

DEMOGRAPHIC ENVIRONMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF BUSINESS AND MARKETING

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ABSTRACT

The task of every business enterprise is to establish itself on the market and to be able to offer consumers its product. In order for a business enterprise to be able to properly focus on end consumers, it is an integral part to know the environment, in which the business enterprise operates, or plans to do company. Business environment is composed of the micro-environment and the macro-environment. By monitoring these environments, the business enterprise can respond in time to possible opportunities or threats that may arise. The aim of the paper is to create prerequisites for successful segmentation of the retail market based on the analysis of the demographic environment in selected districts of eastern Slovakia in a time horizon of five years. The contribution will allow analyzing the demographic environment of eastern Slovakia for individual business enterprises, that want to expand their business activity and establish themselves in new markets, but also for emerging business enterprises that are considering the suitability, of the district for their business. Based on the facts determined in the paper, individual businesses enterprises will be able to appropriately segment the market in selected districts based on this paper's contribution.



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1. INTRODUCTION

In marketing practice, knowledge of the demographic environment has a significant impact on the success of business activities. Demographics provide business enterprises with key information that helps them better understand their market, better direct their business activities, and respond more effectively to changing conditions. It is extremely important for business enterprises to know the characteristics of the population in a given region. Knowledge of demographic factors can become key in creating strategies, marketing campaigns and creating the structure of the desired assortment.

Thorough knowledge of demographic factors creates a possible competitive advantage in terms of correctly defining the target market, applying an effective strategy, compiling a suitable range of products and products in the desired price range, as well as optimal location of retail stores.

It is important, that both existing business enterprises and those considering doing business have a good understanding of the environment, in which they want to introduce their products. For that reason, it is an integral part to monitor and analyze the business environment. In addition to the micro-environment of the business, which

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can include suppliers, competition, the public, consumers and the business enterprise itself, it is also important to monitor the macro-environment. The macro-environment will help a business enterprise to know how to correctly segment the market, follow new technologies and trends, know the economic and demographic situation of the population, in which the business enterprise will operate and be able to respond in time to possible upcoming changes in the market. Based on this fact, the paper's contribution points to the demographic environment, which belongs to the macro-environment.

The demographic environment examines factors such as the number of inhabitants, population density, the distribution of men and women, the structure of the population, etc. (Čihovská et al., 2015). The paper describes inhabitants, which are monitored for 5 years in selected districts of eastern Slovakia. It monitors the rate of growth and the rate of increase, through which it points to the fulfillment of the forecasts of the decreasing number of the population. Due to the fact, that these districts have the largest number of inhabitants, who claim to belong to different nationalities, this region of Slovakia was selected as a sample. Individual districts of eastern Slovakia are neighbors to three countries, namely Poland, Ukraine and Hungary and as a result this area is ethnically diverse.

Based on the input data of the micro-environment and the macro-environment, the business can further analyze its opportunities and threats, but also its strengths and weaknesses. From the input data, the business can create various analyses, such as BCG matrix, Porter's model of five competitive forces, PEST analysis, SWOT analysis, etc. However, before applying individual methods, a proper and detailed analysis of the business environment is an integral part.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

There are several authors who have dealt with the analysis of the demographic environment. Already in the 18th and 19th centuries, the English economist Thomas Robert Malthus formulated the Malthusian theory of population growth. In his work, he focused on the relationship between population and available resources (Malthus, 2008).

American economist and demographer Simon Kuznets contributed to the analysis of demographic aspects of economic development, including the relationship between demographics and economic growth (Kuznets, 2019). Ansley Coale was engaged in researching national and demographic changes, especially in developing countries (Coale & Guang, 1989). In close connection with demography within demography, it is also interesting to examine the demography of business enterprises.

The business environment is composed of various factors that surround the business. Authors Kita et al. claim that: "Elements and factors that are contained in the marketing environment significantly affect the ability of marketing management. The working week of a marketing manager has 7 days. The week of the lazy manager is 7 times tomorrow." (Kita et al., 2017). Dynamic changes that may occur in the business environment are of great importance to the business, so it is important to monitor the given environment (Škorvagová & Zarkóciová, 2009). Customers also appear in the business environment itself, or consumers, who are the most important factor in the environment for the business itself (Horáková, 2014). Marketing environment can be defined as micro-environment and macro-environment.

