
THE ENVIRONMENTAL ROLE OF NATURAL RESOURCES IN THE SPORTS INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Environmental organizations are pressuring sports companies to modernize their production by redirecting ESG standards to conserve natural resources. The research used historical methods, description, synthesis and comparison to analyze the environmental role of natural resources in the sports industry development. Empirical research was conducted on the environmental impact on sports industry development and consumer priorities when choosing products made of eco or traditional materials. The results showed that 46% of participants declared themselves in favor of eco materials, 31% in favor of traditional materials, 23% declared that it doesn't matter for them. The organization of sports competitions for many sports today is conditioned by climate change, which can disrupt the organization and make it even more difficult to conduct competitions. To preserve natural resources from destruction, it is recommended to promote eco standards in the media, which should be introduced by law into regulations and procedures.

Introduction

The impact of natural resources on the sports industry's development is enormous because sports companies must redirect their production using eco materials, such as recycled cotton used instead of regular cotton, recycled rubber or seaweed used to make sneakers. The environment has become a strategic direction of sports companies' business, which increasingly affects competition and sustainability. Most of the sports company's business is in the most economically developed markets such as the USA, the EU and Asia, where eco standards (ESG, Green Deal) have become a mandatory part of modern business. Sports companies are increasingly turning to their consumers who are looking for environmentally conscious brands whose production does not impact environment destruction. Many sports companies and startups often turn to investors to get money to develop new sports technologies and products. Often, an investor's condition is compliance

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with ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) standards, which are important because they affect ethical business and sustainability related to natural resources. The synergy of natural resources and the sports industry can be positive if it is well aimed at increasing environmental awareness (consumers do not want to destroy nature, they are great advocates of preserving natural resources), green building infrastructure that affects eco standards in the construction of sports venues, the use of recycling, and renewable energy sources, financing through revenues generated from sports tourism that are invested in the maintenance and conservation of natural resources. The sports industry is a market in which goods and services are exchanged simultaneously and on equal terms, i.e. some values, subjects and the internal and external environment of sports activities. The essence and center of the entire sports business is found in nature and phenomenon of sport and sports activity, which is the initiator of the entire subject process, with its external and internal surrounding world, and all of them together make up the sports industry. (Tomić, 47). Nature sports comprise a group of sporting activities that are developed and experienced in natural or rural areas, ranging from formal to informal practices. These practices are performed in a variety of natural contexts including on land (mountain biking, rock-climbing, trekking, etc.), in water (kayaking, sailing, surfing, windsurfing, etc.), and in the air (paragliding and hang-gliding, etc.). (Van Rheenen, 2021).

Sport has been developing rapidly for decades, creating an increasing number of competitions and thus developing sports companies that present new types of sports equipment on the market every year, which has attracted media interest. Sport has gone from being a simple amateur competition, thanks to the media that have led to commercialization and professionalization, it has managed to form its market of supply and demand, it has created its own media that deal only with sports, its target groups and consumers, and thus it has formed the sports industry. (Radošević et al). Thanks to the media, sport has become a global phenomenon that must be understood as a megatrend of economic and technological development, the distribution of social and financial power, and the imposed ideological scheme. This megatrend is a continuation of the previous megatrend - the industrialization of sports that began at the end of the 20th century, which also encompassed the entire society, all spheres from political to economic and cultural. (Krsmanović, 190). The heavy burden and unsustainable nature of taking on a mega sports event has proven over time to decimate the willingness of the host. (Geijer & Heijnen, 2024).

Materials and methods

Global environmental trends have been analyzed in this paper, and they have become an indispensable part of the business strategy that has affected the environmental production quality. Searching for new methods of business management, the sports industry has connected with other industries such as IT industry, fashion industry, construction industry, textile industry, environmental industry. (Radošević et al). In this paper, the author used the historical method, description, synthesis and comparison to analyze the environmental role of natural resources in the sports industry development. Empirical

research was conducted on the environmental impact on sports industry development and consumer priorities when purchasing products made of eco or traditional materials that are among the biggest polluters and affect the destruction of natural resources. The globalization impact of sports market development was analyzed as well as the commercialization of sports itself by comparative method. The comparison was made between the sports company's business system and sports clubs that have focused on eco standards and those that are focused on the traditional way of business management.

