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STUDY OF THE IMPLEMENTATION POSSIBILITY OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS*

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Abstract. After assessing the relevance of sustainable development goals (hereafter SDGs) and their implementation in the context of scientific literature, this article examines the experience of research participants' involvement in the performance of SDGs. It discusses the possibilities of managing sustainable development processes. 198 respondents participated in the research. Analytical descriptive, quantitative and statistical research methods were applied. Quantitative data analysis was performed by calculating analysis of variance (ANOVA) and percentage distribution (frequency). Using the Student's - t criterion, a comparative analysis of the evaluation of the experience of involvement in the implementation of SDGs was performed in two groups of subjects of different ages. It was identified that the respondents engage in the implementation of SDGs in both the environmental and social fields by their behaviour: they combine various means of transport during trips and participate in ecological management campaigns, help poor and vulnerable people, allocate funds for charity, support and look for ways to reduce inequality (social, gender, religion, age, etc.). However, the observed lowest estimates indicate less expressed efforts of the research participants in contributing to the implementation of SDGs by sorting waste/garbage, saving paper and electricity, and respecting the rights and needs of every person. After conducting a comparative analysis in terms of age, it was found that the expressiveness of the experience of involvement in the implementation of SDGs is different in the two groups of subjects. The results of the statistical analysis showed that the younger research participants, belonging to the age group under 35 years old, evaluated their efforts in contributing to the implementation of SDGs in both social and environmental fields with significantly higher estimates than the elder respondents belonging to the age group over 36. When evaluating the possibilities of achieving SDGs, the results of the research confirmed the importance of public education on the topics of sustainable development, as well as the importance of raising personal awareness in the family and educational institutions and encouraging young people to be more actively involved in the implementation of SDGs. Television, media and social networks are also named ways to ensure sustainable development processes. The results of the research will have a lasting value in the scientific discussion about SDGs and the possibilities of their implementation, as well as practical significance in predicting possible ways of managing sustainable development processes and creating social and environmental well-being, forming public awareness and responsibility, changing mindsets, and attitudes.

Keywords: sustainable development goals; sustainable development principles

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1. Introduction

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Sustainable development includes environmental protection capacity, policy formulation and implementation and monitoring, science, technology, and research; development of national data and statistics; cleaner production; and trade-related capabilities. The globalisation process, economic competitiveness, technological changes, innovation support, environmental protection, and natural problems should focus more on quality than quantity. It is the knowledge-based economy and sustainable development that attract a lot of attention from scientists and politicians. Both processes are focused on improving quality, which increases competitiveness, so it is appropriate to highlight the most critical aspects of the mentioned processes. In recent years, organisational cohesion has become one of the most popular and ambitious concepts in modern management. Environments and organisations are tightly connected; the long-term success of organisations depends on how harmoniously they are integrated into the environment and feel the social mood of the interested parties. Scientists from various countries have studied the issues of sustainable development. Elder et al. (2016) mentioned that sustainable development includes environmental protection capabilities, formulation and implementation of policy and monitoring, science, technology, and research, while Dacko et al. (2021) analyse sustainable development in international agreements, treaties, and conventions dealing with and relating to the broadly defined natural environment protection with optimal use of energy resources. Crespo et al. (2017) stated that teaching and learning sustainable development must be implemented to achieve SDGs. Hedlund-de Witt (2014) mentioned that it is necessary to consider different worldviews when discussing sustainability and offer broad tentative suggestions. According to the Government of the Republic of Lithuania (2003), sustainable development is understood as a compromise between environmental, economic, and social goals of society, enabling the achievement of universal well-being for present and future generations without going beyond permissible environmental impact limits; while Čižauskaitė-Butkaliuk (2014) stated sustainable development should be more focused on quality than quantity.

The research problem is made concrete by raising *problematic questions*: what is the experience of the research participants in contributing to the implementation of SDGs? What are the possibilities of managing sustainable development processes by developing the field of public education on sustainable development topics and involving institutions responsible for the implementation of sustainable development goals?

Aim of the research: after studying the experience of research participants' involvement in implementing SDGs, predict the possibilities of implementing these goals.

Research objectives:

1. After analysing the scientific literature on the subject under consideration, find out the current assumptions, possibilities and conditions for implementing SDGs that today's researchers are studying.
2. To find out the respondents' experience and the efforts made in implementing SDGs.
3. Based on the assessment of the research participants, suggest solutions for the implementation of SDGs.

