

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL ASPECTS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT – A CASE STUDY OF FOOD COMPANIES INCLUDING CONSUMER ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR

Bożena GARBOWSKA^{1*}, Monika RADZYMIŃSKA²

¹ University of Warmia and Mazury, Faculty Economics, Institute of Management and Quality Sciences, Olsztyn; bozena.garbowska@uwm.edu.pl, ORCID: 0000-0003-0566-3543)

² University of Warmia and Mazury, Faculty Economics, Institute of Management and Quality Sciences, Olsztyn; mradz@uwm.edu.pl, ORCID: 0000-0003-0531-268X

* Correspondence author

Purpose: Competing for increasing numbers and more conscious consumers, as well as the emergence of new generations on the market, necessitates the continuous improvement of knowledge about pro-environmental and pro-social consumer attitudes and behavior. Therefore, this study attempts to: - identify the type of actions taken within the framework of sustainable development by selected food brands, - assess the pro-environmental and pro-social attitudes of young consumers purchasing food products, - determine whether environmental and social aspects are a criterion for food choice among young consumers.

Design/methodology/approach: The research was conducted in two stages. In the first, an analysis was made of messages posted on the websites of selected food brands. In the second, a quantitative survey was conducted among young consumers (n = 420) by indirect online survey measurement, using a survey questionnaire posted on Google form.

Findings: Young consumers have positive pro-environmental and pro-social attitudes. According to the respondents, the social involvement of companies influences the positive image and popularity of the products offered. Nevertheless, almost half of all consumers declared reluctance to pay more for the purchase of goods whose producers are involved in philanthropic and pro-environmental activities. This suggests that, in the opinion of this segment of respondents, it is entrepreneurs who should take financial responsibility for their actions by not raising the prices of the products they sell. It has been shown that concern for others by purchasing socially committed brands and the environmental friendliness of the product have lower rankings in the hierarchy of food product selection factors.

Research limitations/implications: The research was conducted on a narrow subject basis, so the results obtained cannot be generalized to the entire segment of young consumers. The scope of the presented research is also limited. The results of the research should be considered as a pilot.

Practical implications: The findings are relevant to managers implementing brand sustainability campaigns in the food production sector. They point to the need to continue such activities aimed at fostering altruistic and pro-environmental attitudes among the society.

Originality/value: This study highlights that sustainability encompasses a wide range of activities with diverse ways of communicating value to consumers.

Keywords: sustainability, consumer, pro-environmental attitudes, pro-social attitudes, food industry.

Category of the paper: marketing research.

1. Introduction

The issue of combining non-economic issues (such as incorporating social goals into operating strategies or developing new products taking into account minimizing their negative impact on the environment) with running a business has been practiced for a long time (Gkogkos et al., 2023). For several decades now, there has been an increased discussion about the need to build a sustainable business model with a responsible way of increasing income at its core (Sovacool et al., 2021; Acampora et al., 2023). Fundamental influence on such changes taking place in the industry has been exerted by the concept of sustainable development (Report of the World Commission..., 1987) and the social responsibility of organizations operating in the market (ISO 26000; Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament..., 2011), which provide theoretical foundations and set the main directions for the strategies and operating practices of modern companies (Maas, Reniers, 2014; Engert, Baumgartner, 2016; Rudnicka, 2018). Companies, investors, NGOs, governments and other stakeholders are increasingly taking ESG factors (E - environmental factors, S - social factors, G - corporate governance) into account when making investment or regulatory decisions. Integrating these factors helps create more sustainable, ethical and socially responsible business models (Aktaş, Demirel, 2021). Environmental factors refer to aspects related to environmental protection and sustainable use of resources. They are related to climate change, energy consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, water management, waste management and biodiversity conservation, among others (Calisto Friant et al., 2021; Ciliberti et al., 2022). Social factors refer to those aspects that affect society and the organization's stakeholders. These include human rights, working conditions, diversity, social inclusion, community relations, employee health and safety, and community involvement, among others (Radziwon, Bogers, 2019; Akanmu, Norshahrizan, 2022). Corporate governance refers to aspects of an organization's management and structure and includes factors such as ethics, regulatory compliance, corporate responsibility, independence of regulators, transparency in management, accountability, risk management and safeguarding shareholders' interests (Yun et al., 2019; Manikas et al., 2022).

Corporate sustainability is a path of socio-economic development that ensures the realization of sustainable development goals. The most important factors that ensure the creation of a sustainable and sustainable enterprise are sustainable production and consumption. It is increasingly important to modernize production, ensuring the optimization of processes, reducing energy and materials, and on effective dialogue between entrepreneurs and state authorities (Liao et al., 2017; Lertpiromsuk et al., 2022). Sustainable development of

enterprises, therefore, means taking measures aimed at achieving their fundamental economic goal and complementing it with issues related to taking care of the social and environmental aspects of its operation (in accordance with accepted environmental standards). The realization of a company's financial goals must take into account social and environmental aspects as the main areas of sustainable development (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Di Vaio et al., 2022a; Di Vaio et al., 2022b).