The micro-environment of the business is characterized more closely by many authors. Among the most famous authors, who approach the micro-environment belong to Kotler and Armstrong, who define the micro-environment as a set of factors, through which the business can satisfy the needs of consumers (Kotler & Armstrong, 2004). Kita et al. interprets the micro-environment of the business as internal, which is formed by the company itself, and external, which includes the business market itself, e.g. customers, suppliers, competition, etc. (Kita et al., 2017; Sandrin et al., 2017). Famous authors, who analysed the micro-environment more closely include also Foret. His claims divide the micro-environment of the business into two parts. The first part consists of factors that are easier to influence, which are defined as the marketing mix (4P), and the second part is made up of factors that are more difficult to influence, which are represented by employees and people outside the company (Foret & Turnerová, 2023), (Jakubíková, 2008).

Analyses of the micro-environment point to the strengths and weaknesses of the business enterprise (Novacká et al., 2020). Individual results can be entered into a matrix. At the same time, it is possible to use various specific analyses when analysing the internal environment, such as 7S analysis, value chain analysis, financial analysis, etc.

The macro-environment of the business represents another integral part of the business environment. It is defined as the external environment of the business enterprise. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2004), (Kotler & Keller, 2013) The macro-environment is most often divided into 6 separate environments, which include the demographic environment, the economic environment, the natural environment, the cultural environment, the technological environment and the political environment (Grewal & Levy, 2021). Each environment that falls into the macro-environment is specific:

- **Demographic environment** – it specifies the population, which consists mainly of consumers. The demographic environment is of the greatest importance for marketing research,

because it relates to people, and people for a business enterprise represent consumers, who bring financial resources to the business enterprise. Based on the demographic environment, the business enterprise can further segment individual types of consumers (Pol, 1986). However, the environment itself is mostly concerned with the number of inhabitants, population density, age structure of the population, national structure of the population, the share of men and women in the market, employment, or unemployment of residents. It is important to know the geographical location of the investigated area. People living in cities have different shopping habits than rural people. Climatic conditions and cultural differences can also influence product preference and selection.

- **Economic environment** – it specifies in more detail the individual incomes of residents, their economic situation and, at the same time, their purchasing power. Among the most monitored factors can be included, for example: inflation, gross domestic product, direct investments, interest rate, savings rate, etc. People with higher income have greater shopping opportunities and may be more willing to spend on luxury or higher quality products. Highly educated consumers may be more inclined to scrutinize product characteristics and analyse information before making a purchase. Some age groups or social classes may be more oriented towards well-known brand products.
- **Natural environment** – focuses on natural and renewable resources. Each business enterprise has a specific natural environment depending on the inputs, that enter the production process itself in the business enterprise. Among the most monitored factors can be included, for example, the use of all natural resources, lack of natural resources, increasing prices of natural resources, environmental impacts, etc.
- **Cultural environment** – is equally very important for the business enterprise. Each potential customer grows up in a certain society, which affects the individual himself. Based on this, the potential customer can form basic attitudes and values. According the Kita, the elementary factors can include hobbies, behaviour, social attitudes, basic values, etc., which influence the consumer in the final choice (Kita, et al., 2017). People with different lifestyles may prefer different products depending on belonging to a certain ethnic group. This is associated with different traditions and preferences, which are reflected in their purchasing behaviour.
- **Technological environment** – the environment itself can be the biggest threat to the business enterprise, because it changes too quickly with

the change and development of individual technologies and scientific disciplines. New technologies are currently having very dynamic character. To the most well-known factors belong the rapid growth of technology changes, high expenses for science and research, increased regulatory interventions, etc.

- **Political environment** – it can also pose a threat to the business enterprise. Part of the environment itself is individual legislation and legal standards that affect the business enterprise. The business enterprise must therefore follow individual laws and regulations, that could affect its activity. Among the factors, it is possible to include various laws, legal regulations, adjustments of state administration and self-government, etc.