2. Sustainable development: theoretical aspects

Sustainable development is becoming one of the most popular ideas of social development. Sustainable development helps society, companies, and individuals to change their behaviour concerning the environment. It covers three leading indicators: economic, ecological, and social. More and more attention is being paid not only to the financial performance results but to the formation of a harmonious and responsible society, improving the quality of life. Social, economic, and environmental rules of sustainable development motivate people to stick with the message. Only an effective, continuously developed, supported, and encouraged culture of knowledge sharing can meet the needs of society in the current period, preserving opportunities for future generations to meet their own needs and preserving a sustainable environment for future generations. Sustainable development is based on three main elements - environmental protection, economic and social well-being. Čiegis (2004) stated that the term sustainability began to be used in various contexts and became especially popular after the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) published the World Conservation Strategy in 1980, which had a clear, practical goal: to encourage a more focused approach to the management of living resources and to provide political guidelines. How could this be implemented? It was a completely new approach that tried to combine the conservation and utilisation of nature with environmental

and development goals. Luque González et al. (2021) stated that sustainability can be defined within two typologies - weak and - strong sustainability. The first assumes that natural capital and economic capital are perfectly interchangeable substitutes over a period, while the second is a sound economic principle that is impossible to replace by natural resources in a complex biological system. The principles of sustainable development were formulated in 1992 at the global top-level conference in Rio de Janeiro. More than 170 heads of state signed the Rio Declaration, and “Agenda 21” was announced at this conference. Based on these and the documents adopted later at the World Heads of State and Government Meeting held in Johannesburg, countries prepared National Strategies for Sustainable Development. The document sets 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) and 169 smaller tasks (targets), which cover many policy areas and are intended to be implemented by 2030.

The essence of the definition of sustainable development is to emphasise the long-term economic development of countries/states to rationally harmonise the economic, social, and environmental interests of society. All these factors must not only be combined and complement each other but the attention to quality must be given.

Liu (2009) stated that sustainable development includes economic growth and reducing its impact on the environment. It also assumes that Earth can provide enough resources for humanity to meet present and future needs.

Sustainable development principles. Navickienė et al. (2021) mentioned that sustainable development is a development that meets the needs of the present without reducing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, and this is the central long-term ideology of social development that emphasises the interdependence between the three harmonious development pillars (dimensions) - economic development, social development, and environmental protection. According to Navickienė et al. (2021), this concept began to be widely used only in the 20th century because until then, humanity did not appreciate the changed situation due to the strengthening of civilisation and economic activities and because there are no areas left untouched by humans on the planet. Still, in the last century, humanity realised. There was a need to balance the development of the global society due to the rapid population growth and the increase in their consumption.

Sustainable development must be carried out in a balanced and simultaneous manner in three dimensions: social, economic, and environmental. Staniškis et al. (2012) and Vasiljeviienė et al. (2008) state a strong relationship between these dimensions - decisions in one of the dimensions will always affect the other dimensions. Sustainable development is a development that ensures better development and quality of life for both current and future generations. In other words, economic development will be harmonious and sustainable only if it positively affects the social environment and those around it.

Žičkienė et al. (2019) identified the most critical features of sustainable development: 1) preservation of economically beneficial capital reserves, increase of production productivity and limitation of adverse external effects; 2) meeting the needs of the current generation, reducing inequality and uncertainty, ensuring the stability of social systems and cultural diversity; 3) decoupling economic growth from environmental deterioration, responsible management of natural capital and restoration of capital of critical natural resources, changing the current methods of assessing social progress; 4) determination of principle global, macro- and lower regional levels, cooperation of international, national and local level institutions, promotion of public activeness.

Possibilities of implementing sustainable development goals. Examining the situation of the implementation of SDGs on a global scale, it is evident that this process only sometimes goes smoothly due to subjective or objective reasons. Crespo et al. (2017) mentioned that their article aims to report a carried out higher education Master’s study in Thermal Engineering at the University of Vigo based on teaching and promoting sustainable development. According to Crespo et al. (2017), it mainly consists of individual cases solved by the students in which the different criteria of sustainable development should be addressed. According to the authors, the results were evaluated by a sustainable rubric developed based on the 17 SDGs recently announced by the United Nations. Finally, a discussion of the outcomes is given, related to sustainable development in higher education.

Grainger-Brown et al. (2019) analysed that the SDGs framework is a template for a sustainable future, with goals that include poverty reduction, better health and education, climate change, and preserving forests, oceans, and cities. Real consensus on the SDGs is difficult to achieve due to the almost universal applicability of the targets. Still, overall, the SDGs agenda is perceived as a valuable gathering tool to rally the world's nations around a central vision for a better future. Mobilising societal change and directing investments and strategies to pressing global issues is critical.

Ionescu et al. (2021) assessed the implementation of SDGs in Bulgaria, as well as the existing development potential, considering the current knowledge gap related to this critical topic. Eurostat data was processed using dynamic indices and time series analysis based on the ARIMA methodology to identify development trends and progress dynamics of key indicators related to the SDGs. Ionescu et al. (2021) calculate that in 2030, the projected 36.28% of targets will be met, but it also reveals the great potential to accelerate the transition to a low-carbon economy and a more sustainable and inclusive society.