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is one of the main factors that helps an organization to gain an advantage in the market (which is possible by gaining the trust and loyalty of consumers, also used in negotiations with contractors), increase consumer satisfaction, which will be a guarantee that they will not abandon the company's products. In addition, CSR is an effective tool for raising new capital as well as providing an opportunity to reduce costs as a result of risk mitigation and a positive impact on productivity and employee morale. Since an organization's activities also affect its contractors, it is obligated to meet their needs. For this to be feasible, CSR activities must be compatible with corporate decisions and resource allocation (Genedy, Sakr, 2017; Gamal et al., 2022).

Globally, the food sector is a major employer in most countries, and the European food chain provides a secure food supply for more than 400 million citizens. It is therefore an important economic sector for the European Union is also a key area of focus when considering sustainable development. There is constant pressure on food companies from external stakeholders, such as NGOs, customers or regulators to implement sustainable practices in their operations during all stages of production and throughout the supply chain (Grimm et al., 2014). The special role of the food sector is to ensure food security. However, agri-food production is responsible for 80% of global deforestation, 29% of greenhouse gas emissions, and consumes 70% of fresh water used in industry. The food sector encompasses a very wide range of economic activities of all kinds that result from the production, processing, transportation as well as consumption of food (Rosenzweig et al., 2021).

More and more companies operating in the food sector have quality management systems in place, thanks to which losses of materials as well as raw materials used in production are minimized as well as the number of defective products is significantly reduced. However, companies are engaging at every stage of creating and producing goods increasingly conscious employees who are environmentally and socially sensitive and act in accordance with buyers' expectations. For full implementation, it is also essential that individual business partners also respect the same assumptions about quality standards, in accordance with the principles of sustainable development. Companies focus on minimizing the use of energy and all kinds of polluting chemicals during production processes (Thyberg, Tonjes, 2016; Grinberga-Zalite, Zvirbule, 2022; Mostaghimi, Behnamian, 2023). Effective management of water resources in food industry enterprises is possible by increasing the efficiency of water use at each stage of operations by reducing the amount of water withdrawn per ton of product. Many food plants have a, "Water Mapping" project in place, using sensors and meters, so that the production

process can be designed to reduce water consumption. Many enterprises also use water recycling or implement a closed loop system. Some enterprises with on-site water treatment plants can save water each year by using it to wash the production line (Liu et al., 2019; Cheng et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021).

According to the Accenture Report (2022), more than 50% of surveyed food and beverage companies in Poland already measure their carbon footprint and have adopted reduction targets. In this regard, actions can be divided into those related to changing the ways in which energy is used (to increase energy efficiency), its origin towards renewable sources, and changes at the supplier level. All of the companies analyzed have adopted targets for reducing waste and water consumption. The organizations also cite the tenets of the Closed Circuit Economy, most notably its section on full product management, the use of all production waste, packaging and the redistribution of unsold products. A strong focus on replacing packaging with partially recycled, lighter, recyclable packaging and on changing the recovery system can be seen. Social goals, and focus mainly on issues of diversity management, plant safety and philanthropy. Unfortunately, only a handful of companies have tools to support concern for human rights in the supply chain, such as risk monitoring systems or complaint mechanisms. Animal welfare is a must-have item, as caring for animals, while not the main communication message, is an important corporate action, which is linked to growing consumer empathy in this area. All of the companies surveyed that use eggs in their production process have eliminated those that come from cage farming. Still a small number of companies have detailed data on deforestation prevention, although this is one of the industry's biggest challenges. Indeed, harnessing the sector's mitigation potential is critical to achieving emissions reduction targets. Key examples of companies' efforts in this area include purchases of certified soybeans and palm oil (Accenture Report, 2022).

Investments in sustainable sources of raw materials, emission reductions, sustainable packaging and attention to fair working conditions are just some elements of a comprehensive approach to sustainability in this industry. At the same time, responding to changing consumer attitudes, companies are adjusting their strategies, integrating sustainable practices into daily operations. As a result, the food industry is shaping a new sustainable business model that simultaneously cares about the environment, employees and local communities.

In the context of the issues presented, this paper attempts to:

- to identify the type of sustainability measures taken by selected food brands;
- to assess the relationship between the pro-environmental and pro-social attitudes of young consumers and the behavioral attitudes and declared intentions towards environmental and social issues;
- to determine whether environmental and social aspects are a criterion for the choice of food products among young consumers.

2. Subject and research methodology

The research was conducted in two stages. In the first stage of the research, messages posted on the websites of selected food brands (PepsiCo, Coca-Cola, Danone, Tymbark, Milka, Nestle) were analyzed in terms of their sustainability activities. The selection of brands was suggested by their global - international reach. In the second stage, surveys were conducted among young consumers purchasing the selected food brands ($n = 420$). A non-probabilistic sampling technique - convenience sampling - was used to select respondents for the survey sample (CAWI). The research was conducted by indirect online survey measurement method, using a survey questionnaire hosted on Google Form.

