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# Sustainable activities in manufacturing enterprises: Consumers' expectations

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**Abstract.** Generating profit is one of the primary reasons behind the establishment and functioning of any enterprise that pre-determines its behavior, inter alia, in the context of sustainability. Manufacturing enterprises are a specific area in terms of sustainability, as they have a great impact on social and environmental indicators. The paper analyses the issues of sustainable production in the Slovak Republic. The methodological basis of the study is the triple-bottom line concept. The methods used in the paper are analysis, synthesis and comparison. Within the framework of the research, the author has conducted two surveys in the form of open-ended questions. The first part is dedicated to consumers' evaluation of the production activity of manufacturing enterprises. Consumers as stakeholders of an enterprise have a significant influence on its activities due to the fact that they create market demand. The survey results show that the main methods for stimulating consumers' sustainable behaviour are the use of compostable packaging and abandoning chemical sprays. The second part is an overview of barriers and problems at enterprises that prevent consumers in the Slovak Republic from transitioning to a sustainable lifestyle. Among them are excessive plastic packaging and high prices for eco-products. The presented activities determine the direction for managers how to lead enterprises to sustainability in the market. The most significant findings from the surveys point to the excessive and reckless use of plastic by manufacturing enterprises. Consumers demand that managers make rational decisions about the origin, quantity and quality of materials used in production, including the long-term consequences and environmental impact of materials.

**Keywords:** consumers; limited resources; sustainability; sustainable development; sustainable production; consumers' expectations.

**JEL Classification:** Q01

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## INTRODUCTION

Humanity exists in a space where the dimension of human needs is much greater than the resources to meet people's needs. This basic economic paradigm is the driving force behind progress towards a more efficient use of factors of production. Awareness of the rapidly dwindling number of limited resources and environmental pollution were the initial impulses to begin the formation of the concept of sustainable development as an important direction of human activity. In connection with limited resources, their rational allocation is needed. Most of the limited resources are processed and subsequently used in the manufacturing industry. An essential step prior to assessing the sustainable activities of enterprises is the division of production activities into two directions, which need to be distinguished. One is information that reaches final consumers with the final product, and the other is information that consumers are unaware of. Based on the knowledge that consumers have, they create their own preferences for sustainable products, which put pressure on the production activities of enterprises in the distribution, production, and sale of their products. Consumers are the part of stakeholders [Ďurišová, Kušnírová, 2020] that directly affects the production of enterprises. In-

creasing consumer interest in greener products, along with greener production, is forcing managers to change inputs and the conservative production process towards sustainability.

It takes a long time for the entire production process in enterprises to be reoriented towards sustainable development. It is necessary for managers to deal with the elements of sustainable development, especially because of consumer preferences, supporting the domestic economy and increasing competitiveness in the market. An enterprise that does not apply the elements of sustainable development will not be able to compete for some time with enterprises that apply the principles and elements of sustainable development. It is necessary to perceive sustainable elements in the enterprise as a matter of course, not as a marketing achievement.

The purpose of this research is to point out inadequate inputs, activities and outputs resulting from the manufacturing enterprises with regard to the concept of sustainability.

The main objective of the research is to analyze the demanded sustainable characteristics and consumers' product preferences and to compare them with the biggest

obstacles created by manufacturing enterprises and preventing consumers from leading a sustainable lifestyle.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Sustainable production is based on several pillars, which provide an enterprise with frameworks of a sustainable direction. One of these frameworks is the triple-bottom line (TBL) model, which states that sustainability must have an economic, social and environmental aspect [McWilliams et al., 2016] without the possibility of abstracting from any of these aspects [Glavas, Mish, 2015; Nikolaou, Evangelinos, Allan, 2013]. The TBL model itself is clear and distinct. However, its use in practice raises many questions and conflicting views. According to the academic community, it is necessary to build sustainable opportunities [Hahn et al., 2018] and implement them in practice. Among managers, however, building such models brings difficult conditions in the decision-making process. While some studies support TBL models in the enterprise, others refute them [Gao, Bansal, 2013; Hahn et al., 2018]. These authors believe that the TBL model should be unified and not decompose the forms of sustainability into three aspects. Chell et al. [2016] and Montiel and Husted [2009] argue that focusing the enterprise exclusively on maximizing profits is only possible at the expense of the environment and society.

