

ABSTRACT

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“The importance of functioning formalized organizational management systems in the context of implementing the assumptions of the circular economy concept”

In today's world, significant consequences of human activity are increasingly observed. On the one hand, human progress has contributed to the development of civilization, but on the other hand, it has led to environmental problems, such as the loss of biodiversity, degradation of ecosystems, or melting of glaciers. Observable and disturbing changes within natural ecosystems have become the beginning of activities aimed at reducing the negative impact of human activity on the natural environment. The evolution of these concepts and environmental trends has led to the creation of a new paradigm, which would assume achieving harmony between economic development and the use of the natural environment. This paradigm is the concept of a circular economy.

The concept of a circular economy can be defined as a system or model that can be implemented at any economic level, and which enables, among others, closing the raw material, material and product cycles, achieving key assumptions of the sustainable development concept, improving the efficiency of resources used, reducing the amount of pollutants emitted, and at the same time bringing positive economic benefits. However, implementing the circular economy concept at the microeconomic level – especially in an organization – is an extremely difficult activity. It requires a change of approach from a linear model of functioning to a circular model. On the other hand, acting in accordance with the assumptions of the circular economy concept in an organization requires specific tools that allow organizations to adapt to solutions resulting from closing the cycles. For this purpose, new requirements or guidelines for implementing the assumptions of the circular economy concept are being developed. Most of these solutions are only of a national nature, and it was not until 2024 that the first international standard containing guidelines for acting in accordance with the assumptions of the circular economy concept was published. Due to these limitations, the doctoral thesis addresses the issue of the importance of organizational management systems as tools enabling the achievement of the assumptions of the circular economy concept in an organization.

The doctoral thesis consists of six chapters of a theoretical and empirical nature. The first three chapters are based on a literature review and refer to the specific objectives of the doctoral dissertation. The next three chapters are the development of the empirical part, which was divided into two main stages: preliminary research and proper research. The preliminary research used the case study method using documentation analysis and interviews as research methods. The second part consists of survey research.

As a result of the conducted research and statistical analyses, the main objective of the doctoral dissertation was achieved, concerning the analysis of the perception of the circular economy concept by organizations operating in Poland, in which formalized management systems have been implemented, as well as the specific objectives, i.e.:

- C₁: Determining the motives for implementing the circular economy concept in organizations.
- C₂: Indicating the differences between the environmental management system (ISO 14001:2015) and the circular economy concept and the way they are perceived by the representatives of the organization.
- C₃: Determining whether, from the perspective of the organization, issues related to the circular economy concept are a significant determinant of the choice of products by their customers.
- C₄: Determining the importance of formalized management systems in the organization for implementing the assumptions of the circular economy concept.

The conducted research also allowed for the verification of the assumed research hypotheses, which were adequate to each of the specific objectives:

- H₁: The main motive for implementing the circular economy concept in organizations is an attempt to limit the negative impact on the natural environment.
- H₂: Organization representatives do not see any differences between the environmental management system (ISO 14001:2015) and the circular economy concept at the organizational level.
- H₃: According to the opinions of the organization representatives, issues related to the circular economy concept are not the main determinant of the choice of products by customers.
- H₄: The level of involvement of the organization in the implementation of the circular economy concept is related to the functioning of formalized management systems.

The doctoral dissertation ends with the presentation of conclusions from the conducted scientific research, recommendations and limitations.