mgr Katarzyna Cieślak
PhD Candidate
Lund University, Szwecja

A changing role of finance department in organization's management: part two – empirical presentation

Nowa rola działu finansowego w zarządzaniu przedsiębiorstwem: część druga – aspekt empiryczny

Streszczenie: W pierwszej części artykułu zaprezentowanej w numerze 11 Zeszytów Naukowych Akademii Podlaskiej przedstawione zostały rozważania teoretyczne na temat nowej roli działu finansowego w zarządzaniu przedsiębiorstwem. Coraz częściej dział finansowy uczestniczy w procesach gospodarczych nie związanych z księgowością (na przykład analiza klienta), jak również bierze aktywny udział w określaniu strategii organizacji. Artykuł przedstawia analizę i ocenę empirycznych danych odzwierciedlających działalność pięciu zespołów finansowych.

Abstract: In the previous article theoretical underpinnings of the changing role of finance department as well as theoretical framework guiding the study were presented. The general transformation pattern sketched embraced horizontal dimension of more involvement of finance department in other business processes beyond bookkeeping (e.g. customer analysis), as well as vertical dimension of increasing influence of finance department in important strategic decisions. This article presents empirical data and analysis of five finance teams in different stages of “business partner” journey.
Method

The study is performed within a learning partnership between Lund University and a multinational packaging company, which provides corrugated board packaging and packaging services. The company is one of the biggest players on corrugated packaging market in Europe and it has its headquarters in Brussels. Production sites in Europe are clustered into management areas (county or lower level clusters). Local clusters are potentially granted with autonomy which allows for strategizing at cluster level and they are independent enough to provide a rich variety of settings. Local finance teams are objects of the study, which is a comparative case study, where all the cases are drawn from one company. The company grew strongly by acquisitions and the variety can be regarded as its inherent characteristic. At the same time, studying only one company minimises effects on comparisons which would be e.g. industry related or size related. Instead of focusing on aspects which were previously researched, the distinct method allows elucidating new explanations (e.g. lower level operating organization or schedules of meetings) and it poses the strength of this study. The company produces various kinds of packaging products, all based mainly on corrugated board. These include most notably conventional brown boxes with scant printing directly on the box, consumer packaging boxes (with higher print quality, often printing is done on paper, which is later stick to the box), display (promotional) packaging (produced in shorter series, these are e.g. point of sale boxes for direct marketing at stores), industrial packaging (larger, stronger brown boxes, similar to conventional). Other types of products include transit packaging, protective packaging (e.g. foam products) or packaging services.

Five sub cases were chosen from the case company for analysis. These were not chosen at random, but rather ‘polar types’ of finance teams were looked for (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). In order to find sub cases for analysis the researcher utilized a survey instrument. Based on different scores on four factor dimensions emerging from the survey data on used competences, 5 sub cases were chosen for further analysis. The survey questionnaire, played not only a role of a ‘road sign’, which could possibly point at different finance teams, but it was also utilized in statistical linking scores on competences to financial performance.

The second - main part of the study collects qualitative evidence through interviews and observations. The researcher immersed herself into specific cases and allowed specific descriptions to come into picture. Qualitative data were collected mainly through means of semi - structured interviews. Both finance as well as non-finance employees were interviewed. For each team from particular cluster on average 8 interviews were made, including finance team leader, some members of the finance team, general management, production and sales management. Interviewing period was between July 2008 and March 2009, and a total of 60 interviews were conducted. These lasted on average 1 h 20 min.
Reduced data is arranged and displayed according to the generic categories in the framework. Drawing conclusions involves spotting patterns in the data by usage of comparisons, so that comparative case study is the main method used in the study.

Terms finance department, finance function and accountants are used interchangeably in the article and denote broadly understood finance community in an organization.

Empirical data and comparative analysis

Survey
Before embarking on interviews survey questionnaire was sent to 159 employees (finance and non-finance) of the Case Company and 141 utilizable responses were obtained. The 22 survey questions regarded competences used by finance department in their work. First factor analysis was performed using SPSS 14.0 and four factors were obtained from this analysis: these were called strategist, energy, watchdog and cooperative assistant. Correlation analysis was performed with all the factors linked to performance measure (of net profitability). It turned out that STRATEGIST factor was positively linked to performance, with statistical significance of 0.263 (Pearsons coefficient). It then may be tentatively stated that finance department which utilizes STRATEGIST competence can be a source of competitive advantage for the company as it positively influences performance. It is then important for finance department to have high status and be strongly visible in the company, work as a team member with business managers, have strong culture and vision, be focused on advice for business units, have a deep understanding of the business and focus on long term rather than short term issues.

From the chosen cases 2 received lower scores on strategist dimensions (Case A and Case D) and the remaining 3 received higher scores on strategist dimension (Case B, Case C and Case E). Another factor analysis was also performed for just responses of non-finance employees, and similar factors were obtained, namely strategist, energy, cooperative assistant, and instead of watchdog there was a factor which was called under pressure and it contained such variables as: FF’s employees spend more time with other FF’s staff than operating (e.g. plant/general) managers, FF doesn’t have time to help operating managers as much as they would like it to, The work of FF is more connected to control issues rather than finding where the value is. Case A received much higher scores on this factor than remaining cases.

1 Parameters of analysis: Bartlett’s test of sphericity - significance .000, KMO measure – 0.800, Cattell’s scree plot used as criteria for number of factors, principal component analysis as an extraction method: factor solution explains 53% of total variance of variables, varimax rotation performed for final solution, for more info on statistical study contact katarzyna.cieslak@fek.lu.se

2 The scores were based on cluster analysis, for more information contact katarzyna.cieslak@fek.lu.se
Table 1. Competences used by finance department (FF-finance function)
Tabela 1. Kompetencje użyte przez departament

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor 1: passion and energy</th>
<th>Factor 2: strategist</th>
<th>Factor 3: cooperative assistant</th>
<th>Factor 4: watchdog</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3) FF could be described with: 'strong focus on actions'</td>
<td>21) FF has high status and is strongly 'visible' in the company</td>
<td>12) FF cooperates strongly with general managers</td>
<td>10) FF could be described with: 'focus on control and reporting'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) FF could be described with: 'Innovativeness'</td>
<td>19) FF works as a team member with business managers</td>
<td>13) FF cooperates strongly with sales</td>
<td>11) FF could be described with: 'focus on monthly/quarterly closing deadlines'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) FF could be described with: 'desire to win and beat the competition'</td>
<td>22) FF in our company has strong culture and vision</td>
<td>14) FF cooperates strongly with production/manufacturing</td>
<td>8) FF could be described with: 'old classical finance function'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) FF could be described with: 'passion and energy for a change'</td>
<td>9) FF could be described with: 'focus on advice for business units'</td>
<td>18) FF has a deep understanding of our business</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) FF could be described with: 'staying on the top of emerging practices'</td>
<td>15) FF could be described with: 'long-term rather than short-term orientation'</td>
<td>5) FF could be described with: 'teamwork and integration with other FF's members'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17) The work of FF is more connected to finding where the value is rather than control issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) FF could be described with: 'teamwork and integration with other FF's members'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own study.
Źródło: Opracowanie własne.

Cases

Introduction of finance teams, in terms of employees, their location at sites, and size of the finance department compared to net external sales is presented in Table 2. It also contains used competences, whose assessment was made on basis of survey complemented with interviews.

In Case A, which was a country level cluster there was no Finance Manager (Director), only a Chief Accountant and she mentioned that ‘The finance department is at the end of the information chain. We inform about the results.’ The Chief Accountant was very much involved in mundane activities and the resources for finance department were the lowest, i.e. 0.2% or revenues. Market was growing very fast and it was difficult to serve the increased sales. Finance department received low scores on 'strategist' dimension.

In Case D finance department received low scores on ‘strategist’ dimension and the Finance Director of a country level cluster with numerous plants described his role in the following way: I do everything, not just accounting. I have the contact typically to the lawyers, unless it is on matter that the lawyer should talk to manager, so I would establish the link. When it
concerns accounting I am the one that handles the overall activities and more political aspects of contact between the organization and auditor PWC. All reporting which has business perspective in it, combining numbers, for example monthly reporting to the region and then I am also the one having overall responsibility over IS IT community. The Case D was in a process of restructuring and reorganizing as a response to shrinking market and falling sales. Since the cluster consisted of numerous sites, three main conventional plants were in the focus of the study.

**Case B** and **Case E** received high scores on ‘strategist’ dimension. The Finance Director in Case B stated he is ‘at the front of strategy making’ and he observed referring to his role: *As the member of the business management team, so the management team consists of the business manager, the operations director, sales & marketing director, and myself as Finance Director, so it is my responsibility to ensure the business receives all the management information to make business decisions and move business forward.’* Similarly, in Case E the Managing Director summarized the role of finance department: *Firstly to control, secondly to be involved in strategy in general. Third to be involved in special programs like kilt, like lean, helping the sales people with giving good data about profitability for example. And fourth, to give the results on time* and he stated: *‘Yes they are business partners’. *Since revenues of cluster were high (plants were of significant size), economies of scale could be utilized, with numerous types of finance employees specializing on particular tasks. The cost of finance department amounted to 0.5% of revenues.*

**Case C** received medium/high scores on ‘strategist’ dimension. General Manager stated: *Yes they are business partners. But perhaps they could develop even more.*

**Context: structure**

Before moving to description of activities and interactions of finance teams contextual structural arrangement will be analyzed, since they impact work of finance function. The case results confirm, contradict and develop previous knowledge.