Among the social, economic and environmental pillars of sustainable development, paradoxes often arise between theoretical and practical perspectives. According to some authors, moving towards sustainability in one area has the opposite effect in another area [Gray, 2010]. Under certain conditions, this significant problem can be eliminated by focusing on specific sustainability pillars. According to the author, concentrating on sustainability does not necessarily mean achieving a stable ratio between all dimensions. The aim is to find a solution for all areas simultaneously through an integrated approach.

If an enterprise were to focus on maintaining the quality of the environment and society, it would reduce its profits and benefits for the economy. Hahn et al. [2018], on the other hand, suggest that the enterprise's managers focus on all the pillars of TBL at the same time. This mutual synergy is based on an approach stating that the economy cannot exist without society and the environment, which predisposes to consider all three aspects of TBL simultaneously [Walker, Yu, Zhang, 2020]. The enterprise's orientation towards the environment and society also has side benefits for the enterprise, e.g. building the enterprise's reputation and strengthening long-term relationships [Deng, Kang, Low, 2013]. Walker, Yu and Zhang [2020] found that focusing on a certain aspect (e.g. social one) does not mean the need to reduce the orientation in favour of other aspects (e.g. economic and environmental). An important factor for the enterprise is the connection of all three dimensions of TBL into business activities. It is essential that managers focus on the sustainable ele-

ments that are characteristic of a given type of business activity. Every enterprise requires different measures and elements in its sustainable area. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the scope and nature of individual elements of sustainable development. For example, the framework of objectives in the form of AGENDA 2030 offers enterprises the opportunity to focus on meeting those objectives that are typical of their activities and can influence them. It should be noted that the objectives of AGENDA 2030 are set from a global perspective and each enterprise must specify and narrow the individual objectives for the needs of the microelement.

The behaviour and decision-making of managers depend mainly on the financial ability of the enterprise. Hahn et al. [2018] point to the "paradox theory", where enterprises abstract from the environmental and social impacts of the enterprise. This situation is particularly characteristic of the period of crisis, when they are not allowed to focus on the environment and society, especially for financial reasons. So far, no research has been done on this "theory of paradox".

The second framework for promoting sustainability contains the UN programs, which include established goals for solving global economic, social, and environmental problems. A proactive approach by governmental and non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, stakeholders and the like is essential to achieve the goals of the UN programs. Enterprises, as the central actors of the most extensive environmental problems, serve as a specific component in this case. It is enterprises that represent the potential through which sustainable development can be achieved [Mombeuil, 2020].

**Sustainable Development.** Integration groups and international organizations that put elements of sustainable development into practice are aware of the need to move to a sustainable way of managing all activities in manufacture. The reason is the need to protect the environment, which is overburdened by human activity. In 1972, efforts to combat environmental pollution were officially launched at the Stockholm Conference. Eight years later, the World Conservation Strategy (WCS) was developed. This strategy refers to "development that is considered sustainable", in particular in terms of improving people's lives and protecting natural resources. In this context, it is essential to maintain "the management of human use of the biosphere so that it is able to provide its potential for the satisfaction of the next generation"<sup>1</sup>. In 1983, the UN Commission established the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), which in the Brundtland Report ("Our Common Future") characterized the term "sustainable development", which thus gained widespread acceptance.

In the literature, it is necessary to distinguish two concepts – sustainability and sustainable development.

<sup>1</sup> UN Environmental Programme (UNEP). (1980).

In a broader sense, sustainability is the state that humanity is striving to achieve. On the other hand, sustainable development represents all the activities, direction and process by which humanity seeks to move closer to sustainability. Several authors address this concept and their clarification [Buhr, Reiter, 2006; Livesey, Kearins, 2002; Milne, Kearins, Walton, 2006]. This issue raises many questions and uncertainties.

The official wording of the definition of sustainable development from the UN point of view is as follows: "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."<sup>1</sup>

One of the major groupings dealing with sustainable development is the European Union. It has shown increased initiative in addressing sustainability issues, since the Council of Europe Summit in Cardiff in 1998. The European Union's strategy, in terms of production enterprises and their activities, focuses in particular on waste management, waste recycling and reuse<sup>2</sup>. An important means of correcting the activities of all entities is mentioned the AGENDA 2030 program, which forms a framework of 17 main goals taking into account the current problems of the world in the context of sustainability. These objectives are broken down into 169 sub-objectives, which aim to guide the political, structural, economic and social transformation of the individual countries of the world in response to the threats facing humanity in the long term.

