

Research on the Macro Elements of the Marketing Environment of Companies by Industry

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Abstract—Companies operate in the conditions of environmental factors, some of which do not directly affect their activities, but through indirect influence. The subject of the development are the macro factors of the companies' environment, and the object is the business in the Veliko Tarnovo region. The main goal is to present the reactions to changes in the macro factors of the environment and how this can affect the company's competitiveness. The research objective is to compare the temporal influences of individual factors on company activity. The main research method is comparative analysis. The main result of the study is the identification of the specifics of influences in different industries.

Keywords—environment, industry, macro factors, marketing

I. INTRODUCTION

Business organizations do not operate in isolation. They are under the conditions of constant influences from elements of the environment.

Companies are surrounded by factors that have an impact on them. This environment is not static and “its elements undergo continuous changes, which are often unexpected for companies” [1].

Therefore, in order to be more adequate to the impacts “it is important for the company to build a specialized communication system” [2].

This communication system receives information to the organization and sends information out of it. In this regard, S. Lakova notes that “the originality of the communicated message is the most important prerequisite for the formation of trust and even for choice, through a conscious decision” [3].

The first direction of environmental factors directly affects companies and is part of the microenvironment.

Considering this environment “institutions are forced to look for new forms of interaction with contractors and users of their services” [4].

The second direction “encompasses factors that first affect the elements of the organization's microenvironment and then their influence is transmitted to the company itself” [5].

As R. Ileva notes “along with the rapidly changing global picture, the company must monitor the macroenvironmental factors, which are numerous, but can be divided into six main groups: demographic, economic, natural, technological, political and cultural” [6].

Sustainable development is “an objective necessity for the future, but effective action should be taken now to implement it” [7].

The topic of sustainable development “with the complex of environmental, social, and economic problems is increasingly entering every sphere of public life” [8].

In general, it can be said that “in many areas of public life, research is needed into the needs of certain social groups”, as well as in various industries [9].

The article will examine six macro elements of the marketing environment: demographic environment, economic environment, natural environment, political environment, technological environment, and cultural environment.

The research objective is to compare the temporal influences of individual factors on company activity and the main research method is comparative analysis. Three main industries in the territory of the Veliko Tarnovo region are being studied, as part of the three levels of the economy.

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II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The article includes results from two studies on business organizations conducted by the author in the Veliko Tarnovo region, Bulgaria. The first was carried out in the period February - May 2018 and 92 business leaders from the region were surveyed. The second survey was conducted between April and June 2024 and included 70 business managers.

In both surveys, invitations were sent to the same respondents. The number of respondents was different in the two surveys due to the different proportion of managers who agreed to participate in the survey.

This represents a limitation of the study, which may, to a small extent, fail to take into account the opinions of managers from the second survey.

Also regarding the limitations, the study of macroenvironmental factors in Bulgaria is not popular and it is difficult to compare the results of this study with other similar studies in order to make the results comparable.

Both surveys asked questions related to the environment as part of a larger study of the management and marketing activities of enterprises.

The questionnaire includes over 30 questions regarding the management and marketing activities of the companies, which are mainly closed with pre-set answers or have a rating scale.

Evidence of empirical data regarding the influence of the macroenvironment on the activities of companies in the region under consideration is available in the author's cited monograph.

In both studies, stratification was made by different industries. Enterprises were divided into sectors: agriculture, heavy industry, light industry, construction, transport, trade, tourism and services.

The article will consider companies from agriculture, light industry and services, as representatives of the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy.

The main research method used (comparative analysis) allows for comparing the results obtained over time and revealing key specifics in different industries.

The study clearly links to the PESTEL model, but there are some differences, as the social environment is represented by demographic factors, cultural factors are identified as a separate element, and legal factors are combined with political ones.

As part of future research, it is appropriate to examine the results of the PESTEL analysis through the prism of a SWOT analysis.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The cited authors and leading writers in the field of marketing are unanimous about the significant impact of the macroenvironment on business operations.

Whether entirely indirectly or with insights into certain direct impacts on organizations, they examine this environment in terms of distinct, separable elements.

The same applies to the presentation of the elements below.

The first macroelement of the environment is the demographic environment.

The influence of demographic environment on the activities of agricultural companies is presented in Table I.

