



USE OF PESTEL ANALYSIS FOR ASSESSING THE SITUATION OF POLISH TRANSPORT ENTERPRISES (PART I)

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Abstract: The objective of the article is presenting what influence on the activity of transport companies has macro-environment. In the first place the notions of macro and micro-environment have been defined. Then those elements of macro-environment that determine the functioning of Polish companies have been specified. On this basis the factors of macro-environment that are crucial for the functioning of transport companies dealing with the transport of cargo have been presented and described. Defined factors are the basis for the analysis of PESTEL transport market in Poland. Macro factors important for transport operations and PESTEL analysis will be presented sequentially in the second and third parts of the article.

Keywords: strategic management, macro-environment, microenvironment, transport company

DOI: 10.17512/znpcz.2017.3.2.15

Introduction

Every enterprises have processes. Processes are depend on the nature of the business. According to the authors, one of the most important logistics processes realized in the enterprises, is the process of transportation. Generally transport is undoubtedly an important part of the national economy. It is the basis for its smooth functioning. Production, service and/or commercial companies can procure necessary materials, raw materials, semi-finished products or goods, and deliver ready-made products to customers with their own vehicles. When certain conditions are been fulfilled, this transport can be classified as transport carried out for company's own needs. In some situations, maintaining own transport is unprofitable for a variety of reasons. One of such reasons is the level of transport costs, which, according to K. Sukiennik, constitute a significant proportion of the costs incurred by the company and reported in the financial result (Sukiennik 2011, p. 132). It is therefore unreasonable to carry out own transport when the cost of this transport exceeds the costs of equivalent services provided by third parties. The use of external service providers may also be justified when a company does not have the appropriate quantity or types of means of transport required to fulfil orders. It is then reasonable to use the services of transport companies, implemented on the basis of outsourcing. In such a situation, cargo conveyance services are provided by specialised transport companies. These companies, by optimising the utilisation

of capacity of means of transport, can reduce unit costs of transport and improve the quality of services.

Many entities operate on the Polish transport services market. Currently the market situation of Polish transport companies is difficult. This is due, among other things, to ever-changing legal regulations governing setting up, operating and the organisation of transport services, the vulnerability of transport companies to fluctuations in market fuel prices (Kot 2015, p. 393) and the difficult international situation. This means that transport companies need to prepare, sufficiently in advance, for changes in their closer and wider environment. Changes in the market can directly or indirectly affect the situation of transport companies. Some of those changes can be predicted, but some changes cannot be prepared for beforehand. Nowadays, the changes in the functioning of enterprises on the market are the most important challenges for strategic management (Piontek 2016, p. 48;

Kościelniak, Skowron-Grabowska, Nowodziński 2017, p. 19). In order to reduce the risks associated with operating transport services it is necessary to constantly monitor the situation in the company's environment and on this basis to develop a strategic plan for the management of enterprises (Brzóska 2017, p. 69).

Macro-environment and micro-environment of transport companies

A detailed description of the conditions prevailing on the Polish transport market should be supported by a detailed analysis of macro- and micro-environment. These two concepts need to be defined first. Macro-environment is a wider environment that has a significant impact on the operation of businesses. Unilateral impact of macro-environment on businesses can be observed. This means that companies are generally not able to influence their macro-environment. However, as K. Kozioł emphasised, there are exceptions to this rule is, for example large companies (corporations). They can, to some extent, influence some selected macro-factors (e.g. political and legal factors) (Kozioł 2010, p. 78).

In turn, the micro-environment is defined as the near environment. The term "competitive environment" can also be found in the literature (Kowalczyk 2015, p. 39), reflecting "the competitive situation of a company in a sector/industry" (Wach 2004, p. 424). It is in this environment that the interactions between various economic entities and influence groups take place. In this case, economic entities (buyers, competitors, suppliers and business owners (Lewandowska 2010, p. 156)) and the previously mentioned influence groups (customers, residents, media, financial institutions, local authorities, environmental and consumer advocacy groups, trade unions, employers' associations, etc.) influence the operations of the company and vice versa. An enterprise may also influence the activities of previously specified economic entities and influence groups operating in its immediate environment.