The ethnic composition of the territory can have a significant impact on the success of business activities. This impact can be linked to various factors that affect the business environment. Diversity in culture and language groups can affect the way communication and marketing is done. Successful businesses enterprises may be able to adapt their marketing strategies to accommodate cultural differences and communicate successfully with all demographics. Different cultural groups may have different shopping preferences and values. Successful businesses enterprises can understand these differences and adapt their products and services, to meet the needs of different nationalities. Distribution of different nationalities can have an influence on demographic trends and as the result have a significant impact on business activities. For example, changes in population growth, age structure or family composition may affect the demand for certain products and services. Different nationalities at certain territory can also mean differences in legislation and regulatory standards. Successful businesses enterprises should be able to effectively manage and adapt to different legislatives in areas with different nationalities. In some cases, there may be ethnic markets with specific needs and preferences. Successful businesses enterprises can identify and target these markets, providing products and services, that are relevant to these groups. The success of business activities can also be influenced by the level of social integration of different nationalities. If groups are well integrated and communicate with each other, this can create a positive business environment. The presence of different nationalities can also affect the availability of labour force and the qualifications of employees. Successful businesses enterprises should be able to properly manage and utilize a diverse workforce. Nationality factors can also be linked to political stability. Business activities may be affected by political changes, ethnic conflicts and other political events in the area.

When designing business strategies and planning expansion into new markets, it is important to understand the national and cultural aspects of the given territory. Successful businesses enterprises will be able to adapt to these factors and create a business environment, that reflects the diversity of nationalities and at the same time is able to function effectively.

Analyses of the macro-environment reveal opportunities and threats in the business enterprise (Lamb et al., 2012). Individual results can be entered into a matrix. At the same time, it is possible to use other analyses, such as PESTLE analysis, Porter's analysis of five competitive forces, etc.

When combining and analysing the micro-environment and macro-environment itself, a SWOT analysis can be done to determine strengths and weaknesses, as well as opportunities and threats (Silk, 2006). However, the paper focuses more closely on one of the most important environments, that belongs to the macro-environment of the business, namely the demographic environment.

Taking demographic factors into account when creating marketing strategies and product offerings can help businesses enterprises better understand their customers and reach their target group more effectively. The demographic environment provides businesses enterprises with information about the basic characteristics of their target customers and surrounding conditions. Ultimately, the success of a business enterprise is often linked to its ability to adapt and respond to demographic changes in the surrounding environment. Analysing the demographic environment can be a strategic planning and decision-making tool for a business enterprise.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

According to Vastíková, the marketing environment of the village and city is characterized as a system that consists of interweaving subsystems (Vaštíková, 2011), (Fisher et al., 2012).

Because the demographic environment is represented by residents, who can become potential consumers, it is necessary for every business enterprise to monitor this environment (Walsh & Mitchell, 2005). The paper points out and analyses the demographic environment in selected districts of eastern Slovakia. According to the author Hasprova, the source of power in the city and village is the citizen, because in a democratic society those, who are affected by the decisions, have the right to participate in decision-making (Hasprová et al., 2005), (Brezák, 2006).

The study of the demographic environment was carried out with the methodology of statistical indicators, which were applied to indicators pointing to the number of inhabitants in selected districts of eastern Slovakia. Monitored was:

- **number of the population:** expresses how many inhabitants live permanently, or long-term in the given territory,
- **absolute increment:** respectively decrease (1), which expresses the increase or decrease of variable Y in time t compared to the value of the previous period (where: y_t represents the value of the time series in period t , y_{t-1} value from period $t - 1$ of the immediately preceding period),

$$d_t = y_t - y_{t-1} \quad (1)$$

- **growth rate:** respectively decline (2):

$$Tm_t = k_t * 100 \% , \quad (2)$$

which expresses by what percentage it has grown, or the value of the indicator of variable Y decreased in time t compared to the value from the previous period, (where k_t – growth coefficient). Immediately, the growth coefficient is calculated subsequently (3):

$$k_t = \frac{y_t}{y_{t-1}} , \quad (3)$$

where y_t represents the value of the time series in the period t , y_{t-1} period value $t - 1$,

