

SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES IN ROMANIA: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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Business sustainability has become a key topic in organizational growth literature, gaining more importance as environmental changes have accelerated over the past decade. With the shifts in the global economy that allowed many companies to develop, sustainable development has become crucial. It helps companies voluntarily integrate social and environmental concerns into their operations, while also engaging with stakeholders and realizing the long-term benefits it brings to the business. This paper also explores business sustainability from the perspective of two multinational companies in Romania, as this concept is still relatively new in the market, but increasingly relevant in today's world. Given its growing significance, this research focuses on business sustainability, offering a deeper understanding of the process—from theory to the challenges, risks involved, and tools.

Keywords: Sustainability, corporate responsibility, businesses, Romanian market, responsible behaviour, sustainable development

JEL Classification Codes: M14, M21, M29, Q01,

1. BUSINESS SUSTAINABILITY – THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The concept of business sustainability was integrated as a solution for companies to maximize their profits; at the same time, they are increasing the quality of life, preserving resources and serving the interests of society (Popa, 2015). Business sustainability, also known as corporate sustainability, is a concept that has its roots back in the times of the Industrial Revolution (Bergquist, 2017) and can be defined in various ways, but a general explanation may refer to the management of different demands, such as financial, social, environmental, which at the same time, implies to assure ethical, accountable and continuous success. (Wigmore, 2013) Also, part of the importance is given to the fact that humankind has become more conscious of the direct impact that consumption has on the planet in which we all have a life to live. (Singh, 2020) In addition, sustainability can be considered a business approach to value creation by taking into account the way an organization performs in the ecological, social, and economic environment. Therefore, the needs of the present would be met without weakening the capacity of future generations to satisfy their own personal requirements, demands and needs. (Tur-Porcar, et al., 2018)

In conclusion, business sustainability has evolved significantly over time, with a rich history behind it. However, it remains a dynamic and distinct concept with an increasing



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influence worldwide, impacting both businesses and the environment. As the theory of business sustainability evolves and updates, its practices also advance accordingly.

1.1. Theories and Principles of Corporate Sustainability

Although business sustainability is often considered a relatively recent concept and may seem insignificant at first, it is a vast and well-researched subject. Since its very beginning, numerous theories have sought to define it, undergoing decades of adjustments to adapt to evolving environmental changes.

As reported in many scientific papers, there are considered to be four major theories of business sustainability identified, such as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Stakeholder Theory, Corporate Sustainability and Green Economics.

A. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) was conceptualized by Bowen (1953) as the obligation of businesses to make decisions that align with societal values and ethical principles. (Chang et al., 2017). Over time, CSR has evolved into a strategic framework that requires corporations to be socially responsible for their economic, environmental, and societal impact. While CSR fosters innovation, enhances long-term economic advantages, and strengthens customer loyalty (Ponchaut, 2019), it has been subject to criticism. Friedman (as cited in Chang et al., 2017) argued that a corporation's primary responsibility is to maximize shareholder value, challenging the core principles of CSR. The concept is structured around four key dimensions: ethical responsibility (fair labour practices), philanthropic responsibility (corporate contributions to societal well-being), environmental responsibility (sustainable business practices), and economic responsibility (integrating profitability with social and environmental initiatives). (Leonard, 2019; Nafi, 2018) Despite ongoing debates, CSR remains a fundamental pillar of corporate sustainability (Crowther & Aras, 2008).

The relationship between corporate social responsibility and innovation has become increasingly interesting in the literature. Some research highlights the relationship between environmental practices and innovation performance and extended research to the concept of CSR (green CSR). (Gănescu, 2021)

B. Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder Theory, introduced by Freeman in the late 1970s, extends beyond traditional shareholder-centric models by emphasizing a corporation's responsibility to a broad range of stakeholders, including employees, customers, suppliers, government entities, and civil society organizations. (Kantabutra, 2019; Chang et al., 2017) Freeman classifies stakeholders into primary (e.g., investors, employees, customers) and secondary (e.g., regulatory bodies, trade organizations, and competitors) categories. Other authors further refined the theory into three branches: descriptive (how organizations interact with stakeholders), normative (how they ought to engage stakeholders), and instrumental (how stakeholder management influences performance). (Salma Damak-Ayadi, 2005) The theory has contributed to corporate sustainability research by demonstrating how strategic stakeholder engagement enhances organizational resilience and long-term success.