Taking into account the above definitions, it can be concluded that the analysis of micro-environment is not universal. The assessment of the influence of individual economic entities and influence groups on the operations of the company and, vice versa, the influence of the company on the economic entities

and influence groups may differ for a variety of reasons. These reasons include especially: company size, type of business activity, area and scope of activity, competitive position in the market, etc.

In view of the information presented, it could be concluded that analysing the macro-environment influencing transport companies is based on factors which are the same for all enterprises operating in the territory of the Republic of Poland. Nothing could be further from the truth. The macro-environment analysis will vary if only because it should be prepared taking into account the particular company. Some macro-factors will be important for manufacturing companies, others for service companies, others for trading companies, yet others would take into account the industry in which the entity operates. For this reason, the authors of this article will aim to describe the impact of macro-environment on the operation of transport companies. This decision is also supported by contemporary trends. The globalization of the modern economy puts new challenges ahead of logistics (Kovacs, Kot 2016, p. 124). The globalization, which has led to an increase in the movement of all types of goods (Nowicka-Skowron, Mesjasz-Lech 2013) and the associated internationalization of Polish transport companies (influenced mainly by Poland's accession to the European Union (Jasiniak 2017), means that forecasting the future of transport companies one needs to focus on the factors affecting their operations not only regionally and nationally but on the European or even world scale, i.e. take into account the wider environment.

Macro-environment elements affecting the operations of enterprises

The kinds of factors that will allow the analysis of macro-environment will vary according to the purpose of the analysis. In the theory of strategic management a detailed description of such groups of factors can be found. G. Gierszewska and M. Romanowska listed six zones that form the basis for the analysis of macro-environment. These are: economic environment, technological environment, social environment, demographic environment, political and legal environment, and international environment (Gierszewska, Romanowska 2003, p. 34-40). K. Koziół listed eight areas within a company's wider environment. These areas, called segments, include: economic, legal, political, technological, social, demographic, international, and natural segments (Koziół 2010, p. 79). K. Koziół separated political and legal factors which, according to Gierszewska and Romanowska, comprised one group. In addition, the natural segment appeared in Koziół's analysis. The natural segment was also mentioned in another publication. In this case, however, the segments were interchangeably referred to as macro-environmental factors. N. Assylbekova systematised macro-environment factors in terms of their impact on the competitiveness of enterprises. According to Assylbekova, these factors include economic, political-legal, demographic, socio-cultural, technological and natural factors (Assylbekova 2016, p. 156).

