

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT FROM THE STAKEHOLDERS' POINT OF VIEW

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Abstract: The concept of sustainable development is widely used in public discussions. Unfortunately, it is often misinterpreted and reduced only to issues related to environmental protection. The article presents an attempt to assess the current state of knowledge of particular groups of stakeholders, as well as to evaluate the activities to identify, disseminate and use knowledge to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of stakeholders. Knowledge management in the aspect of sustainable development should be treated as an element of building a competitive advantage in the region. Surveys carried out among students and graduates of universities, employees and entrepreneurs as well as public administration indicated a problem in the area of knowledge in the field of sustainable development. Obtained results indicate a misinterpretation and very selective perception of issues related to sustainable development, often identified only with pro-ecological activity.

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Introduction

The concept of sustainable development, which is the fundamental and overarching objective of the European Union, plays a fundamental role in the harmonious development and mechanisms of its implementation. Poland, along with its participation in international arrangements, undertook to implement the principles of sustainable development, and the concept itself was reflected in the most important legal act - the Constitution of the Republic of Poland. Article 5 states: "The Republic of Poland safeguards the independence and inviolability of its territory, guarantees the freedom and rights of man and citizen and the safety of citizens, guards national heritage and ensures environmental protection, guided by the principle of sustainable development" (The Constitution of the Republic of Poland). That is the legal wording, but what does this mean for the proverbial resident? Does the average resident know what sustainable development is? Has anyone explained it to him or did the state, government organizations, universities make sure to provide knowledge in this area? Following this path, let us ask further questions: do the study programs cover the issues of sustainable development? What is the knowledge of university graduates and, most importantly, how do

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industry, the socio-business environment and public administration perceive the principles of sustainable development?

Planned and strategic knowledge management remains rare in Polish organizations (Brodny and Tutak, 2016; Witek-Crabb, 2016). Each of them, however, uses certain specific resources of knowledge necessary for effective business operations. Knowledge management in a conscious and appropriately designed way can increase the effectiveness of business operations and strengthen the competitive position of an organization or region (Gavurova et al., 2017). Organizations that have made sustainable development a part of their strategy can use knowledge management in this context as well (Zastempowski and Przybylska, 2016). There are many definitions of knowledge management, in short, it can be said that it is the ability to transform information and intellectual assets into value for customers and employees (Loorbach, 2010; Costranza and Daly 1992; Folke et al., 2002; Raudeliūnienė et al., 2018). In an even simpler approach, knowledge management can be defined as ensuring that stakeholders have the right information at the right time and in a form so that they can increase their effectiveness and the results of the entire organization. Knowledge means not only information and data but also intellectual capital, which consists of:

- knowledge
- experience
- technologies
- relations with clients / particular groups of stakeholders (relational capital)
- skills

The main "carrier" of intellectual capital is, therefore, employees of the enterprise or residents in the case of the region, who in the knowledge-based economy become the most important resource of the organization/state (Madrak-Grochowska, 2015; Mačerinskienė and Aleknavičiūtė, 2018; Szalavetz, 2017).

Differences in the perception of issues related to sustainable development can generate large management implications. This applies to issues at both the strategic level as well as, but to a lesser extent, the operational level. The synergy effect in the management process, assuming different perceptions of sustainable development by particular groups of stakeholders, does not give the desired effect (Lapworth et al., 2018; Komarova et al., 2018).

The implications for the process of strategy formation can be reduced by:

- Ensuring broad participation and informal channels of communication
- Encouraging the use of multiple sources of information debate and scepticism

Sustainable Development

"Greater production is the key to prosperity and peace"
(H. Truman)

The words of US President Harry S. Truman became the flagship slogan for the development of a market economy. Supporters of the market based on unbridled

production and consumption are also present in today's society, which often does not see a negative impact on the environment and the huge polarization of the world (urbanization, access to work, education, healthcare, etc.). In the 60s and 70s of the last century, there appeared works questioning the economic model based on an unlimited increase in production and consumption, it was the beginning of the birth of the concept of sustainable development (Balcerowicz and Rzońca, 2010). This concept was also found in the theory of economics thanks to the work of Herman E. Daly (Daly et al., 1996; Daly et al., 1999), who clearly pointed to the degradation of nature as a barrier to the development of future generations questioning at the same time the paradigm of an isolated environment from the general rules of socio-economic development. Thanks to the Conference of Scientific Experts of UNESCO, the UN General Assembly and the Roman Club on the threats related with unbridled development and robbery economy it has been growing louder, pro-ecological movements have also contributed to the public's interest in this problem. The preparation of the report Brundtlan Commission by the World Commission on Environment and Development under the leadership of Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Brudland in 1987 is considered the most historic moment for the concept of sustainable development. In this report, for the first time, the principles of sustainable development were formulated, according to which it is desirable to develop such that it guarantees the satisfaction of the needs of present generations and will not threaten meeting such needs for future generations. The report does not only concern the environment but also raises social, cultural, ethical and civilizational issues. It was also pointed out that in order to achieve the effect of sustainable development, it is necessary to integrate activities in three key areas (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Sustainable Development - the Effect of Activities Integration