In previous research decentralization was named as a palpable influence on becoming business partner by finance function. Decentralization was used in numerous ways. First, it was utilized to denote lines of responsibility and it has been suggested that business partners report to non-finance employees. (Siegel, et al. 2003b, Chenhall & Langfield-Smith, 1998, Emsley, 2005). The case results do not fully support this hypothesis. Although the highest members of finance teams in all cases reported operationally to managing directors (and only functionally, through dotted line to finance superiors) it did not allow all of them to become business partners. On the contrary, strong links to regional Finance Director or CFO who were in favor of more business type finance function made it possible at Case B and Case E to draw on these relations and make changes in the functions. More will be said about it later.
Second, Chenhall & Langfield-Smith, 1998, Burns & Baldvinsdottir, Järvenpää, 2007 talk about team based structures as significant factors. The case results are supportive to these arguments. In Case A and in Case D finance team members were not members of any specially created task forces. In Case C tasks forces were often created, e.g. Finance Manager was leading Commercial Excellence project and three organizational members from different areas reported to him on this project. In Case B there was a top executive team, which could be treated as a team based arrangement and in Case E Managing Director was asking either the Industrial Controller or the Finance Controller to create a team, or a process for tackling special issues, and usually regular follow up meetings were established.

Table 2. Introduction of cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Case B</th>
<th>Case C</th>
<th>Case D</th>
<th>Case E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finance department</td>
<td>Plant 1 Conv Plant 2 Conv/HD Plant 3 Conv Plant 4 CP and D Plant 5 O (small)</td>
<td>Plant 1 Conv Plant 2 Conv/HD Plant 3 Conv Plant 4 CP and D Plant 5 O (small)</td>
<td>Plant 1 HD Plant 2 HD (next door)</td>
<td>Head office FSSC Plant 1 Conv Plant 2 Conv Plant 3 Conv Plant 4 CP and D Plant 5 Conv Plant 6 O Plant 7 O Plant 8 O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of finance dept as % of net external sales</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.85%</td>
<td>Data not obtained, but assessed to be rather high</td>
<td>0.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competences used</td>
<td>STRATEGIST low ENERGY medium/low WATCHDOG medium COOPERATIVE ASSISTANT medium/low</td>
<td>STRATEGIST high ENERGY medium WATCHDOG high COOPERATIVE ASSISTANT medium</td>
<td>STRATEGIST high/medium ENERGY medium WATCHDOG high/medium COOPERATIVE ASSISTANT high</td>
<td>STRATEGIST high ENERGY medium WATCHDOG high COOPERATIVE ASSISTANT high</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conv - conventional, CP – consumer packaging, D-display, HD – heavy duty, O-other, e.g. fibre pack, packaging services, merchandise FSSC - finance shared service centre

Source: own study.

źródło: opracowanie własne.
Intervening variables of organization of management (strategy level) and operational organizing

Third, the most often used meaning of decentralization is the close physical location, which could also be linked with endowment of low organizational units with ‘finance resource’. (Chenhall & Langfield Smith, 1998, Järvenpää, 2007, Pierce & O’Dea, 2003, Burns & Baldvinsdottir, 2005, Siegel, et al. 2003a, Emsley, 2005). The case study offers an important result regarding decentralization understood as close physical location and the findings refine, contradict and develop statements that close physical location explains business partnering. On the one hand, Case A shows that too little resources spent on finance can be detrimental and causes finance department to focus on achieving integrity of finance statements, but not much above it. At the same time, Case D shows that the often emphasized decentralization of finance resource with local controllers might not be decisive, since there is an intervening variable. An intervening variable emerged as result of the study, which can be called organization of management (level of strategy making). Namely, in Case A and Case D strategy was made on a country level, embracing numerous plants. Local controllers did not have much authority and strategist dimension could not be realized. Separate plants usually are not big enough to decide about strategy, since the management needs to be coordinated in a multinational company. At the same time the highest finance employees in Case A and Case D, located at the level of strategy making, had to embrace numerous plants (5 and 9) and this caused cognitive challenges. It was very difficult to manage all the plants at the country level. Central cluster management did not go in detail into management process of the plants, yet the local employees could not form management teams and were not fully responsible for management of their sites. One controller in Case D said:

If you are big central finance department you cannot see all the divisions (plants) in my opinion. So centralized, specialized finance department you have lots of skills but you have problem with connections and communications with divisions I think.

In contrary, Case B, Case C and Case E all represented independent clusters of up to four sites, which were managed as a single body. Although all plants received information about their profit & loss statements, it was the summary result that counted. In this setting the finance department leaders could embrace all sites in quite details. Also, since strategy was made on the cluster level, they could also use ‘strategist’ competence. Interestingly, finance department was not decentralized to all the plants. Although almost all the plants had some type of finance resource, these employees were the prolongation of cluster finance department. At the same time small number of plants allowed close communication.

The case study results suggest one more structural factor which impinges upon work of finance team and which was not earlier focused on. This factor can be called operational organizing. First of all, in Case A and Case D there was not only relatively high number of sites to be embraced by
central management, but also different types of products in the cluster, from conventional and heavy duty, to consumer packaging, display and other like packaging services or cushioning packaging. In Case B, Case C and Case E clusters were more homogenous (in Case C it was heavy duty, Case E consumer packaging, and only in Base B there were both consumer packaging and a display site, however at this display site there was a strong commercial manager who reported to Finance Director, but at the same time focused on addressing the different production type of display). This operational organizing with different types of sites in the cluster was creating complexity for heads of finance departments in Case A and Case D. Operational organizing has also another, a more refined meaning, denoting situation where more than one type of product is produced at the same production site. In Case A and Case D there were plants which produced both consumer packaging and display, or both long machining series boxes and boxes in short series requiring manual work. This created complexities in cost calculations for finance departments. For example in display packaging material is just 20% of costs and in consumer packaging 70% of costs, and display packaging would require more project based costing, since manufacturing is not so significant costs in the whole cost figure whereas in consumer packaging machining time could be fairly good general cost driver. In case when both displays and consumer packaging are produced at one site, there are difficulties arising on defining profitability of the two. Kaplan & Cooper (1998) talked about intricacies in cost management caused by product variety. Giordano & Wegner (2008) in their practice oriented article on ‘organizing for value’ state that as a rule of thumb, value cells have stand-alone economics and must be relatively “homogenous” in regard to their target market, business model, and peers—that is, they must have one target segment, one country or region, or one group of products. The trick is to create financial analyses, such as P&L statements, as if a value cells were a stand-alone business’. Complicated operational organizing hindered analyses of profitability of products where costs for different products were put in one basket:

We produce mainly big boxes in long series, but also small manual work boxes. If the IT system is set up properly there isn’t, or rather there shouldn’t be any problem. But it is right that we don’t share the costs in a proper way between the two. (Plant Manager, Case A)

You know, in theory it can be so that we deliver to customers that bring losses and we don’t fully know about that. (Sales Manager, Case A)

But when you come down to a level when a person is actually serving more business, products, then you can make calculations saying so much is going for this, so much to that. But as soon as you are making an allocation you are in a danger of making and error. (Finance Director, Case D)
For example in Case C operating organizing was very clear. There were two plants next to each other. The second one was very small. It produced short series, with boxes including additional materials of wood or EPS. The tracking of costs and revenues were done separately for the two plants. Also for example the manual work was performed in Case C in a warehouse with separate tracking of costs thereof. It was opposed to other cases (e.g. Case A and Case D), where manual work was performed on the site and hindered cost analyses since it was as an overhead costs in production plants.

In Case E operating organizing was also quite clear, whereas in Case B one case of complex operational organizing at the biggest site occurred. Namely, apart from production of boxes there was also production of just printed paper (that was later stick to a box) sold separately. Both Finance Director and Management accountant perceived this as challenge, and actions were taken to solve it. The issue was added on the OGSM matrix, and attempts were made to divide reporting in ABS for the two operations. It was discussed how to share the costs between the two.

**Size of finance resource**

Previous literature on ‘finance function business partner’ accentuates that nowadays ‘more is done with less’, in other words, since transaction processing is often organized in FSSC where economies of scale are reached and IT systems take over mundane job tasks, size of finance departments worldwide decrease (May, 2002, Hope, 2006). Hope (2006) states that in average American companies size of finance department amounts to 1 % of revenues, and in ‘top’ companies 0.5 per cent. The study results draw attention to the fact that first it takes several years before economies of scale occur in FSSC arrangement, second the assumption about IT systems taking over all mundane job tasks is still not fully realized, and third, most importantly, in the quest for cost reductions on finance resource it must not be forgotten than below certain limits business partnering cannot develop. Case A is an example to support this argument, where finance resource size amounted to around 0.2% of revenues and coupled with other contextual intricacies it was not possible for the finance department to take care about much more than delivering financial statements.

**Content: Activities**

This section analyses differences of finance teams in activities performed by them.