The AGENDA 2030 program follows on from the Agenda 21 program because not all goals in Agenda 21 were successfully met. The AGENDA 2030 program contains a comprehensive set of individual goals and objectives, which complement the Agenda 21 program and need to be achieved by 2030. Almost all countries in the world are involved in meeting the AGENDA 2030 goals. This program includes economic, environmental, social, institutional goals, as well as those for peace in the world.

Despite current advances in certain areas, humanity is still substantially unsustainable [Fischer et al., 2007]. This situation is alarming and requires increasing the impact of global efforts towards sustainability [Dorninger et al., 2020]. It is important to divide the issue of sustainability and sustainable behavior of individuals, society and enterprises into individual areas and to try to solve partial problems. In terms of research and our previous knowledge, a sufficient range of research has not been carried out, which would focus on the issue in a systemic way. The economic, environmental and social consequences of individual human activities are not clearly defined.

The topic of solving sustainability and sustainable development is still quite relevant, but the way of understanding this issue is not yet sufficiently elaborated. Individuals, as well as society and enterprises, do not have

well-defined frameworks and measurable indicators that are relevant to their activities and that they can record continuously. This paper examines the synergies between consumer demand and the output of manufacturing enterprises.

**Sustainable Business.** Sustainable entrepreneurship [Dean, McMullen, 2007] is characterized as "the process of discovering, evaluating, and exploiting economic opportunities that exist in the event of market failure or reduce sustainability and are relevant to the environment." Shepherd and Patzelt [2011] define sustainable entrepreneurship as "an activity that focuses on nature conservation, supports life and the local community, seeks opportunities for the future implementation of processes, products and services, while generating economic and non-economic benefits for the economy, society and individuals."

Sustainable entrepreneurship is also linked to several concepts and standards that are an essential part of sustainability. One of these concepts is Corporate social responsibility.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is defined as the concept by which enterprises integrate environmental and social interests into their activities and interactions with stakeholders. The goal is to achieve long-term sustainable development and growth [Prieto-Carron et al., 2006]. Stakeholders represent employees, shareholders, customers, suppliers, the community, and business management. In the literature, we encounter different views on the interaction between the enterprise and its priorities with stakeholders [Freeman, 2010]. The concept of CSR is considered an important direction for the development of enterprise activities in the field of low-emission production and efficient use of available resources [Aluchna, 2018]. The adoption and integration of CSR into the enterprise is a long-term process that significantly affects the enterprise's strategy. The enterprise must, therefore, predict the potential consequences of its activities in the long run. CSR generally changes the roles, reporting and scope of evaluations [Idemudia, 2011]. From an economic perspective, it significantly changes the understanding and redistribution of profits, taking into account social and environmental aspects [Dahlsrud, 2008]. The inclusion of corporate social responsibility in the enterprise requires a thorough overhaul of the way of doing business. In other words, the undertaking should recognize and understand the importance of environmental and social aspects in its existence [Hardjono, 2001].

An essential part of the inclusion of CSR in the enterprise is its origin in the enterprise's strategy. Enterprises are recommended to focus on meeting the AGENDA 2030 objectives after the inclusion of CSR in the enterprise strategy, which will increase the environmental, social and economic performance of the entire enterprise [Aluchna, 2018], including better orientation in a dynamic market.

<sup>1</sup> World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) (1987).

<sup>2</sup> European Council (1997).

Social and environmental responsibility to stakeholders of the enterprises has become more and more a key business principle [Tokarčíková et al., 2014]. Their commitment to TBL factors is integrated in their strategies and ingrained in various managerial decisions.

Both the government and society are constantly under pressure to switch to sustainable production. Significant momentum is coming from consumers, who are moving from a conservative consumer lifestyle, to a sustainable one on their own initiative.

Consumers in certain countries are increasingly leaning towards different philosophies that help them lead sustainable lives (e.g. zero waste philosophy, eco-friendly, etc.).