In 1992, on the UN initiative at the Rio de Janeiro conference, a document called Agenda 21 was adopted, which presented the method of developing and implementing sustainable development in local life. The Polish version was published a year later in the study "Final Documents of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development". The program itself contained in Agenda 21 was valued at 600 billion dollars. After 25 years from the publication of Agenda 21, positive effects can be discussed, but not internationally or globally.

Positive effects relate more to local, regional and national areas. The interests of individual countries make it impossible to undertake real actions on a global scale. In the light of the experience of the past years, numerous scientific publications and examples of practical application of principles, the sustainable development should be treated as a dynamic process that is to ensure the aspirations of the present generation, as well as the aspirations of the next generations the so-called intergenerational justice. In order to achieve the effect of sustainable development, it is necessary to link three areas: economy, society and the environment (Sutopo et al., 2018; Cash et al., 2003; Tutak and Brodny, 2017). It is often a mistake to equate sustainable development only with environmental protection, omitting mutual links and dependencies with the previously mentioned economy and social environment. These connections and dependencies are built in the economic, social and cultural spheres. From an economic point of view, the environment is a resource that is available to the public (Skotnicka-Zasadzien and Midor, 2010; Ślusarczyk and Grondys, 2018; Grabara et al., 2016). And managing it requires the application of efficiency assumptions, which is recorded in the concept of lasting sustainable development. At the foundation of sustainable development lies the assumption of the possibility of the rational functioning of the natural environment, which the future goal is to improve the quality of life of contemporary and future generations.

Sustainable Development - Social Perception (Research)

In order to determine the degree of recognition of the concept of sustainable development by the social environment, a questionnaire was developed, which included, among others, open questions regarding the perception and definition of sustainable development, advantages as well as weaknesses and weaknesses of sustainable development. One of the closed questions concerned the knowledge of the Agenda 21 document. The research was carried out using: auditorium survey (students and some academic staff), direct questionnaire surveys PAPI (Paper and Pencil Personal Interview) (employees, entrepreneurs, graduates, selected governmental institutions and chambers of commerce and associations, as well as residents) and CAWI (Computer Assisted Web Interview) questionnaire surveys. In the research was also used a direct interview mainly addressed to representatives of local business, government institutions (city office, the district labor office) as well as industry institutions and employees of independent universities. 312 questionnaires of full-time and part-time students and doctoral students, 41 academic questionnaires, 71 questionnaires from business representatives, 24 questionnaires from central and local government institutions, 54 graduate questionnaires and 60 residents of the commune and 60 residents of cities over 100,000 were qualified for the study. The total number of qualified questionnaires was 521. The research was carried out at the turn of 2016/2017. The obtained results indicate a big problem with the correct identification of the concept of sustainable development, regardless of the social group. This is not an optimistic

message in the light of legal regulations obliging the government and the public for certain specific actions aimed at securing the future and safety of the next generations. The concept of sustainable development has been correctly interpreted by only less than a third of respondents. Most often, sustainable development was identified with the even development of the country with particular emphasis on the economy and communication infrastructure, environmental protection, even development of the city or with even human development. A very worrying is the very small, almost insignificant knowledge about Agenda 21 or other documents regulating the principles of sustainable development. Among the group of students for 312 qualified questionnaires, only four people had knowledge of Agenda 21 and they were students of the environmental infrastructure faculty as well as students of postgraduate studies dedicated to employees of the State Forests.