TABLE I. INFLUENCE OF DEMOGRAPHIC ENVIRONMENT ON THE ACTIVITY OF AGRICULTURAL COMPANIES

№	Influence for agricultural enterprises		
	Influence	2018	2024
1	Without Influence	0.0	25.0
2	Low Influence	0.0	25.0
3	Medium Influence	33.3	25.0
4	Strong Influence	66.7	25.0

The demographic environment is having a decreasing impact on the activities of agricultural enterprises.

The influence of the demographic environment on the light industry sector can be traced in Table II.

TABLE II. INFLUENCE OF DEMOGRAPHIC ENVIRONMENT ON THE ACTIVITY OF LIGHT INDUSTRY COMPANIES

№	Influence for light industry companies		
	Influence	2018	2024
1	Without Influence	20.0	0.0
2	Low Influence	33.3	22.2
3	Medium Influence	26.7	55.6
4	Strong Influence	20.0	22.2

In the light industry sector, there is an increase in managers who believe that the demographic environment has a moderate impact on business. It is positive that over time there are no managers who do not take into account the impact of this environment on company activities.

Table III demonstrates the impact of the demographic environment on the services sector.

TABLE III. INFLUENCE OF DEMOGRAPHIC ENVIRONMENT ON THE ACTIVITY OF ENTERPRISES FROM THE SERVICE SECTOR

№	Influence for service sector		
	Influence	2018	2024
1	Without Influence	12.5	7.7
2	Low Influence	18.7	23.1

№	Influence for service sector		
	Influence	2018	2024
3	Medium Influence	43.7	23.1
4	Strong Influence	18.7	46.2

In service companies, there is a certain growth in managers who report a strong impact of the demographic environment.

The demographic environment is a projection of the organization's market. To report the decline in the influence of this environment is most likely indicative of the weak theoretical knowledge of managers in this industry and specifically in agriculture.

A major macro factor in the business environment is the economic environment.

Table IV shows the impact of the economic environment on the activities of agricultural companies.

TABLE IV. INFLUENCE OF ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT ON THE ACTIVITY OF AGRICULTURAL COMPANIES

№	Influence for agricultural enterprises		
	Influence	2018	2024
1	Without Influence	0.0	0.0
2	Low Influence	0.0	25.0
3	Medium Influence	33.3	25.0
4	Strong Influence	66.7	50.0

In the agricultural sector, there is a slight decrease in managers reporting a moderate and strong impact of the economic environment on the business.

The influence of the economic environment on the activities of light industry companies is presented in Table V.

TABLE V. INFLUENCE OF ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT ON THE ACTIVITY OF LIGHT INDUSTRY COMPANIES

№	Influence for light industry companies		
	Influence	2018	2024
1	Without Influence	6.7	0.0
2	Low Influence	20.0	22.2
3	Medium Influence	33.3	55.6
4	Strong Influence	40.0	22.2

Light industry managers are increasingly beginning to take into account the moderate impact of the economic environment on their activities.

Table VI demonstrates the impact of the economic environment on the activities of service companies.

TABLE VI. INFLUENCE OF ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT ON THE ACTIVITY OF ENTERPRISES FROM THE SERVICE SECTOR

№	Influence for service sector		
	Influence	2018	2024
1	Without Influence	0.0	15.4
2	Low Influence	0.0	7.7
3	Medium Influence	31.2	7.7
4	Strong Influence	62.5	69.2

Among companies in the service sector, the leading opinion is that the economic environment has a strong impact on company activities.

Managers in the service sector are most likely to adequately account for the economic impact on their business. Managers in agriculture are most likely to neglect monitoring the economic environment.

An important macroelement of the company's environment is the natural environment.

It includes natural resources that are “extraordinarily diverse in quantity, variability, renewability and reusability” [10].

Table VII presents the impact of the natural environment on the activities of agricultural companies.

TABLE VII. INFLUENCE OF NATURAL ENVIRONMENT ON THE ACTIVITY OF AGRICULTURAL COMPANIES

№	Influence for agricultural enterprises		
	Influence	2018	2024
1	Without Influence	0.0	0.0
2	Low Influence	0.0	0.0
3	Medium Influence	0.0	0.0
4	Strong Influence	100.0	100.0

All managers in the agricultural sector recognize the strong impact of the natural environment on their activities, as their activities are most directly related to nature.

What is the influence of the natural environment on light industry is clarified by the following table (Table VIII).