The questionnaire consisted of three thematic blocks. The first part related to assessing attitudes toward environmental and social issues (12 statements). The second part of the questionnaire concerned pro-environmental and pro-social behavior, including in the choice of food products (18 statements). In the third part, on the other hand, consumers declared future intentions for pro-environmental and pro-social behavior (3 statements). Respondents expressed their level of approval or disapproval, in relation to the statements posted using a 7-point Likert scale, with strong disagreement with the statement corresponding to a rating of 1, and strong agreement with it a rating of 7. The collected empirical material obtained from the survey was subjected to statistical analysis using Statistica 13.3 software. Basic statistics were calculated: mean values, standard deviations and median. R-Pearson correlation analysis was used to determine the strength and significance of the relationships between attitude, behavior and intention.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Actions taken by selected food brands for sustainable development - a case study

In order to identify the sustainability activities undertaken by food brands, the selected brands were t.i. PepsiCo, Coca-Cola, Danone, Tymbark, Milka, Nestle. It was found that the range of activities carried out by the selected brands in the implementation of their CSR strategies, is very wide. Brands build their positive image based on activities concerning the consideration of social interests and environmental aspects.

PepsiCo's brand marketing communications show that it implements socially engaged marketing tools. PepsiCo, the manufacturer of the Pepsi-Cola brand, has been actively involved in corporate social responsibility (CSR) ventures for a long time. PepsiCo has committed to sustainable development, focusing on environmental and social issues. The company has set ambitious goals, such as a promise that 100% of the company's packaging will be recyclable by

2025. The company is investing in energy efficiency, aiming to reduce its carbon footprint. By modernizing production facilities and using renewable energy sources, PepsiCo aims to minimize its environmental impact. Given the critical importance of water to beverage production, PepsiCo is engaged in projects to conserve water resources. Through sustainable agricultural practices and investments in water-reducing technologies, the company is moving toward sustainable water management. PepsiCo works to benefit the community through a variety of initiatives. The company's "Performance with Purpose" program includes educational projects, support for local communities and the fight against hunger. PepsiCo also participates in various charitable programs, providing humanitarian aid for natural disasters. The company not only focuses on sustainability, but also on promoting healthy lifestyles. PepsiCo is implementing strategies to reduce the sugar and calorie content of its products, while developing a range of low-calorie products and healthy snacks. PepsiCo places importance on diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Through its Diversity and Inclusion programs, the company promotes equality of opportunity and eliminates barriers for employees of different ethnicities, genders and sexual orientations. PepsiCo's CSR activities reflect the company's commitment to sustainability, taking into account both environmental and social aspects. Through consistent investments in energy efficiency, water conservation, community support and the promotion of healthy lifestyles, PepsiCo is setting ambitious goals while adapting to the expectations of today's consumers and social norms. These CSR-oriented initiatives not only help minimize the company's impact on the environment, but also enhance the brand's positive image in the eyes of consumers.

A strong competitor to the aforementioned company is Coca-Cola, one of the largest companies in the global beverage market, which has been undertaking extensive corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities for years. Below is a brief analysis of the key areas in which Coca-Cola engages in CSR activities. Coca-Cola consistently strives for sustainability, as evidenced by its commitment to sustainable sources of raw materials. The company actively supports farmers working in responsible agricultural production programs, promoting sustainable farming practices. In the area of energy efficiency, Coca-Cola emphasizes the reduction of CO₂ emissions. By investing in environmentally friendly technologies, such as refrigeration using natural gases, the company is taking steps to reduce its impact on climate change. The company is also committed to waste management, seeking to minimize packaging waste. The organization has introduced an innovative approach to recycling, and is working to increase consumer awareness of packaging recycling. The company works to benefit local communities through a variety of initiatives. Corporate social responsibility programs include support for education, health and the development of local communities. Coca-Cola also invests in projects to provide clean drinking water in areas where it operates. In response to the growing interest in healthy lifestyles, like its competitors, Coca-Cola has introduced a number of measures aimed at reducing the amount of sugar in its products. The company is also expanding its range of low-calorie beverages and has launched sugar-free products. Coca-Cola consistently

promotes equality and diversity in the workplace. The company is actively committed to eliminating all forms of discrimination, creating a work environment that is open and accessible to employees from different social groups. Coca-Cola's CSR activities cover a range of areas, from sustainable management of raw materials to social investment and promotion of healthy lifestyles. Through these initiatives, the company not only cares about the environment and local communities, but also adapts to changing consumer expectations. The innovations it introduces, such as sustainable packaging and reducing sugar content, are not only a response to market trends, but also an expression of its commitment to corporate social responsibility. As a result, Coca-Cola is creating a positive brand image, which translates into the company's long-term success in the global market.