**Bookkeeping**

Previous literature on finance function business partner suggests business partners perform less bookkeeping activities and more other activities. In Case A the Chief Accountant was enmeshed with lots of mundane bookkeeping activities. She was leading her accountants; however, since the team was new, she also performed lots of these activities. Sales and pur-
purchase invoices were booked by accountants, but the Chief Accountant solved any problems arising with non paid purchase or sales invoices. She talked about credit control with sales and general managers. The Chief Accountant was also responsible for month end closing (accruals, stock counts), ‘head office’ tasks like VAT, and legal reporting as well as monthly reporting up the corporate hierarchy in a corporate reporting system ABS. For this purposes local accounting had to be adjusted to meet corporate accounting rules. Due to intricacies in the IT system local accounting books were formally closed only yearly, and later reconciliations to ABS were quite difficult. Finally the Chief Accountant recorded capital expenditures invoices and maintained fixed asset register.

In **Case B** situation looked differently. The Finance Director managed to delegate all bookkeeping tasks to his team members and also even to administrative employees at plants (i.e. internal sales - commercial), since commercial department (internal sales) reported to Finance Director. Sales and purchase invoices were dealt with by the Finance Shared Service Centre (FSSC), which had another head functioning independently. Purchase invoices came directly to FSSC, they were scanned and sent for authorization through B4 system running through SAP, which allowed much more efficient authorization than manual signature and sending of invoices by post from plants to finance department (e.g. Case A or even Case E). Any problems with purchase invoices and sales invoices (including credit control) were dealt with by 2 finance team members who were a liaison between the FSSC and the plants. In FSSC there was a ‘head office’, whose employees prepared VAT and legal reporting. ABS reporting up in the corporate system was made by Management Accountant. Monthly closing like accruals, or collecting stock information was performed by 2 finance team members, but they were assisted in it by internal sales (commercial) employees, which was a very good arrangement for the finance department. Also the 2 finance team members maintained fixed asset register.

In **Case C** there was no FSSC and there wasn’t any links between purchase order system and finance system and Finance Manager twice a week had to sign, authorize and record all cost invoices in the system. He also dealt with credit control, and recorded capital expenditures for fixed assets. Luckily the cluster consisted of ‘just’ two sites, so the Finance Manager could also perform other activities. Importantly, he tried to dispose and delegate mundane bookkeeping activities to his team members. In order to do that he made one accountant a team leader, so that others could report to this team leader instead of himself. The accountants and the Assistant Finance Manager recorded sales invoices and they helped with credit control. The team leader and the Assistant Finance Manager performed monthly closing (e.g. accruals and stock taking), and they reported up in the ABS system. The Assistant Finance Manager also prepared VAT and legal reporting.

In **Case D** there was a FSSC, however, local controllers were still involved in bookkeeping activities. Also, the Finance Director was a head of
FSSC (he had another employee to assist him). This was in contrast to Case B, where Finance Director wanted to stay away from activities at FSSC, (although he was the one who initially set up the FSSC). In Case D the Finance Director was reporting in the ABS up in the corporate hierarchy. The FSSC employee who assisted Finance Director prepared VAT, legal reporting and recorded capital expenditures in fixed assets. Purchase invoices and sales invoices were recorded in FSSC in SAP and B4 system for authorization was also used. Credit control was also performed by employees in FSSC. Local controllers complained they had to perform numerous activities at month end: So when you talk about the business partner concept, we still have quite a lot of classic accountant type. (...) Sometimes we feel they (FSSC) press everything on us. We have a lot of manual work to do at month end. The controllers prepared month closing, e.g. accruals and stock takings. Also, in case of problems with sales invoices they issued credit notes. Some controllers mentioned they had to prepare their own credit control reports with amounts due, since the FSSC was delivering excessive reports to sales organization that were not easy to deal with.

In Case E, similarly to Case B, the Industrial Controller and the Financial Controller have delegated all bookkeeping activities to mainly FSSC, which had two independent heads. The FSSC processed purchase and sales invoices; there was a special employee for VAT, legal reporting, reconciliation of local accounting to corporate rules and reporting in ABS up in the hierarchy, as well as recording capital expenditures in fixed assets. The Financial Controller was responsible for credit control; however he had a person who assisted him. The Industrial Controller was free from bookkeeping activities. Interestingly, one FSSC employee was located at the biggest plant and she would deal with month end closing, e.g. obtaining accruals and stocks information from all the plants. Other three plants had no accountants at sites and some problems occurred when cost invoices were kept at plants and sent to FSSC only after some time, since production people did not have knowledge about impact on financial statements. (This could be solved by introduction of B4 system or solution similar to it and authorization through this system so that all the invoices could come directly to FSSC).

It follows from the description of bookkeeping activities that Case A and Case D were the furthest from the business partner concept, since the heads of their teams (or controllers) still performed lots of bookkeeping activities, Case C was somewhat in the middle and Case B and F had the best conditions for business partnering, since bookkeeping activities were delegated to lower levels of finance.

Profitability/commercial

The finance teams in sub-cases differed regarding activities linked to commercial issues including analysis of profitability of customers and orders. These activities may be divided in three groups, namely analysis and nego-
tations with new customers (tenders), calculations and pricing for orders, and analyzing realized profitability of customers/products.

In Case A finance department did not perform any of these activities in a regular manner. Decisions about new customers were taken between sales and plant managers and sales manager stated: ‘finance is not so much interested in that, as this is only potential money that may only flow to the company in the future’. Calculations and pricing were performed by internal sales and external sales and the model was kept in Excel. The Chief Accountant delivered updates of e.g. o/h rates for each machine yearly to be put in the model and paper prices were updated more often. However, the model was quite crude. The same applies to analysis of post cost profitability of orders. This information was not known (consumer packaging and display site was an exception since the controller there was working on more detailed calculations of profitability by customer/order). Although the IT system was an integrated system with potential of assisting in cost and profitability calculations there was not enough resource to work on it. The Chief Accountant also stated: ‘The customer profitability is not the most important issues now. The market is growing and we need to keep up with it’. Also, other factors hindered good calculations/profitability model: not enough refined data capture of processes by the IT system or complicated operational organizing. These factors will be described later.

In Case B situation was different. Although analysis of profitability of orders after they were produced (post cost calculations) were not performed the Finance Director was aiming at introduction of such analyses. He had strong position and managed to convince Managing Director to employ an employee (with title commercial project) who would work just on improving links of newly implemented ERP system (CBS) with machines in order to collect all costs in more detail and link them with invoices on order level. For the display site the Finance Director managed to convince corporate management about receiving investment money for a new, another IT system that could more accurately record costs of projects (e.g. design, sales and admin costs). Also, the Finance Director was a head of Commercial Department, and in this way he was in charge for calculations and pricing for orders. He would perform calculations and pricing activities for the biggest plant himself. Additionally Finance Director was performing analyses of new customers (e.g. if special investments in machines were required to meet their needs) and he was having a big impact on decisions about new customers together with Sales, Operational and Managing Directors.

In Case C Finance Manager was involved in all three types of commercial activities. Case C was chosen by Regional Finance Director as a pilot plant to introduce post cost calculations. The corporate CBS system (the same as in Case B) was implemented with an ‘add on’ tool for presenting profitability data in a graphical form. The Finance Manager received a support from a corporate level through a calculation person coming from headquarters to the plant in Case C to assist the Finance Manager in implementing the system. At the time of interviews post cost calculations were not yet
performed in a regular manner. The main plant of Case C was very technologically advanced with lots of automation, e.g. even the internal transport was automatic, and this made it easier to collect production data from the shop floor. Every invoice was linked to costs and in this way profitability was established. For the pre cost calculations being a base for pricing the cost rates were all recorded in the system and at the time of making pricing for a new order also expected profitability was calculated. Although the Finance Manager did not perform price calculations activities himself (it was internal sales), he was every day checking the list of recorded orders and their expected profitability and he contacted sales department if any low values. The Finance Manager was also often contacted by the Sales Manager when analysis and negotiations with new customers were made.

In Case D especially in the focus plants finance department was not performing commercial activities to a high extent. There was a separate calculations manager and also the Managing Director had an influence on commercial activities. For example when new customers were analyzed and negotiations made calculations manager worked with sales people, and for any crucial decision Managing Director was contacted. Calculations for pricing were made by calculation manager and there was also post cost calculations based on a data from SAP system which was linked to manufacturing system. However, there were problems with the linkages between the two systems. Also the post cost calculations were mainly based on difference between realized and expected machining time at standard machine costs rates (consumption of paper pre and post was also included in the model), but recording of time was often not accurate since, as one controller mentioned, production people sometimes ‘forgot’ to register time as it negatively affected their efficiency ratios. Machining time was the main driver of differences in pre vs. post cost calculations and the results of post cost calculations were directed often to production people, however no fixed process was made for it at time of interviews: it is new to us this post cost calculation (Controller). On the whole, the Finance Manager and the Controller from the three focus plants stated they were too little involved in profitability/commercial activities. The Managing Director was pressing the sales representatives to cover all costs and receive fixed profit margins and this was questioned by the Finance Manager and Controller, who stated such policy was translating into lost sales, especially dangerous in situation of shrinking market.