TABLE VIII. INFLUENCE OF NATURAL ENVIRONMENT ON THE ACTIVITY OF LIGHT INDUSTRY COMPANIES

№	Influence for light industry companies		
	Influence	2018	2024
1	Without Influence	40.0	55.6
2	Low Influence	46.7	33.3
3	Medium Influence	6.7	11.1
4	Strong Influence	6.7	0.0

To a large extent, light industry managers do not consider the impact of their activities on the natural environment, but they must consider that their raw materials depend on this environment.

The impact of the natural environment as a macro factor on the activity of the service sector is demonstrated by Table IX.

TABLE IX. INFLUENCE OF NATURAL ENVIRONMENT ON THE ACTIVITY OF ENTERPRISES FROM THE SERVICE SECTOR

№	Influence for service sector		
	Influence	2018	2024
1	Without Influence	43.7	41.7
2	Low Influence	18.7	16.7
3	Medium Influence	6.3	41.7
4	Strong Influence	12.5	0.0

Many managers in the service sector also do not consider the influence of the natural environment, but over time there has been an increase in those who consider the moderate impact of this environment on their activities.

It is quite logical that the natural environment has a very strong impact on the agricultural sector, but its impact is not limited to this industry. Managers in the secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy must also take these influences into account, given their connection with the factors of production, especially in light industry.

The next macro factor of the environment for organizations is the political environment.

The influence of the political environment on company activity in the agricultural sector is presented in Table X.

TABLE X. INFLUENCE OF POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT ON THE ACTIVITY OF AGRICULTURAL COMPANIES

№	Influence for agricultural enterprises		
	Influence	2018	2024
1	Without Influence	0.0	0.0
2	Low Influence	33.3	25.0
3	Medium Influence	66.7	50.0

№	Influence for agricultural enterprises		
	Influence	2018	2024
4	Strong Influence	0.0	25.0

The political environment has the greatest moderate impact on the activities of agricultural enterprises. The minimum purchase prices set by the government for their products are very important for them.

Table XI presents the opinions of light industry managers on the impact of the political environment as a factor of the macro environment.

TABLE XI. INFLUENCE OF POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT ON THE ACTIVITY OF LIGHT INDUSTRY COMPANIES

№	Influence for light industry companies		
	Influence	2018	2024
1	Without Influence	33.3	55.6
2	Low Influence	33.3	0.0
3	Medium Influence	33.3	22.2
4	Strong Influence	0.0	22.2

To a significant extent, light industry managers believe that the political environment does not affect their business, but they should take into account changes in special laws related to their activities.

The influence of the political environment on company activity in the service sector is presented in Table XII.

TABLE XII. INFLUENCE OF POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT ON THE ACTIVITY OF ENTERPRISES FROM THE SERVICE SECTOR

№	Influence for service sector		
	Influence	2018	2024
1	Without Influence	25.0	61.5
2	Low Influence	31.2	15.4
3	Medium Influence	25.0	0.0
4	Strong Influence	6.3	23.1

In the service sector, even more so than in light industry, serious attention is not paid to the political environment. Managers need to do better monitoring of legislative changes and the government's views on the direction of economic development.

In all three sectors of the economy, insufficient attention is paid to the influence of political and legal factors on the activities of the organization. Given the political instability in Bulgaria, business managers need to conduct a more in-depth analysis of the political environment, which has a strong impact on both the economic and demographic elements.

The technological environment is a macro element of the company's environment, together with the elements discussed so far.

Table XIII presents the influence of the technological environment on the activities of companies in the agricultural sector.

TABLE XIII. INFLUENCE OF TECHNOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT ON THE ACTIVITY OF AGRICULTURAL COMPANIES

№	Influence for agricultural enterprises		
	Influence	2018	2024
1	Without Influence	0.0	0.0
2	Low Influence	0.0	0.0
3	Medium Influence	33.3	75.0
4	Strong Influence	66.7	25.0

Managers in the agricultural sector take technological change seriously as a factor affecting their operations. All in this sector report either a moderate or strong impact of the macroelement.

How the technological environment affects the light industry sector can be seen from Table XIV.

TABLE XIV. INFLUENCE OF TECHNOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT ON THE ACTIVITY OF LIGHT INDUSTRY COMPANIES

№	Influence for light industry companies		
	Influence	2018	2024
1	Without Influence	6.7	0.0
2	Low Influence	33.3	55.6
3	Medium Influence	6.7	33.3
4	Strong Influence	53.3	11.1

Interesting results are obtained for the light industry sector. There is an atypical increase in those managers who believe that the technological impact on the activity is weak. They should think strategically in the long term, because their outdated productions cannot bring them competitive advantages in the future.

