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Comparative analysis of the factors of price competitiveness of niche eco-products on marketplaces in the United States and the European Union

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Abstract. The study's relevance stems from the dynamic development of e-commerce and the growing demand for products that meet the principles of sustainable consumption. The **purpose of the article** is to study the factors that shape the price competitiveness of niche ecological goods on the marketplaces of the USA and the European Union, and to substantiate approaches to increasing the effectiveness of pricing strategies for their promotion in the digital trading environment. The research process used **methods** of system analysis, comparative analysis, generalization and systematization of scientific approaches to pricing in digital trade. An analytical approach was applied to the study of factors in the formation of prices for ecological goods on electronic trading platforms, and a structural comparison was used to determine differences in mechanisms of price competition on the marketplaces of the USA and the EU. **Results.** Based on data on the features of the functioning of marketplaces as digital channels for the sale of niche eco-products and the results of studying the factors of price formation in the e-commerce environment, it was established that the price competitiveness of such



products is formed under the influence of a combination of production costs, logistics costs, algorithmic mechanisms for ranking products on platforms and consumer perception of the environmental value of products. The differences in price competition mechanisms in the US and EU marketplaces are characterized, which are due to differences in regulatory environments, competition intensity, and the role of environmental certification in building trust in the product. The main problems in ensuring the price competitiveness of niche eco-products are identified, including high certification costs, logistics costs, regulatory barriers, and the dependence of product visibility on platform algorithmic mechanisms. **Conclusions.** The analysis indicates that in US marketplaces, the price competitiveness of eco-products largely depends on the flexibility of pricing strategies and the intensity of competition between sellers, while in EU countries, institutional mechanisms for confirming the environmental quality of products and trust in certification systems play a more important role. Prospects for further research include developing quantitative models to assess the price competitiveness of eco-products in the digital marketplaces, as well as studying the impact of platform algorithms on the formation of pricing strategies and consumer behavior in international e-commerce.

Keywords: e-commerce, sustainable development, digital platforms, environmental certification, algorithmic ranking, consumer behavior.

Компаративний аналіз факторів цінової конкурентоспроможності нішевих екотоварів на маркетплейсах США та Європейського Союзу

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Анотація. Актуальність дослідження зумовлено динамічним розвитком електронної комерції та зростанням попиту на продукцію, що відповідає



принципам сталого споживання. **Метою статті** є дослідження факторів формування цінової конкурентоспроможності нішевих екологічних товарів на маркетплейсах США та Європейського Союзу та обґрунтування підходів до підвищення ефективності цінових стратегій їх просування у цифровому торговельному середовищі. У процесі дослідження використано **методи** системного аналізу, компаративного аналізу, узагальнення та систематизації наукових підходів до ціноутворення у цифровій торгівлі. Застосовано аналітичний підхід до дослідження факторів формування ціни екотоварів на електронних торговельних платформах та метод структурного порівняння для визначення відмінностей у механізмах цінової конкуренції на маркетплейсах США та ЄС. **Результати.** На підставі даних щодо особливостей функціонування маркетплейсів як цифрових каналів реалізації нішевих екотоварів та результатів вивчення факторів формування ціни у середовищі електронної комерції, встановлено, що цінова конкурентоспроможність такої продукції формується під впливом поєднання виробничих витрат, логістичних витрат, алгоритмічних механізмів ранжування товарів на платформах та сприйняття споживачами екологічної цінності продукції. Схарактеризовано відмінності у механізмах цінової конкуренції на маркетплейсах США та ЄС, що зумовлені різним рівнем регуляторного середовища, інтенсивністю конкуренції та роллю екологічної сертифікації у формуванні довіри до товару. Виявлено основні проблеми забезпечення цінової конкурентоспроможності нішевих екотоварів, серед яких висока вартість сертифікації, логістичні витрати, регуляторні бар'єри та залежність видимості товарів від алгоритмічних механізмів платформ. **Висновки.** Доведено, що на маркетплейсах США цінова конкурентоспроможність екотоварів значною мірою залежить від гнучкості цінових стратегій та інтенсивності конкуренції між продавцями, тоді як у країнах ЄС важливішу роль відіграють інституційні механізми підтвердження екологічної якості продукції та довіра до систем сертифікації. Перспективи подальших досліджень пов'язані з розробленням



кількісних моделей оцінювання цінової конкурентоспроможності екотоварів у цифровому середовищі маркетплейсів, а також із дослідженням впливу алгоритмічних механізмів платформ на формування цінових стратегій та поведінку споживачів у міжнародній електронній комерції.