In this paper, we have analyzed the environmental methods used by companies to promote their brand and their products. The research is focused on the topic: Do you prefer to buy sports products made of eco-friendly materials or traditional (non-eco) materials? The research was conducted in Period May 1.2024 – November 1.2025 in four largest cities in Serbia (Belgrade, Novi Sad, Niš and Kragujevac) where sports industry is developed, where sports competitions are organized and where is a significant offer of sports equipment through shops, shopping malls, and online sales through websites. The survey was conducted on a sample of 2384 participants, of which 1412 are men (59.23%), aged 18 – 50 years and 972 women (40.77), aged 18 – 50 years in Serbia.

The natural resources impact on the sports industry – environmental challenges

In the sports sector, the textile industry is one of the biggest polluters in the world with a major impact on natural resources due to the fast fashion model that is in a for-profit rush focused on the hyper-production of cheap sportswear. The textile industry is in third place in the world in terms of water consumption, where the production of a cotton T-shirt requires more than 2,700 liters of water! The textile industry uses chemicals (8,000 synthetic chemicals, mercury and lead) that are major water pollutants (streams, rivers, lakes, seas, oceans), where 20% of the world's water pollution comes from the finishing and dyeing of fabrics, which affects the ecosystems destruction. During the washing of clothes made of synthetic materials (nylon, polyester), microplastics end up in waterways, which enter the food chain. The textile industry is responsible for 10% of global CO₂ (carbon dioxide) emissions from energy consumption, from global transport to man-made fibers that require oil. The problem of waste is enormous because only 1% of clothing is recycled, while the rest ends up in landfills, which, along with the huge amounts of pesticides necessary for the creation of natural fibers, affect soil degradation and biodiversity.

Table 1. Impact of Materials on Chemical Footprint, Biodegradability and Water Consumption

Material	Chemical imprint	Biodegradability	Water consumption
Coton (conventional)	High (pesticides)	Yes	Extremely high
Poliester	High (Petroleum products)	No (centuries)	Low
Organic flax	Minimal	Yes	Low
Recycled textiles	Intermediate	Depending on the composition	Minimum

Source: Authors' Research 2025

The increased production of sports equipment initially did not foresee what to do with the old worn-out sports equipment, which led to the accumulation of sports waste that takes 100-150 years to decompose naturally. Environmental standards rightly insist that sports companies switch to biodegradable materials production, with no negative environmental impact (*Table 1*).

The consequences are best described by the fact that “the Adidas Group uses more than 380 independent factories from 40+ countries for its products with 110 key manufacturing partners to produce the majority of products”. (Adidas Group). The environment has a direct and indirect impact on the sports company’s business. Direct impact refers to transport and logistics, energy consumption, and production costs, raw materials (recycled polyester and cotton), latex used to make balls and protective equipment, wool used for winter sports, wood used to make sports equipment, steel and aluminum for gym equipment, leather to make gloves and shoes. Indirect impact refers to brand reputation and image, market access, legal risks, and relationships with investors and sponsors. Cotton itself involves the use of large amounts of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, which affects the degradation of the soil. Polyester is considered a petroleum product whose production involves the consumption of a large amount of energy, while polyester products make up 60% of sportswear. Washing sports equipment releases microplastics that eventually end up in the seas and oceans, and then in the food chain.