In Case E profitability/commercial activities were the most organized, with special explicit processes to deal with these issues, and the Industrial Controller was performing and leading all activities in area of customers and their profitability. The Financial Controller was involved also in analysis of new customers, mainly through appraisal of investments needed to meet the needs of the customers. The Industrial controller was a head of calculations department and he supervised calculations and also post cost calculations. Calculations for pricing model was distinct from other cases since set up costs were separate and margin on set up costs was much higher than on
other costs, to avoid short serie orders. The IT system was linked with ma-
chines and at plants there were data validation people who checked re-
cording time of processes on the shop floor every day. This ensured validity
of machining time for calculation and post cost analyses by order. Post cost
calculations were summarized in a report made in Excel by the Industrial
Controller based on data from the system. The file was called TOPLINE and
the post cost profitability was discussed regularly with Sales Manager and
general management to decide upon which markets are good to be de-
veloped. TOPLINE report included 4 variances (1) ‘Selling price’ variance, i.e.
variance between price reached in negotiations and price ‘hoped for’ from
calculation model, this variance was used to appraise sales people 2) ‘value
added’ variance, i.e. variance between estimated machining time and real
machining time at standard machine cost rates, this variance was delivered
monthly to plant managers and used to appraise plant managers since
plants were run as production units, 3) waste variance, i.e. variance of paper
usage above estimation, it was also used to appraise plant managers 4)
other variance (of direct assigned costs, e.g. transport, die-cutting tools etc.).
Regarding calculations for pricing, often sales representatives contacted the
Industrial Controller when they wanted to decrease the price for customers
to ask if certain parameters in calculation could be changed (e.g. higher
speeds of machines). The Industrial Controller was an arbiter in this case.
Also there was a daily VETO process, and within this process the Industrial
Controller checked all registered orders for selling price variance and in case
of any big variances he would at once contact the sales people.

To summarize, in Case A and E finance department was not perform-
ing commercial/profitability activities to a high extent. The Finance Director in
Case B and the Finance Manager in Case C were working on post cost
analyses and they were involved in new deals with customers. The Finance
Director in Case B performed and supervised pricing while the Finance
Manager in Case C supervised pricing and performed daily control of all or-
ders. In Case E finance department performed all the three types of com-
mercial/profitability activities and the processes linked to these activities
were the most developed.

**Performance management artifacts**

This study utilizes a concept of performance management artifacts to
denote comprehensive control tools that are used for managing the com-
pany as a whole. They are often discuss in management meetings and
they embrace different organizational areas. (Management) control theory in-
forms us that traditionally budgets were such management artifacts; how-
ever, they are nowadays more often complimented by other control tools.
Also the usage of management control tools has moved from pure perfor-
mane evaluation in a ‘policeman’ fashion to performance management, i.e.
delivering useful information for managing the business. Activities linked to
managing performance management artifacts by finance departments in sub
cases are compared in this section.
The cases differed in usage of performance management artifacts. In Case A budget was the main artifact. The Managing Director was emphasizing the need for plant managers and sales to meet their budgets, and this was also accentuated by the Chief Accountant, who prepared budget reports for management meeting of general managers monthly, or less often. The profit and loss report connected to budget included also some ratios, e.g. profitability ratios, and information about stock levels and aging of receivables. Although budget was the main performance artifact in Case A, plant managers did not often ask the Chief Accountant for help in understanding the differences, e.g. which invoices contributed to cost figures of the month. One plant manager observed the Chief Accountant did not have time for it. Yearly, plant managers and the Managing Director set targets (e.g. profit targets, or personal targets regarding time schedule for particular investments at plants), however, there wasn’t any formalized, widely used and shared document summarizing the targets and the follow up of the target was once a year, without involvement of finance.

In Case B budgets were presented monthly for all the plants during meeting with plant managers but joint results were treated as most important. The Finance Director stated that budgets were of limited value since they were ‘once a year exercise’. So there was not very much emphasis on this control tool, although of course the final results were important. One plant manager stated that budgets were useful during the time they were made, since the assumptions for any (e.g. energy) costs growing in the following year could directly show the impact on profit spurring action plans to counteract that. Also during the year if any cost groups were higher than expected for several months that could create investigation for reasons and actions, e.g. subcontractors charging more could be replaced. Plant managers contacted the Management Accountant to performed budget vs. actual analyses for them. Instead, the Finance Director was managing another control tool in Case B, more important than budgets during the top executive team meeting, namely the OGSM matrix (objectives-goals-strategies and measures). The OGSM matrix was the most important performance management artifact in Case B. One employee aptly observed that ‘it formed the basis of our business’. The OGSM was composed of 7 themes split into action plans for each of the four functional area (finance, commercial, sales, and operations). The Finance Director managed finance and commercial part and he also helped design sales and operations action plans. The OGSM framework in Case B was used as a way to organize the complex organizational reality, make sense of it and write down actions that could possibly lead to improved performance. It was spread down the organization chain and it was an organized way to motivate actions to improve performance in different dimensions.

In Case C budget was main performance management artifact (sales manager mentioned ‘the only thing I have is a budget’), but new artifacts were looked for, since, as the General Manager stated, there was a need for better forecasting and more looking forward. There was a distinct situation
with budgets: the Finance Manager prepared reports for monthly ‘results’ management meeting, but as he was himself signing off most of invoices, he was in a way ‘responsible’ for cost figures. The Production Manager stated that at times of making yearly budget Finance is more preserved on costs, so we would put higher costs when possible. The Finance Manager was preparing budget vs. actual analysis and he was presenting solutions to keep positive variances and reduce negative variances. The General Manager stated that the Finance Manager is ‘fairly good in looking at the business’. Budgets were also used intensively in a way that every day the Finance Manager was sending information on a graph about booked orders, production and outbound logistics (in square meters) from the previous day juxtaposed with budget line and this was discussed by sales, production and logistics employees on daily morning meetings. At the same time the General Manager expressed several times a feeling of deficiency, and he stated that finance department could be more ‘future looking’ and that it needed to be used more for ‘management evaluations, dashboarding and calculating strategic options’. To understand monthly variances between budgetary and actual the Managing Director introduced a dashboard composing of 9 key performance indicators (KPIs) drew from LEAN, since as he stated the dashboard contains reasons for good or bad performance. The KPIs were also tracked in other locations but it was not discussed in such an organized manner on management meetings.

In Case D budgets were mainly used and there was an emphasis on meeting them on a country level, since the cluster received significant investment allocations for ‘turn around plans’ and it was expected that the performance would improve. The Managing Director stated budgets are important since he had to answer all those nasty questions from the headquarters. At the focus plants, however, budgets was not used very intensively for management, perhaps similarly to Case A. The Finance Manager and Controller stated: We don’t put too much time into it. We make reports but we are not going into detail too much. They stated budgets are important for motivation and performance evaluation. Also, since machines were moved between plants and also sales force started to be joint for the three plants, it was difficult to share costs and it was decided the plants will not get separate figures, but just joined budget. This was in contrast to Case E where plants received their profit information monthly, even if they were treated as ‘only’ production sites. The Finance Manager and Controller in Case D said they were not satisfied with budget but it was used, since there was a need for some follow up system. They were considering using control tool of pre versus post calculations especially on machining time to control the plants. However, this was not done in a regular manner at time of interviews.

In Case E similarly to Case B there was another main performance management artifact apart from budget. It was a ‘balanced scorecard’ type report sent monthly to plant managers by the Assistant Industrial Controller. It contained a set of financial and non-financial indicators and plant managers stated on numerous occasions it gave them all the important information
to manage the plants. Based on the report the Industrial Controller travelled to different plants and discussed different ‘red’ figures and how they could be improved. Value of the report lied also in the graphical presentation (it was very colourful and the information was for all the months in the year, so trends could be spotted). Budgets were sent from FSSC to plant managers monthly, and sometimes plant managers asked for variance analysis. However more emphasis was on joint summary performance, since plants were explicitly treated as ‘just’ manufacturing sites with central sales team. The Industrial Controller, asked by the Managing Director, prepared a new ‘budget’ called kilt, which was a response to financial crisis, and it focused monthly on mostly fixed costs. Initiatives by plant managers had to be made how to decrease types of fixed costs. Another performance management artifact was a TOPLINE, which was used to talk about which customers are good customers and which segments are worthwhile to develop. TOPLINE was discussed often by the Industrial Controllers with sales department, and also on meeting of strategic committee with the Managing Director and the Sales Director. The last performance management artifact was the strategic plan document. The Financial Controller stated that previously strategy was not written down in a formalized way, however the new format of PP presentation prepared every year was a way to share with all organizational members the development plans, focusing on mainly on investments.

To summarize, in Case B and Case E finance department was managing also other performance management artifacts (tools) apart from budget. These other performance management artifacts were often an organized way to motivate and plan future actions Although they did not provide the managers with all the answers, they helped in achieving what Ahrens & Chapman (2007) described as ‘situated functionality’, i.e. not optimal best possible solutions, but good solutions within cognitive and other constraints. In Case C there was mainly budget used, but also a set of KPIs additionally linked to budget, although the Finance Manager was not fully ‘responsible’ for managing it. In Case D and Case A at time of interviews budget was the most important performance management artifact run by finance department.

