ESG AS A DETERMINANT OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR AMONG YOUNG CONSUMERS

JOANNA WYRWA

PhD; Professor Anetta Barska, PhD; Janina Jędrzejczak-Gas, PhD
Institute of Economics and Finance, University of Zielona Góra, Poland
E-mail: j.wyrwa@wez.uz.zgora.pl

Abstract - Environmental, social and governance (ESG) activities have become a key element of contemporary corporate responsibility, regulatory compliance and market communication. However, the consumer dimension of ESG is still less explored than its financial and organisational consequences, especially in relation to young consumers whose values, information habits and purchasing preferences are still being shaped. The aim of this presentation is to examine ESG as a determinant of consumer behaviour among young consumers. The study focuses on how the perceived environmental, social and governance activities of companies are associated with consumer awareness, trust in companies, assessment of the credibility and transparency of ESG-related information, and declared purchasing decisions. The empirical research was conducted using the CAWI method and an original survey questionnaire addressed to students as representatives of young consumers. The questionnaire covered several interrelated dimensions: knowledge and understanding of ESG, attitudes towards responsible companies, trust in firms communicating ESG activities, evaluation of the availability and reliability of ESG information, the role of ESG in purchasing choices, and declared sustainable consumption behaviours. The data were analysed using correspondence analysis, which enabled the identification of co-occurrence patterns between response categories and the graphical exploration of relationships between ESG perception, consumer attitudes and purchasing behaviour in a multidimensional space. This methodological approach is particularly useful for examining categorical and ordinal data and for revealing structures that are not fully visible in descriptive statistics. The findings indicate that ESG may influence how young consumers evaluate companies, interpret corporate communication and declare their readiness to choose more responsible products and services. Trust, transparency and the credibility of information appear to be crucial mechanisms linking ESG perception with consumer behaviour. The results also suggest that young consumers do not respond only to the presence of ESG declarations, but also to their perceived authenticity, consistency and verifiability. The study contributes to the current debate on sustainable consumption by showing that ESG should be analysed not only from the corporate or financial perspective, but also as a market signal that may shape consumer confidence and purchasing preferences. The presentation offers practical implications for companies seeking to design credible ESG communication and for institutions promoting responsible consumption among younger generations.

Brief Biography - The authors are academic staff members of the Institute of Economics and Finance, University of Zielona Góra, Poland. Their research is situated in economics and finance, with particular focus on consumer behaviour and market research, sustainable development and ESG, innovation, corporate finance, and socio-economic development. Their scientific output includes publications in the fields of sustainable development, energy transformation, consumer behaviour and regional development.