The use of natural resources in sports production is necessary for sports infrastructure because new stadiums and halls, due to the excessive density of the existing infrastructure, are most often carried out on the outskirts of cities on agricultural land. The mountains are facing environmental challenges in the form of cutting down large numbers of trees and devastating forests to make ski tracks and building hotels that would attract many to enjoy the charms of mountain sports. In the lowlands, natural resources are also used to create golf courses that occupy large areas of land. Sports Industry 5.0 mandates that the sector confront these realities proactively. This involves greening the infrastructure: building energy-efficient, zero-carbon stadiums; sourcing renewable energy; implementing water recycling and waste reduction at venues. (Glebova & all, 2025)

Table 2. Characteristics of eco marketing (Authors’ Research 2025)

Characteristic	Green sports club	Greenwashing (marketing)
Sponsors	Choose partners with eco-values	Oil companies as sponsors
Transport	Trains or eco buses for short distances instead of planes	Traveling short distances by plane
Transparency	Publish data on pollution	Eco-phrases without implementation
Operations	The buildings run on solar energy without the use of plastic	Recycling bins emptied to landfills

Source: Authors’ Research 2025

One of the biggest environmental challenges associated with sports is transportation (*Table 2*). Mega events (Olympics, World Cup), require teams, officials and fans to travel around the world, which produces huge carbon dioxide emissions. To mitigate this,

many sports organizations are implementing strategies to reduce the impact of travel. The use of public transport is encouraged, shuttle lines are provided, cycling routes are promoted, and new formats that require fewer international flights are increasingly chosen. Some leagues are implementing emissions offset programs through reforestation or investing in renewable energy, while others are experimenting with schedules that geographically group games to keep travel to a minimum. While transportation remains a significant challenge, creative solutions and collaborative efforts can significantly reduce the carbon footprint of sport. (Ekologija, 2025). Conflicts of interest can often be seen at the Paris 2024 Olympics, where organizers have been criticized for the main sponsor Coca-Cola, which is the biggest polluter in the world, with its plastic bottles (137 billion PET bottles per year, 250,000 bottles per minute) selling a carbonated beverage that is considered unhealthy and creates obesity and addiction. They produce 500g of plastic waste globally per capita. The company is the world's largest plastic polluter in 2026. Environmental pollution caused by sports equipment factories, Formula 1 races, water and electricity consumption at sports venues, irrigation of the field, as well as waste left after the organization of sports events in the form of glasses, bottles, paper and other types of waste are not negligible. In the last 10-15 years, the sports sector has begun to pay more attention to the contribution to the conservation of natural resources and the environment.

The non-profit sports organization "Green Sports Alliance" was created with the task of helping sports teams, sports venues and leagues improve their relationship with the environment. Recognizing the benefits of such cooperation, the Alliance went global in March 2011, bringing together sports workers from all over the world to share information and ideas on how to improve the situation across the environmental industry. The project, which started with six professional sports teams and five sports venues, now boasts a membership of nearly 170 professional and university sports teams and sports venues from 15 different sports leagues. (Pfahl, 2014).

The Impact of Sport Tourism Development on Natural Resources Destruction

Sports tourism is a combination of sport and nature, where consumers are offered the opportunity to engage in recreational sports or sports competitions in nature, in the form of mountains, oceans, seas, rivers and lakes. The sport tourism impact on economic development is often conflicting because it is impossible without the destruction of natural resources, although through sustainable development the damage can be reduced to a minimum. Natural resources can be used for sports development, but overexploitation can lead to the destruction of the tourist offer itself. Due to excessive urbanization and the race for profit, many mountains have destroyed the essence of their existence, which has jeopardized tourism development, affecting the non-arrival of dissatisfied and disappointed tourists who wanted to enjoy nature, and were greeted by a devastated environment. The ecosystem is the primacy in terms of infrastructure within sports tourism, which is related to the quality of air and water, which is why people choose to go to the mountains.