Consumers have a significant influence on business based on their shopping behaviour. They are a component that is often forgotten in sustainability research. Every person in the world, among other things, is a consumer and their behavior significantly, albeit indirectly, affects the degree of environmental damage.

Enterprises respond to shopping behaviour and produce products that are of interest to the market. This fact needs to be accepted in further research, and certain efforts should be made to change consumer preferences as a matter of priority, because they are the article that affects the entire production. This cycle has a prominent place, especially in matters of sustainability. If consumers demand sustainable products, businesses will respond to this stimulus by producing the products they want. Enterprises, on the other hand, should produce sustainable products from sustainable materials and in a sustainable way on their own initiative. Despite the efforts of enterprises to switch to a sustainable way of production, the reality is completely different. Enterprises are failing to sufficiently balance the needs of current and future generations.

For this reason, several studies have been carried out on sustainable production and its impact on business, environment and society (Table 1).

*Table 1 – Main research findings on sustainable development at enterprises*

*Таблица 1 – Основные результаты исследований устойчивого развития на предприятиях*

Authors	Main knowledge
Weisheng Deng, Lipan Feng, Xiukun Zhao, Yaqi Lou (2020)	Sustainable products significantly shape the social and environmental image of the enterprise, which increases the competitiveness of the enterprise
Moritz Petersen, Sebastian Brockhaus (2017)	The use of sustainable materials has a generally positive effect, but the nature of the products produced must be considered
Thomas J. Dean, Jeffery S. McMullen (2007)	Sustainable business has a significant impact on improving the quality of the environment

The connection of theoretical recommendations and developed frameworks with practical application in en-

terprises contains many failures. Managers are unable to accept and implement elements of sustainable development for several reasons. The first reason is that, to our knowledge, there are no frameworks of indicators applicable to the specific needs of managers – for different industries, different locations, different size of the enterprise, etc. For an enterprise to be able to report sustainable activities, it should have transparent and useable indicators and determinants. For all these required indicators and determinants, it is necessary to develop a proposal for implementation, acceptance and compliance control. It is essential to put in place a framework of sustainability indicators that are measurable and that management will be able to record them continuously.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Survey (A) of expected sustainable behavior by enterprises from a consumer perspective*

The very concepts of sustainability and sustainable development are difficult to explain and understand. Everyone imagines something different under these terms, so it is necessary to grasp the main most numerous features in their perception. Therefore, we consider it necessary to define the concept of sustainable development and to understand this concept from the consumer's standpoint. Ordinary consumers are increasingly aware of the need for more rational and environmentally friendly shopping behavior. When making a purchase decision, it is crucial to take into account sustainable principles of enterprises, specifically in all phases of its activities.

In order to understand the general perception of sustainable development in society, we conducted a survey (A), divided into two parts. In the first part of the survey (A), 189 respondents expressed their views on how enterprises can use their production to help consumers behave more sustainably. The survey (A) focused on consumer group mainly due to the high degree of influencing the market situation – creating demand.

Based on the statements of the respondents, after a thorough analysis, a list of the most frequent statements was compiled, which provided the basis for the second part of the survey. In the second part, 202 Slovaks expressed themselves by choosing a statement (possibility to choose more options) from the list, with which they most identify.

### *Survey (B) of obstacles in the implementation of a sustainable lifestyle in the Slovak Republic according to the opinions of Slovak consumers*

The survey (B) was divided into two parts, similarly to the survey (A). The first part of the survey took the form of an open-ended question about obstacles and problems preventing consumers from living a "sustainable" way of life. Exactly 287 Slovak consumers participated in the survey. A list was created from the most frequent statements of consumers, which formed the basis for the second part of the survey (B).



In the second part of the survey (B), 308 consumers commented on the most common obstacles that prevented them from living in a sustainable way of life. Respondents chose one of the mentioned 8 categories indicated in the first part of the survey (B).

## RESULTS

At the first stage of the survey (A), respondents were asked the open question: "How can businesses use their production to help consumers behave more sustainably?". The results of the survey are given in Table 2.

Table 2 – Distribution of the respondents' answers to the question "How can businesses use their production to help consumers behave more sustainably?"