Danone has been committed to sustainability for years, which is an integral part of their business strategy. The organization not only provides food products, but also actively works to bring about positive social, environmental and economic change. Danone focuses on minimizing the environmental impact of its production. It implements innovative solutions, such as efficient water management, reducing energy consumption, and using environmentally friendly packaging. The company promotes healthy eating habits by offering products that are low in calories, low in sugar and high in nutritional value. It also introduces innovations, such as alternatives to traditional dairy products, to accommodate the diversity of dietary preferences. The company actively participates in the communities in which it operates. It supports educational, health and social programs to improve the quality of life in the local community. Danone is committed to developing sustainable practices throughout its supply chain. It works with suppliers and business partners to ensure ethical labor standards, minimize greenhouse gas emissions and reduce environmental impact. The company is investing in renewable energy projects. By using renewable energy, it reduces its carbon footprint and supports the development of greener technologies. Danone consistently develops packaging recycling programs to reduce plastic waste. It focuses on creating packaging that is more environmentally friendly and can be recycled more easily. As part of its operations, Danone supports farmers in transitioning to more sustainable practices. This includes, among other things, training programs, access to modern agricultural technologies and participation in sustainable agriculture initiatives. Danone regularly publishes sustainability reports outlining its goals, progress and targets for the future. This transparent approach helps build trust with consumers and business partners. Danone not only provides food products, but also acts as a leader of a socially responsible company, taking concrete steps toward sustainability. This commitment to responsible business positively impacts society, the environment and the company's long-term success.

Another company analyzed was Tymbark. Over the years, this organization, as a brand known for its juices and beverages, has been actively engaged in sustainability efforts. The company directs its efforts not only to developing its product range, but also to reducing the environmental impact of its operations, improving food quality and supporting local

communities. Tymbark focuses on introducing innovations to minimize the negative impact of production on the environment. It is optimizing the use of water, electricity and other resources, aiming for more efficient production processes. The company is working to reduce waste through efficient resource management. It also strives to reduce the amount of energy used, promoting conservation and the use of renewable energy sources wherever possible. Tymbark is committed to designing packaging that is more environmentally friendly. It implements solutions related to recycling and plastic reduction, while taking care of the aesthetics and functionality of packaging. As part of its offering, Tymbark is introducing products with low environmental impact. This includes, for example, juices with low water consumption in the production process or products without added artificial substances. Tymbark is involved in community projects at the local level. This could include support for local schools, cultural institutions or community projects that help improve the quality of life of the local community. The company not only offers products, but also promotes healthy lifestyles. It supports educational campaigns on healthy eating, physical activity and overall well-being. Tymbark works with suppliers and business partners to promote sustainable practices at every stage of the supply chain. This includes both raw materials and logistics processes. The company regularly communicates its sustainability goals and progress toward them. It creates channels of communication with customers to emphasize its commitment to responsible business. By innovating, supporting local communities and being environmentally conscious, the company aims to create a positive impact on the world and build a sustainable brand.

Over the years, Milka, as a well-known chocolate brand, has undertaken numerous sustainability initiatives. The company is not only focused on producing high-quality products, but is also committed to reducing its environmental impact, supporting local communities and promoting ethical business practices. Milka works toward sustainable production, focusing on efficient use of resources, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and optimizing production processes from an environmental perspective. The company aims to reduce its use of water, electricity and other resources by implementing efficient technologies and practices. Milka is actively working to reduce the amount of plastic in its packaging, looking for alternative, more environmentally friendly materials. In addition, the company promotes the principles of recycling and educates consumers on the proper handling of packaging. Milka pays attention to the origin of the raw materials used in chocolate production. It works with suppliers that adhere to sustainable farming standards, taking care to ensure fair working conditions and minimize environmental impact. The company is involved in social projects at the local level, offering financial and logistical support for initiatives related to education, health and development of local communities. The organization implements educational programs aimed at consumers and local communities, promoting responsible attitudes, healthy lifestyles and informed purchasing choices. The brand not only focuses on sustainable business practices, but also inspires consumers to lead more sustainable lifestyles, promoting conscious shopping and minimizing waste, among other things. The company regularly reports on its

sustainability progress, sharing information on its goals, initiatives and results. This transparency builds trust with consumers and business partners. Milka, through its sustainable practices, not only provides consumers with tasty products, but also shapes its brand as a responsible market participant. Sustainability has become an integral part of Milka's business strategy, which allows it to create a positive impact on society and the environment.

As one of the world's largest food companies, Nestlé is undertaking a variety of sustainability efforts. The company not only provides a wide range of food products, but also actively works to minimize its environmental impact, improve food quality, support local communities and promote ethical business practices. The organization focuses on sustainable production, aiming to minimize the use of water, electricity and other natural resources. The company implements innovative solutions, such as efficient water management in the production process. The company strives for efficient resource management, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and cutting energy consumption. It is working to use renewable energy sources wherever possible. Nestlé is taking steps toward sustainable packaging, aiming to reduce plastic and promoting recycling. It is also innovating, such as designing environmentally friendly packaging. The company is committed to sourcing food ingredients sustainably, working with suppliers that adhere to environmental and ethical standards. It supports farmers in transitioning to more sustainable practices. Nestlé actively participates in the communities in which it operates. It supports educational, health and social programs, aiding the development of local communities. The company implements educational programs, promoting healthy lifestyles, nutrition education and professional skills in the communities where it operates. Nestlé not only supplies food products, but also engages in campaigns to promote healthy lifestyles, paying attention to nutrition, physical activity and overall well-being. The company is committed to implementing sustainable practices throughout the supply chain, from raw material producers to distributors, paying attention to ethical labor standards. Nestlé invests in renewable energy projects, supporting the development of greener technologies. The company regularly publishes sustainability progress reports, sharing information on its sustainability goals, challenges and actions. Nestlé is taking decisive steps toward sustainability, seeking to integrate environmental, social and economic aspects into its operations. This commitment to sustainability is crucial for a company with global reach, affecting the lives of millions of people