**Efficiency/quality/shop floor**

The involvement of finance department on the shop floor differed among plants, but on the whole, it was not extremely high. In contrast, literature suggests the involvement of finance function becoming business partner in different organizational processes increases. In Case A efficiency and quality measures were tracked by plants internally and the Chief Accountant did not perform activities linked to efficiency on the shop floor or quality issues. At rare occasions she would though deliver information about costs, what was spent or saved on improvements, e.g. when efficiency improvements in machines were considered during ‘six sigma’ project aiming at reducing customer complaints.
Similarly in Case B the Finance Director could provide financial information about costs, savings opportunities, when improvements on shop floor were considered. He observed inefficiencies causing backlogs occurred e.g. machine downtimes, running out of materials, or unexpected orders requiring usage of corrugated board intended for other orders. However finance department was not quantifying and dealing with these inefficiencies (in case of ‘non-conformance’ costs caused explicitly by a customer, there could be attempts by commercial department to charge the client). The Finance Director discussed during top executive meeting how sales team can better forecast demands. According to the Finance Director lots of breakages in the flow of production was caused by unexpected demands, which grew since the plants changed customer base from electronics and consumer goods to food and drinks.

In Case C a corporate program LEAN was introduced, aiming at instilling ‘continuous improvement’ mindset and involve all employees in the shop floor in improvements in efficiency and quality. Lean was praised by all plants in the case company in which it was introduced. It consisted of three parts: 1) 9 KPIs to report monthly to the central headquarters 2) daily and weekly meetings disusing performance of all machines in terms of production and down time, speed, waste, maintenance stops, any problems 3) Tactical implementation plans (TIPs), i.e. change plans aiming at improving the KPIs, like e.g. improving flow through better planning, preventive maintenance, talking to customers about order behavior etc. In Case C the Finance Manager was not very much involved in LEAN, although he ‘supervised’ to a limited extent the activities, he took part in setting the 9 KPIs, in decisions about TIPs and he sometimes attended lean meetings.

In Case D LEAN was also introduced, and Finance Manager and Controller helped with setting the 9 KPIs targets and after the local ‘lean team’ had taken over. Finance department from the focus plants was neither involved in TIPs nor in lean meetings. During one TIP aiming at decreasing customer complaints the lean team visited customer’s site to talk about parameters that influenced the quality of the box so that production at customer’s site could run smoothly. Perhaps finance department could help in quantifying or suggesting any cost savings, however it was not the case.

In Case E finance community, mainly through the industrial controlling department, was the most involved in efficiency/quality activities of all the sub cases. Industrial controlling department prepared daily information on machines for production at all plants. Interestingly, industrial controlling department was responsible for ‘data validation’ at sites, i.e. every day all the recorded times on all machines were checked and if any abnormal numbers would occur (e.g. cleaning time of 10 hours) production and plant managers were contacted. Additionally to delivering daily production data, the Assistant Industrial Controller were also sending monthly summary information for all machines to plant managers supported by graphs. When lean was introduced the Industrial Controller set the 9 KPIs, and at the biggest plant Assistant Industrial Controller was leading lean team and also all the TIPs.
In Case E there was also another important daily process aiming at improved efficiency at sites called VETO. Industrialization department tried to plan and optimize orders after they were registered even more than it was done at the time of calculations (orders were registered in a system with open access to all departments). Finance community was not much involved in performing activities of this process, however, the Industrial Controller was ‘supervising’ the process and he was an arbiter in case of any VETO (which were arising since the changes could influence ‘the selling price’ variance for sales people, or plants could oppose changes in location of production).

**Investments**

Investment decisions belong to the most important decisions in companies. Looking at finance department through the lens of management control theory and practice theory finance department becomes business partner when its influence in important decisions rises.

There were differences across cases in performing activities linked to investment decisions. In **Case A** the Chief Accountant did not perform analyses linked to feasibility of new investments. Important investment decisions (e.g. building of a new plant) were made by the Managing Director, who had finance educational background and who would negotiate with future customers. To calculate financial CVA (cash value added, a common criterion used in the Case Company) employees from regional head office finance were contacted. The Chief Accountant recorded CAPEX in corporate system and tracked fulfillment of investment budgets. However, on the whole investment decisions were taken very high in the hierarchy including regional finance employees. Even for non-strategic smaller investments the Chief Accountant was excluded from the process and even plant managers did not have much decisive power, which caused their irritation.

In **Case B** the Finance Director was performing analyses for acquisition proposals (there were plans in Case B to grow by acquisitions), and he was taking an active part (leading role) in decisions about investments. His strong position in investments for the cluster could be explained partly by his involvement in the sale of the conventional plants’ cluster in the country (in cooperation with the CFO). The Finance Director was also himself supporting his role in acquisitions emphasizing that he was not only able to give a financial perspective for any deal, but also more strategic perspective of future potentials, since he was a head of the commercial department. For smaller investments plant managers prepared technical analysis of the benefits of proposed investments, but the Finance Director while making CVA calculations questioned, proposed changes in these analyses and suggested the best timing for performing investments. Recording and tracking fulfillment of CAPEX was done by the two finance team members, supervised by the Finance Director.

In **Case C** the Finance Manager performed analyses of feasibility of big investments (e.g. opting out external warehouses and building a new warehouse) and, as observed by the Sales Manager, he was in a driving
seat in this process. For smaller investments the Production Manager would prepare all the technical calculations of what was needed and how it would change performance of machines (in terms of people, speeds, set up times etc) and the Finance Manager during making CVA calculations would also take active part in this process. The Production Manager summarized: (...) he is always active, he says: ‘that is too expensive’, ‘can’t it be cheaper? (...) Then we are discussing, do we need to have a new machine?, can we reduce more people?, and then critical questions to sales, can’t you sell more?, sell to a higher price? (name of the Finance Manager) is always in the middle: ‘Can’t you sell it for a higher price? Can’t you do it cheaper?’ The Finance Manager and the Production Manager were both tracking the fulfillment of CAPEX through a shared excel file. The Finance Manager recorded CAPEXes in the corporate system.

In Case D finance department was rather not performing feasibility studies for investments. The cluster was allocated a significant ‘turn around plan’ capital, and the Managing Director stated that although the Finance Director was making ‘some suggestion’ it was himself that prepared the overall strategy: the overall strategy, closing down factories, and what to invest I did together with some technical guys and the overall strategy I made myself. The Finance Manager and the Controller of the focus plants observed that for the turn around plans they delivered figures and made some analysis but then ‘management took decision, or region or higher level’. Recording of CAPEX was done in FSSC by the Finance Director and the FSSC Controller.

In Case E strategic investments discussions and decisions were made among the Managing Director, the Technical Manager, the Industrial Controller and the Financial Controller. The Financial Controller calculated expected outcomes of different options. Investment strategies were shared with plant managers during management meeting for which also regional level management was invited, including regional Managing Director and regional Finance Director. In this way the regional level management was ‘acquainted’ with the development plans of the cluster and later on it was easier to get support when applying for investments. During the year when plant managers suggested investments (often of smaller amounts) the Technical manager prepared calculations in cooperation with Industrial Controller, since the Industrial Controller run the database of production information collected daily by industrial controlling department about historic speeds, volumes, set up times, production hours and down hours of machines. This was a base for the Technical Manager to prepare evaluation. The Financial Controller was calculating CVA of investments. CAPEX was recorded by FSSC. Only big investments were followed up in terms of fulfillment of initial plans. Smaller investments were not tracked regularly.

In sum, in Case A and E finance department performed less activities linked to investment process and investment decisions than their counterparts in Case B, Case C and Case E. Variables which had influence on such state of affairs included organization of management (level of strategy mak-
ing), links with regional (corporate) finance, running information databases and close interactions with production.

Content: Interactions
The finance teams in studied subcases differed not only in performed activities, but also in interactions with general, sales and production employees. The study shows there are links between activities and interactions, as similar activities were performed by finance teams having similarities in interactions. Also, the interactions were influenced by activities, yet at the same time a way of entering into interactions by finance employees allowed and made it possible for finance department to perform certain activities and not others. Similarly to activities, interactions were influenced by contextual organizational forces. Table 3 summarizes frequency of encounters (interactions) of finance teams with other organizational members and the characteristics of these interactions.

In Case A interactions between finance and general managers were not frequent. There was a performance review meeting usually monthly with the Managing Director, plant managers, and also sales manager and human resource manager, however regularity of the meeting was not always ensured. The Chief Accountant presented budget versus actual figures for all the plants but there were not much analysis for separate plants, rather holistic view was taken, e.g. plant manager presented capacity utilization rates since plants cooperated in capacity utilization.