The influence of the technological environment as a macro-element of the environment on the activity of service companies is presented in Table XV.

TABLE XV. INFLUENCE OF TECHNOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT ON THE ACTIVITY OF ENTERPRISES FROM THE SERVICE SECTOR

№	Influence for service sector		
	Influence	2018	2024
1	Without Influence	18.7	61.5

№	Influence for service sector		
	Influence	2018	2024
2	Low Influence	18.7	0.0
3	Medium Influence	18.7	7.7
4	Strong Influence	37.5	30.8

To a very large extent, service company managers do not consider the technological environment as a serious influencing factor. This should be changed so that they do not seriously reduce their company competitiveness.

Only managers in the primary sector recognize the great importance of new technologies for the development of their activities. In the other sectors of the region, low-tech activity is observed, but investments in new technologies should be made to increase company competitiveness.

The last macrofactor of the organizational environment is the cultural environment.

Table XVI shows the influence of the cultural environment on the activities of agricultural companies.

TABLE XVI. INFLUENCE OF CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT ON THE ACTIVITY OF AGRICULTURAL COMPANIES

№	Influence for service sector		
	Influence	2018	2024
1	Without Influence	66.7	25.0
2	Low Influence	33.3	75.0
3	Medium Influence	0.0	0.0
4	Strong Influence	0.0	0.0

In agriculture sector, the cultural factor is either not taken into account or is taken into account with little impact on business.

The influence of the cultural environment on the light industrial sector can be seen in Table XVII.

TABLE XVII. INFLUENCE OF CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT ON THE ACTIVITY OF LIGHT INDUSTRY COMPANIES

№	Influence for service sector		
	Influence	2018	2024
1	Without Influence	33.3	22.2
2	Low Influence	40.0	22.2
3	Medium Influence	26.7	55.6
4	Strong Influence	0.0	0.0

In the light industry sector, there has been a slight increase in those managers who report a moderate impact of the cultural environment on their activities.

The impact of the cultural environment as a macro factor is presented in Table XVIII.

TABLE XVIII. INFLUENCE OF CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT ON THE ACTIVITY OF ENTERPRISES FROM THE SERVICE SECTOR

№	Influence for service sector		
	Influence	2018	2024
1	Without Influence	37.5	30.8
2	Low Influence	25.0	23.1
3	Medium Influence	18.7	23.1
4	Strong Influence	6.3	23.1

In the service sector, the influence of the cultural environment is taken into account to a greater extent, with a slight increase in the number of managers who report a moderate or strong impact on their business.

The cultural factor is considered to be the most important factor in the development or limitation of a company's activity in the service sector.

The influence of the cultural element increases consistently at different levels of the economy - from a weak influence in the primary sector, to a moderate influence in the secondary sector, and to the most significant influence in the tertiary sector of the economy.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results obtained from the two studies, some trends emerged.

The demographic environment is not sufficiently considered by companies in all three industries as a factor that has a strong impact on the activity. Considering that the market consists of people, it is important to pay more attention when conducting an analysis from a demographic perspective and to improve the theoretical knowledge of managers, especially in the primary sector of the economy.

The economic environment is considered a factor with a significant impact on the activities of companies in all three sectors but this is insufficiently monitored in the primary sector of the economy.

Quite logically, agricultural enterprises take into account the strong influence of the natural environment on company activities to the greatest extent. The impossibility of production without the necessary factors of production makes it mandatory to monitor and analyze the natural environment at all levels of the economy.

Service companies and light industry enterprises largely do not take into account the impact of political macro factors on the company's operations. The legal framework, the political climate, and their impact on other elements of the business environment should be the focus of corporate managers' analysis.

The technological environment is considered to be the most influential factor for the activities of agricultural enterprises. In other sectors, more attention needs to be paid to technological factors and managers should invest in new technologies to increase the efficiency of company operations.

The influence of the cultural environment is more noticeable in the service sector and light industry, while for agricultural companies this influence is not significant.

The results of the study of the macro environment are useful for managers from the considered spheres of activity, who can base themselves on them to increase their company's competitiveness. The results are practically applicable to other industries from the three levels of the economy of the region, and in the future, when conducting a national study, they can be the basis for application at the national level.

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