Shareholders, employees, regulators and even customers should be able to influence the decision-making process through consultation and dialogue mechanisms. This will better align management decisions with the expectations and interests of these stakeholders. (Hagiu et al., 2023)

C. Corporate Sustainability

Corporate Sustainability represents a holistic approach to business that integrates economic, social, and environmental considerations. (Lozano et al., 2015) It is often

operationalized through the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) framework, introduced by Elkington (1994), which assesses corporate performance in three dimensions: financial, environmental, and social (Chang et al., 2017; Kenton, 2020). The social dimension evaluates a firm's contribution to human capital and local communities, the environmental dimension measures sustainability efforts in resource management, and the economic dimension assesses the company's broader economic impact. (Chamberlain, 2020) Additionally, the Sustainable Business Model (SBM), a derivative of the Business Model (BM), incorporates sustainability considerations into corporate strategies, reinforcing competitive advantage through responsible business practices (Chang et al., 2017). While CSR and Corporate Sustainability share commonalities, they are often differentiated in academic discourse, with CSR focusing more on corporate accountability and sustainability addressing broader systemic challenges.

D. Green Economics

Green Economics extends the principles of CSR by advocating for the transition from traditional economic models to sustainable, resource-efficient frameworks. (Sulich et al., 2018) This approach emerged as a response to global environmental crises such as climate change and ecological degradation, which threaten economic stability and employment. (Pop et al., 2011) Green growth strategies enhance economic efficiency by fostering innovation, reducing pollution, lowering production costs, and attracting foreign direct investment (Saufi et al., 2016) Policies promoting green growth target various sectors, including education, labour markets, urban infrastructure, and transportation, fostering systemic transformations toward sustainability. Although Green Economics contributes to economic growth through improved resource efficiency and labour productivity, it necessitates significant institutional and regulatory reforms to align economic incentives with sustainability goals. (Chang et al., 2017) The recirculation of resources is the key to achieving the circular economy, respectively the transition to a green economy in Romania. (Avrănescu, 2021)

The modern vector of sustainable development is the improvement of the use of already exploited natural resources and environmental protection through modernization of the economy, support of innovations, and replacement of nature-intensive technologies with resource-saving and energy-efficient, best-available technologies. (Pandas et al., 2020)

1.2. Factors that influence Business Sustainability

Despite the growing importance of sustainability and its impact on society, some sectors still struggle to achieve it—especially when it comes to developing new businesses. Challenges arise from various factors, including environmental concerns, human behaviour, social interactions, and business practices. (Tur-Porcar, et al., 2018)

The objective of corporate sustainability is to launch actions and processes that expand profitable opportunities and contribute to sustainable expansion. Following this goal, there are two categories of factors that influence this process and make business ventures create successful sustainability strategies.

The first category (and probably the most substantial) contains business factors, which involve job satisfaction, business management, and profits as sustainable entrepreneurship is enclosed in a competitive background where earnings matter. Based on sustainable, competitive surroundings, businesses can emerge according to market needs and encourage sustainable technologies to emerge with sustainable activities. The second category of factors includes behaviour and human relations. On this matter, ethics along with competitive intelligence, self-efficacy, leadership, and common motivation are outstanding for the reason that corporate sustainability is dependent on personal and psychological factors of people attempting sustainable movements.

Since corporate sustainability happens in a competitive environment, businesses need to be profitable to keep their sustainable initiatives going. Therefore, it can be summarized that the most important drivers of business sustainability are business and behavioural factors, when ethical laws and values, along with competitive intellect, are critical for attempting actions that will eventually lead to sustainability. (Tur-Porcar, et al., 2018)

1.3. Risk Management System

Considering that businesses are exposed to various forms of risk, even more critical is the situation in terms of sustainable corporations. Taking this into account, sustainability risk management (SRM) has been established, as a company strategy for integrating profit objectives with internal green strategies and plans. The scope of those strategies is to reduce negative environmental effects by conserving natural resources and minimizing hazardous chemicals, carbon emissions and waste. The main objective of SRM is to have this convergence effective enough to allow and flourish a business while also protecting the environment. (Idowu, et al., 2013)

As sustainability risk becomes a major challenge in today's world, Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) plays a key role in helping businesses align their strategies to protect and enhance their value.