3.2. Pro-environmental and pro-social attitudes and behavior – consumer research

Table 1 includes results relating to attitudes (statements 1.1-1.12), behaviors (statements 2.1-2.18) and declared pro-environmental and pro-social intentions of consumers (statements 3.1-3.3). As a result of the survey, it was noted that young respondents showed positive pro-environmental and pro-social attitudes (Table 1). According to the respondents, businesses should engage in pro-environmental and philanthropic actions (mean score 5.42, $M = 6$), social involvement of businesses affects the positive image and popularity of their products

(mean score 5.52, $M = 6$). Respondents also felt that companies/brands should clearly communicate to consumers that they participate in social initiatives (mean score 5.43, $M = 6$), and it is appropriate to inform consumers about philanthropic and pro-environmental activities, e.g. on product packaging (mean score 5.31, $M = 6$). When considering pro-environmental and pro-social behavior, it was noted that price (mean score of 6.56, $M = 6$) and functional value related to quality (mean score of 6.22, $M = 7$) are the most important factors for a young consumer when purchasing food products. On the other hand, environmental (mean score of 5.10, $M = 5$) and social (mean score of 4.53, $M = 5$) values ranked far lower in importance of food product selection factors. Analyzing declared intentions to behave towards environmental and social issues, it was found that young people most often show an undecided/neutral attitude towards supporting philanthropic and environmental activities of businesses ($M = 4$), while respondents most often expressed a desire to buy products whose sales proceeds support social initiatives (mean score 5.14, $M = 5$).

Table 1.

Pro-environmental and pro-social attitudes and behaviors of young consumers

Variables	Mean	SD	Median
Consumer attitudes towards environmental and social issues			
1.1. I know brands that are socially committed, i.e. brands that, for example: when producing goods, care about the environment, support charitable organizations, make donations to social causes, provide decent values	4,83	1,59	5
1.2. I have come across information about social engagement of companies/brands on their websites	5,18	1,46	5
1.3. I have come across information about social commitment of companies/brands on product packaging	4,93	1,49	5
1.4. I believe that entrepreneurs should engage in pro-environmental and philanthropic actions	5,42	1,36	6
1.5. In my opinion, brands' giving to philanthropic and pro-environmental campaigns should be a more frequent occurrence	5,38	1,44	5
1.6. I believe that social involvement of companies affects the positive image and popularity of their products	5,52	1,34	6
1.7. I believe that companies/brands should clearly communicate to consumers that they participate in social initiatives	5,43	1,46	6
1.8. Communicating/informing consumers about philanthropic and pro-environmental activities, e.g., on product packaging, I consider appropriate	5,31	1,39	6
1.9. The activities of socially engaged enterprises are important to me	4,75	1,48	5
1.10. I value the products of brands that engage in social campaigns	5,13	1,41	5
1.11. I am sensitive to environmental issues	4,94	1,51	5
1.12. I think of myself as someone who is concerned about ethical issues	4,93	1,46	5
Pro-environmental and pro-social behavior			
2.1. I try to choose environmentally friendly brands/products	5,02	1,39	5
2.2. I often buy products packaged in an environmentally friendly way	4,89	1,46	5
2.3. I buy fair trade products where fair wage and labor conditions have been ensured in their production	4,63	1,43	5
2.4. I take into account the information on product packaging or labels regarding social issues when purchasing goods	4,38	1,60	5
2.5. I happened to buy products marked with a symbol supporting some social action	5,26	1,37	5

Cont. table 1.

2.6. When I have a choice between two products I buy the one that is less harmful to the environment	5,02	1,55	5
2.7. When I have a choice between two products I buy the one which products are recycled	4,65	1,51	5
2.8. When I have a choice between two products I buy the one from the sale of which some part of the income is donated to social initiatives	4,77	1,44	5
2.9. I willingly buy products of socially responsible brands	4,84	1,38	5
2.10. By buying products whose producers support social initiatives I feel socially responsible, care about the environment, contribute to helping others	4,88	1,51	5
2.11. When buying food products I take into account: price	6,56	1,75	6
2.12. Quality (sensory characteristics, naturalness, safety, nutritional value, composition, expiration date for consumption, certificates)	6,22	1,05	7
2.13. Packaging (size, aesthetics, material used)	5,19	1,27	5
2.14. Product brand (confidence in the brand)	5,38	1,33	6
2.15. Country of origin	4,61	1,65	5
2.16. Promotion and discounting	5,62	1,28	6
2.17. Environmentally friendly product	5,10	1,42	5
2.18. Manufacturer's involvement in charitable activities	4,53	1,47	5
Intentions for pro-social and pro-environmental behavior			
3.1. I am willing to pay a higher price for goods whose producers are involved in philanthropic activities	4,09	1,55	4
3.2. I am ready to pay a higher price for goods whose producers are involved in pro-environmental activities	4,22	1,65	4
3.3. I am ready to buy products marked with a symbol supporting some social action	5,14	1,35	5

SD - standard deviation.