Firoiu et al. (2021) mentioned that a sustainable society is based on sustainable education; in Romania, access to education is unlimited. Youth and adults are encouraged to improve their skills and competencies. This society is ready for a sustainable future. However, regarding specific indicators, Romania occupies a lower position than the European average, which is relevant for the OECD program for international student assessment. School abandonment, poor infrastructure, and deprivation of investment in sustainable education have resulted in a significant undervaluation of education in Romania. From a lifelong learning perspective, Romania has yet to foster a tradition that promotes lifelong learning. The lowest percentage from the national budget for education in Romania in 2016 was 3.7%, compared to the European average of 4.7%.

Mestdagh et al. (2023) studied the following areas of implementation of SDGs: (1) evaluation of the state of SDGs implementation by organisations, (2) review of SDGs implementation activities (3) evaluation of the direct impact of COVID-19 on the organisation's sustainable goal implementation, 4) evaluation of the direct impact of COVID-19 on the organisation's implementation of individual sustainable development goals. Thus, participants were asked both directly and indirectly about the relationship between the variables of COVID-19 and SDGs implementation.

According to Płonka et al. (2022), the study showed that very often, the idea of sustainable development is simplified to care about environmental protection. Such reasoning ignores or marginalises the other aspects that have formed the triad of sustainable development from the beginning, i.e., economic dimension and social context. Moreover, as indicated in the literature on this topic, only a holistic approach to these three vectors provides a sufficient basis for defining the changes taking place in terms of sustainable development. In the presented study, shortcomings were observed both in emphasising the concept of sustainable development, in explaining its essence in the program's content, and the fairness of learning. The benefits of solid sustainable development education are not limited to specific knowledge and a good foundation. They are manifested in social attitudes that are desirable not only from an environmental point of view but also from an economic and social point of view. Spending on social education for sustainable development feeds into the macroeconomic account by saving modern production technologies and reducing waste generation, which is important in every aspect of sustainable development.

Bardal et al. (2021) stated that the results of the conducted research showed that the successful implementation of SDGs in local and regional planning requires that both municipalities and counties have the capacity and resources necessary to work with SDGs implementation. To prioritise work on the performance of the SDGs, respondents mentioned the importance of administration leaders, expressing that this is an essential and prioritised task. Municipal cooperation was also mentioned as a possible strategy to overcome the capacity barrier. However, as one respondent commented, work on sustainable development goals must be integrated into existing activities and not become something separate from the service delivery activities for which municipalities and county councils are responsible.

Sonntag et al. (2022) state that the research has shown that sustainable development is perceived as a source of new entrepreneurial opportunities, helping solve social and environmental problems. This is beneficial for companies, as they can contribute to the implementation of "green solutions" and, at the same time, respond to the needs of customers who are increasingly paying attention to the benefits of these solutions. This is

important because the vast majority of those interviewed believed that there is a lack of financial resources that mainly hinders the implementation of SDGs in companies.

Fallah Shayan et al. (2022) analysed that SDGs help corporations achieve their corporate social responsibility goals because they are more comprehensive on a global scale. The SDGs are holistic and interrelated, meaning one purpose can help others. The results of the SDGs last longer; therefore, they save companies time and money.

Yeh et al. (2022) remark that the social goals of sustainable development are directly related to people's daily lives, such as health, water, energy, consumption, and production, and have attracted more researchers' attention. On the other hand, the frequencies of all SDGs studied in these review papers were within a narrow range. More research on the SDGs has focused on specific SDGs rather than the SDGs as an indivisible and integrated framework as defined in the UN Resolution. Systematic thinking is critical to research related to sustainable development and the SDGs.

Mestdagh et al. (2023), Płonka et al. (2022), Bardal et al. (2021), Sonntag et al. (2022) Fallah Shayan et al. (2022) et al. research distinguishes essential things - that it is a holistic approach, that these three areas are interrelated and mutually influencing. This is also confirmed by Plonka et al. investigation. From the point of view of scientists, public education on sustainable development is one of the essential factors contributing to the implementation of the SDGs.

It is clear that in today's context, the implementation of sustainable development goals acquires particular importance for achieving quality of life and creating well-being for future generations. When it comes to SDGs, it should be kept in mind that it is holistic, covering three areas, i.e., environmental, social, and economic, which are interconnected. Therefore, it can be defined as an indivisible, integrated system when the implementation of goals in the economic field is related to the environmental and social areas. The possibility of reaching SDG goals depends on the behaviour and lifestyles of companies and people. Behavioural attitudes still need to be investigated.

3. The research methodology

Research organisation and a sample of subjects. When organising the research, the following systematic logic was followed: 1) analysis, evaluation, and summarising of the scientific and methodical literature related to the topic and the results of the conducted scientific research related to the topic under consideration. This helped to clarify the objectives of sustainable development and aspects of their implementation and to create a research instrument. 2) conducting diagnostic research, which allowed to study the experience of the research participants and the efforts made in contributing to the SDGs and to predict possible ways and means of implementing the SDGs. The questionnaire distribution method was an online survey. 3) formulation of conclusions based on the analysis of scientific literature and research data, predicting the possibilities of achieving the SDGs.