Sustainability brings three key values: growth, risk management, and return on capital. If a company fails to manage sustainability risks, it could face heavy financial penalties and damage its reputation. Moreover, ignoring the three pillars of sustainability—economic, social, and environmental—can hurt a company's long-term success. On the other side, many theorists have proved that the integration of sustainability in the risk management of a company gives opportunities to increase their profit while still demonstrating environmental and social consciousness. (Aziz, et al., 2016)

1.4. Sustainable Supply Chain Management

In the same way, as sustainability has become more visible and vital for companies, the same scenario is applied also for supply chain management. From this perspective, corporations cannot survive nowadays without a sustainable supply chain. Additionally, due to the regulations to preserve the environment, a sustainable supply chain offers numerous advantages, including enhanced corporate responsibility and increased business value.

A sustainable supply chain may be defined as the management of environmental, social, and economic implications along with the support of strong governance practices, during products and services business lifecycles.

Similar to other forms of business sustainability, this supply chain aims to create, preserve, and enhance long-term environmental, social, and economic benefits for all parties involved in bringing products and services to the market. In addition, as mentioned according to the fact that companies with a supply chain sustainability (SCS) are more open to opportunities that can increase the value of the business. The most known drivers of SCS business are as follows:

- Managing risks – by decreasing business separation from environmental or labour issues; and increasing the access to capital, financing, and resources.
- Achieving efficiency – boost labour productivity, develop strategic supplier connections for expansion, and decrease the cost of raw materials.
- Creating sustainable products through innovations in order to satisfy the requirements of business partners, get access to new markets, and build customer loyalty.

- Building a culture of responsibility – attract and retain committed employees, build great partnerships with external stakeholders, and acquire greater access to capital, financing, and insurance. (Chorn, et al., 2010)

To summarize, a sustainable supply chain can lead to an increased performance of firms, big opportunities in terms of assessing direct savings due to their actions of implementing and also maintaining a green, safe, and environmentally friendly supply chain management. All reflect a safe, transparent climate for both governments and partner companies. (Hachtman, 2020)

2. SUSTAINABILITY IN B2B, B2C, AND B2M BUSINESS MODELS

Globalization has had a significant impact on economic growth, job creation, and innovation, but it has also led to environmental and socio-economic issues. Many companies, particularly in energy, agriculture, and industrial sectors, have neglected sustainability, leading to environmental damage and strained relationships with stakeholders. As a result, sustainability has become a key factor for competitive advantage and financial performance.

A. Business-to-Business (B2B) Sustainability

B2B refers to transactions between companies rather than individual consumers. Sustainability has gained importance in this sector but faces challenges such as justice, environmental impact concerns, stakeholder considerations, resource efficiency, and supply chain alignment. Differences in sustainability perceptions between business partners create obstacles, and companies often struggle with integrating sustainability into marketing and communication. However, clear sustainability policies and effective communication can enhance a B2B company's market positioning.

B. Business-to-Customer (B2C) Sustainability

B2C involves direct transactions between companies and consumers. This sector is under greater pressure to adopt sustainable practices due to consumer preferences, competition, and regulatory requirements. The rise of e-commerce has further driven transparency in sustainability efforts. Companies that integrate sustainability into their supply chains and business models gain a competitive advantage by appealing to environmentally conscious customers.

C. Business-to-Many (B2M) Sustainability

B2M companies serve both businesses and individual consumers. This model is prevalent in large multinational corporations (MNCs), which have the resources to implement sustainability initiatives effectively. Due to their visibility, B2M companies face higher expectations for sustainable practices and often lead the way in influencing B2B and B2C businesses toward sustainability.

Sustainable development is deeply interconnected with business, as corporate activities significantly impact the environment. Businesses contribute to pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, and resource depletion, which in turn affect their operations and profitability. At the same time, sustainable development relies on the private sector for wealth creation, market integration, and technological advancements. Sustainability offers a competitive advantage by promoting economic growth, social responsibility, and environmental protection. Sustainability in business has evolved from a challenge to a strategic priority. A sustainable business strategy integrates social, environmental, and economic objectives to ensure long-term value.

Companies must implement clear sustainability objectives, improve supply chain sustainability, and promote employee well-being. Sustainable business practices include recycling, eco-friendly design, R&D investments, and responsible marketing. Green

marketing and sustainability-focused branding enhance customer trust and market competitiveness. Integrating sustainability into branding ensures long-term business success and consumer loyalty.

