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COLLABORATIVE STRATEGIES AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY IN SECURITY CRISIS CONTEXTS: THE ROLE OF INTER-FIRM PARTNERSHIPS AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT IN BURKINA FASO

Simpore Ismael [1]

Iradukunda Sengesho Benigne2

Nizeyimana Jean Baptiste3

1. Joint Reseacher at Lisala University and UNCR University, Development of Business management
2. Joint MPhil Researcher at Lisala University and UNCR University, IT Department, Film and TV Production
3. Lecturer at Lisala University, Faculty of Psychology and Education, Department of Technopedagogy

ABSTRACT

In security crisis contexts, no single enterprise can navigate the challenges alone. Collaboration with other enterprises, government agencies, financial institutions, and international partners is essential for maintaining business continuity and building organizational resilience. This article analyzes the effect of inter-firm collaborations and stakeholder engagement on organizational resilience, drawing on the case of Tarwendé Business International (TBI) in Burkina Faso. The research employs a qualitative methodology, including documentary review, semi-structured

[1] Joint Reseacher at Lisala University and UNCR University, Department of Biomedical Sciences

interviews, questionnaires, and direct observation. The analysis reveals that TBI's collaborative strategy includes: partnerships with the state (subsidies and tax relief); partnerships with banks and financial institutions (increased credit lines); partnerships with international suppliers (supply chain security); and partnerships with security forces (staff and asset protection). The article concludes that inter-firm collaborations and stakeholder engagement significantly increase organizational resilience in security crisis contexts, and that effective collaboration requires trust, mutual benefit, clear communication, and formal agreements.

Keywords: Inter-firm collaboration, stakeholder engagement, organizational resilience, security crisis, Burkina Faso, business continuity.

RÉSUMÉ (FRENCH)

Dans les contextes de crise sécuritaire, aucune entreprise seule ne peut naviguer les défis. La collaboration avec d'autres entreprises, les agences gouvernementales, les institutions financières et les partenaires internationaux est essentielle pour maintenir la continuité des activités et construire la résilience organisationnelle. Cet article analyse l'effet des collaborations inter-entreprises et de l'engagement des parties prenantes sur la résilience organisationnelle, à travers le cas de Tarwendé Business International (TBI) au Burkina Faso. La recherche emploie une méthodologie qualitative, incluant une revue documentaire, des entretiens semi-directifs, des questionnaires et l'observation directe. L'analyse révèle que la stratégie collaborative de TBI inclut : des partenariats avec l'État (subventions et allègements fiscaux); des partenariats avec les banques et institutions financières (augmentation des lignes de crédit); des partenariats avec des fournisseurs internationaux (sécurisation de la chaîne d'approvisionnement); et des partenariats avec les forces de sécurité (protection du personnel et des actifs). L'article conclut que les collaborations inter-entreprises et l'engagement des parties prenantes augmentent significativement la résilience organisationnelle dans les contextes de crise sécuritaire, et que la collaboration efficace nécessite la confiance, le bénéfice mutuel, une communication claire et des accords formels.

Mots-clés: Collaboration inter-entreprises, engagement des parties prenantes, résilience organisationnelle, crise sécuritaire, Burkina Faso, continuité d'activité.

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Auteurs correspondant: *Simpore Ismael,Iradukunda Sengesho Benigne and Nizeyimana Jean Baptiste*
Adresses électroniques: *simporeismael@cirep.ac.cd,benigneira0@gmail.com, nizeyimana.jb@dphu.ac.cd ,*
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1. INTRODUCTION

In security crisis contexts, no single enterprise can navigate the challenges alone. The scale and complexity of the disruptions require collective action, with enterprises pooling resources, sharing information, and coordinating responses. Collaboration with government agencies, financial institutions, international partners, and other enterprises is essential for maintaining business continuity and building organizational resilience.

This article analyzes the effect of inter-firm collaborations and stakeholder engagement on organizational resilience, drawing on the case of Tarwendé Business International (TBI) in Burkina Faso. The article is organized as follows. Section two presents the theoretical framework. Section three describes the methodology. Section four presents TBI's collaborative strategies. Section five evaluates the effectiveness of these collaborations. Section six discusses implications for other enterprises. Section seven concludes.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Inter-Firm Collaboration Theory

Inter-firm collaboration refers to cooperative arrangements between two or more independent firms that involve exchange, sharing, or co-development of resources, capabilities, or information (Gulati, 1995; Dyer & Singh, 1998). Forms of inter-firm collaboration include: strategic alliances (long-term partnerships for mutual benefit); joint ventures (creation of a separate entity owned by

partners); supply chain partnerships (collaborative relationships with suppliers and customers); and informal cooperation (ad hoc coordination without formal agreements).

Key factors that enable effective inter-firm collaboration include: trust (confidence in partner's reliability and integrity); commitment (willingness to invest in the relationship); communication (open and timely exchange of information); and governance (formal and informal mechanisms for managing the relationship) (Gulati, 1995; Ireland, 2002).

2.2 Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder theory, developed by Freeman (1984), posits that organizations should consider the interests of all parties affected by their activities, not just shareholders. Stakeholders include: employees, customers, suppliers, creditors, local communities, government agencies, and civil society organizations.

In crisis contexts, stakeholder engagement is particularly important. Engaged stakeholders are more likely to provide resources, share information, and collaborate in response efforts. Conversely, alienated stakeholders may obstruct or undermine response efforts.