Source: own research.

Tables 2a and 2b show the correlations between the pro-environmental and pro-social attitudes of young consumers and behaviors and stated intentions to behave. In most of the analyzed cases, statistically significant correlation relationships ($p < 0.01$) were recorded between the studied variables. The correlation coefficients recorded most often ranged from 0.3 to 0.5, indicating a moderate degree of correlation. It was found that people familiar with socially engaged brands think of themselves as someone who cares about ethical issues ($r = 0.42$), are sensitive to environmental issues ($r = 0.45$) and value products from socially engaged brands ($r = 0.48$). They happen to purchase products bearing a symbol supporting social initiatives ($r = 0.53$). These people when given a choice between two products buy the one that is less harmful to the environment ($r = 0.50$). In turn, when purchasing food products in the hierarchy of choice attributes, environmental friendliness is important ($r = 0.39$) next to the manufacturer's commitment to charity ($r = 0.29$) and quality distinctions ($r = 0.30$). In addition, consumers familiar with socially committed brands declare future intentions to purchase products that support social actions ($r = 0.45$), are willing to pay a higher price for goods whose manufacturers are involved in pro-environmental activities ($r = 0.41$) and philanthropic activities ($r = 0.39$). The study found that people willing to buy products from socially responsible brands are willing to pay a higher price for products that support philanthropic ($r = 0.60$), environmental ($r = 0.55$), and social ($r = 0.66$) activities. It was also found that those who declare future support for social and environmental initiatives when purchasing food

products take into account the manufacturer's commitment to charity and the product's features in terms of environmental friendliness.

Table 2a.

Relationships between pro-environmental and pro-social attitudes of young consumers and behaviors and stated intentions to behave

Variables	Variables											
	1.1.	1.2.	1.3.	1.4.	1.5.	1.6.	1.7.	1.8.	1.9.	1.10.	1.11.	1.12.
1.1.	1,00											
1.2.	0,52	1,00										
1.3.	0,52	0,56	1,00									
1.4.	0,47	0,42	0,39	1,00								
1.5.	0,48	0,40	0,44	0,69	1,00							
1.6.	0,45	0,42	0,49	0,60	0,64	1,00						
1.7.	0,45	0,40	0,46	0,59	0,69	0,60	1,00					
1.8.	0,51	0,41	0,51	0,58	0,63	0,56	0,65	1,00				
1.9.	0,50	0,40	0,39	0,58	0,53	0,52	0,57	0,53	1,00			
1.10.	0,48	0,40	0,45	0,68	0,64	0,60	0,60	0,57	0,66	1,00		
1.11.	0,45	0,35	0,35	0,54	0,58	0,45	0,49	0,47	0,55	0,53	1,00	
1.12.	0,42	0,38	0,36	0,50	0,54	0,44	0,45	0,46	0,56	0,48	0,62	1,00
2.1.	0,48	0,31	0,36	0,56	0,57	0,50	0,50	0,47	0,56	0,57	0,64	0,53
2.2.	0,48	0,43	0,34	0,49	0,53	0,45	0,53	0,48	0,58	0,51	0,54	0,51
2.3.	0,42	0,36	0,33	0,45	0,47	0,40	0,47	0,45	0,54	0,47	0,47	0,49
2.4.	0,35	0,31	0,32	0,50	0,47	0,45	0,44	0,44	0,55	0,54	0,49	0,51
2.5.	0,53	0,50	0,52	0,50	0,53	0,58	0,56	0,54	0,47	0,56	0,45	0,43
2.6.	0,50	0,35	0,42	0,57	0,59	0,53	0,49	0,50	0,57	0,52	0,64	0,57
2.7.	0,45	0,28	0,34	0,49	0,57	0,46	0,48	0,39	0,52	0,49	0,60	0,49
2.8.	0,44	0,35	0,34	0,52	0,54	0,55	0,50	0,44	0,52	0,49	0,49	0,49
2.9.	0,46	0,42	0,48	0,57	0,61	0,59	0,59	0,53	0,64	0,61	0,53	0,57
2.10.	0,46	0,36	0,35	0,60	0,59	0,55	0,57	0,49	0,65	0,70	0,52	0,55
2.11.	-0,05	-0,04	-0,06	-0,04	-0,07	-0,12	-0,06	-0,05	-0,03	-0,03	-0,02	-0,04
2.12.	0,30	0,25	0,28	0,32	0,34	0,34	0,28	0,32	0,20	0,32	0,24	0,22
2.13.	0,16	0,04	0,08	0,18	0,17	0,17	0,18	0,13	0,20	0,22	0,22	0,14
2.14.	0,15	0,10	0,17	0,14	0,15	0,20	0,14	0,17	0,11	0,26	0,10	0,18
2.15.	0,20	0,08	0,08	0,05	0,10	0,05	0,08	0,11	0,20	0,12	0,24	0,18
2.16.	0,08	0,07	0,06	0,15	0,23	0,16	0,15	0,19	0,03	0,17	0,07	0,10
2.17.	0,39	0,20	0,24	0,42	0,46	0,31	0,37	0,33	0,50	0,48	0,52	0,47
2.18.	0,29	0,15	0,25	0,34	0,33	0,25	0,33	0,32	0,43	0,46	0,36	0,39
3.1.	0,39	0,31	0,38	0,46	0,52	0,42	0,43	0,46	0,54	0,49	0,48	0,54
3.2.	0,41	0,28	0,28	0,48	0,49	0,41	0,37	0,43	0,56	0,50	0,54	0,51
3.3.	0,45	0,43	0,46	0,62	0,65	0,59	0,66	0,58	0,58	0,65	0,49	0,53