- **increment rate:** respectively decline (4):

$$Tm_{dt} = k_{\Delta t} * 100 \% , \quad (4)$$

by what percentage did it increase, or the value of variable Y decreased in time t compared to the previous period, (where $k_{\Delta t}$ – increment rate). The increment coefficient is specified by the following formula (5):

$$k_{\Delta t} = \frac{\Delta t}{y_{t-1}} = \frac{y_t - y_{t-1}}{y_{t-1}} \quad (5)$$

(Labudová et al., 2021),

- **the structure of the population:** a basic parameter for examining the demographic analysis and follows the breakdown, or distribution of the population in the given territory (6)

$$\text{part/whole} \quad (6)$$

The first selected indicator, that describes the demographic environment is the number of inhabitants. 17 districts in eastern Slovakia were selected as a sample for the investigated issue. Individual districts are different in size and structure, which is why we wanted to highlight the diverse sample of investigated objects. The selected districts include Prešov (PO), Vranov nad Topľou (VT), Gelnica (GL), Svidník (SK), Humenné (HE), Medzilaborce (ML), Snina (SV), Sobrance (SO), Bardejov (BJ), Sabinov (SB), Kežmarok (KK), Stará Ľubovňa (SL), Košice surroundings (KS), Trebišov

(TV), Michalovce (MI), Rožňava (RV), Košice (KE).

The number of inhabitants in selected districts was monitored for 5 years, which for each country in the world represented the years before the COVID-19 pandemic, during the COVID-19 pandemic and the period after the COVID-19 pandemic. Table 1 shows the development of the population over the years (2018 – 2022) in selected districts of eastern Slovakia.

Table 1. Population development during the period of years (2018 – 2022) in number of the population (Source: authors' processing according to https://datacube.statistics.sk#!/view/sk/vbd_dem/om7102rr/v_om7102rr_00_00_00_sk)

District	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
PO	173,187	172,804	176,181	175,038	174,286
VT	79,181	79,426	80,841	80,692	80,607
GL	31,668	31,698	31,894	31,842	31,759
SK	31,397	31,611	32,484	32,644	32,800
HE	59,535	60,126	61,773	62,198	62,561
ML	10,870	11,056	11,787	11,896	12,004
SV	34,655	35,125	36,123	36,358	36,610
SO	22,377	22,440	22,789	22,849	22,845
BJ	75,786	76,012	77,765	77,777	77,704
SB	60,607	60,389	60,659	60,378	59,995
KK	74,232	73,685	75,533	74,937	74,408
SL	52,867	52,968	53,958	53,949	53,849
KS	129,237	128,346	130,132	128,955	127,365
TV	103,377	103,687	105,295	105,411	105,605
MI	108,520	108,954	110,748	110,662	110,713
RV	58,995	59,345	62,131	62,286	62,335
KE	227,458	229,04	238,593	238,757	239,095

Individual values in Table 1 are expressed in the number of the population. The largest number of inhabitants was in District of Košice (KE), where however, we can see a decrease in the population over 5 years by 11,637 inhabitants. In second place with the largest number of inhabitants is District of Prešov (PO), where however, we can also see a decrease in the population over 5 years by 1,099 inhabitants. The lowest number of inhabitants can be observed in District of Medzilaborce (ML), where, however, there was also a significant decrease of 1,134 inhabitants over the course of 5 years. In all the selected districts, we can see a decrease in the population during the observed period of 5 years, but the most significant decrease was precisely in District of Košice (KE). The significant decrease in population was also recorded in District of Rožňava (RV), where the population decreased by up to 3,340 inhabitants over the course of 5 years. The sample of post-national consumers from selected districts of eastern Slovakia thus represents 24.57 % of consumers from the whole of Slovakia. Consumers from the Region of Košice and Prešov are represented in the examined sample. A closer specification and definition of consumers can be carried out within the regions also through sales for own services and goods in retail business enterprises. The retail turnover for the year 2022 per inhabitant within Eastern

Slovakia thus amounts 2,428 € (in current prices). Revenues for own services and goods within Region of Košice were 2,435 € in current prices and 2,421 € in current prices within Region of Prešov. Based on the facts, it can be concluded that sales for own services and goods in retail business enterprises in these eastern regions are not too different, even if the sales themselves within the Prešov region represent a value of 14€.