Academic Environment - Research Results

Research conducted among university students and staffs indicates a close relationship between the knowledge of the concept of sustainable development and the type of study as well as the specialization of researchers. The most-oriented in the analyzed topic were independent employees about 68%. Scientists dealing with renewable energy sources, optimized construction, management and issues related to environmental infrastructure had the most knowledge about sustainable development. The employees had detailed knowledge about sustainable development but only in the area of their specialization. The results indicate a focus on the technical and technological aspects. One can afford to formulate the thesis on the lack of integration and the non-equal treatment of economic development, social development and environmental protection. Only employees dealing with management issues pointed to mutual dependencies and connections between the economy, society and the environment. A similar situation was noted while analyzing questionnaires of students who define sustainable development through the prism of the studied field. In the case of full-time students, only 26% correctly defined sustainable development. Part-time students obtained a higher score of 37%, which is related to professional experience, performed functions and performed duties in enterprises. In the case of post-graduate studies (employees of the State Forests), more than half correctly interpreted sustainable development, while the rest of students reduced sustainable development to environmental protection issues and sustainable forest management. Academic employees considered economic factors in the second place environmental and social at the end to be the highest priority in the sustainable development strategy. In the case of students, the priorities are environmental factors that are posed before economic and social factors. The students' knowledge of threats and responsibility for the negative impact of the environment is exemplary. This is due to educational programs, campaigns and information campaigns in the field of ecology. However, in the case of extramural students who work there is a great fear that absolute respect of already existing or future legal regulations in the field of protection and

environmental responsibility will contribute to reducing the profitability of operations, which may lead to the closure of enterprises and a significant reduction of jobs on the market.

In the academic environment (technical universities), the technical level prevails in the approach to sustainable development, in the use of renewable energy sources, reduction of energy demand or reclamation and regeneration of the environment. A large number of scientists present the belief that what technology has destroyed, the technique will repair. What is needed is technology, innovation and financial resources for scientists and entrepreneurs appropriate incentives, for example in the form of tax exemptions or co-financing of pro-ecological investments. To the threats related to the sustainable development, scientific employees indicate the abuse of the word sustainable development, which is often used contrary to the assumptions. This is one of the reasons for the problem with the correct interpretation of the very idea of sustainable development. Another problem is the awareness of a society that is looking in the short-term (perspective of the length of one's own life) through a purely financial perspective - profits and losses. Stimulation for innovation and new solutions was considered a strong side. On the other hand, students pointed out that it is the sustainable development that will inhibit development. Because, quoting students, "everything is half-measures", "controlling development dynamics", "constant controls inhibit development", "high costs of running companies slow down progress", "regional specializations limit diversity", etc.

Analyzing the matrix of learning outcomes of particular fields of studies majors realized at the university, we find important elements of the concept of sustainable development, which indicates that universities are engaged in propagating this idea. However, according to the authors of the publication, in many cases, it is knowledge focused on specific areas with marginalization or omission of such an important issue as the integration and interdependence of the economy, society and the environment.

Business Environment - Enterprises (Research Results)

In common understanding, sustainable development is an alternative to the current development based on the growth of consumption and is to counteract limiting the chances of civilization progress of present and future generations (Krawczyk Sokołowska, 2012; Lech-Mesjasz, 2007; Anttila and Kari, 2018). Typical goals of the company are profit, increase in sales, increase of market share, reduction of operating risk, reduction of operating costs as well as shaping a positive image of the company, i.e. increase in the trust of customers and other entities to the company. Financial gain is often only associated with an increase in consumption. And unrestrained consumption does not blend well with the sustainable development strategy. On the other hand, shaping a positive image, increasing customer confidence or reducing the company's operating costs, reducing the energy demand, is an integral part of the concept of sustainable development.

Another concept related to production - lean manufacturing is as if tailored for the needs of sustainable development. Its aim is to provide customers with only products that meet their expectations (we do not produce unwanted products) with the least possible consumption of resources. Thanks to the use of lean instruments (Nowicka-Skowron and Ulewicz, 2016; Ulewicz, 2014; Klimecka-Tatar, 2017) it is possible to develop not by increasing expenditures and resources but by reducing wastage. This is a completely different approach than the standard image of a production company. One of the primary causes of damage to the environment is unsustainable production and consumption. In order to ensure sustainable production, many indicators and characteristics of raw materials consumption must be below the environmental limit. In practice, this means the need to minimize the production of all kinds of waste, as well as minimizing the consumption of raw materials and energy. In this way, we reduce waste, which results in the release of funds and resources. Lean is to make the company more effective, or implements the demands of sustainable development. Expectations of society and government in enterprises' involvement in implementing the concept of sustainable development are very large. Over 85% of respondents from the academic community, residents and representatives of public administration pointed to the key social responsibility of entrepreneurs (Business) in implementing the concept of sustainable development. What is the state of knowledge about sustainable development in this group? We have all of the surveyed entrepreneurs showing their knowledge on the question about the knowledge of the lean manufacturing concept. Unfortunately, this result could not be repeated for knowledge of the assumptions of sustainable development. Only one third of people were able to correctly define the objectives of the concept of integrated development - even though both concepts have elements in common.