The negative impact is directed at the overload of natural resources: increased water consumption, which can affect the supplies needed by citizens and households; energy consumption necessary for the operation of sports venues; pollution related to waste left over after sports competitions; the use of harmful chemicals used for the maintenance of sports fields; conflicts that occur with the local population, because the development of tourism often bothers the locals, for whom it disturbs peaceful life and destroys natural resources, which primarily refers to winter sports, the destruction of natural habitats through infrastructure projects such as ski slopes, hotels, sports venues, which affects the destruction of biodiversity and ecosystems. The carbon impact of the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games is estimated at 2.085 million tCO₂-eq (tonnes of CO₂ equivalent). This is approximately half the average for the London 2012 and Rio 2016 Games, and equivalent to the Tokyo 2020 Games, which were held without spectators. (EY, 2025)

Environmental Impact on Consumer Sports Image

Sports companies rely on their image as a products quality guarantee they have been building for decades to better position themselves in the sports market. The image of each company shows the social responsibility that companies have towards consumers and the public. Image is a belief, impression and representation of a sports organization, athletes and their sports results, abilities and possibilities of determining their own position in the environment. (Tomić, 87). There are more clubs that have paid special attention to the environmental image, which is necessary today as an important segment of the business strategy. In the English Premier League, clubs must have a greenhouse gas emissions report and a sustainability strategy until the 2026/27 season. Tottenham Hotspur is the greenest club in England with zero waste and renewable energy. Barcelona Football Club has water recycling systems in place with huge areas under solar panels, while they were the first to promote recycled jerseys (Play Green) to inform their fan base.

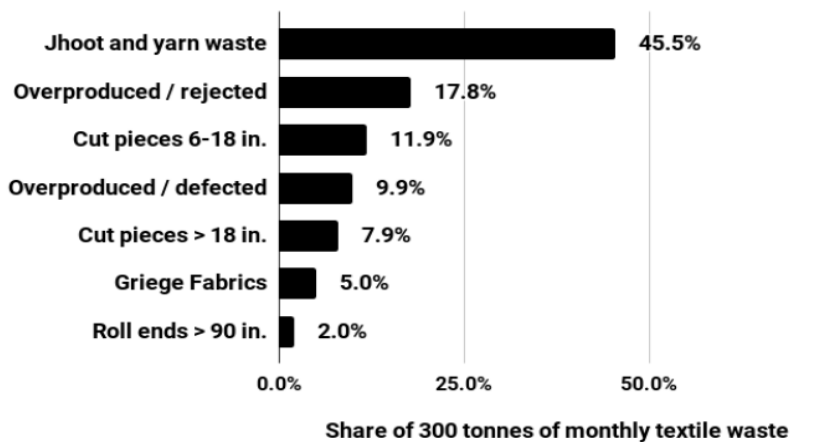
In 2011, Greenpeace had launched the Detox My Fashion campaign, which revealed the pollution of waterways with hazardous chemicals, demonstrating the effects of pollution in the supply chain that are felt disproportionately in southern Cambodia, where sports equipment is produced in factories outsourced by Adidas, Nike and Puma. A 2017 study found that at least 25% of purchased materials went to waste, and some factories used almost half of the materials brought in. These materials are generally perfectly usable, but tight deadlines and minimal orders mean that neither suppliers nor designers have the space to use them effectively and instead create waste at a level that would not be tolerated in other industries. (Wohlgemuth, 2022).

Analyses have shown that certain products contain hazardous chemicals (perfluorinated (PFCs), nonylphenol ethoxylates (NPEs), phthalates and dimethylformamides (DMFs), which are present in textile products sold across three continents and have environmental and health consequences. These hazardous substances can be dissolved from products into the environment or enter the food chain. Some of them can potentially cause cancer,

disrupt the hormonal system, or be toxic to reproduction. (Greenpeace, 2014). The problem is the fact that used donated clothes usually end up thrown into landfills, used to light fires, left by rivers or thrown into the sea (Figure 1). Greenpeace has called for a boycott of purchases of products from brands whose products destroy the environment, which has created a negative image and endangered the business of sports brands. The companies have pledged to phase out the use of toxic substances in their products and to start using eco-friendly materials such as recycled cotton, seaweed used to make sports shoes. Some brands offer consumers a 15% discount on their products if they bring them a bag full of used items that the company sends for recycling to show social responsibility and offer consumers to recycle their products when they are finished using them. One problem is if used clothes end up in landfills, but a much bigger problem is that 25-50% of unused materials are thrown into landfills and endanger the environment (example Bangladesh and China).