Таблица 2 – Распределение ответов респондентов на вопрос «Как при помощи собственного производства предприятия могут стимулировать потребителей соблюдать принципы устойчивого развития?»

Answers of consumers	Number of votes	Percentage
Manufacture of clothing from natural materials	25	4,11
Recyclable materials	50	8,22
Products designed for long-term use	18	2,96
Resources from local suppliers	40	6,58
Food without chemicals	56	9,21
Compostable packaging	93	15,30
Fewer plastic products	80	13,16
Ensuring take-back	41	6,74
Fruits and vegetables without chemical sprays	90	14,80
Animal products from free range animals	72	11,84
Public relations in the internal and external area	43	7,07
<b>Total</b>	<b>608</b>	<b>100</b>

Based on the data from Table 2, we compiled the second part of the survey (A), in which respondents voted for

the category with which they most identified. Slovakian consumers' opinions on sustainable business activities are shown in Figure 1.

In the survey (B), respondents were asked an open-ended question: "What barriers and problems at enterprises are preventing consumers from living a "sustainable" way of life?". The following list was compiled from the most frequent answers (Table 3).

Table 3 – Distribution of the respondents' answers to the question "What barriers and problems at enterprises are preventing consumers from living a "sustainable" way of life?"

Таблица 3 – Распределение ответов респондентов на вопрос «Какие проблемы и сложности на предприятиях не позволяют потребителям соблюдать принципы устойчивого развития?»

Answers of consumers	Number of votes	Percentage
Too many plastic containers that may not be necessary for some products	88	27,59
High prices of "ECO" products	66	20,69
High prices in non-packaging stores	62	19,44
Low determination and willingness of people to change their lifestyle	42	13,17
High prices for products from local suppliers compared to foreign ones	17	5,33
Lack of non-packaging stores and their unavailability	16	5,02
Problems with disposal of old items (recycling, content of toxic substances, products after expiration, etc.)	15	4,70
Purchase of unnecessary products due to low price (sales, promotions, etc.)	13	4,08
<b>Total</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>100</b>

Based on the list from Table 3, we compiled the second part of the survey (B), in which respondents voted for the category with which they most identified. Problems of implementing a sustainable way of life according to consumers in Slovakia are graphically shown in Figure 2.

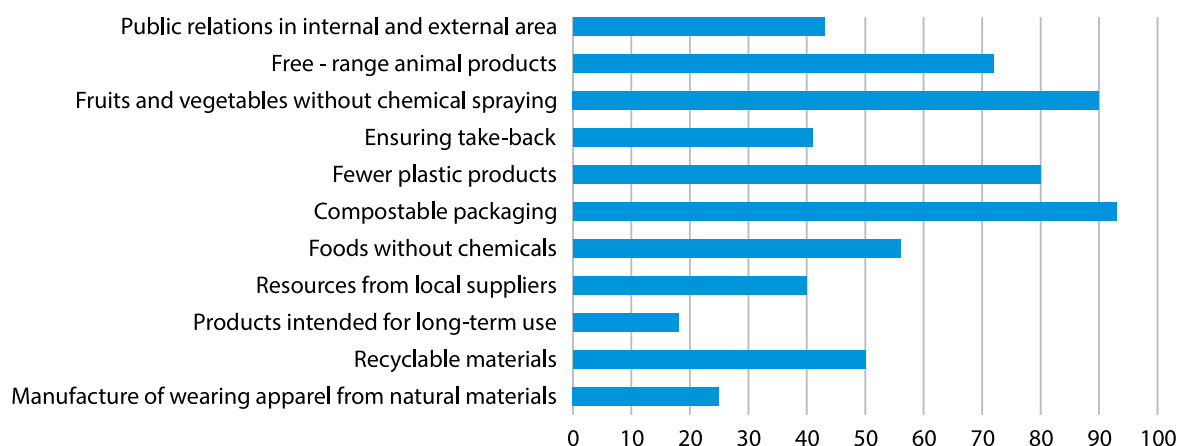


Fig. 1. Distribution of the respondents' opinions on the most efficient sustainable enterprises activities, number of answers  
Рис. 1. Распределение мнений потребителей о наиболее эффективных видах деятельности предприятий в рамках концепции устойчивого развития, количество ответов



Fig. 2. Problems of implementing a sustainable way of life faced by consumers, number of answers

Рис. 2. Основные препятствия при внедрении потребителями принципов устойчивого развития, количество ответов

The surveys showed the most frequent reasons behind the insufficient ability to introduce the concept of sustainable development into everyday life. The results show the view of people who are aware of the seriousness of the issue of sticking to sustainable development principles on a daily basis and encounter shortcomings that need to be overcome. According to respondents, the excessive amount of plastic packaging and high prices for eco-products are the biggest problems.