For the purpose of further observation, we monitored the following elementary indicators of the time series. In the following Table 2, the difference over 5 years (2018 – 2022) is pointed out in more detail, at the same time, Table 2 shows the growth rate, or decrease and increment rate, or decrease of the period t (2022) with the immediately preceding period (2021).

Table 2. Selected indicators during the monitored period

District	Difference in persons	Growth rate in %	Increment rate in %
PO	1,099	100.22	0.22
VT	1,426	99.69	-0.31
GL	91	99.91	-0.09
SK	1,403	99.32	-0.68
HE	3,026	99.02	-0.98
ML	1,134	98.32	-1.68
SV	1,955	98.66	-1.34
SO	468	99.72	-0.28
BJ	1,918	99.70	-0.30
SB	-612	100.36	0.36
KK	176	100.74	0.74
SL	982	99.81	-0.19
KS	-1,872	100.69	0.69
TV	2,228	99.70	-0.30
MI	2,193	99.60	-0.40
RV	3,340	99.41	-0.59
KE	11,637	99.31	-0.69

From the results of Table 2, it can be concluded, that the year-on-year growth rate was recorded in Districts of Prešov (PO), Sabinov (SB), Košice surroundings (KS) and Kežmarok (KK), while the population is still decreasing in the other districts. Thus, we can observe the highest increment rate in District of Kežmarok (KK), while the highest decrease in the decrease rate can be seen in District of Medzilaborce (ML). A better representation of the population decline over 5 years is shown in Figure 1.

From the given Figure 1, the highest number of the population is in District of Košice (KE), which is part of Region of Košice. The second largest population is located in District of Prešov (PO), which is part of Region of Prešov. This fact is also obvious due to the area of the district itself. The third largest population is found in District of Košice surroundings (KS), and in fourth place with the highest number of the population in District Michalovce (MI). At the same time, we also monitored the structure of the population in selected districts for the year 2022, where the input data are expressed in Table 3.

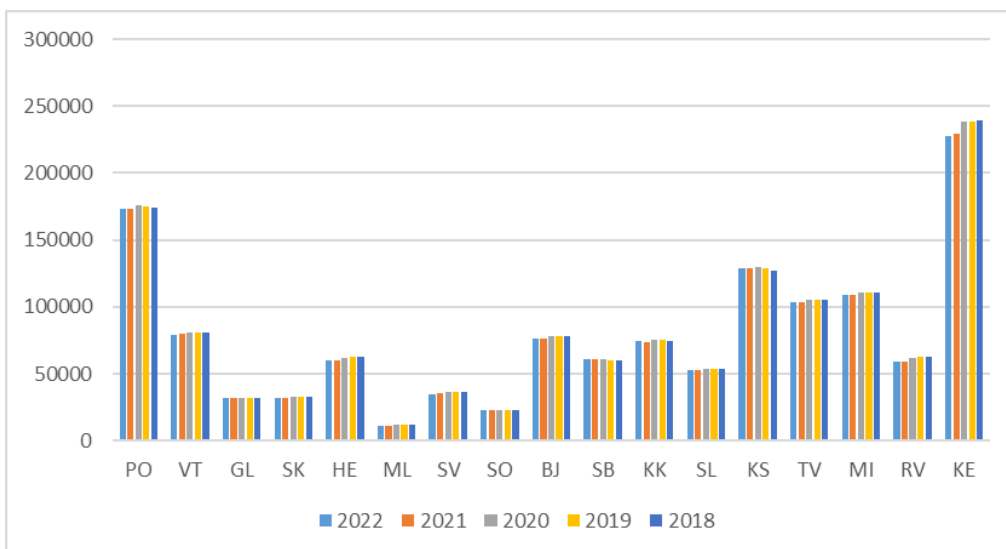


Figure 1. Change in the number of the population over five years (2022 – 2018)

Table 3. Number of the population of selected nationalities in 2022 (in persons) (Source: authors' processing according to https://datacube.statistics.sk/#!/view/sk/vbd_dem/om7102rr/v_om7102rr_00_00_00_sk)