Table 3. Interactions of finance department with other organizational members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interactions with</th>
<th>Case A</th>
<th>Case B</th>
<th>Case C</th>
<th>Case D</th>
<th>Case E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General managers: frequency &amp; type</td>
<td>LOW Low symbolic capital &amp; authority, more interactions asked for</td>
<td>HIGH High symbolic capital &amp; authority</td>
<td>HIGH High symbolic capital &amp; authority</td>
<td>LOW Low symbolic capital &amp; authority, more interactions asked for</td>
<td>HIGH High symbolic capital &amp; authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales: frequency &amp; type</td>
<td>LOW Low symbolic capital &amp; authority</td>
<td>HIGH High symbolic capital &amp; authority, power struggles</td>
<td>HIGH High symbolic capital &amp; authority, small power struggles</td>
<td>LOW Low symbolic capital &amp; authority</td>
<td>HIGH High symbolic capital &amp; authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production: frequency &amp; type</td>
<td>LOW Low symbolic capital &amp; authority, more interactions asked for</td>
<td>MEDIUM/LOW High symbolic capital &amp; authority</td>
<td>MEDIUM High symbolic capital &amp; authority</td>
<td>LOW Low symbolic capital &amp; authority, more interactions asked for</td>
<td>MEDIUM/ HIGH High symbolic capital &amp; authority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own study.
Żródło: opracowanie własne.
Plant managers wanted the interaction to be more frequent, the general manager of the second biggest plant stated: *you cannot steer the business from the distance of 450 km and we would need a controller.* Finance department did not have authority or high symbolic capital in relations with general managers. In fact, management was mainly in hands of the Managing Director, who influenced behavior of plant managers (there was a yearly strategic target setting meeting of general managers). When it comes to sales, interactions with the Chief Accountant were also not frequent, besides weekly discussions on credit control and information of actual sales compared to budget during performance review meetings. Interestingly, the Sales Manager did not ask for more cooperation. First, he was convinced about shortage of resources in finance (*The finance department needs to collect and prepare all the different documents on specific deadlines. We need to respect their priorities. (...) List of my wishes...maybe analysis of realized profitability on orders and customer, but I know it is hard to say that I would like something that is difficult to do.*). Second, there was a high focus on meeting sales budget rather than profitability analyses from the Managing Director. Finance department did not have much authority in relations with sales, and it was partly due to the influence of Managing Director who emphasised growing sales. Interactions with production were also scarce, and this even caused some frustration from production leaders who did not have access to information of costs. Interactions were limited to transfer of signed cost invoices to finance for processing and one production leader said: ‘at a current stage I am not a client of service of finance, but rather accounting department is my internal client’. Production leader at the biggest site stated that production could be more involved in decreasing of costs, but in order to improve something knowledge about the current state is important. There were several occasions production leader implemented changes in production process but she never got to know the impact on costs, since as she stated *there wasn’t a custom in this company to share information with production.* She juxtaposed this situation with her previous employer and stated finance should organize meetings with production.

In **Case B** mainly the Finance Director interacted often with general managers and he had authority in these relations, since he could influence decisions of others. The Managing Director made the Finance Director a head of the commercial department and the Finance Director was also a member of the top executive team (together with Managing, Sales and Operations Directors). The team would meet regularly monthly to *debate about important issues like acquisitions, certain customers, price increases.* The Finance Director observed he was allowed during meetings to criticize the Managing Director and others and that *(the name of Managing Director) would allow us to do that, that is the benefit of a relatively small group that people feel free to talk.* With other general mangers the Finance Director met on a wider management team monthly meeting where he would discuss results of the plants and projects worked on (e.g. new die cutting equipment, new IT system). Apart from this meeting plant mangers contacted
the Finance Director for advice on important decisions linked to running the sites. The Finance Director had high symbolic capital. One plant manager stated: *If I am not sure about something then I would discuss it. We would talk about it first. And if I am not sure myself, if it has financial implications then I would talk to (name of the Finance Director) or some of the members of his team.* The Operations Director who was also a plant manager of the biggest site contacted Finance Director every day to talk about all important commercial and other issues. He observed: *I think historically the finance teams were a lot more transactional, (...) I think now there is a much more flexibility with the things they are getting involved with.* With regards to sales there was a power struggle. As a head of commercial department the Finance Director was working on improved pre cost calculations and also post- cost calculations, which was also linked to the new EPR system. The Sales Director did not posses knowledge of the costing model and also she complained that due to often travels she did not have access to the IT system. Symbolic capital of the Finance Director was growing and the Sales Director tried to act in response, e.g. she prepared her own ‘customer evaluation template’ and she also argued that there is a need for a stand alone commercial department: *You don’t go to the shop to buy anything if it is not clear that the shop sells that item. I think really most of my team would see finance as transactional function. (...) commercially the business is weak, but I am not sure that is a finance directive.* The Finance Director drew on links with the Managing Director in this struggle and he stated: *Managing Director, he thinks it is right to have finance responsibility within commercial function since we can act as a balance to sales.* With regards to production the Finance Director interacted with the Operating Director during investments and the Operation Director spoke highly of finance involvement: *I think finance is strongly visible and has high profile in this discussion.* On the lower plant levels finance was not so much ingrained in production processes and daily efficiency and quality issues. Production people had however free access to information, e.g. maintenance managers spoke often with management accountant about budget vs actual variances. The Operation Director welcomed growing influence of finance in the shop floor area (e.g. calculating financial value of waste etc.), which he stated was maybe not high since finance department was busy with setting the FSSC.

In **Case C** the Finance Manager interacted often with the General Manager. In the second week of the month there was a ‘results’ management team meeting (the General, Finance, Sales, Production, Human Resources Managers as well as a Manager of the tiny plant). Usually in the third week of the month there was a ‘projects’ meeting for any issues linked to investment projects or customer issues. Apart from that the General Manager often contacted the Finance Manager for advice outside these meetings. The Finance Manager was granted much authority to influence decisions of the General Manager who stated: *With Finance Manager I might discuss figures, but I might also discuss with him his view on other issues, because he will give me the financial view on the subject.* The General Man-
ager stated he allowed the Finance Manager and also other team members to criticize his ideas. Also, the General Manager wanted the Finance Manager to have even more influence: *In my mind they are business partners - this is what they should be. They can develop even more. (...) maybe we can use them more in planning and business decisions.* As for interactions with sales the Finance Manager was also having high symbolic capital and authority. The Sales Manager observed that ‘*finance is the backbone of decisions that are made in sales, if I want to be informed in a right way then I need the support of finance to have the right market approach*’ and he also stated that ‘*they are influencing total behaviour of my department.*’ The Sales Manager met with the Finance Manager during management meetings, but also outside the meetings to discuss credit control and any issues regarding new customers. Symbolic capital of the Finance Manager was stemming from his experience, links with regional level management who had chosen the Case C for pilot plant in post cost calculations based on the corporate ERP system. He also acquired lots of knowledge from a central expert on calculations. Interestingly, however, the Sales Manager also aimed at gaining that knowledge and increase symbolic capital of sales. On numerous occasions he asked the Finance Manager to introduce trainings for sales team on costing model and other financial issues and he also stated that when post cost calculation model is in place, ‘*it will be sales not finance doing the analysis of customers, that is the responsibility of sales.*’ Interestingly the Finance Manager did not explicitly defend his position, he rather stated that possibly his involvement in post cost calculations will decrease but certainly there will be other new projects to perform instead. When it comes to production, the Finance Manager interacted most with the Production Manager during management meetings, while talking about investments and also weekly signing off of cost invoices. The Production manager spoke highly of Finance Manager and stated: *Finance is everywhere, since I don’t have money myself (...) Finance is always involved, without finance I cannot live.* Although the Finance Manager did not influence a lot the lean program on the shop floor, he was still invited for meeting when TIPs were decided, so that he ‘supervised’ to some extent what was going on in the shop floor.

In **Case D** the Managing Director was responsible for managing the three focus plants (since the general manager previously employed to manage the plants had been dismissed), but since he was also responsible for all other plants in the cluster there weren’t any regular meetings with finance. The Managing Director visited the sites from time to time and talked on the phone monthly with the Financial Manager about results. The Finance Manager and the Controller did not have high authority in relations with the Managing Director, who observed his ideas are rather not criticized by finance. On the contrary, the Managing Director influenced relations of finance with other organizational members, especially sales. The Finance Manager and the Controller did not agree with the philosophy supported by the Managing Director of always covering full costs, however they were not participating in
the sales meeting, where the Managing Director would talk with sales people about meeting the profit targets. The Finance Manager met with plant (who were called production) managers, sales manager, and supply chain manager during performance review meeting (‘to discuss results, KPIs and a way forward’), however he could not exercise authority at this meeting. On the whole he stated that We don’t have so many meetings, which referred both to interactions with production and sales employees. There was an expectation from production (plant) managers to increase frequency of interactions: ‘There is a pressure that you should be more present in the production areas, more present in the different plants’ (the Finance Manager) Yeah, that is quite a problem. You have to show yourself in different plants’ (the Controller). The Finance Manager stated they were trying to introduce pre vs. post cost machine hours in assessing performance of production (plant) managers, however production time was not recorded accurately at plants, and at the time of interviews the finance department did not have enough authority to influence that.