If we evaluate the respondents' answers based on the TBL model, consumers in their expected preferences focused mainly on the environmental area (Fig. 3). Customers perceive the scope of the consumer society and try to eliminate the impact on the environment.

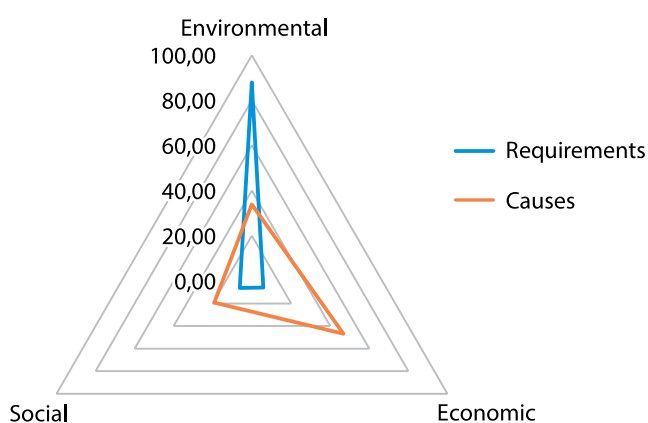


Fig. 3. Synergy of consumer requirements and problems in the application of a sustainable lifestyle, %

Рис. 3. Синергия потребительских требований и трудностей перехода к образу жизни, направленному на реализацию целей устойчивого развития

In terms of barriers that prevent consumers from living a sustainable lifestyle, we see above all an economic reason. Compared to the available variants and substitutes, it is clear that "less organic" products are much cheaper than "organic" products. This is the primary reason behind Slovak consumers' shopping behaviour.

## DISCUSSION

The surveys show, in particular, how consumers understand and perceive sustainability.

Both surveys were not primarily focused on manufacturing enterprises and implementation of sustainable elements into their production. These surveys offered each respondent an understanding of the concept of sustainable lifestyle or sustainable development subjectively.

The results reveals problems and obstacles related to every aspect of the TBL model. Defining precise difficulties in individual aspects is challenging, mainly due to the diversity of views on the issue. Almost every problem is in some way caused by economic factors (e.g. finance), social factors (e.g. lifestyle), but also environmental factors (e.g. recycling, production, packaging).

Given the strategic definition of the survey concerning exclusively the Slovak market, but especially the diversity of individual consumers' lifestyles, gender, age and a relevant social group, this survey should be seen mainly as an impetus for manufacturing enterprises trying to produce sustainable products in a sustainable way.

This research broadly draws attention to consumers as an essential part of the market. Several research works on sustainability, sustainable production and the sustainable style of people are abstracted from the influence of consumers. It is therefore essential not only to take into account the views and preferences of consumers on sustainability and a sustainable lifestyle, but in particular to raise awareness of the needs of sustainable direction and the sustainable lifestyle of every person on the planet. It is necessary to solve problems from elementary particles.

In our further research, we would like to narrow the sample of consumers in the questionnaire. We plan to focus on consumers who are already university students, since they are more interested in sustainability goals, e.g. expects meaningful work and self-fulfilment [Kucharčíkova et al., 2019], demanding equal technical, business and societal skills [Chodasova et al., 2015; Tokarcikova et al., 2014, 2020]. The results also indicate that new educational methods, internationalization of higher

education [Stanciu et al., 2018] and investments in human resources management [Hitka, Kozubíková, Potkány, 2018; Kucharčíková, Miciak, Hitka, 2018; Lorincova et al., 2018] not only stimulate consumers' sensitivity to sustainable issues, but also encourage employers, managers and employees to make decisions on sustainability at an enterprise and act accordingly.