Ключові слова: електронна комерція, сталий розвиток, цифрові платформи, екологічна сертифікація, алгоритмічне ранжування, споживча поведінка

Problem statement. The development of e-commerce and the spread of the concept of sustainable consumption are today driving increased demand for environmentally friendly products. Marketplaces are becoming key channels for their implementation, providing manufacturers with access to international markets and creating new conditions for competition in the digital environment. At the same time, the specifics of the functioning of electronic platforms in the United States (US) and the European Union (EU) countries are characterized by differences in institutional regulation, the level of environmental standards, consumer behavior and the cost structure of manufacturers, which directly affects the formation of prices and competitive positions of eco-products. For niche ecological products, the problem of price competitiveness is complicated by the combination of increased production, certification, and logistics costs with the need to maintain an attractive price in the highly competitive digital marketplace. In such conditions, the price is determined by a complex of factors, among which algorithms for ranking products on platforms, the level of competition between sellers, and consumers' perception of the environmental value of products play an important role. This necessitates an in-depth analysis of the factors driving the price competitiveness of niche eco-products on the US and EU marketplaces to identify key patterns of price formation and substantiate effective approaches to increasing manufacturers' competitiveness in the international digital environment.



Analysis of recent research and publications. A review of modern research enables the systematization of scientific approaches to the topic along several interconnected research vectors. First of all, in scientific works, considerable attention is paid to the problems of forming pricing strategies and managing price volatility in conditions of global market instability. A. Iutkina investigates the mechanisms of flexible pricing in conditions of demand fluctuations, justifying the feasibility of using adaptive pricing strategies to increase the competitiveness of goods in the digital trading environment [1]. M. Derbenov analyzes the issue of financial risks associated with cost instability, proving the effectiveness of automated resource control systems as a tool for stabilizing the cost structure of enterprises and reducing the impact of price volatility on the final cost of products [2]. V. Panasiuk and co-authors study the impact of global economic trends on pricing models in international trade, emphasizing the role of inflationary processes, currency fluctuations and logistics costs in forming the competitive price of goods [3].

An important body of scientific literature is devoted to the study of factors shaping the competitiveness of ecological products and the market positioning strategies of enterprises. M. Kotsenko considers the competitive advantages of organic products, identifying key factors of their market attractiveness, including environmental quality, certification and consumer trust [4]. I. Taranenko and co-authors investigate the competitive business strategies of enterprises in EU countries amid economic instability, emphasizing the importance of innovation, product diversification, and cost optimization to secure sustainable positions in international markets [5]. B. R. Olaleye demonstrates that innovations in the field of ecological products, combined with enterprises' corporate reputations, create additional product value for consumers and strengthen their competitive positions [6].

A large body of studies examines the role of eco-innovations and the principles of the circular economy in shaping the economic value of ecological products. B. Peyravi and co-authors analyze the practices of the circular economy in



the EU countries, proving that the implementation of eco-innovations contributes to increasing the efficiency of resource use and the formation of long-term competitive advantages of enterprises [7]. V. Platon and co-authors investigate the impact of eco-innovations and resource recycling processes on reducing raw material consumption, which allows optimizing production costs and forming a more effective price structure for ecological products [8]. S. A. Sahili and V. Barrales-Molina examine the mechanisms for introducing eco-innovations into the activities of European startups, emphasizing the roles of financial resources and patent activity in the creation of new ecological products [9]. J. Hojnik et al. review EU projects aimed at improving the environmental quality of production and integrating innovative technologies within the framework of the circular economy [10].

A separate research vector concerns the economic value of ecological products and mechanisms for realizing their market potential. M. Imanova analyzes the structural transformations of the economy in the process of industrialization, which create the prerequisites for the development of environmentally friendly production sectors [11]. J. Wang and G. Tian conduct a comprehensive analysis of the sustainability of ecological product development in the forest sector, identifying economic and environmental factors that shape the market value of these products [12]. J. Liu and co-authors systematize theoretical approaches to the realization of the value of ecological products, emphasizing the need to integrate economic, environmental and institutional factors in the process of forming their price [13]. N. Cherep investigates the role of neuromarketing trust markers in brand communications, proving that the formation of consumer trust through emotional and cognitive brand signals significantly affects the perception of product value and consumers' willingness to accept a higher price level, which is also important for the positioning of ecological goods in the digital environment of marketplaces [14].