2.3 Collaborative Resilience

The concept of collaborative resilience emphasizes that resilience is not just an individual organizational attribute but a property of inter-organizational networks and ecosystems (Boin & van Eeten, 2013; McManus, 2008). Collaborative resilience is built through: information sharing across organizations; resource pooling (sharing scarce resources during crises); coordinated response planning; and mutual aid agreements.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This research employs a qualitative case study design, focusing on Tarwendé Business International (TBI) in Burkina Faso.

3.2 Data Collection

Data were collected through multiple methods: documentary review (analysis of company reports, government documents, and academic literature); semi-structured interviews (with TBI management and staff, government officials, bank representatives, and other stakeholders); and direct observation.

3.3 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis, with themes derived from the theoretical framework and emerging from the data.

4. TBI'S COLLABORATIVE STRATEGIES

4.1 Partnerships with the State

TBI has developed partnerships with the state to access resources and support during the crisis. Key aspects of this partnership include: subsidies for large enterprises in difficulty; tax relief (reduction or deferral of tax obligations); access to government procurement opportunities; and coordination with security forces for protection of staff and assets.

The benefits of state partnerships have included: improved cash flow from subsidies and tax relief; new business opportunities from government procurement; and enhanced security for operations.

4.2 Partnerships with Banks and Financial Institutions

TBI has strengthened its partnerships with banks and financial institutions to access additional financial resources. Key aspects include: increased credit lines to cover operational expenses and investments; favorable interest rates and repayment terms; access to specialized crisis financing instruments; and financial advisory services.

The benefits of bank partnerships have included: improved liquidity; capacity to invest in crisis response capabilities; reduced financial stress; and enhanced credibility with other stakeholders.

4.3 Partnerships with International Suppliers

TBI has developed partnerships with international suppliers to secure its supply chain. Key aspects include: long-term supply agreements with guaranteed volumes; joint planning and forecasting; investment in supplier relationships; and development of backup supply arrangements.

The benefits of international supplier partnerships have included: reduced risk of supply interruptions; access to new products and technologies; improved supply chain visibility; and enhanced negotiating leverage.

4.4 Partnerships with Security Forces

TBI has developed partnerships with security forces to enhance protection of staff and assets. Key aspects include: information sharing about security threats; coordination of security responses; access to security force protection for critical assets; and training for TBI staff on security procedures.

The benefits of security force partnerships have included: reduced risk of security incidents; improved response times when incidents occur; enhanced staff confidence and morale; and lower insurance costs.

4.5 Collaboration with Other Enterprises

TBI has collaborated with other enterprises, including competitors, to address common challenges. Key aspects include: information sharing about security conditions and supply chain disruptions; joint advocacy for government support; pooling of resources for shared security infrastructure; and coordination of logistics and transportation.

The benefits of inter-firm collaboration have included: improved situational awareness; enhanced bargaining power with government and other stakeholders; reduced costs through shared resources; and strengthened relationships with other enterprises.

5. EVALUATION OF COLLABORATION EFFECTIVENESS

5.1 Resource Access

Collaboration has been effective in providing access to resources that TBI could not obtain on its own. State subsidies, bank credit, international supplier relationships, and security force protection have all contributed to TBI's ability to maintain operations during the crisis.

5.2 Information Sharing

Collaboration has been effective in facilitating information sharing about security threats, supply chain disruptions, and market conditions. This information has enabled better decision-making and more timely responses to emerging threats.

5.3 Coordination

Collaboration has been effective in enabling coordination among multiple actors. Coordinated security responses, joint logistics, and collaborative advocacy have achieved outcomes that individual enterprises could not achieve alone.

5.4 Limitations and Challenges

Collaboration has also presented limitations and challenges. Coordination among multiple partners requires significant management attention. Differences in interests and priorities can create conflicts. Dependence on partners creates vulnerability if partnerships fail. Information sharing may raise competitive or confidentiality concerns.

6. IMPLICATIONS FOR OTHER ENTERPRISES

6.1 Mapping Stakeholders

Enterprises should systematically map their stakeholders to identify potential collaboration partners. Key stakeholders include: government agencies (at national, regional, and local levels); banks and financial institutions; suppliers and customers; security forces; other enterprises (including competitors); and civil society organizations.

6.2 Building Trust

Effective collaboration requires trust. Enterprises should invest in building trust with potential partners before crises occur. Trust-building activities include: regular communication, transparency about intentions and capabilities, demonstration of reliability, and fulfillment of commitments.

6.3 Establishing Formal Agreements

While informal collaboration can be valuable, formal agreements provide clarity about roles, responsibilities, and expectations. Enterprises should develop formal partnership agreements that specify: objectives of the collaboration, contributions of each partner, governance arrangements, dispute resolution mechanisms, and exit provisions.

6.4 Managing Dependencies

Collaboration creates dependencies that can become vulnerabilities if partnerships fail. Enterprises should manage these dependencies by: diversifying partners, maintaining some independent capabilities, developing contingency plans for partner failure, and monitoring partner health and performance.

7. CONCLUSION

This article has analyzed the effect of inter-firm collaborations and stakeholder engagement on organizational resilience, drawing on the case of Tarwendé Business International (TBI) in Burkina Faso. The analysis reveals that TBI's collaborative strategy includes partnerships with the state, banks and financial institutions, international suppliers, security forces, and other enterprises.

The article concludes that inter-firm collaborations and stakeholder engagement significantly increase organizational resilience in security crisis contexts, and that effective collaboration requires trust, mutual benefit, clear communication, and formal agreements. Enterprises seeking to build resilience should systematically map stakeholders, invest in trust-building, establish formal agreements, and manage dependencies.

Future research should examine the conditions under which collaboration most effectively contributes to resilience, and should explore the challenges of collaboration across different types of partners.

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