Another area of future research may be individual groups of population divided according to such criteria as age, gender, place of residence, employment or nationality. Each of these aspects has a significant impact on consumer preferences, and it is important to identify which areas modify consumer preferences and to what extent. This is particularly important for further research needs and the design of sustainable consumer frameworks that affect the behavior of manufacturing enterprises.

## CONCLUSION

The increasingly discussed topic of sustainability and sustainable development is no longer the subject of transnational organizations and the scientific community. In addition, these concepts and knowledge about them are being transformed into the lives of ordinary people. The need to respect the environment, quality of life, safety and other issues in the world affect almost every individual. For this reason, it is necessary for every person or another entity to protect the environment and ensure quality and dignified conditions for the life of entire society.

Within the framework of protection and quality of the environment, international organizations, integration groups as well as individual states focus on sustainable development, especially at enterprises. This is caused by the manufacturing activities, which are the most harmful to the environment and associated with threats to human (animal) health and biodiversity. The way of production, raw materials and their origin, packaging components and the like are increasingly influencing consumers' purchase decisions.

It is evident from the surveys that consumers expect production enterprises to reduce the amount of

plastic used. Consumers also prefer shopping in non-packaging stores, where they face several problems: the distance and the low number of unpackaged shops, as well as high prices for unpackaged products. High prices for "greener" options, their unavailability and excessive use of plastics are obstacles that prevent consumers from living a sustainable lifestyle.

Sustainability often does not mean organizing enterprises' activities in a sustainable way, but only a form of marketing. For this reason, consumers buy sustainable and organic products, in fact not as sustainable and organic as they seem at first glance. Therefore, prices for this product alternative are often steep. In this regard, we observe a significant potential in the analysis of products of manufacturing enterprises, which are presented as "greener" or "sustainable" alternatives to conventional products.

It is important for managers and other specialists competent in the field of production to realize that being sustainable in the market does not mean to declare sustainability, but actually implement it. It is essential to incorporate as many sustainability elements into the production process as possible. The crucial part of this process is to secure local inputs, ensure a more energy efficient production process with the least polluting impact on the environment, guarantee the recovery and processing of products as well as packages and try to be part of the circular economy.

All these activities and processes can only be carried out if they are part of predetermined goals. The SMART rule [Cormier, Elliott, 2017] states that goals should be measurable, which is a major problem for managers when achieving sustainable direction of the enterprise. To the best of our knowledge, a system capable of recording the degree of sustainable development at enterprises, relevant to various sectors, has not yet been set up. This gap requires the creation of a system for managers, which would contain indicators of sustainable development directly applicable to an enterprise. ■

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## Деятельность промышленных предприятий в рамках концепции устойчивого развития: ожидания потребителей

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**Аннотация.** Генерирование прибыли – одна из основных причин создания и функционирования любого предприятия, определяющая его поведение, в том числе в контексте реализации целей устойчивого развития (УР). С точки зрения концепции УР наиболее выраженной спецификой обладают промышленные предприятия, поскольку они оказывают существенное воздействие на окружающую среду и социум. Статья посвящена анализу вопросов устойчивого развития в Словацкой Республике. Методологической основой исследования послужила концепция учета трех аспектов устойчивого развития. Использованы методы анализа, синтеза и сравнения. В рамках исследования проведено два опроса с применением вопросов открытого типа. В первой части статьи с позиции потребителей анализируются производственные аспекты деятельности промышленных предприятий. Потребители рассматриваются как ключевой фактор создания рыночного спроса, а следовательно, и влияния на производство. Установлено, что главными методами стимулирования их поведения, направленного на реализацию целей устойчивого развития, являются использование предприятиями био-разлагаемого пластика и отказ от химических удобрений. Во второй части представлен обзор проблем и сложностей, препятствующих внедрению потребителями принципов УР. Основные из них – избыточность пластиковой упаковки и высокая стоимость органических продуктов. Сделан вывод о безответственном отношении промышленных компаний к чрезмерному применению пластика. Менеджеры, по мнению потребителей, должны принимать более рациональные решения относительно происхождения, качества и количества используемых в производстве материалов с учетом долгосрочных последствий и влияния на окружающую среду.

**Ключевые слова:** потребители; ограниченные ресурсы; устойчивость; концепция устойчивого развития; устойчивое производство; ожидания потребителей.

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