Figure 1. Percentage of unused materials in factories

Data from one Bangladesh factory producing 7 million garments per month shows the make-up of pre-consumer fashion waste



Source: Cosgrove, 2019

A growing number of sports companies have pledged to ban the use of hazardous chemicals in their products. Adidas has developed a five-year strategy to reduce its environmental impact and invest in sustainability. The company has developed corporate volunteer programs and supports contributing to a healthy community that aims to make fitness available to children in underserved areas through a program – sports before school. Four keys for employees in sports organizations to get started with environmental issues are:

- Analyze and reduce energy and water consumption in combination with a waste diversion strategy.
- Work in a team or facility to achieve maximum environmental benefits.

- Identify and work towards a return on investment objectives to justify a long-term strategy of environmental values and align environmental issues with other key organizational strategic planning and elements.
- Maintain awareness of changes in technology as well as in other areas related to environmental changes. (Pfahl, 2014).

ESG standards in the sports industry

Environmental organizations are putting pressure on leading companies in various industries to force them to modernize their production in factories where they would redirect the use of environmentally, recycled and biodegradable materials according to eco standards. Environmental quality control is a procedure, standards and measurement that connects sustainable management, product safety, environmental safety and the sports industry, which means that it is looked at whether a product is good quality for both nature and athletes. Environmental quality control has the task of ensuring and harmonizing the quality of products with international standards and environmental regulations, to monitor and control the use of chemicals, energy and raw materials, to reduce the impact that sports services and products have on the environment. In 2026, the EU has tightened sanctions on eco-design, requiring companies to focus their production on longer-lasting clothing with alternative fibers derived from agricultural waste that is easier to recycle. The application refers to:

- Sports infrastructure focused on the use of renewable energy sources, air quality, energy efficiency, waste management after the competition
- Sportswear aimed at controlling CO₂ in production, recycling and biodegradability, the presence of toxic substances, reducing water consumption
- Sports competitions focused on sustainable transport, banning single-use plastics, control of packaging waste, measurement of carbon footprint.

In the football industry, FIFA has built its own zero-emission headquarters (HQ) and has also developed “Green Goal” guidelines for its members - associations for organizing sporting events. The first major sporting event to be organized according to environmental standards was the Sydney Olympics in 2000, while the Athens Olympics in 2004 left behind a cleaner, healthier environment and a legacy in the form of raised awareness of the importance of concrete steps that will contribute to the preservation of the environment. The planned programs include the installation of new green areas, the construction of venues with materials that do not pollute nature, as well as improved waste disposal. (Masterman, 108). The 2022 FIFA World Cup, held in Qatar, brought new “green building” technological standards for the construction of sports stadiums. One of the new innovations is the Floating Offshore Stadium, which can be moved to any part of the world. Nine of the 12 stadiums are completely new and based on environmental principles with the use of eco-friendly materials without carbon dioxide emissions, using solar energy, while all stadiums are air-conditioned with an average temperature of 27 degrees. (FIFA, 2022).