Highlighting previously unresolved parts of the general problem. Despite active research on e-commerce and sustainable consumption, some aspects of the formation of price competitiveness for niche ecological goods on marketplaces



remain insufficiently studied. In the scientific literature, the peculiarities of the functioning of US and EU marketplaces as digital channels for the sale of ecological goods, the complex of factors shaping their prices in the e-commerce environment, and comparative differences in price competition mechanisms on these markets have been studied to a limited extent. The scientific and practical problems of ensuring the price competitiveness of eco-products, including certification costs, logistics, regulatory requirements, and algorithmic product ranking on platforms, are not sufficiently systematized.

Formulation of the objectives of the article (task statement). The purpose of the article is to conduct a comparative analysis of the factors shaping the price competitiveness of niche eco-products on the US and EU marketplaces and to identify approaches to improving the effectiveness of pricing strategies for their promotion in the digital trading environment.

To achieve the set goal, the following research tasks were defined:

1. To analyze the features of the functioning of the US and EU marketplaces as digital channels for the sale of niche eco-products and to determine the factors of formation of their price on electronic platforms.
2. To conduct a comparative analysis of the factors of price competitiveness of eco-products in the US and EU marketplaces and to identify the key scientific and practical problems of their provision.
3. To substantiate recommendations for the formation of effective pricing strategies for the promotion of niche eco-products in the US and EU marketplaces.

Presentation of the main material of the study. The functioning of marketplaces in modern e-commerce forms a new model of goods sales, within which digital platforms act as key intermediaries between producers and consumers. For niche eco-products, such a model is particularly important, as it allows small producers to enter international markets without creating their own extensive trade infrastructure. At the same time, the specifics of the operation of marketplaces in the US and the EU are determined by different institutional conditions, the level of



regulatory requirements for eco-products, as well as differences in consumer behavior, which affects the mechanisms for promoting goods and the formation of their competitive positions (table 1).

Table 1

Features of the functioning of the US and EU marketplaces as digital channels for the sale of niche environmental goods

Criteria	US marketplaces	EU marketplaces
Level of market concentration	High dominance of global e-commerce platforms	More diversified structure of platforms and regional marketplaces
Regulatory environment	Dominance of market mechanisms for the regulation and self-regulation of platforms	Stronger regulatory regulation of digital platforms and consumer protection
Environmental certification	Comparatively flexible requirements for confirming the environmental characteristics of products	Rigid standards for environmental labeling and certification
Consumer behavior	Focus on delivery speed, convenience of purchase and competitive price	More attention to sustainable consumption and environmental responsibility of products
Logistics infrastructure	Centralized logistics systems of platforms	Combined logistics model with the participation of local operators
Promotion mechanisms	Algorithmic ranking of goods and active use of paid advertising	Combining algorithmic ranking with requirements for information transparency

Source: formed by the author based on [5, p. 303; 7; 10, p. 5; 11, p. 14]

The practice of marketplaces shows that, in the US, digital platforms form a highly competitive environment in which search ranking algorithms and internal advertising tools play a key role. For sellers of niche eco-products, this means combining price optimization with increased product visibility on the platform. For example, the Amazon marketplace operates the Climate Pledge Friendly program, which marks products with verified environmental certifications. Such labeling allows buyers to more quickly identify environmentally friendly products and



increases their visibility in search results, which directly affects sales volumes in the relevant segment [15]. In practical terms, this means that for sellers of eco-products, not only price but also the availability of internationally recognized sustainability certificates becomes an important factor of competitiveness. In EU countries, marketplaces operate in a more regulated environment, where significant attention is paid to the reliability of product environmental characteristics and the prevention of so-called «greenwashing». This stimulates the formation of specialized platforms focused on sustainable products. A prime example is the European marketplace Avocadostore, which specializes in selling products that meet certain criteria for environmental friendliness and social responsibility [16]. To list products, sellers must confirm that each product meets one or more sustainability criteria, including organic materials, resource-efficient production, or ethical working conditions. This platform model contributes to a more transparent market for ecological products and increases consumer trust in niche ecological products. Thus, in modern conditions, marketplaces act not only as e-commerce channels but also as institutional environments that shape the rules of access to digital markets. For producers of niche ecological products, this means adapting marketing and pricing strategies to the specifics of regional platforms, accounting for environmental certification requirements, and effectively using digital promotion tools.