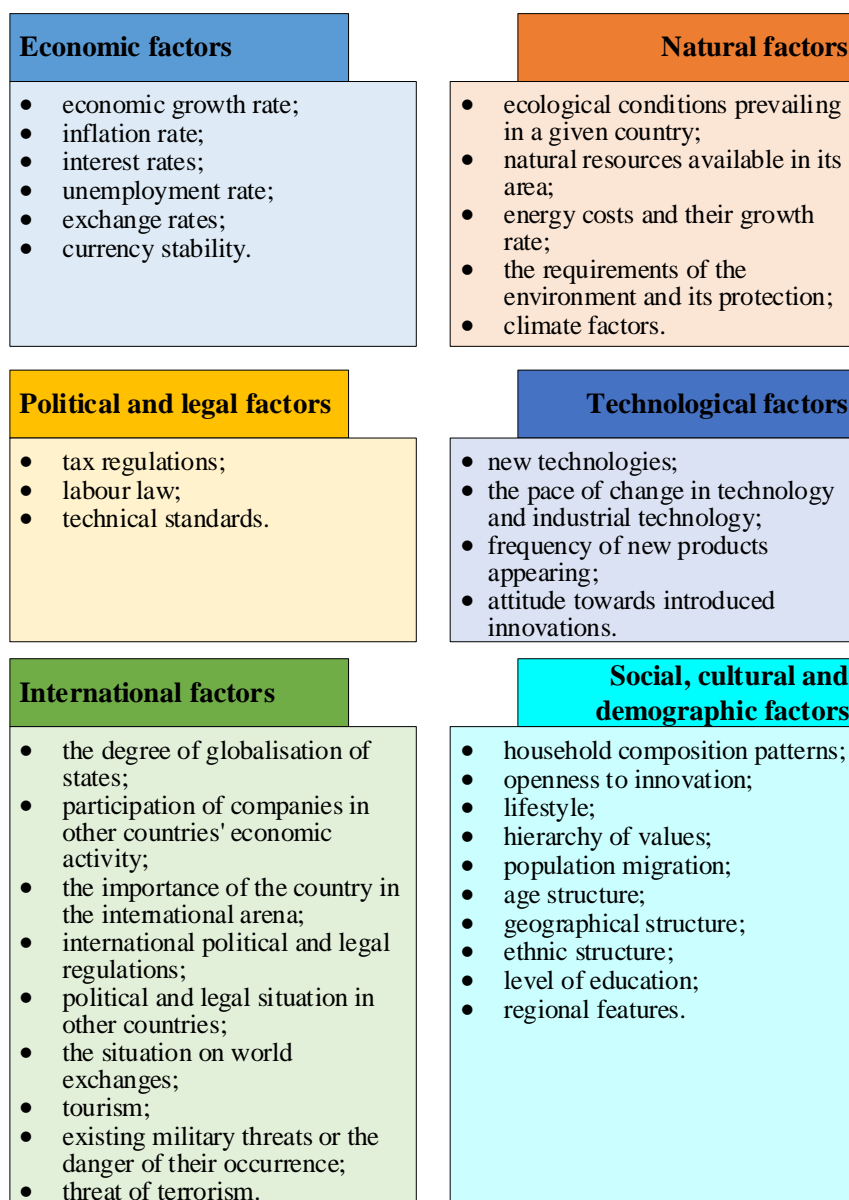


Figure 1. Macro-factors affecting the functioning of enterprises

Source: Study based on (Assylbekova 2016, p. 156-158; Kozioł 2010, p. 81; Kozyra 2006, p. 3)

As can be concluded from previous considerations, macro-environment is analysed in the same way. It does not matter whether the individual elements are named factors, zones or segments. It is also irrelevant that they are considered in terms of business risk or business competitiveness. They all allow for the determination of the impact of the wider environment on the entities of the national

economy. That's why there is no reason not to use these elements to assess the present and future situation in the transport services market. Macro-factors are presented in *Figure 1*.

Economic factors include those that describe the condition of the economy (Assylbekova 2016, p. 156), reflecting the market potential of a given country (Lewandowska 2010, p. 156). All these factors are significant for determining the state of the economy and should be considered holistically.

The social, cultural and demographic segment also has a significant impact on the operation of businesses. Of particular importance here are factors such as age, education, and economic activity of the population as well as people's lifestyle, consumption trends, and adaptation of innovative solutions emerging on the market. Undoubtedly, socio-economic factors have a significant impact on businesses (including transport companies) in the global economy (Odlanicka-Poczobutt, Knop 2016, p. 368).

Political and legal factors primarily determine the influence of the state on economic processes (Griffin 1998, p. 105-107). These include, above all, regulations that stimulate or inhibit the entrepreneurship among the entities in the national economy.

Another of the macro-environmental factors – technology development – is closely related to the pace of changes in technology and industrial technology at national, European and international levels. Introducing innovation in enterprises is important for building competitive advantage (Nowakowska-Grunt, Piersiala 2014, p. 145) and is crucial for economic growth (Zimmer, Mierzwa 2017, p. 8-9). According to A. Lemańska-Majdzik and M. Okręglicka, it is currently the implementation of information and communication technologies in enterprises that greatly affects the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (Lemańska-Majdzik, Okręglicka 2017, p. 48). Implementing technological changes often forces companies to reorganise their operations, in other words, to introduce change. Changes are often associated with a certain level of risk. In addition, innovative technologies are capital-intensive. As a rule, it's large companies with a well-established market position that can afford to take on such risks and incur large expenses.