Research methods. Analytical descriptive. The analysis of scientific literature and documents on SDGs in the social, economic and environmental fields was carried out, and research related to the topic under consideration was discussed, which examined SDGs and the possibilities of their implementation. *Quantitative method.* In analysing the experience of research participants in getting involved in the implementation of SDGs and predicting the possibilities of implementing them, a quantitative research method (questionnaire survey) was used. The statements of the questionnaire were compiled based on theoretical insights criteria identified in the scientific literature, which were used to examine the experience of the research participants in getting involved in the implementation of SDGs and, based on the respondents' point of view, revealed the possibilities for the implementation of SDGs. The validity of the questionnaire was determined by calculating Cronbach's alpha values in each group of questionnaire statements separately. The results of the statistical data analysis show that the overall degree of internal consistency of the questionnaire statements (number of variables = 33) is high enough (Cronbach's alpha = 0.86) and varies from 0.851 to 0.88. The internal consistency of the variables was also checked in each group of the questionnaire separately. The questionnaire identified constructs: 1) the expression of research participants' involvement and efforts in contributing to SDGs; 2) the possibilities of implementing SDGs. After checking the expression of the group

of statements in the questionnaire about the involvement and the efforts made in contributing to SDGs, which consists of 20 statements, Cronbach's alpha = 0.9084 was calculated and varied from 0.9005 to 0.91. When defining the question group of the possibilities of implementing SDGs, the results of statistical data analysis show that the degree of internal consistency of the statements of this question (number of variables = 13) is sufficiently high (Cronbach's alpha = 0.817) and varies from 0.804 to 0.822. Based on the fact that internal consistency should be between 0 and 1, and the value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient reaching 0.60 is considered suitable for research (Pakalniškienė, 2012), the Cronbach's alpha calculated during this research shows that both questions - Involvement and efforts made in contributing to implementation of SDGs and SDGs implementation possibilities- groups of statements should be considered as matched. To check whether several constructs consist of the statements of the question group of involvement and the efforts made in contributing to the implementation of SDGs, principal components factor analysis was performed using *Varimax* rotation. The results show that the data is suitable for factor analysis: KMO=0.793 (possible not lower than KMO=0.6), and Bartlett's specificity test $p < 0.001$. The results of the factor analysis show that the statements of the question form two factors: a) social and b) environmental, and their weights range from 0.683 to 0.812. After performing a factor analysis of the main statement components of the possibilities of implementing SDGs by applying *Varimax* rotation, the results show that the data is suitable for factor analysis: KMO=0.731 (possible not less than KMO=0.6), and Bartlett's specificity test $p < 0.001$. The results of the factor analysis show that the statements of the question form two factors; on that basis, the following constructs are distinguished: a) education and public education on the topics of sustainable development; b) involvement of institutions responsible for the implementation of SDGs. Factor weights in this group of statements range from 0.708 to 0.742. *Statistical.* Statistical analysis methods were used to process the data collected during the research. When determining differences in several independent populations, the Student's t-test was applied (to compare the averages of two independent samples), and quantitative data analysis was performed by calculating variance analysis (ANOVA) and percentage distribution (frequency). When the significance level was less than 0.05, the difference in characteristics was considered statistically significant. Statistical data analysis was performed using SPSS (Statistic Package for Social Sciences) software version 17 data package and MS Excel 2016 computer program.

The sample of subjects. Lithuanian residents (n=198) participated in the research, more than two-thirds of which were women (n=132 (66.7%)) and only 65 (32.8%) were men, and one respondent did not specify his/her gender. Analysing the distribution of subjects by age, it can be seen that more than half of those who took part in the research belong to the age group of 36 years and older (n=115 (58.1%)), while a smaller proportion of respondents belonged to the age group under 35 (n=83 (41, 9 per cent)). The research sample is convenient. The research was conducted using an electronic system, which probably led to a more passive involvement of Lithuanian residents. Therefore, this study is small-scale, and the results may only partially reflect part of the population, so this fact can be termed a research limitation. However, the results of this type of research can only be reliable by transforming them beyond the study group. However, in the perspective of further research, to achieve greater representativeness, to formulate essentially statistically significant conclusions concerning the phenomenon under consideration, and also so that the general whole can be judged based on the obtained results, it would be appropriate to delve deeper into the subject under consideration by expanding the sample of subjects.

The research procedure. Respondents for this research were selected using convenience sampling. A distribution method using an electronic system - an online survey - was used. The survey was conducted following the principle of quality control, i.e., an internal check of the survey was carried out (completeness of filling out the questionnaire, consistency and duration of the survey). Incompletely or carelessly completed questionnaires (e.g., the same numbers are marked in all graphs of the questionnaire, etc.) were excluded from further data analysis. For further data analysis, 198 questionnaires were used, which can be considered suitable for statistical analysis. The duration of the research was two weeks. During the investigation, the ethical principle of voluntariness and free decision to participate was observed. The study was conducted anonymously; the results were processed and presented in aggregate, and data confidentiality was ensured.