For example, the Olympic Stadium in London was built using only 10% of the steel used to build the Bird's Nest Stadium for the 2008 Beijing Olympics. (Černušenko, 2022). To keep up with the new standards, the construction industry has introduced "Green building" standards, which are applied to the construction of new sports venues (stadiums, halls, swimming pools) from special materials, while the use of solar panels that contribute to electricity savings has become increasingly popular. These are all examples where eco-standards have contributed to the development of the sports industry. Sports venues can only be a successful heritage if they are built regarding the preservation and protection of natural resources, not only because society demands it today, but also because it can be economically viable. (Mihoces, 2013). Overall, of the 126 clubs in the five major sports in the U.S., 38 clubs use renewable energy for a portion of their needs, while 68 clubs use an energy efficiency program, 18 sports venues have installed solar panels, and almost all clubs use recycling programs. For example, the Seattle Seahawks NFL stadium has 3,750 solar panels on the roof of the stadium. (Letteney, 2015). In Europe, sports clubs started to introduce environmental standards, and in 2009, Manchester United Football Club was among the first to say it had saved more than £200,000 by working with the Carbon Trust and introducing energy efficiency methods. To reduce water consumption, some clubs are using simpler methods with the help of efficient taps and showers installed at the stadiums of Arsenal, Exeter United and Sheffield United. Chelsea Football Club uses rainwater using artificial lakes and pipes under the pitches to irrigate the pitch. The Stade de Suisse in Bern and the Kaohsiung National Stadium in Taiwan have shown that the installation of solar panels can generate enough electricity for the stadium's needs, while excess energy would contribute to the community. (Letteney, 2015). English football club Forest Green Rovers has been named the greenest club in the world because they use 100% renewable energy, the jerseys are made of bamboo and recycled plastic, the fans are offered vegan food, the grass is maintained with the help of solar robotic lawn mowers. Adidas makes sneakers from plastic scraps from beaches, seas and oceans, while Nike's Move to Zero initiative has focused its business on zero waste and carbon emissions using Nike Grid – production scraps and recycled sneakers that are also directed to make running tracks.

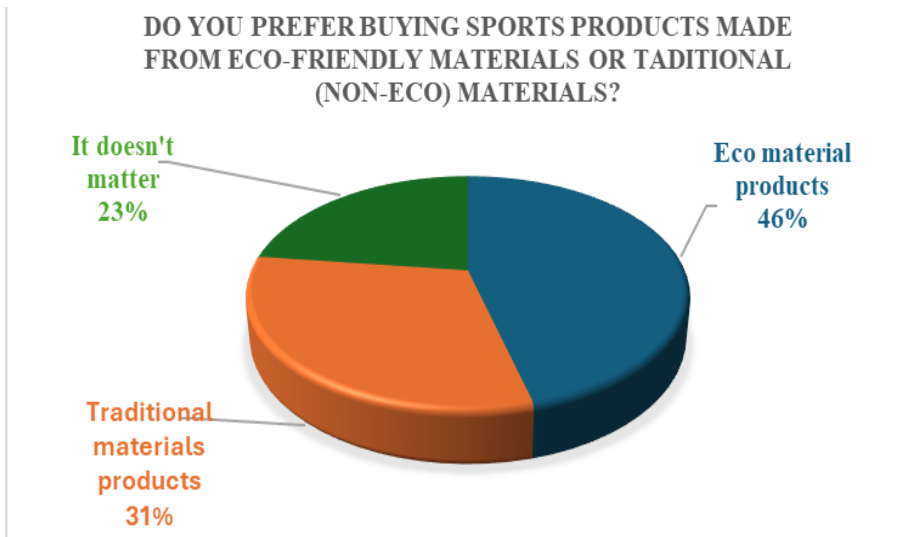
ESG standards within the sports industry focus on the policies and practices that sports companies and clubs adopt to be socially responsible and sustainable. ESG standards have become an indispensable part of sports business because it affects the attraction of investors and sponsors, as well as the creation of a positive image. The environmental aspect refers to sustainability in the form of the use of renewable energy sources (solar panels), waste reduction, recycling, green initiatives in the form of investing in eco projects, sustainable production in the form of the use of eco materials in sports products. The social aspect is focused on responsibility in the form of connecting with local communities, safety aimed at fans and athletes, diversity aimed at intolerance of racism, sexual and ethnic intolerance, promoting diversity among fans, sports managers who run sports organizations and companies, as well as among athletes themselves. The

governance aspect refers to transparency (financial, managerial, ethical, environmental), which includes public reporting on decision-making and financial management, risk management in the form of strategies, as well as ethics aimed at promoting fair play and preventing corruption. Corruption and financial malfeasance are present in clubs and companies where there is no transparency. Nature-dependent and nature-independent outdoor activities neither pollute nor consume nature, so these two categories are combined as nature-based activities. (Wicker, 2021)