Natural factors also have a significant impact on the type of business undertaken by companies. Those primarily refer to the geographic location and the climate conditions of a given area. Access to natural resources that are at the disposal of companies is also necessary. Availability of energy and the cost of using that energy in production, service and/or commercial activity is also significant for business operations.

At present, the last group of factors – the international factors – has acquired a special significance. The situation in the world markets has a strong influence on the Polish market sentiment. The opening of the borders and the creation of conditions for the free exchange of goods and services between the Member States of the European Union have had a significant impact on the range of business operations. At the same time, the conditions prevailing in world markets, the increasing danger of armed conflict or terrorist attack, adversely affect the situation

in the domestic market. At present, international regulations aiming to reduce the negative impact of road transport on the environment are also highly significant for the operation of transport businesses. The European Union has been for many years addressing environmental issues, which has become particularly important for ensuring sustainable development of the transport sector (Kadłubek et al. 2016).

A number of factors influence the activities of companies in the macro scale. Their differentiation depends on the type of activity a given entity of the national economy engages in. The size of the company, the range of its activity and its financial results are also important. Identifying factors that are significant from the business point of view may be based on an analysis of macro-environment. These issues will be addressed in the second part of the article. Factors derived from the wider business environment which affect the sentiment on the transport market and, above all, affect the condition of transport companies engaged in cargo transport will be presented.

Conclusions

Transport constitutes the basis of the economy. Transport operations allow enterprises with different business profiles to obtain supplies and distribute products and services. Where using own transport is unprofitable for a variety of reasons, it is possible to use transport services. These services are carried out by specialised external companies, so called freight carriers. Transportation of goods by road is noticeably increasing. According to B. Skowron-Grabowska, K. Sukiennik and T. Szczepanik, the growing popularity of road transport is a result of competitive supply prices compared to other means of transport (Skowron-Grabowska, Sukiennik, Szczepanik 2015). Increasing popularity of road transport has contributed to the increase in the number of entities providing services in the transport of goods.

The operations of these businesses are influenced by many factors. One of the groups of factors that affect the situation of carriers, and which carriers have no influence on (or can only influence to a small extent), are macro-environment factors. Those include: economic, political-legal, socio-cultural, technological, natural, and international factors. The impact of macro-factors on transport companies changes over time. The survival of these companies depends on the introduction of new services (Skowron-Grabowska 2014, p. 35) that take account of trends in this area.

There are numerous specific factors that create the macro-environment of a company. Some stimulate the development of the transport services market, others, on the contrary, inhibit such a development. What is important is that businesses cannot directly influence those factors. They can only monitor the situation on the domestic, European and world markets and adjust the directions of their own operation to the prevailing conditions.

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WYKORZYSTANIE ANALIZY PESTEL DO OCENY SYTUACJI POLSKICH FIRM TRANSPORTOWYCH (CZĘŚĆ I)

Streszczenie: Celem artykułu jest zaprezentowanie wpływu, jaki na działalność przedsiębiorstw transportowych ma makrootoczenie. W pierwszej kolejności zdefiniowano pojęcia makrootoczenia i mikrootoczenia. Następnie wyszczególniono te elementy makrootoczenia, które determinują funkcjonowanie polskich przedsiębiorstw. Na tej podstawie zaprezentowano i opisano czynniki makrootoczenia, które są istotne dla funkcjonowania firm transportowych zajmujących się przewozem ładunków. Zdefiniowane czynniki posłużą jako baza do sprężenia analizy PESTEL rynku transportowego w Polsce. Czynniki makrootoczenia istotne dla prowadzenia działalności transportowej oraz analiza PESTEL zostanie zaprezentowana kolejno w drugiej i trzeciej części artykułu.

Słowa kluczowe: zarządzanie strategiczne, makrootoczenia, mikrootoczenie, przedsiębiorstwo transportowe