4. Analysis of research results

Sustainable development process management initiatives will only achieve the desired result with consumer awareness and responsibility for their actions, following the principles of sustainable development. Analysing how the research (see Figure 1) participants evaluate their efforts in contributing to the implementation of the SDGs, the highest averages of the estimates in the general sample showed that respondents monitor and track their behaviour concerning the SDGs from an environmental perspective: they cooperate with others and seek ways to solve climate change issues (M=3.06), combine various means of transport during trips (M=2.67) and participate in environmental management actions (M=2.67). Also, during the research, it became clear that those who participated evaluated their efforts in contributing to implementing SDGs in the social field with sufficiently high estimates. According to respondents, they help poor and vulnerable people (M=2.68), allocate funds for charity support (M=2.69), and are also active in finding ways to reduce inequality (social, gender, religious, age, etc.) (M=2.7). Meanwhile, the statistical analysis of the data showed that the research participants evaluated their efforts in contributing to the implementation of SDGs in such areas as sorting waste/garbage (M=1.83), saving paper (M=1.83) and electricity (M=1.85)).

On the other hand, respecting the rights and needs of every person, regardless of their social status, was evaluated as the weakest behaviour contributing to the implementation of SDGs (M=1.67). Recent results show the need to look for ways and means to ensure the management of sustainable development processes and to shape consumers' attitudes and responsibility for their impact on the world's climate and its change, encourage changing their consumption habits, sort waste, save paper, and also strengthen commitment to electricity stewardship. In addition, when examining respondents' self-assessment of their behaviour from a social aspect, using various methods and measures, it is necessary to emphasise the importance of respecting the rights and needs of every person, regardless of their social status.

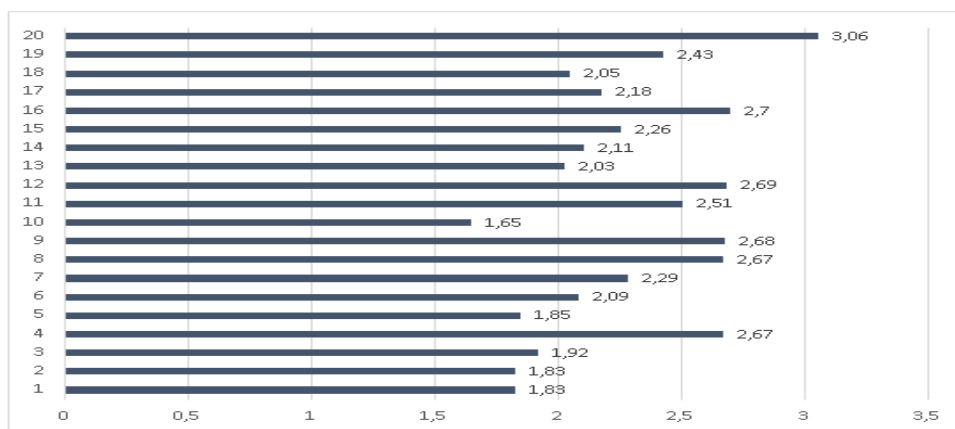


Figure 1. Behavior of research participants in relation to SDGs (n=198; mean values (M), max=5)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. I sort waste/garbage | 11. I feel responsible for people suffering from hunger and malnutrition and look for ways to solve the problems related to poverty |
| 2. I save paper (e.g., use it for drafts, print on both sides, email documents, etc.) | 12. I allocate funds for charity, sponsorship, support |
| 3. I feel responsible for the negative impact of the release and discharge of harmful substances on air pollution | 13. I am trying to change my consumption habits (not wasting food, etc.) to contribute to the fight against hunger and malnutrition |
| 4. During my travels, I combine various means of transport (public transport, scooter, etc.) | 14. I am trying to use all the educational opportunities available to me to learn |
| 5. I save electricity and feel responsible for its consumption | 15. I notice inequality (social, gender, ethnicity/race, religion, age, etc.) in my environment and can assess its effects |
| 6. I save water in my daily activities | 16. I am looking for ways to reduce inequality (social, gender, ethnicity/race, religion, age, etc.) |
| 7. By my behaviour, I try to contribute to water storage and improve its quality | 17. I can manage and use natural resources moderately |
| 8. I participate in environmental management actions (e.g. DAROM and other ecological management campaigns) | 18. I understand my impact on the world's climate and its change, both locally and globally |
| 9. I help poor and vulnerable people | 19. I encourage others to protect the climate and contribute with their behaviour to the reduction of climate change |
| 10. I respect the rights and needs of every person regardless of their social status | 20. I collaborate with others to find ways to solve climate change questions |

