

SUMMARY

Determinants of the eco-innovation generation process in SMEs in the Silesian Voivodeship

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The main premise of the scientific research presented in this dissertation was the need to analyse the multidimensional determinants of effective implementation of eco-innovation in micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The importance of this topic arises from the dynamically changing conditions of economic activity, including both increasing environmental burdens related to the depletion of resources and excessive pollution, and growing environmental awareness, which makes the generation and implementation of innovations, particularly eco-innovations, a significant element in shaping the competitive advantage of enterprises. Additionally, there is a research gap in the literature regarding the determinants of eco-innovation, particularly in the context of SMEs. A significant part of the analyses conducted in the literature regarding the determinants of the generation and implementation eco-innovation in contemporary enterprises are partial studies of selected relationships related to specific types of eco-innovation. In addition, the studies undertaken are largely focused on the development of eco-innovation in large enterprises, and few studies are focused on the micro, small and medium-sized enterprise sector. Furthermore, the researchers analysing eco-innovation at the organizational level predominantly adopt an outcome-oriented approach, treating it as a result rather than a process.

The main objective of the dissertation was to determine the direction and strength of the relationship between the identified determinants (political-legal, market, technological and contextual factors) and the main stages of the process of generating eco-innovation (invention, development of eco-innovation and its implementation) in micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises of the Silesian Voivodeship. To achieve this objective, five theoretical-cognitive goals and two utilitarian goals were adopted and implemented.

The dissertation is theoretical and empirical in nature and includes an introduction, four chapters and a conclusion. The first chapter is a general description of the concept of eco-innovation. By organizing the terminology related to eco-innovation and conceptualizing eco-innovation in process terms, along with an analysis of the eco-innovation generation process, it was possible to identify the key stages of the process (the stage of invention, development and implementation of eco-innovation). The second chapter focuses on the determinants of the eco-innovation generation process in the context of the specificity of conducting activities by SMEs. This chapter includes firstly the characteristics of the SME sector in the Polish economy. In the further part of the chapter, external and internal determinants of conducting eco-innovative activities by enterprises were identified and then systematized, which allowed for the differentiation among (1) political and legal factors, including both legal regulations and economic policy instruments; (2) market factors, referring to the influence of such stakeholders as: consumers, suppliers and competitors; (3) technological factors, viewed through the prism of a company's access to external sources of knowledge and technology; and (4) contextual factors, directly related to key elements of the organizational context.

Chapter three presents the characteristics of the research procedure, the research model developed and the four research hypotheses formulated. The adopted research procedure used literature studies, document analysis, survey research and statistical analysis methods. The chapter also presents the developed integrated research tool along with the operationalization of the constructs into variables. The fourth chapter presents the results of the author's own research, which was conducted in 96 micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in the Silesian Voivodeship that implement technologies for environmental protection. The analysis of the obtained results allowed achieving the main research objective of the study, as well as verifying three out of four developed research hypotheses. The obtained results allowed to indicate which factors have the greatest impact on the specific stages of the eco-innovation generation process in SMEs operating in the Silesian Voivodeship, and therefore should be particularly taken into account to ensure effective eco-innovation activities. This chapter also presents an assessment of the level of efficiency of the researched SMEs in the context of their eco-innovation activities.

The final part of the dissertation – the conclusion – includes a discussion of the results of the implemented empirical research in relation to the conclusions drawn from the literature research. In this part of the dissertation, the most important recommendations for theory and management practice were formulated, limitations of the conducted research were described, and directions for further work were proposed. The dissertation ends with a bibliography, lists of figures and tables, and an appendix containing the research tool.