The pricing of niche eco-products on e-commerce platforms is influenced by a combination of production costs, market competition, and specific mechanisms of digital platforms. Unlike traditional retail, pricing in marketplaces largely depends on algorithmic product ranking, logistics models for order fulfillment, and consumer perceptions of a product's environmental value. For niche eco-products, an important factor is the combination of higher production costs and the potential to create premium value through the product's environmental characteristics (table 2).

Table 2

Key factors of price formation of niche eco-products on electronic trading platforms



Factor	Influence on price formation	Manifestation in the digital environment
Production costs	Use of organic raw materials and ecological technologies	Formation of an increased basic cost price
Ecological certification	Need to obtain international ecological certificates	Creating added value of products
Logistics costs	Transportation, storage, order fulfillment	Integration of fulfillment services
Competitive environment	A large number of sellers of similar products	Dynamic price adjustment
Platform algorithms	Product ranking mechanisms	Impact on product visibility

Source: formed by the author based on [4, p. 47; 6; 8; 13]

Pricing of niche eco-products in the digital environment is determined by the interaction among production costs, platform promotion mechanisms, and consumer behavioral characteristics. Consumer behavior studies show that environmental characteristics of products are increasingly perceived by buyers as a source of added value, helping partially offset the higher cost of sustainable production. In particular, McKinsey's analytical materials show that a significant share of consumers in the USA and Europe are willing to support a more sustainable consumption model, even if the price of products with verified environmental characteristics is slightly higher [17]. At the same time, on marketplaces, the seller's logistics component and service offering become important elements in price formation. Data from Ecommerce Europe reports show that delivery speed, transparency in receiving the product, and the possibility of free returns are key factors in choosing a product in European e-commerce, which forces sellers to integrate logistics costs into the final price [18]. In the niche eco-goods segment, this situation creates a delicate balance between the need to cover the costs of environmental production standards and the need to maintain competitive pricing in a digital environment where buyers can quickly compare alternative offers.

The factors shaping the price competitiveness of niche eco-goods in the US and EU marketplaces are influenced by different institutional, economic, and



behavioral conditions of e-commerce. In the digital environment, the price of ecological products is determined not only by production costs, but also by the level of trust in the product's environmental characteristics, the intensity of competition on the platform, logistics costs, and the characteristics of consumer demand. It is these factors that determine the differences in the mechanisms of price competition in the US and EU marketplaces (table 3).

Table 3

Comparative analysis of factors of price competitiveness of eco-products in the US and EU marketplaces

Factor	US	EU
Price elasticity of demand	High sensitivity to discounts and short-term promotions	Lower sensitivity in the sustainable consumption segment
Perception of environmental value	Environmental friendliness is important, but often inferior to convenience and speed of delivery	Environmental characteristics are integrated into product selection criteria
Regulatory environment	Less unification of environmental labeling standards	System of official environmental certifications and standards
Intensity of competition	High number of sellers and frequent price fluctuations	Competition is combined with niche specialization
The role of the brand	The brand is important, but easily displaced by cheaper analogues	The brand's reputation for sustainability stabilizes price positioning
Logistics costs	Centralized logistics systems of large platforms	More fragmented logistics infrastructure

Source: formed by the author based on [5, p. 305; 6; 7; 12]

The differences identified directly affect the practice of forming pricing strategies in digital commerce. The US market is characterized by intense competition among sellers on marketplaces, which drives the use of flexible pricing strategies and frequent promotions. Under such conditions, even in the eco-goods segment, price often remains one of the key factors in attracting buyers. At the same time, NielsenIQ research shows that a significant proportion of consumers are paying increasing attention to sustainability issues: about 69% of respondents note that the importance of environmental aspects of consumption has increased



compared to previous years [19]. This means that environmental characteristics are gradually becoming a factor that can affect the perception of price and the competitiveness of a product on the platform. In EU countries, the formation of price competitiveness is largely associated with the development of institutional mechanisms for confirming the environmental quality of products. One such tool is the EU Ecolabel system, which designates goods and services with reduced environmental impact throughout their life cycles [20]. The presence of such labeling increases consumer confidence in the product and simplifies its identification among alternative offers on marketplaces. As a result, manufacturers can maintain a relatively higher price level, since environmental certification acts as a signal of quality and compliance with established standards. Therefore, a comparative analysis shows that in US marketplaces, the price competitiveness of eco-products is largely determined by the flexibility of pricing strategies and the high level of competition among sellers. In EU countries, institutional mechanisms for confirming product sustainability play a more important role, increasing trust in products and allowing manufacturers to establish a more stable price positioning on digital platforms. Ensuring the price competitiveness of niche eco-products on international marketplaces is accompanied by a number of interrelated scientific and practical problems arising at the intersection of environmental requirements for production and the specifics of digital platform operation. One of the key ones is the high cost of confirming the environmental characteristics of products. Obtaining organic production certificates or eco-labels requires additional costs and time, which increases the product's price and makes it difficult to maintain a competitive price in a marketplace where consumers can instantly compare alternative offers [12].

