporate group was developed. The model consists of three interrelated components: boundary conditions, operational activities, and synergy effects. The study identified key determinants of operational synergy generation, including the presence of synergy initiative brokers, the use of market-based coordination mechanisms, the facilitative role of the parent company, and the complementarity of resources and competencies among network participants. The findings also demonstrated that the mechanism of synergy generation in networked corporate groups is bottom-up and relational in nature, differing significantly from the hierarchical model dominant in the literature, which is based on centralization and organizational integration.

A second major outcome of the dissertation was the development and implementation of a procedure for generating operational synergy. The procedure consists of an analytical component aimed at identifying potential areas of cooperation and an implementation component focused on managing synergy initiatives from their initiation through to the monitoring of achieved results. The proposed solution enables the practical operationalization of the operational synergy model and supports the organization of cooperation processes among entities operating within networked corporate groups.

The theoretical contribution of the dissertation lies in extending corporate group management theory through the identification of mechanisms for generating operational synergy under conditions of a networked corporate group structure. Particular importance is attached to the development of the operational synergy model and the procedure for its generation, both of which enrich existing knowledge with a relational and process-oriented perspective. The research findings also indicate the need to complement the traditional corporate governance approach with mechanisms of interorganizational cooperation, network coordination, and value creation based on resource complementarity.

The dissertation also contributes to management practice by providing practical tools supporting cooperation management and the generation of operational synergy within corporate groups. The developed model and procedure may be applied in both public and private sector corporate groups, supporting the integration of activities, the development of interorganizational cooperation, and the improvement of overall group performance.

Keywords: corporate group, networked corporate group, operational synergy, corporate governance, network organization, action research, strategic management, value creation, interorganizational cooperation.