Sustainability balances economic, social, and environmental dimensions. Businesses are encouraged to shift their focus beyond short-term profitability and adopt sustainable strategies that ensure long-term success while benefiting people and the planet.

3. SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES IN BUSINESS OPERATIONS: LIDL AND OMV PETROM

Sustainable practices play a pivotal role in the operations of modern businesses, impacting both corporate strategies and day-to-day business activities. These practices can be implemented at two key levels: the corporate level, where policies and strategies are formulated, and the business unit level, where the impact on the community and environment is direct. This section outlines the sustainable strategies implemented by two companies, LIDL and OMV Petrom, showcasing their efforts to integrate sustainability into their operations and business models. This section of the paper relies on the theory of sustainable development (Avrămescu, 2022)

3.1. Research Strategy

In the case study that is going to be further presented, the research is exploratory, and its purpose is to analyze how companies that are operating in the Romanian market succeeded in implementing sustainability and how they managed to maintain it and further develop their cluster along sustainability. Additionally, the case study will be presented as a multiple case study, featuring two companies. This approach was chosen because it offers a more comprehensive and insightful analysis, thanks to the wider range of data it provides (Gustafsson, 2017).

This study uses a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of decisions, processes, and concepts, offering a broader perspective on corporate sustainability in Romania and enabling effective data collection through questionnaires. The qualitative method was chosen over the quantitative approach, which relies on mathematical and statistical analysis (Sakyi et al., 2020), as it provides more comprehensive and accessible explanations for this case study.

As stated in the introduction, this research aims to examine business sustainability in the Romanian market, including its implementation, activities, benefits, and challenges. To achieve this, a multiple-case study of two companies operating sustainably in Romania provides the most suitable approach. (Awuah, 2008)

Managers have to continue to seek sustainable strategies, and innovative business models and establish the organization's key performance indicators (KPI) that could create a sustainable enterprise. (Blaga, 2018)

As Romania continues to refine its corporate governance environment, a commitment to addressing these challenges and building on the achieved progress will contribute to a resilient and globally competitive business environment in the country. (Hagiu et al., 2023)

3.2. Analysis of the findings

A comparative presentation of the two companies, based on several parameters, is provided in the following table.

Table 1. Overview of the two companies

| Parameters | Lidl Romania | OMV Petrom |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
| Inception | 2011 | 2004 |
| Presence | Romania: 346 stores and 6 logistic centers Lidl Group - International, over 92 years ago, 31 countries across three continents | Romania: 400 locations OMV Group – International, over 66 years ago, 17 countries across four continents |
| Business Model | B2C | B2M |
| Industry | Retail | Oil and Gas |
| Sustainability inception | 2011 | 2007 |
| Employees | ~ 12.000 | ~ 7200 |
| Turnover | 22,4 Bln. RON (2023) | 33,8 Bln. RON (2023) |

Source: Authors' contribution

A. Sustainable Practices of LIDL and OMV Petrom

Sustainable practices are integrated into a company's core operations and can be seen at two levels: the corporate level, where policies, strategies, and funding are determined, and the business unit level, where the direct impact on the community and environment occurs, while also generating income for the company. (Mani, 2016) A comparative analysis of the sustainable practices of the two companies is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Comparison of Sustainable Practices of LIDL and OMV Petrom

| Aspect | LIDL | OMV Petrom |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| Sustainability Initiatives | Integration into core operations since 2011 | Incorporation into strategy since 2007, reporting since 2012 |
| Environmental Focus | Energy-efficient stores, ISO 50001 certification | Carbon efficiency improvements, environmental investments |
| Employee Engagement | Fair treatment, promotion of employee welfare | Creation of a learning-oriented workplace, employee digital skills |
| Community and Local Impact | Support for local suppliers, reducing foreign dependency | Contributions to local communities and sustainable development goals |
| Supply Chain Practices | Sustainable sourcing, local product promotion | Health, safety, and environmental risk management in the supply chain |
| Innovation and Technology | Use of eco-friendly technology in logistics | Promotion of innovation-based culture and new business technologies |

Source: Authors' contribution

B. Sustainability Process in LIDL and OMV Petrom

An analysis of the sustainability processes implemented by LIDL and OMV Petrom in the Romanian market, exploring their strategies, market entry and commitment to sustainability, is presented in Table 3. The analysis connects the theoretical background of corporate sustainability with empirical data from both companies, discussing their decision-making processes, the factors influencing their sustainability and their ethical approaches in operations.