15% of respondents had knowledge about the Business Card for Sustainable Development, 5% of the respondents got acquainted with the Sustainable Development Strategy for Poland by 2025, 20% have knowledge about Agenda-21. When asked about the knowledge of the ISO 26000 standard (guidelines on social responsibility), only in one case was answered in the affirmative way. The ISO 26000 standard in practice gains the opinion of a structured interpretation in the field of shaping the expected behaviors of enterprises in terms of their contribution to real actions for sustainable development. However, entrepreneurs see the need to take actions in the field of adaptation to the sustainable development strategy. The main factor determining these activities, however, is the desire to avoid responsibility for destroying the natural environment and fear of a lost image, loss of customers and investors. A frequent question asked by entrepreneurs (small and medium) during the interview, which indicates a misunderstanding of the concept of sustainable development was the question of implementation costs and the indication of the implementing entity.

Entrepreneurs define their concerns about sustainable development, in particular from large companies, which can impose very high standards, mainly in the field of

environmental protection and reduction of energy consumption that local companies cannot meet. They also point to the lack of support from government and self-government institutions and the lack of clear, legible and understandable information on the adaptation of the concept of sustainable development in enterprises. Often the only element of the sustainable development strategy in enterprises is to submit to the legal pressure of the eco-economy and adaptation to the environmental protection regulations. However, there are other activities involving the implementation of system solutions, of which the following ones deserve special attention: Environmental Management System (ISO 14001), EMAS system (Eco-Management and Audit Scheme) and the Cleaner Production program. All of these programs cost, entrepreneurs are afraid of increasing their own costs, slowing down development, excessive controls, penalties for non-compliance with requirements and loss of competitive advantage. Summing up, the implementation of the idea of sustainable development in the assessment of entrepreneurs is a process that directs enterprises to recognize the complexity of functioning (in the system: environment, economy, society) in a turbulent environment and harmonious reconciliation of economic, social and environmental company development objectives without compromising its future development opportunities.

State and Local Government Institutions (Research Results)

Planning and management of sustainable development (social, economic, spatial and environmental protection) is a basic task not only of government authorities but also, above all, of self-government authorities functioning at the regional and local level (Lele, 1991; Elkington, 1994; Lazzarini et al., 2018). An important element is the implementation of a coherent policy for sustainable development in the aspect of the development of the country and the region. Coherent decisions should also be taken to solve specific development problems, transformed into strategic goals in relevant planning documents, aimed at directing the development of regions, poviats and communes. Achieving cohesion and integration is more and more difficult to achieve due to the number of plans being created at different levels of management (voivodeship, poviat, and commune). Sometimes it comes to the situation that plans at particular levels are excluded. Considering the problem of cohesion and integration from the commune level, we are dealing not only with the sustainable development strategy but also with numerous local development plans. Governmental and self-governmental institutions have the responsibility to manage the implementation of the sustainable development strategy. The management process is very important and influences the dynamics of the strategy implementation process. The management system consists mainly of strategy implementation instruments and subsystems of monitoring and updating. The results of questionnaire surveys in the area of public administration give optimism that only 10% of respondents misinterpreted the concept of sustainable development. Deepening the research in the area of administration, a question was

asked to determine the priorities for sustainable development. Nearly 80% of respondents pointed to the equal importance of the economy, society and the environment. Six people pointed to the most important economic and two people on the environment. All representatives of the administration paid particular attention to the process of social consultations, which serve to gain public and entrepreneurial opinions on the activities proposed by the administration. Thanks to this, in the community under investigation a situation is obtained in which the inhabitants have knowledge about the decisions made, as a consequence of which the scale of the conflict caused by such decisions is limited. Administration staff also showed knowledge of Agenda 21 and the Strategy of sustainable development for Poland (84% of respondents). Representatives of local government (including representatives of the commune council) pointed out that sustainable development should not be imposed by various laws and regulations, but should be created by ecological culture. According to the author, this approach will result in a very slow dynamics of actions taken towards sustainable development.