District	Year 2022	Slovak	Hungarian	Roma	Ruthenian	Ukrainian	Polish	Others
PO	173,187	159,006	234	3,152	1,136	713	266	8,680
VT	79,181	70,196	65	5,356	173	96	44	3,251
GL	31,668	27,821	24	2,391	120	35	6	1,271
SK	31,397	25,710	32	868	2,937	300	30	1,520
HE	59,535	52,750	63	758	1,722	339	47	3,856
ML	10,870	6,521	20	192	3,179	242	6	710
SV	34,655	28,755	33	184	2,924	384	26	2,349
SO	22,377	19,611	144	1,257	152	365	20	828
BJ	75,786	69,046	58	1,375	1,700	311	100	3,196
SB	60,607	53,307	28	5,226	310	59	30	1,647
KK	74,232	65,524	52	5,993	82	72	155	2,354
SL	52,867	45,535	24	2,004	2,626	190	71	2,417
KS	12,9237	105,870	10,096	7,277	180	146	64	5,604
TV	103,377	68,034	24,648	3,903	105	202	20	6,465
MI	108,520	86,924	11,349	2,322	200	450	79	7,196
RV	58,995	39,799	13,177	1,990	31	44	17	3,937
KE	227,458	190,75	5,461	1,113	1,128	895	155	27,954

Table 3 shows the number of individual nationalities in selected districts. From the given data, it can be concluded that in each district there is the highest number of the population is Slovak. At the same time, if the district itself borders another state, it is obvious that the nationality of the given neighboring state prevails in the district itself. The districts with the highest Hungarian nationality are Košice (KE), Košice – surroundings (KS), Michalovce (MI), Trebišov (TV) a Rožňava (RV), while in the districts located in the north of Slovakia, the Ruthenian nationality prevails. For greater clarity, the selected districts were monitored using Figure 2, which expresses the structure of the population by nationality in the selected districts for the year 2022.

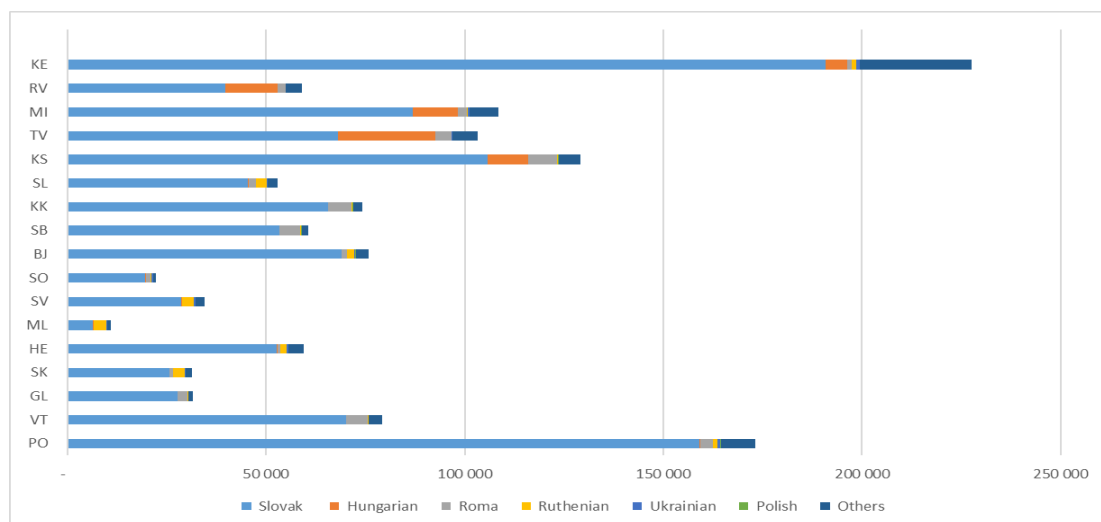


Figure 2. Population structure by nationality in selected districts of eastern Slovakia in 2022

From the above-mentioned Figure 2, it is clear that in District of Košice (KE) predominates Hungarian nationality, which represents 5,461 inhabitants. At the same time, District of Prešov (PO) is dominated by the Roma nationality, which represents 3,152 inhabitants, i.e. 1.82 %. The largest representation of Polish nationality is recorded in District of Prešov (PO), which consists of 266 inhabitants. Among Ruthenians, the largest representation is in the Medzilaborce district (ML - 29.25 %). In District of Košice – surroundings (KS), Hungarian nationality prevails, i.e. 7.81 % and at the same time in District of Michalovce (MI) Hungarian nationality is also predominant, i.e. 10.46 %. However, the highest Hungarian nationality is found in District of Trebišov (TV - 23.84 %) and in District of Rožňava (RV - 22.34 %).