Source: own research.

The results obtained confirm earlier studies (Radzymińska, Garbowska, 2023; Radzymińska, 2021). In the research on the factors of choice of clothing brands (Radzymińska, Garbowska, 2023), it was shown that concern for others by purchasing socially committed brands and the environmental friendliness of the product have lower positions in the hierarchy of other choice factors, especially functional values. This indicates that these values are side benefits in the decision-making process of young consumers. In contrast, another study found (Radzymińska, 2021) that the vast majority of young consumers have positive attitudes toward

socially committed brands/companies. It was also found that the vast majority of them happened to buy products whose sales proceeds supported a social initiative. In addition, an overwhelming percentage of respondents expressed a desire to purchase socially committed brands in the future. Nevertheless, nearly half of all consumers were ambivalent or negative about incurring higher costs for purchasing goods whose manufacturers are involved in philanthropic activities. This suggests that, in the opinion of this segment of respondents, it is entrepreneurs who should take financial responsibility for their actions by not raising the prices of the products they sell.

Table 2b.

Relationships between pro-environmental and pro-social attitudes of young consumers and behaviors and stated intentions to behave

Variables	Variables																						
	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.9	2.10	2.11	2.12	2.13	2.14	2.15	2.16	2.17	2.18	3.1	3.2	3.3		
2.1.	1,00																						
2.2.	0,60	1,00																					
2.3.	0,48	0,56	1,00																				
2.4.	0,50	0,46	0,48	1,00																			
2.5.	0,50	0,45	0,42	0,47	1,00																		
2.6.	0,69	0,60	0,57	0,56	0,50	1,00																	
2.7.	0,64	0,57	0,52	0,48	0,47	0,67	1,00																
2.8.	0,56	0,49	0,52	0,55	0,53	0,64	0,58	1,00															
2.9.	0,60	0,56	0,54	0,52	0,55	0,62	0,57	0,57	1,00														
2.10.	0,59	0,54	0,51	0,49	0,43	0,58	0,52	0,51	0,59	1,00													
2.11.	-0,05	-0,02	0,03	-0,02	-0,07	-0,08	-0,03	-0,07	-0,05	-0,04	1,00												
2.12.	0,23	0,22	0,22	0,20	0,33	0,30	0,23	0,22	0,30	0,23	-0,26	1,00											
2.13.	0,27	0,19	0,21	0,24	0,22	0,23	0,29	0,13	0,23	0,19	-0,03	0,31	1,00										
2.14.	0,13	0,10	0,18	0,11	0,23	0,11	0,10	0,18	0,17	0,20	-0,07	0,36	0,41	1,00									
2.15.	0,28	0,15	0,20	0,26	0,17	0,23	0,25	0,22	0,19	0,14	0,03	0,18	0,37	0,31	1,00								
2.16.	0,04	0,13	0,13	0,00	0,14	0,04	0,10	0,08	0,14	0,12	-0,10	0,35	0,20	0,30	0,15	1,00							
2.17.	0,56	0,48	0,47	0,43	0,40	0,58	0,59	0,40	0,48	0,50	-0,08	0,37	0,47	0,32	0,49	0,26	1,00						
2.18.	0,40	0,40	0,41	0,39	0,29	0,40	0,45	0,36	0,41	0,40	-0,02	0,21	0,40	0,37	0,46	0,20	0,71	1,00					
3.1.	0,53	0,50	0,48	0,54	0,44	0,57	0,52	0,58	0,60	0,48	-0,02	0,15	0,18	0,16	0,23	-0,01	0,47	0,45	1,00				
3.2.	0,55	0,53	0,50	0,55	0,37	0,60	0,52	0,52	0,55	0,55	0,00	0,13	0,17	0,08	0,20	0,01	0,48	0,40	0,71	1,00			
3.3.	0,56	0,55	0,50	0,45	0,60	0,54	0,51	0,58	0,66	0,61	-0,05	0,33	0,22	0,18	0,12	0,16	0,40	0,36	0,50	0,45	1,00		

Source: own research.