Interactions of finance community with other organizational members in Case E were frequent and finance community, especially the Industrial Controller, had lots of authority and power to influence behavior of other organizational members. Employees from the whole cluster spoke highly of the Industrial Controller e.g.: ‘His authority goes much far beyond the strict name of industrial controlling and purchasing manager’, ‘He has a very deep knowledge of the company’s customers and competitors and that is a reason why practically he is participating in every meeting’, ‘(the name of Industrial Controller) has many responsibilities. So necessarily his opinion counts. So that is why he is always involved, as he is the only one who has good eyes on both, sales and costs. (…) In our organization the person that is really at the centre of the different information flows is (the name of the Industrial Controller)’. There were many meetings between the Managing Director, plant managers, the Industrial Controller and the Finance Controller (at some of them head of FSSC was also taking part, but not in a very active way): strategic committee meeting, directive committee meeting, results meeting, cash meeting, kilt meeting and lean meeting. The Managing Director allowed for agency and granted authority to both the Industrial Controller and the Financial Controller: ‘I don’t see finance as a kind of policeman only saying ‘no, you are not good here, you have not good figures’ It is not my way of working. I see them as partners’, ‘I feel they must be involved in strategy, in following the figures, in relationships with all the teams’. The Industrial Controller met plant managers often beyond the meetings. For example he visited sites regularly to talk about indicators from balanced scorecard and how they can be improved, or he contacted plant managers to discuss any machine improvement opportunity, since for big orders certain investments could be done, and he stated that ‘finally it is myself who decides’. Interactions with sales were intensive, especially for the Industrial Controller. The Industrial and Financial Controller met with the Sales Manager during strategic committee meeting where profitability of market segments was discussed
(TOPLINE by the Industrial Controller) and investments in segments decided (calculations by the Financial Controller). Also the Industrial Controller and the Financial Controller participated in most commercial meetings, which included all sales employees, design centre, the Managing Director and also newly created marketing department, separate from sales. TOPLINE was not discussed during this meeting, rather it was shared with sales representative individually for their individual customers (Industrial Controller stated it is secret (...) we refuse to diffuse information to all our sales forces because in the sales force there are many changes, salesmen go to competition). This caused slight discontent of sales employees and one external and internal sales group leader stated that ‘communication between finance and sales could improve’. Another internal and external sales group leader expressed willingness to be even more involved in calculations and pricing, however, the Industrial Controller stated: ‘No, not at all, there is no possibility for the commercial people and sales people. We prepare it, we think calculations department should be controller people, finance people and not sales. For us it seems it would be too dangerous.’ The Industrial Controller had high symbolic capital and he also could defend it. The Industrial Controller interacted with sales employees very often beyond formal meetings. For example they contacted him to ask for possible changes in calculations that could decrease estimated price, and the Industrial Controller stated: In final it is myself who makes the decisions, they contact absolutely me to decide. If the recorded negotiated price was low in comparison with estimated price, the Industrial Controller contacted sales for explanations during daily VETO process, and he said: we must question some things, we come back to the customer when it is not acceptable. On the whole, the Industrial Controller could influence behavior of sales department. When it comes to interactions with production the Financial Controller and the Industrial Controller interacted with the Technical Manager during meetings in respect of investments, and they had authority in this relation (Finance has a very strong gear of this working process (Technical Manager)). Interactions of finance with production on plant level, apart from the biggest site where the Assistant Industrial Controller led the LEAN introduction, were not very intensive, although still the most intensive among all the cases. It was due to the fact that industrial controlling department was responsible for collection and validation of daily production data and delivering summary monthly production reports for plants. Production employees spoke highly of industrial controlling department who had authority in the relations (especially the Assistant Industrial Controller who coordinated data collection process): ‘I think I have pressure from finance department. It is not a war, she is a good colleague. She cannot find solutions but she is able to help me, as she can compare plants and she can tell me in (name of the plant) they have different organization and they are able to produce the same level with minimum people. She helped me to compare, I think for benchmarking she is good contribution’ (Production Manager).
Context: structure of formal meetings

The case study results draw attention to a contextual force of formal regular meeting which can have palpable influence on finance function becoming business partner. Structure of formal meetings was not previously explicitly discussed in literature about finance functions. However, it appears from the sub cases that thanks to regular formal meetings involvement of finance community in management was more visible and the meetings paved the way for the finance department to take active part in organizational life. Although meetings of finance employees with other organizational members are central to interactions part of the framework, the regularity and types of meetings can be perceived to some extent as also contextual setting for particular cases. In writings about authority Simon (1945, 2000) observed that in an organizational realm there is a resistance of suggestions made outside line of duty and volunteered through lines of communication others than usual. This links to Bourdieu’s habitus concept which depicts the situation in which the previous behaviour creates predispositions and prevents change. In fact meetings provided an opportunity for finance employees to put forward suggestions which otherwise would not be listened to. Production Manager in Case C stated meetings were the opportunity to discuss if ‘there are strange things going on, do we need to change, implement something’. Meetings provided also a basis and a reference point for involvement of finance function with organizational members outside these meetings.

In Case A and in Case D there were performance review meetings, but not other regular management meetings of which finance department could be a part. In some cases, especially in Case A the regularity of these meetings was not ensured. In Case B, Case C and Case E there were more meetings with finance department. In Case B there was not only monthly meeting for wider management team during which results and other issues were discussed but also ‘top executive team’ meeting for explicitly discussing management and strategic issues. In Case C there were two monthly management team meetings: in the second week of the month there was the ‘results’ meeting, and in the fourth week of the month there was the ‘projects’ meeting. In Case E there was the highest amount of management meetings (strategic committee meeting, directive committee meeting, results meeting, cash meeting, kilt meeting, lean meeting), in fact for every new program or process a special meeting was arranged with finance department.

Context: Influence of Managing Director (General Manager)

The case study offers interesting findings regarding influence of a head of a cluster, i.e. a Managing Director or a General Manager on business partnering of finance function. The study results develop previous theory. Pierce & O’Dea (2003) speak overall about ‘strong managers’ that press finance employees to deliver the information they need, and practice theory presents us with notion of powerful actors who are able to influence symbolic capital of other organizational members. The study results suggest that al-
though sales and production managers have some influence on the work of finance department, it is rather a Managing Director or a General Manager who posses an overriding impact on finance function and its work including relations with others. Authority granted by a Managing Director or a General Manager allows finance function to make changes in the department and influence management of the company.

In Case A the Managing Director, referred to by the Chief Accountant as ‘the man that built the empire’, emphasized his finance educational background and claimed he was holding a responsibility of a country Finance Manager (after the previous one had left the company and position had not been refilled). The Managing Director himself decided about investments, he influenced what is important in management (sales growth, and not yet profitability analysis) and decided about limited sharing of information by finance to production. Similarly, in Case D, although the Managing Director stated that ‘more controlling and analysis by finance department is needed’, at the same time he emphasized that he himself prepared the ‘turn around’ strategy since he was himself coming from ‘the finance side’ (he also had financial educational background) and that ‘they are more taking care of the reporting’. The Managing Director also stated that finance department’s role is to deliver on time, manage receivables and ensure that the rules are respected. On the contrary, Managing Directors in Case B, Case C and Case E invited finance employees to criticize and question theirs ideas and to be involved in strategic discussions. In Case E whenever a new project was established (e.g. kilt), finance was asked to run it by the Managing Director. In Case B the Finance Director was made a head of commercial department by the Managing Director and he could freely ask the Managing Director for new resource, i.e. new employee to run post cost calculations (‘this is why I said to (the name of Managing Director): I need this resource’). The Finance Director could also draw on symbolic capital built by relations with the Managing Director in power struggle with sales. In Case C the Finance Manager instead of Sales Manager, was assigned a head of the new three-persons commercial team by the General Manager (although the power of General Manager in Case C in influencing relations of finance with other organizational members appeared the least strong).

Context: Links with regional (corporate) level finance

As observed in a preceding section on structural arrangements and in particular on decentralization understood as lines of responsibility, previous writings accentuate that finance employees becoming business partners should report to non-finance superiors rather than to finance (Siegel, et al 2003b, Chenhall & Langfield Smith, 1998, Emsley, 2005). As explained earlier the study results showed that although all heads of finance teams reported to non-finance employees and only functionally with dotted lines to finance superiors it did not guarantee them becoming business partners. However, the case study brings new vistas and contribute to discussion about linkages of finance employees with higher echelons of finance organi-
zation since it suggests that finance employees could draw on links (understood not purely as reporting lines, but rather as social links through interactions) with regional (corporate) level finance, and these links were giving them increased symbolic capital and opportunities to exercise agency. During interviews influence of links with regional (corporate) level finance emerged for Case B, Case C and Case E. Case C and Case E belonged to the same Region, and Case B also joined this Region at times of interviews (earlier the country of Case B was a separate region together with a smaller neighboring country), whereas Case A and Case D belonged to other, two different Regions. The Finance Director of Case B had links with the corporate CFO, who assigned the Finance Director to lead the project of introducing FSSC in the country, in which Case B company was located. The Finance Director was very acquainted with corporate initiatives, especially Commercial Excellence program aiming at better cost calculations, value assessment, pricing and profitability analyses, which was especially supported by the Regional Finance Director. The Finance Director in Case B saw an opportunity for finance department to increase its position in a new corporate process of moving from emphasis on selling physical product to emphasis on selling value and service: ‘Also the company wants world class sales and marketing, excellence, they have got to recognize that people from finance have skills to offer and the example would be the Commercial Excellence program.’ Drawing on Commercial Excellence program the Finance Director managed to convince the Region to get investment money for a new IT system at display site, which would measure services (project based costing) in a better way. Case C was chosen by Regional Finance Director as a pilot plant to implement post cost calculations using internally developed corporate ERP system and the Finance Manager was having a direct contact and worked together with expert sent from Brussels. The Finance Manager also attended quarterly meetings of Finance organized by Regional Finance Director. The Assistant Finance Manager stated that the Finance Manager has strong position since ‘he is doing also things for Brussels’. Also, the Managing Director talked about Finance Manager as a part of a higher level finance community: ‘I think the quality of finance here is high(...) also the same for the rest of the region, the central finance team is very good, very sharp. In Case E the links with Regional Finance Director were the highest, since Regional Finance Director was located at the same place that cluster management (including the Financial Controller). Sales representatives and the Technical Manager knew and spoke highly of the Regional Finance Director, who on some occasions helped with analysis of big investment projects linked to customer proposals from big customers. Regional level management was also invited for directive committee meeting of the Case E cluster. In this way they were acquainted with investment strategies, which would make the investment process smoother than in e.g. Case A or Case D. Regional Finance Director also asked Industrial Controller about cost model in Case E and for support in his endeavors to built cost model for conventional cluster. On the whole finance employees which had links with regional (cor-
porate) level finance could increase their authority, since they were perceived as a part of higher finance organization with lots of decision power. In **Case A** and **Case D** such links with their respective regional Finance Directors were unfortunately very weak.