Results

The survey results (Figure 2.) showed that 46% (1,097 participants) were in favor of purchasing sports products made of eco-friendly materials, while 31% (739 participants) were in favor of buying sports products made of traditional (non-eco) materials. Neutral participants, who said they don't matter (unimportant) were 23% (548 participants).

Figure 2. Researching consumer choice when purchasing sports products



Source: Authors' Research 2025

Analyzing the results of the survey, we can conclude that environmental awareness among citizens is quite present, compared to the period 10 – 15 years ago, that today among the participants of the research there is concern for natural resources protection that are endangered by the development of the textile industry, that younger participants (aged 18-30) have the most understanding and interest in the environment. In second place are participants aged 31-40 who show moderate interest in the environment, while the older generations of participants aged 41-50 showed the least interest in protecting natural resources and the environment.

Table 3. Percentage of survey participants by gender, age, and choice of purchase

Category	No of participants	%	Age 18-30	Age 31-40	Age 41-50	Eco material	Non-eco material	Don't matter
Men	1412	59,23%	631	523	258	15%	24%	14%
Women	972	40,77%	513	271	188	31%	7%	9%
Total	2384	100%	1.144	794	446	46%	31%	23%

Source: Authors' Research 2025

The results of the research (*Table 3.*) showed that out of the total number of participants who declared themselves in favor of purchasing sports products made of eco materials (46%), a larger number are women participants which declared themselves in favor of buying sports products made of eco materials (31%) compared to male respondents (15%). Of the total percentage of participants who declared themselves in favor of buying sports products made of traditional (non- environmental) materials (31%), male participants are the majority (24%) while less women declared themselves (7%). It should be noted that out of 2384 participants in the study, 538 participants (23%) said that it doesn't matter to them (unimportant) because the price of the product is what affects the purchase.

Discussions

Eco standards have become the main advertisement for promoting sports companies to attract the consumers' attention. Companies that do not adapt to market trends will be outperformed in the eyes of consumers. That is why the companies proudly point out that they have certificates such as: GOTS (Global Organic Textile Standard), which confirms that the company uses organic cotton in its products that do not have harmful substances; LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is the most widely recognized certification for green sports venues. Blue sign, which certifies that minimal energy and water consumption is used, as well as safety for consumers, B Corp, whose ownership means that the company operates with an environmental and ethical purpose.

Environment and natural resources open up opportunities for investment in innovations and new technologies that have influenced the development of the sports industry, which has helped to sustain some sports, such as winter sports, due to the lack of basic conditions caused by climate change, such as artificial snow in the mountains, while the latest technologies have enabled the emergence of indoor ski resorts that operate all year round. There is an increasing number of countries that are building indoor ski resorts near large cities (China – 50+ indoor ski resorts, Middle East – Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Saudi Arabia, EU – Norway, Germany, Netherlands, Great Britain), where fans of snow sports are allowed to fulfill their wishes without going to distant winter ski resorts. Environmental standards used to be part of marketing campaigns, but today they are an important part of business strategy. Cooperation between sports clubs and companies that decide not to comply with eco standards is quite difficult, it is more difficult to cooperate with sponsors because no one wants negative image to be damaged in public.