As Szuszkiewicz (2023) points out, due to the skeptical attitude of informed consumers toward traditional marketing messages, companies are increasingly recognizing the need to change the content created to capture customers' attention and build brand loyalty. Such messages center around the concepts of sustainability, business and consumption, emphasize the need to incorporate such patterns into everyday life, and educate on how they can be implemented. Particular importance is also given to disclosing information about the origin of the components that make up products, the ways in which they are produced, their impact on the environment and communities, as well as additional CSR activities of companies. Such information can take the form of both advertising content and environmental

and social reporting, both of which are taken into account by consumers in the purchasing process (García-Jurado et al., 2021; Hashmi et al., 2021). Consumers, in addition to being recipients of information, are also co-creators of information. This is particularly true for the category of prosumers, actively engaged in the process of sharing opinions and knowledge with other customers, as well as in the collaborative creation of value in the enterprise by creating and sharing content, product and brand suggestions, or eventually new ideas or concepts, operating in an open source and open innovation environment. Such consumers are a very valuable resource for businesses. Economic theory and practice provide a number of concepts and tools for using the phenomena in question to achieve the goals set by organizations, including building innovation potential and competitiveness, corporate and brand image, customer loyalty and commitment. Among them, the concepts of collaborative marketing, oriented towards co-creating value with the customer, and marketing based on educating consumers should be highlighted. Also associated with these concepts are such approaches as service logic in marketing, platformization, crowdsourcing, peer production, open innovation, social marketing and social reporting.

According to a study by Lassoued et al. (2023), a third of the Canadians they surveyed defined sustainable food as food that is of good quality, safe and healthy (a social dimension) (34%) or believed that sustainable food contributes to local economies, such as through lower production costs for producers (32%). Only 3% said they did not know what sustainable food meant. When asked about the importance of sustainable food, most respondents (80%) linked the concept to its "green" dimension, in which sustainable food protects nature, including the diversity of both plants and animals, and avoids destroying or wasting natural resources. These results suggest that a third of Canadians surveyed have a complete picture or holistic view of sustainable food with integrated environmental, social and economic aspects. However, the majority lacks adequate knowledge of sustainability because they do not seem to be able to interpret it as a tripartite concept; rather, they maintain a narrow understanding limited to the environmental dimension. About two-thirds of respondents indicated that they do not consciously look for sustainable food products at the grocery store, compared to 28% who do. The results show that Canadian consumers have an incomplete view of food sustainability, as the environmental aspect dominates. The social and economic dimensions were not as important in the analysis, as only a third of the sample understood the multifaceted nature of food sustainability (Burnier et al., 2021; van Bussel et al., 2022; Lassoued et al., 2023).

Foroudi et al. (2022) conceptualized their research on sustainability on the basis of seven components (i.e., social/community well-being, affordable and clean energy consumption, economic growth, responsible consumption, responsible production, sustainable industrialization and innovation, and gender equality). They showed that both responsible consumption and production are important to the study population. Affordable and clean energy consumption, responsible consumption and responsible production highlight the importance of sustainable consumption and production (Foroudi et al., 2022).

A study conducted by Norton et al. (2022) among UK consumers found that they were always aware of proper recycling procedures. For example, not all respondents were aware that black trays cannot be recycled, and that compostable trays must be composted in an industrial composter. These authors showed that correctly labeling a food product's packaging with recyclability can promote trust and be linked to perceived environmental friendliness or act as a preference factor for sustainable materials (Norton et al., 2022).

Conclusions

Studies of selected food brands have made it possible to identify the types of sustainability measures taken. It was found that among the sustainability measures, one of the main aspects is investment in renewable energy sources to reduce CO₂ reduction into the environment. All companies use recycled materials, and PepsiCo declared that by 2025 all packaging was recyclable. The organizations also engage in charitable and social causes by supporting areas affected by natural disasters as well as promoting healthy lifestyles among consumers.

In turn, the results of the surveys presented indicate that young consumers have positive pro-environmental and pro-social attitudes. According to the respondents, the social involvement of companies influences the positive image and popularity of the products offered. Nevertheless, almost half of all consumers declared their reluctance to pay more for the purchase of goods whose manufacturers are involved in philanthropic and pro-environmental activities. This suggests that, in the opinion of this segment of respondents, it is entrepreneurs who should take financial responsibility for their actions by not raising the prices of the products they sell. It has been shown that concern for others by purchasing socially committed brands and the environmental friendliness of the product have lower rankings in the hierarchy of food product selection factors. The results obtained have significance for managers implementing sustainable brand campaigns in the food production sector. They indicate the need to continue such activities aimed at shaping altruistic and pro-environmental attitudes among the public.

The study presented here has some limitations. The research was conducted on a narrow subject basis, so the results obtained cannot be generalized to the segment of young consumers. The scope of the presented research is also limited. Further research is needed that establishes the profile of the socially responsible consumer, taking into account psychographic characteristics and features derived from the social structure.

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