After performing calculations in different age groups, it became clear that statistically significant differences are observed even in seventeen out of twenty answer categories (see Table 1). After calculating the t-test, it became clear that the younger research participants, belonging to the age group up to 35 years old, evaluated their efforts in contributing to the implementation of SDGs in both social and environmental areas with statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) higher averages than older respondents, belonging to the age group above 36 years and older. According to the assessment of the research participants of younger age (up to 35 years of age), the latter's efforts in contributing to the implementation of SDGs by sorting waste/garbage ($M=2.29$) and saving paper ($M=2.33$) were evaluated with higher average estimates than those of elder age (from 36 years and older) of the study participants ($(M=1.5)$ and $(M=1.58)$ respectively). In addition, according to the research data, it can be seen that younger respondents have a more robust expression of responsibility for the negative impact of the release and emission of harmful substances on air pollution ($M=2.25$) and understanding of their impact on the global climate and its change both locally and globally ($M=2.24$), while significantly ($p<0.05$) lower mean estimates were found in the group of older (over 36 years and older) research participants (respectively: $(M=1.68)$ and $(M=1.9)$). Also after calculating the t-test, significant differences in means were determined (see Table 1) showing that saving electricity ($M=2.25$) and water ($M=2.57$) and responsibility for their consumption, active involvement in organised environmental management actions ($M=3.43$), as well as helping poor and vulnerable people ($M=3.18$), feeling responsible for people suffering from hunger and malnutrition and making efforts to find ways to solve problems related to poverty ($M=2.84$), allocating funds charity and support ($M=3.18$) and respect for the rights and needs of every person, regardless of their social status ($M=1.8$) are more strongly expressed in younger respondents' answers than in the older study participants' answers, which group,

when evaluating their efforts contributing to the achievement of the SDGs, lower mean scores were determined (respectively: (M=1.56), (M=1.74), (M=2.11), (M=2.32), (M=2.26), (M=2.33) and (M=1.54)). In addition, the statistical data analysis showed that the research participants belonging to the age group under 35 years rated their efforts in changing their consumption habits to contribute to the fight against hunger and malnutrition (M=2.35) and also in finding ways to reduce inequality (social, gender, religion, age, etc.) (M=2.98), encouraging others to protect the climate and contribute with their behaviour to reducing climate change (M=2.76), managing and using natural resources moderately (M=2.51) and more actively cooperating with others in finding ways to solve climate change issues (M=3.48) than elder respondents, whose group's statistically significantly lower estimates in these aspects show the latter's weaker expressed efforts. They more strongly expressed passivity in contributing to the implementation of SDGs (respectively: (M=1.79), (M=2.5), (M=2.2), (M=1.94) and (M=2.75)).

Table 1. Evaluation of one’s efforts in contributing to the implementation of SDGs in different age groups (under 35 years (n=83), over 36 years and older (n=115); mean values (M), standard deviations (SD), max=5 when p<0.05)

	Age group under 35 years old		Age group over 36 years old		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
I sort waste/garbage	2.29	1.19	1.5	0.77	5.315	0.001
I save paper (e.g. use it for drafts, print on both sides, email documents, etc.)	2.33	1.06	1.58	0.77	5.426	0.001
I feel responsible for the negative impact of the release and discharge of harmful substances on air pollution	2.25	1.2	1.68	0.87	3.715	0.001
During my travels, I combine various means of transport (public transport, scooter, etc.)	2.57	1.35	2.75	1.23	-0.986	0.325
I save electricity and feel responsible for its consumption	2.25	1.06	1.56	0.79	5.074	0.001
I save water in my daily activities	2.57	1.14	1.74	0.9	5.494	0.001
By my behaviour, I try to contribute to water storage and improve its quality	2.77	1.13	1.94	0.9	5.554	0.001
I participate in environmental management actions (e.g., DAROM and other ecological management campaigns)	3.43	1.46	2.11	1.21	6.74	0.001
I help poor and vulnerable people	3.18	1.31	2.32	0.95	5.09	0.001
I respect the rights and needs of every person regardless of their social status	1.8	0.96	1.54	0.7	2.063	0.041
I feel responsible for people suffering from hunger and malnutrition and look for ways to solve the problems related to poverty	2.84	1.23	2.26	0.99	3.55	0.001
I allocate funds for charity, sponsorship, support	3.18	1.41	2.33	1.14	4.539	0.001
I am trying to change my consumption habits (not wasting food, etc.) to contribute to the fight against hunger and malnutrition	2.35	1.12	1.79	0.79	3.895	0.001
I am trying to use all the educational opportunities available to me to learn	2.16	0.93	2.07	0.89	0.668	0.505

I notice inequality (social, gender, ethnicity/race, religion, age, etc.) in my environment and can assess its effects	2.29	1.15	2.23	0.88	0.36	0.719
I am looking for ways to reduce inequality (social, gender, ethnicity/race, religion, age, etc.)	2.98	1.27	2.5	0.98	2.886	0.004
I can manage and use natural resources moderately	2.51	0.99	1.94	0.69	4.478	0.001
I understand my impact on the world's climate and its change, both locally and globally	2.24	1.05	1.9	0.88	2.374	0.019
I encourage others to protect the climate and contribute with their behaviour to the reduction of climate change	2.76	1.2	2.2	0.98	3.491	0.001
I collaborate with others to find ways to solve climate change questions	3.48	1.19	2.75	1.11	4.456	0.001