**Context: IT systems**

A popular argument in literature about finance function is that IT systems took over all manual bookkeeping causing free resources and new demands on finance department (e.g. May, 2002). While on the whole IT systems indeed head in a direction of ensuring validity and integrity of financial statements, the study results show that this ideal state still cannot be taken for granted. Also, the study suggests, it is not only the system per se which counts, but also how it is used by employees (similar arguments were made previously by Kalling (1999)) and particularly how much time and resources is spent on its refinement:

*The system is only as good as the data you put into it’* (the Finance Director, Case B)

*I don’t care how the system is called, I believe similar models can be achieved in our system as well. Everything that people do can be measured and put into the system’* (plant manager, Case A)

*We have a good system database by working on it* (plant manager, Technical manager, Case E)

The results show that IT systems do have a significant influence on work of finance function. In **Case A** there was system bought from a local supplier, with lots of potential, since it was an integrated system (integrated modules for finance, procurement, warehouse, production and sales), however it was still not working fully well, and not enough was invested in it. Regarding general ledger, finance department had to work a lot to ensure integrity of financial statements. In **Case C** general ledger was separate from purchase system causing the Finance Manager spend a lot of time on signing off cost invoices. In **Case D** SAP was being implemented at times of interviews and problems emerged with automatic bookings, and also problems linked to reorganizations with moving of machines and materials between locations causing a need of recosting and other challenges. In **Case B** and **Case E** general ledger systems worked the most smoothly (In Case B SAP was implemented quite a long time before the interviews, and in Case E there was an old system by IBM).

Apart from general ledger, the study results suggest two issues, characteristics of IT systems, important for finance function becoming business partner, namely data capture of processes, and suitability for product types. In **Case A** linkages with the shop floor were not refined and used for shop floor data capture. Some machines but not all were linked with the IT system, and sometimes validity of shop floor information was not ensured,
which hindered cost and profitability analyses. Some problems occurred also in Case B (corporate ERP system) and Case D (local system linked to SAP), and fully valid information from the machines and work at the shop floor was still not ensured. In Case C the shop floor was very advanced technologically with lots of automated processes whose time was recorded in the system (corporate ERP system), and manual work was taking place in the warehouse and was recorded separately. In Case E machines were linked to system (old integrated system from IBM) and also there were special people for ‘data validation’. Also the system could calculate all the main management variances (price variance at time of registering the order, machining time variance, waste variance and other costs’ variance). The second characteristic of IT system is their suitability for a certain product type. It was recognized that long series conventional, consumer packaging and heavy duty business need another system than e.g. display plants, since in the first case recording of machining time is important, and for displays more project costing is crucial (costs of design, service for customers). Case A and Case D had many different types of products which required different systems, which caused challenges. Also in Case B there was one display site (however new IT system was to be implemented for this plant). In Case C and Case E plants were very homogenous and less problems with IT systems occurred.

**Context: personnel turnover**

One more contextual force emerged as having palpable impact on work of finance department, namely high personnel turnover, which occurred among finance and non-finance employees in Case A and Case D. In Case A the whole department, apart from the Chief Accountant was at time of interviews new (this was partly linked to transferring the finance department to the biggest site). The Chief Accountant spent lots of time on introducing accountants and assisting them in their job. Also plant managers changed and since the plants were geographically dispersed, the plant managers did not know the Chief Accountant well. In Case D personnel turnover was partly linked to reorganizations. It hindered creation of any stable meeting structure. In Case B, personnel turnover linked to creation of the FSSC was quite problematic for establishing links with plants. Personnel turnover is addressed in organizational learning literature which suggests that medium level of personnel turnover can positively affect exploratory learning through producing variability in organization (March, 1991), yet at the same time too high a turnover can be counterproductive since it prevents creation of firm-specific human capital (Hatch & Dryer, 2004).

**Summary and conclusions**

**Understanding concept of the business partner and the driving forces – summary**

This section presents a graphical visualization of the cases compared according to dimensions from the framework and these emerging from
the study. A graphical presentation form helps to distinguish different types of finance function and spot linkages between the constructs forming hypotheses; which ultimately leads to development of theory. This paper tried to provide a consistent approach to understanding finance department in its ‘business partner’ role. The study suggests being business partner depends on activities, interactions and competences used, and it is strongly influenced by organizational forces. Looking at the subcases it can be hypothesized Case E was the closest to the ideal of business partner, followed by Case B and D, while Case D and Case A were still far from the ideal.

Understanding concept of the business partner and the driving forces - conclusions

There were several findings in this study:

- First, looking at activities, business partners are no longer enmeshed with bookkeeping activities. Creation of FSSC is certainly helpful in this respect, however it must be emphasized that it might take several years before FSSC starts to function smoothly, and during this period finance department is spending lots of time on setting up relations between the FSSC and local plants. Also, beyond transaction processing there are also monthly activities linked to closing of the month, like accruals, stocks etc. In finance departments being business partners these tasks are not performed by the heads but rather delegated to lower finance team members.

- Business partners spend more time on analyses of profitability by customers and products and other commercial analyses; they take active part in investment process and manage production efficiency. Also an important task of business partners is to manage performance management tools (artifacts) and the study suggests that business partners manage and use more tools beyond budgetary control. The other tools refer often to future action plans organized and written down in a orderly manner, or they include chosen indicators about past performance, not necessarily being financial numbers.

- Business partners do have significant amount of authority, i.e. ability to influence behavior of others which is linked to high symbolic capital. They can defend the symbolic capital, expand it and draw on it to justify performing the activities they do.

- Business partners utilize strategist competence to a high degree, they are also high as cooperative assistant, high/medium as watchdogs and medium in energy. When finance department is allowed to utilize strategist competence and be involved in strategy making, the study shows that this brings about improved financial performance.
Important study results lie in analysis of organizational forces.

- First the study suggests **decentralization of finance department does not directly translate into increased business partnering.** Position of local controllers may be too weak to implement changes or to take active part in management. At the same time **team based structures** which explicitly incorporate finance department in management issues positively affect business partnering (which confirms earlier studies).

- There are **cognitive limits** for finance and general heads of cluster and to **embrace all plants in detail** and **organization of management** is crucial for business partnering. Organization of management means that strategy is made at a level of cluster composed of manageable number of plants (case study suggests number of four as a maximum number). If clusters are composed from more plants then it is difficult for finance department to become business partner: cluster level finance employees do not know the plants in enough detail and local finance, if existent is not allowed to create separate strategy and decision power for implementing changes is limited.

- Optimal size of a management cluster is influenced by **operational organizing.** Different types of products (e.g. display vs conventional or consumer packaging) require different performance metrics and different approach to costing models and pricing. If a cluster consists of sites with types of products, or different types of products are produced at the same production site it creates challenges for finance department in business partnering since each product type should be addressed separately which requires work overload.

- Although a lot is said about a need to decrease costs of finance department (tasks taken over by IT systems), the study suggests there are limits to this ‘cost cutting’. **The size (cost) of finance department of 0.2% of revenues did not allow any business partnering to develop.**

- An important finding regards palpable role of **regular, formal management meetings** at which finance department should be present, since they make support of finance department more visible and they are opportunities for finance to interact with other organizational members and to suggest initiatives. Finance department does not purchase, produce or sell therefore there is a need for a regular, formal meeting which could ground the position of finance in management or organization and be a reference point for further interactions.
The study results accentuate the role of managing director (general manager) in allowing authority and extended agency to finance department. Managing director (general manager) has an overriding influence on work of finance department over other organizational members e.g. sales or production and over other contextual forces. For finance department in their journey towards business partners it is crucial that managing directors and general managers understand that finance department can contribute to management of company and ultimately to company’s performance.

Links of local finance teams with corporate (regional) level finance also form a palpable influence on enactment of work by finance department mainly through the impact on authority granted to local finance employees who are perceived as a part of a stronger community with lots of decision power on higher echelons of the company.

The summary suggested final conceptual framework regarding finance department is the following (Table 4).

Table 4. Conceptual framework
Tabela 4. Struktura pojęciowa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>ACTIVITIES</td>
<td>TYPE OF FINANCE FUNCTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Structure in the finance department</td>
<td>- bookkeeping</td>
<td>- Strategist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Organization of management (strategy levels)</td>
<td>- performance management artifacts</td>
<td>- Cooperative assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- operational organizing</td>
<td>- profitability/commercial</td>
<td>- Watchdog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- size of finance department</td>
<td>- efficiency/quality shop floor</td>
<td>- Efficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>- Investments</td>
<td>- PERFORMANCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence of Managing Director</td>
<td>- INTERACTIONS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule of formal meetings</td>
<td>- general managers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links with corporate level finance</td>
<td>- sales</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own study. Źródło: opracowanie własne.

In sum, becoming business partner depends to some degree on finance employees themselves, (e.g. how they manage their symbolic capital), yet it is to a high extent affected by organizational context including other organizational members. More understanding in companies is required towards perception of finance department as consultant and managers’ partner rather than policeman or scorekeeper, since the finance department can contribute to company’s competitive advantage and performance.
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