Table 3: Comparison Sustainable Process of LIDL and OMV Petrom

| LIDL's Sustainability Process | OMV Petrom's Sustainability Process |
|--|---|
| LIDL entered the Romanian market in 2011, implementing its sustainability strategy based on the Schwarz Group's established practices. The company faced challenges in aligning its international sustainability strategy with the Romanian market, where sustainability infrastructure was underdeveloped at the time. However, LIDL successfully integrated sustainability through local sourcing, transparency, climate change initiatives, and promoting sustainable development. These practices align with the four principles of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). | OMV Petrom began operations in Romania in 2004 and adopted sustainability principles in 2007. Unlike LIDL, it took a few years for OMV Petrom to integrate sustainability into its strategy. The company has made substantial investments, including over 80 million euros, to meet EU sustainability directives. OMV's sustainability focus areas include innovation, carbon efficiency, employee welfare, and environmental health, all of which align with CSR principles. |

Source: Authors' contribution

C. Business and Operations in the Romanian Market

This section applies the Stakeholder Theory to analyze the business operations of Lidl and OMV Petrom in Romania, Table 4. It explores how these companies engage both primary (suppliers, customers, employees) and secondary (government, interest groups) stakeholder categories to achieve sustainable operations. The analysis uses descriptive, normative, and instrumental aspects of Stakeholder Theory to evaluate the companies' sustainability strategies.

Table 4. Sustainability in Operations

| Company | Descriptive | Normative | Instrumental | Sources |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--|---|
| LIDL | Provides food and non-food items | Serves consumer needs while ensuring sustainability | Increased operations, turnover, and awards | (Lidl, 2023), (Hănganu, 2022), (Wall-Street, 2022), (CSR, 2021) |
| OMV Petrom | Oil and gas exploration, refining | Focuses on responsible production and environmental protection | Increased profit, production, and sustainability investments | (Bănică, 2022), (OMV Petrom, 2023), (Zeilinger, 2020) |

Source: Authors' contribution

D. Practices and Ethics

The theoretical material indicates that the concept of corporate sustainability operates under the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) idea, which states that a business can be managed in such a manner that it will not only create profit but, it will also develop the lives of the people and the planet. (Kenton, 2020) This idea is segmented into three components of sustainable practices: social, environmental, and economic. (Rogers and Hudson, 2011) Both companies taken into the case study proved that they adhere to the triple bottom line way of doing business along with practices they have adopted, due to the impact that their actions have on people and the planet (Table 5). (Elangovan, 2020) Unethical organizational reporting can cause problems throughout the economy by affecting the confidence of the stakeholders (Bondoc et al., 2019).

Table 5: Sustainability Practices and Commitments of Lidl and OMV Petrom

| Aspect | Lidl | OMV Petrom |
|-------------------------------|---|--|
| Social (People) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prioritizes employee & customer health (COVID-19 measures: hygiene, remote work). - Employee development programs & feedback initiatives. - Commitment to fair working conditions & supplier relations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Health & safety programs ("Andrei's Country", "No Injuries-No Loss") to protect employees & communities. - Workplace safety investments. - Preventive health screenings for employees. |
| | (Dimitriu, 2020), (Idowu et al., 2017) | |
| Environmental (Planet) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expands sustainable product range (333 in 2019-413 in 2020). - Supports local suppliers to reduce carbon footprint. - Promotes circular economy (reducing waste, water pollution, microplastics). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invests in low-carbon technologies, reducing carbon intensity by 26% (2010-2020). - Targets net-zero emissions by 2050. - Waste reduction & energy efficiency measures. |
| | (Lidl, 2023), (Păunescu & Man, 2021) | |
| Economic (Profit) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainable investments drive continuous revenue growth. - Maintains market leadership in Romanian retail. - Uses green marketing & sustainability reporting. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Major contributor to Romania's economy. - Challenges in achieving immediate financial returns from CSR actions. - Long-term investments ensure market consolidation. |
| | (Lidl, 2023), (OMV Petrom, 2023) | |

Source: Authors' contribution

E. Network and Relationships importance

From another perspective, as also stated in the theoretical part, the sustainable development of a business goes beyond the main framework of sustainability and enhances the parties involved to also take actions above it and to find support in each other, as the foundation is provided by the advancements in technology and telecommunications, that facilitates global market integration (Lardere, 2009).