The paper analysed individual nationalities within Eastern Slovakia due to the possibility of pointing out the differences of individual consumers within the region itself. The fact, that the study was focused on the regions of eastern Slovakia where is the broad-spectrum diversity of individual nationalities and the possibility of quantifying individual stores within the framework of consumer preferences. Because each nationality prefers different products, raw materials, dishes, etc. the paper showed the structure of the population for the purpose of analysing the demographic environment. The paper can be beneficial for various business enterprises, that are considering expanding their business activities to one of the selected districts. The paper also brings knowledge, that the largest number of the population is precisely in District of Košice (KE), which is due to the fact that the second largest city of the Slovak Republic is located in the given district, and this represents the largest number of potential consumers from the analysed districts for the business enterprise itself. However, the business enterprise must also take into account the preferences of the consumers themselves based on the potential product offered.

4. CONCLUSION

The paper's task was to describe the business environment, which many authors most often divide into micro-environment and macro-environment from a marketing point of view. The investigation of these environments can be carried out based on several analyses: such as 7S analysis, SWOT analysis, financial analysis, PEST analysis, Porter's analysis of five competitive forces, etc.

However, the basic goal of the paper was to approach and analyse the demographic environment, which is part of the macro-environment. The analysis was carried out on selected districts of eastern Slovakia, which should bring a comprehensive view of individual indicators, that belong to the demographic environment. Part of the contribution was to point out the change in the number of the population over the monitored period of five years.

The result of the investigation was noticing a decreasing trend in all selected districts of eastern Slovakia. The paper also approximates the structure of the population by nationality, which leads to the knowledge and possible preferences of individual predominant nationalities in selected districts.

Longer-term demographic trends, such as the aging of the population, changes in the structure of households, changes in the structure of the ethnic population of individual territorial units, can reflect and influence the business activities themselves.

Knowledge of demographic variables also affects knowledge of the labour market and labour force availability. Businesses enterprises can use demographic data to recruit and retain qualified employees. As can be seen from the above information, for the success of business enterprises it is necessary to permanently pay attention to the demographic environment, in which the business enterprise wants to operate.

The paper can be of benefit to business enterprises that are considering expanding their operations, but also to emerging business enterprises that are considering where to locate their operations. Based on the structure of the population according to nationalities in individual districts, business enterprises can anticipate the preferences of potential consumers and thus place their operations appropriately. Each nation is specific by prioritizing other raw materials, products, etc. While, for example, Hungarian nationality will prefer meat products and products that contain red pepper, the Polish nationality may prefer products with a greater content of cabbage, vegetables and flour, or products containing sheep's wool. In this way, business enterprises can correctly segment individual consumers, which will ensure the correct distribution of customers. In addition to the structure of the population, the contribution also approximates the number of inhabitants in individual districts, which can also help a business enterprise when deciding on the location of its operations.

The paper can represent a benefit and inspiration for monitoring the demographic environment in other countries, which can lead to the same or similar studies, as the knowledge of the demographic environment within marketing practice significantly influences the specification of consumers and the possible success of business operations.

With extended research, it would be appropriate to monitor other indicators, that are part of the demographic environment, such as the age structure of the population, the share of men and women on the market, population density, employment, or unemployment in the market. In the future, it would be appropriate to analyse other environments, that are part of the macro-environment of the company, such as the economic environment, natural environment, cultural environment, technological

environment and political environment. It would be appropriate to pay the most attention to monitoring the economic environment, because the variety of input data can be the same as for the demographic environment, as there are different economic differences between residents in individual districts.

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