Society (Research Results)

The results of research carried out among residents of the commune regarding the knowledge of sustainable development issues are simply bad. Out of sixty respondents, only six people were able to define sustainable development, mainly in the aspect of environmental protection. Sustainable development is identified by the residents of the commune clearly with the necessity of incurring additional costs by the household. Residents are concerned about the increase in the cost of municipal waste disposal. Anti-ecological activities involving the illegal emptying of septic tanks or burning rubbish in furnaces (as part of coal savings) are not an isolated phenomenon. For the main reason for such behavior, the inhabitants indicate the financial factor and lack of knowledge about the negative impact of their own actions on the environment and their own health. The research results indicate the need for organic work at the source to educate the public. Residents are not interested in the issues of taking action for the environment, do not believe in the effectiveness of such activities and cannot see long-term effects. This opinion prevails among residents over 40 years of age. In case of urban residents, the state of knowledge on sustainable development is better due to the numerous campaigns and campaigns informing about the dangers of sustainable development, more than half of the respondents showed knowledge of issues related to sustainable development. There was also noticed a positive influence of the city's infrastructure on pro-ecological attitudes, which were not recorded in the case of research carried out in communes.

Summary

Previous studies on knowledge management were subjective (focused on the enterprise, one organization). Researchers, as part of basic research, ask themselves

whether the solutions developed in other conditions can be used on the basis of socio-economic development, local development or the development of the whole country. The project undertakes research in a process approach, that is, it concentrates on the process in which many entities are involved that interact with each other, where cooperation and exchange of information are crucial for the final effect. The results of the study indicate an urgent need to develop, strengthen and popularize activities for sustainable development. Social awareness in this aspect seems to be a necessity, and changes in patterns should be a standard. Unfortunately, the average citizen's level of knowledge about sustainable development is insufficient. He is not aware of the impact of his own activities on the natural environment. He cannot or does not want to see the consequences of his activity and often the perception limits to the lifespan of his generation. The attitude of the academic community, students and academic staff is building; however, here you can also pay attention to certain risks related to the lack of integration of individual areas: environment, society and enterprises (technology, technique). In this research group, sustainable development is perceived through the prism of its own professional experience and it is focused on its own field of science. In the case of graduates who already have professional experience, on 54 respondents more than half mentioned indicated the interaction between the industry and the environment. Respondents also had knowledge in terms of legal conditions related to environmental protection in the aspect of their business activity.

In summary, our environment in which we live, both in the theoretical concept and in fact, ceased to be only a spatial and economic structure. Our small homeland, municipality, city or region is a conglomerate of activities of many entities and relations between them. Often, however, we do not see integration and cooperation between individual entities (including residents) in these relations and dependencies. And it is not only about economics, but also social, cultural and environmental relations.

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ZRÓWNOWAŻONY ROZWÓJ, ZARZĄDZANIE WIEDZĄ Z PUNKTU WIDZENIA INTERESARIUSZY

Streszczenie: Pojęcie zrównoważonego rozwoju jest powszechnie używane w publicznej dyskusji. Niestety niejednokrotnie jest mylnie interpretowane i sprowadzane jedynie do zagadnień związanych z ochroną środowiska. W artykule przedstawiono próbę oceny aktualnego stanu wiedzy poszczególnych grup interesariuszy, a także oceny działań służących identyfikacji, upowszechnianiu i wykorzystaniu wiedzy dla podniesienia sprawności i efektywności interesariuszy. Zarządzanie wiedzą w aspekcie zrównoważonego rozwoju należy traktować jako element budowania przewagi konkurencyjnej w regionie. Przeprowadzone badania ankietowe, wśród studentów i absolwentów uczelni wyższych, pracowników oraz przedsiębiorców, a także administracji publicznej wskazały na problem w obszarze wiedzy w zakresie zrównoważonego rozwoju. Uzyskane wyniki wskazują na błędną interpretację i bardzo selektywne postrzeganie zagadnień związanych z równoważonym rozwojem, często utożsamianym jedynie z działalnością pro-ekologiczną.

Słowa kluczowe: zrównoważony rozwój, zarządzanie wiedzą, interesariusze.

利益相關者觀點的可持續發展和知識管理

摘要: 可持續發展的概念被廣泛用於公共討論。不幸的是，它經常被誤解和減少，只涉及與環境保護有關的問題。本文試圖評估特定利益相關者群體的當前知識狀況，以及評估識別，傳播和使用知識以提高利益相關者效率和有效性的活動。應將可持續發展方面的知識管理視為在該地區建立競爭優勢的一個要素。在大學，僱員和企業家以及公共行政部門的學生和畢業生中進行的調查表明，在可持續發展領域的知識領域存在問題。獲得的結果表明對可持續發展相關問題的誤解和非常有選擇性的認識，往往只能通過親生態活動來確定。

關鍵詞: 可持續發展，知識管理，利益相關者。