The existing problems in the environmental and social fields are of increasing concern and show the need, in the implementation of the paradigm of sustainable development, to promote global awareness associated with the choice of each person in their behaviour, contributing to the improvement of the quality of life, protection of the environment, reduction of poverty, ensuring the guarantees of justice and solving other problems. The latter statement is also confirmed by the results of this research, which revealed that despite the efforts made by the research participants in contributing to the realisation of SDGs through their behaviour, after analysing the data, it should be recognised that in most cases, the efforts made in contributing to the implementation of SDGs are insufficient. This is especially evident after performing calculations in groups of research participants of different age groups. After conducting a comparative analysis, the results showed that older (over 36 years and older) study participants evaluated their efforts in contributing to implementing SDGs in the environmental and social fields with lower average estimates than younger respondents. The recent results reveal the fact that it is necessary to raise people's awareness from a young age and to examine the topics of sustainable development in educational institutions and the development and implementation of social responsibility in organisations by defining goals and providing specific measures for the performance of SDGs, fostering employees' more profound understanding of the meaning of sustainable development, becomes relevant through self-education, encouraging participation in training and creating traditions in the organisation, which can be one of the prerequisites to constructively orient and transform the attitudes and value orientations of users (especially older persons), contribute to a change in mindset and perception by encouraging them to follow the principles of sustainable development, by becoming more actively involved in sustainable development processes and to follow the directions of sustainable development in your personal life. Thus, the results show the need to look for more effective ways to encourage consumers to be more actively involved in their behaviour in contributing to the implementation of SDGs. Therefore, in creating social and environmental well-being, an essential aspect of ensuring sustainable development processes is the search for tools and methods that affect the change in the mindset, attitude and attitudes of consumers, decision-making, awareness and responsibility formation, as well as active involvement and participation in the processes of implementing SDGs.

The harmonious implementation of development goals contributes to the fostering of ecology, ensuring the quality of life, and promoting economic growth. Therefore, when disseminating information about the performance of SDGs, it is necessary to look for the most effective ways and means to attract the attention of consumers and, at the same time, attract their more extensive audience. In promoting the principles of sustainable development in your personal life, it is crucial to provide information about SDGs and their implementation. Depending on the choice of the right strategy, the success of the chosen measures will depend on whether attention is drawn to the information and whether the desire to make a decision based on the principles of sustainable development is aroused. To make the provided information more attractive, more dynamic, and reach a larger audience, stimulate interest, convince and encourage to follow the principles of sustainable development, various means and methods can be applied. Thus, public education on sustainable development topics can be one of the ways of managing sustainable development processes.

What would encourage people to follow the principles of sustainable development? The data analysis revealed (see Figure 2) that in the opinion of more than two-thirds of the research participants if the topics of sustainable development were more discussed or shown on television (64.1%) and from a young age in families, people’s awareness would be raised by encouraging responsible consumption and production (71.7%), this would encourage people to follow the principles of sustainable development. The research also revealed that, in the opinion of more than half of the research participants, if more were written about sustainable development topics in the media or social networks (58.1%), educational institutions would examine sustainable development topics more often (56.1%). Youth would be more actively involved in the implementation of the goals of sustainable development (59.6%), which, according to the respondents, would involve more people in the processes of sustainable development and encourage them to follow the principles of sustainable development. Thus, education and upbringing from an early age, both in the family and in educational institutions, as well as access to relevant information on sustainable development topics in social networks and its dissemination in the media and the involvement of young people to participate more actively in decision-making that affects their current life and future, can be one of the essential factors that encourage people to follow the principles of sustainable development and to participate more actively in the processes of sustainable development. On the other hand, according to the assessment of the research participants, events or charity events on sustainable development topics are more often organised (45.5%), innovations that are implemented, and modern technologies that are applied in production (44.9%), and greater attention from the authorities and politicians which is also paid to promoting sustainable development (40.9 %) and increased funding for the implementation of these goals (43.4%) were named as the most critical factors encouraging to follow the principles of sustainable development. Meanwhile, only a tiny part of the research participants admit that the seminars and trainings that are organised on the topics of sustainable development (27.8%) and meetings with authoritative specialists in their field, who would speak on the issues of SDGs (27.3%), as well as the information provided on sustainable development in publications or literature (21.2%) would encourage people to follow the principles of sustainable development; these factors are assessed as less effective in contributing to promoting the implementation of SDGs.