Another important problem is the fragmentation of environmental standards between different countries and regions. Manufacturers focused on international platforms are forced to adapt their products to different certification systems, labeling requirements, and sustainability verification rules, which increases



administrative costs and complicates sales scaling. At the same time, the logistics component has a significant impact on the final price [5, p. 306]. Niche manufacturers are characterized by relatively small production volumes, which limit the ability to optimize transportation costs. The costs of international delivery, warehousing, and order fulfillment often account for a significant share of the final product price.

Additional difficulties arise from the regulatory environment of international e-commerce. Differences in cross-border sales tax rules, product labeling requirements, and consumer protection laws increase the regulatory burden on manufacturers and make it difficult for them to enter new markets. Additionally, an important issue is the dependence of product visibility on marketplace algorithmic ranking systems. Such algorithms take into account price, delivery speed, seller rating, and sales volumes, which creates advantages for large sellers and makes it difficult to promote niche eco-products at a higher cost. The situation is exacerbated by information asymmetry: the environmental characteristics of products are not always easy to communicate in short product descriptions, so their added value is not always reflected in consumers' willingness to pay a higher price.

Increasing the price competitiveness of niche eco-products on the US and EU marketplaces requires the development of adaptive pricing strategies that account for the peculiarities of the digital trading environment, the level of competition and consumer behavioral characteristics. One key area is the application of a differentiated pricing approach across regional markets. On US marketplaces, it is advisable to use flexible pricing models that allow periodic price adjustments, taking into account demand dynamics, competitive offers and algorithmic product ranking. In turn, in EU countries, a more effective strategy is price positioning, where the price depends on the product's environmental quality and on communicating its long-term value to consumers. Another important area for increasing companies' competitiveness is optimizing the cost structure through effective logistics models, supply consolidation and cooperation with marketplace fulfillment centers. This



allows for reducing the share of transportation costs in the product's final price and increasing delivery speed, which positively affects the product's position in search results. The use of digital promotion tools on platforms, in particular internal advertising, product description optimization and the creation of a system of positive reviews, allows for increasing product visibility and maintaining stable price positions.

A separate role is played by increasing transparency about the product's environmental characteristics. A clear presentation of sustainability certificates, the origin of materials, and the environmental benefits of products helps build consumer trust and increases their willingness to accept a higher price. Combined with consistent positioning of the sustainability brand, this allows niche manufacturers not only to maintain competitive prices but also to build sustainable market advantages in the ecological product segment across the US and EU marketplaces.

Conclusions. As a result of a comparative analysis of the factors shaping the price competitiveness of niche eco-products on the US and EU marketplaces, it was found that in the digital environment of marketplaces, the price of ecological products is formed under the influence of the complex interaction of production costs, logistics costs, algorithmic mechanisms for ranking goods and consumer perception of the ecological value of products. The study found that on US marketplaces, the price competitiveness of ecological products largely depends on the flexibility of pricing strategies and the high level of competition between sellers, whereas in EU countries, institutional mechanisms for confirming product sustainability and trust in ecological certifications play a more important role.

The main scientific and practical problems of ensuring the price competitiveness of niche eco-products on international marketplaces are identified, among which the key ones are the high cost of environmental certification, the fragmentation of sustainability standards, a significant share of logistics costs in the price structure, regulatory barriers to cross-border e-commerce and the dependence of product visibility on algorithmic ranking systems of platforms. The analysis



shows that increasing the competitiveness of niche eco-products requires the use of adaptive pricing strategies that provide differentiated pricing across regional markets, optimization of logistics costs, active use of digital promotion tools, and increased transparency of product environmental characteristics. These findings may be useful for producers, marketplace sellers, and researchers in developing more effective pricing and positioning strategies for niche eco-products. Prospects for further research include developing quantitative models to assess the price competitiveness of eco-products in the marketplace and analyzing the impact of platform algorithms on the formation of pricing strategies in international e-commerce. Researchers and practitioners should join efforts to translate findings into concrete improvements for the industry.

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