Considering the two companies taken into analysis (Table 6) both are part of international markets as they belong to international groups with operations in multiple countries. As a result, both multinational companies recognize the importance of building strong relationships, both within the company and with external partners, which has contributed to their success.

Table 6. Comparative Summary of Sustainable Practices

| Parameter | Lidl | OMV Petrom |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| Sustainability Integration | Sustainability is embedded in all business aspects, including relationships with employees, consumers, suppliers, business partners, and local communities | Strong focus on stakeholder engagement, ensuring sustainable relationships with employees, suppliers, customers, NGOs, and governments |
| Eco-Friendly Initiatives | Expansion of stores using environmentally friendly technologies with reduced | Annual investment in sustainability-focused stakeholder relationships |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| | ecological impact | |
| Community Engagement | Supports NGOs through donation drives and continuous investments in social causes | Prioritizes and addresses stakeholder needs to promote sustainable business development |

Source: Authors' contribution

F. Factors that influence Business Sustainability

Factors that provide their influence on business sustainability were discussed in the theoretical part and they include firstly, business factors and these are followed secondly by behaviour and human factors. Based on these two categories, the two companies studied in this research have addressed some of these factors, as they operate in a competitive environment that can impact their ability to pursue sustainability initiatives, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Factors Influencing Business Sustainability

| Company | Key Challenges | Primary Risk Factors | Mitigation Strategies |
|-------------------|---|--|---|
| Lidl | Customer awareness regarding sustainability, supply chain disruptions, employee and customer safety | Ethical risks (corruption), resource scarcity (water management) | Adoption of the UN Global Compact principles, implementation of structured risk assessment measures |
| OMV Petrom | Transition to a low-carbon economy, energy accessibility, climate change adaptation | Market price volatility, operational uncertainties, dependence on key suppliers, human capital retention | Development of a comprehensive risk management system, sustainable resource governance, and establishment of long-term strategic partnerships |

4. CONCLUSIONS

This paper has given an analysis of the sustainability process of two multinational companies that are operating in a responsible, sustainable way in the Romanian market. This research provides an overview of the key theories of business sustainability, while also diving into the main characteristics of the concept. It covers the associated risks, supply chain management, practices, and how sustainability is implemented, developed, and operated in key business models from both a global and local perspective. Besides, in the second part of this research, the empirical findings are presented of two companies that are operating on the Romanian market, Lidl Romania and OMV Petrom.

This paper has two main goals, based on the approach the companies analyzed have taken in integrating sustainability into their operations. First, it aims to explain the concept of sustainability through the example of two companies operating sustainably in a market where this approach is not yet fully embraced, especially by larger multinational companies. Second, the paper explores the reasons behind the rise of corporate sustainability, highlighting the importance and necessity of this concept both globally and locally in Romania, in line with the theoretical framework discussed in the research.

The findings suggest that given the circumstances presented and the current enhancement of this subject in the Romanian market, the two analyzed companies had succeeded in evolving sustainable measures in all stages of their operations in a competitive

environment. The industries they take part in, retail, respectively oil and gas industry, come both with a significant influence over consumers, business partners, the economy and the environment. However, both companies had been awarded and their actions were recognized both at the Romanian and international level.

Nonetheless, even though the findings in this multiple case study cannot be generalized for the entire category of sustainable multinational companies, the two firms that were the subject of this research paper, had multiple aspects in common in the way in which they approach sustainability, starting from active engagement in daily business activities, continuous investments to improve their operations which will deliver new, updated, improved products and services to their end-users without harming the environment, as well as actively finding new ways in which they can sustainably extend their operations.

Overall, while the analysis is limited to just two companies, it's difficult to draw broad conclusions. However, sustainable businesses are transforming the market, economy, and environment with their actions. Their success creates strong incentives for other companies to adopt this model as well.

One suggestion is for companies of all sizes to create annual sustainability reports in which they will present their sustainable actions, challenges, results, and ways to improve operations.

In conclusion, business sustainability is an important topic with positive effects across industries, sectors, and society as a whole. While it is still an emerging concept, it will soon be crucial for companies that want to continue their operations, as the growing environmental impact is pushing them to adopt this approach.

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