Environmental control methods include eco-certification of products, control of energy and water consumption, Life Cycle Assessment, measurement of CO₂ emissions, and supply chain auditing. International standards and tools necessary for environmental quality control are ISO 14001 related to the environmental management system, FIFA / IOC compliance guidelines, ISO 9001 – ISO 14001 – related to quality and ecology, Global Recycled Standard, OEKO-TEX Standard 100 – which includes textiles that do not contain harmful substances. The development of the sports industry needs to function according to eco-standards for health reasons (which include reduced exposure to toxic substances and safer products for athletes), business reasons related to easier entry into the EU market, competition and brand strengthening, as well as environmental reasons related to the rationalization of natural resources and the reduction of pollution.

Sports brands are present on the public scene and are monitored by consumers, fans, clubs. Sports companies that do not want to comply with environmental standards are in risk of losing existing customers, will be attacked by environmental organizations that will criticize them for destroying natural resources in production for profit, which will affect the destruction of the image that companies have been building for years, and which will be a huge problem for them in negotiation with sports organizations for sponsorship, because no sports organization wants to be criticized for cooperation with companies that have a negative image reputation. Companies that comply with eco standards strengthen their image on a global level, maintain the loyalty of their consumers in a simpler and longer term.

The Impact of the State and Legal Regulations (Protection of Natural Resources)

The green transition in sport is designed to transform sports companies and clubs towards environmental sustainability in the form of a shift in the methodology of sports business such as event management, production of sports equipment or sports infrastructure construction. The green transition is crucial for the survival of the sport, which is endangered by climate change (extreme heat or rain, lack of snow), economic viability in the form of reducing energy costs aimed at savings. The state uses the development of all industries to generate additional revenues in the form of environmental taxes that are used to rehabilitate sites after sports competitions. Penalties for non-compliance with environmental rules in the sports industry can be financial (in the Balkan region 5,000-25,000 euros for legal entities, for responsible managers in sports clubs from 500-2,000 euros, in Germany there are fines of up to 100,000 euros) with which it is required to return to the original state. Subsidies relate to the use of renewable energy sources and energy efficiency. In Germany, sports programs subsidize environmental modernization through state institutions in the form of grants of 20-40% for solar panels and LED lighting, while in France, through the Sport and Sustainable Development program, clubs are influenced to reduce their carbon footprint through funds that finance up to 50% of the cost of solar water heating in changing rooms. Slovenia, as a leader in the region, is considered the most environmentally friendly country through the Slovenian Environmental Public Fund, where clubs have

the option of applying for subsidies of 20-25% of the costs for lighting, insulation and energy efficiency. The green transition in sport allows clubs to reduce costs (LED lighting reduces consumption by 70% compared to halogen floodlights with a return on investment in 4-5 years, provides better quality lighting during sports competitions and attracts sponsors who are increasingly looking for Eco-friendly sports clubs that promote sustainability).

Conclusions

Awareness of the importance of natural resources is present among citizens and has greatly influenced the attitudes of respondents who care about environmental protection. According to the answers, we can notice that the younger generation of participants are, the higher is the percentage of support for the purchase of sports products made of eco materials, while this percentage decreases the older the respondents are, which confirms that younger generations are more interested in environment and natural resources that are necessary for a better quality of life in the future. Sports companies follow current market trends to keep up with the competition, and to adapt their products to their target groups in time, which has influenced the introduction of ESG standards aimed at protecting natural resources. Consumers are very interested in whether the sports products they spend their money on have consequences for the environment or natural resources. The sports industry began to develop rapidly, and due to the increased production of sports equipment in factories, sports companies faced the problem of accumulated waste in the form of old equipment and props. The results of the survey showed that participants are largely aware of the consequences of the production of sportswear on the environment, and that is why 46% of participants choose brands that apply eco standards, to conserve their natural resources. The organization of sports competitions for many sports today is conditioned by climate change, which can disrupt the organization and make it even more difficult to conduct competitions. Many mountains have difficulty organizing sports competitions due to lack of snow.

Conflict of interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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