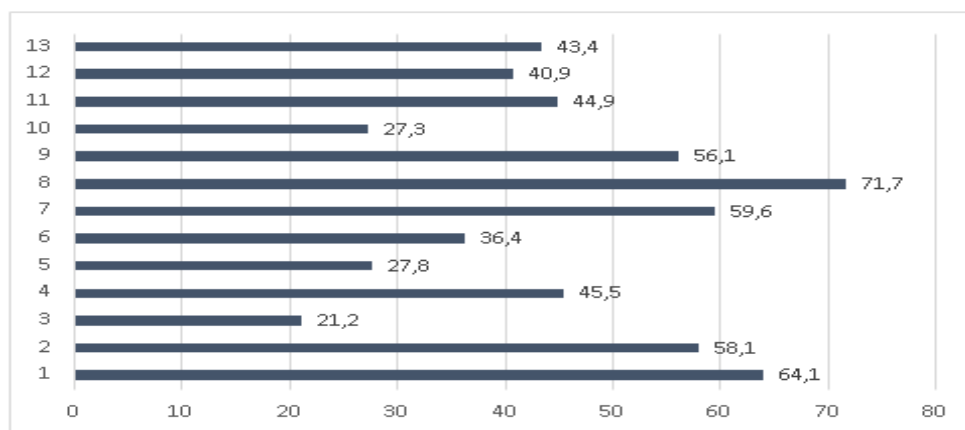


Figure 2. Measures to encourage people to follow the principles of sustainable development (n=198, per cent)

Remark:

1. If the topics of sustainable development were more discussed/shown on television.
2. If more were written about the topics of sustainable development in the media and social networks.
3. If there were more information on the topics of sustainable development in publications and literature
4. If more events, charity events (e.g. supporting people with disabilities, people with low incomes, etc.), initiatives (e.g. "DAROM", etc.) were organised on the topics of sustainable development
5. If more trainings and seminars were organised on the topics of sustainable development.
6. If more discussions and debates were organised on sustainable development (e.g., on television, radio, etc.).
7. If the youth were more actively involved in implementing SDGs.
8. If people's awareness was raised in families from a young age (responsible consumption, creation of production and services without polluting the environment, etc.).
9. If in the educational institution (school, higher education institution), the topics of sustainable development were discussed.
10. If more meetings were organised with authoritative specialists in their field, they would speak on the topics of sustainable development and the implementation of its goals.
11. If innovations were implemented, modern technologies were applied (e.g. in production).
12. If there was an increase in the attention of the authorities and politicians in promoting sustainable development.
13. If more funding were allocated to the implementation of the SDGs.

It can be said that the promotion of following the principles of sustainable development is most associated with the education of society, attitude formation both in the family and in educational institutions, as well as attitude formation using various communication methods and means (e.g., showing on television, media or social networks). Also, encouraging young people to become more actively involved in the implementation of SDGs and providing more funding, the development of production modernisation directions and introducing innovations were identified by research participants as the main factors that encourage people to become more actively involved in sustainable development processes and follow the principles of sustainable development by taking responsibility for their actions and decisions.

A comparative analysis of the data showed that the approach to assessing the factors that encourage people to follow the principles of sustainable development and are most likely to contribute to active involvement in sustainable development processes is not statistically significantly related to the age of the respondents (see Table 2). However, based on the results of the analysis of variance, it became clear that the mass media and social networks, which would provide information on the topics of sustainable development, were evaluated by a more significant part of the younger survey participants belonging to the age group up to 35 years (69.9%) as a factor that could encourage people to follow the principles of sustainable development more than this factor was evaluated by the elder (36 years and older) study participants (49.6 per cent); applying analysis of variance (ANOVA), this variable is statistically significantly related to the age of the subjects ($F=8.436$, $p=0.004$). Meanwhile, the analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed that the evaluation of the factors that encourage people to follow the principles of sustainable development is not significantly related to the age of the respondents (see Table 2), which suggests that all the factors that can contribute to encouraging people to follow the principles of sustainable development principles, importance was rated at a similar level regardless of age.

Table 2. Assessment of factors that encourage people to follow the principles of sustainable development (in the age group under 35 (n=83), in the age group over 36 and older (n=115); per cent; results of variance analysis of estimates and age, when $p < 0.05$)

	Age group under 35 years old	Age group over 36 years old	F	p
If the topics of sustainable development were more discussed/shown on television.	63.9	64.3	0.005	0.944
If more were written about the topics of sustainable development in the media and social networks.	69.9	49.6	8.436	0.004
If there were more information on the topics of sustainable development in publications and literature.	27.7	16.5	3.641	0.058
If more events, charity events (e.g., supporting people with disabilities, people with low incomes, etc.), initiatives (e.g. "DAROM", etc.) were organised on the topics of sustainable development	51.8	40.9	2.33	0.129
If more trainings and seminars were organised on the topics of sustainable development.	33.7	23.5	2.535	0.113
If more discussions and debates were organised on the topics of sustainable development (e.g., on television, radio, etc.).	38.6	34.8	0.294	0.588
If the youth were more actively involved in the implementation of SDGs	57.8	60.9	0.183	0.669
If people's awareness was raised in families from a young age (responsible consumption, creation of production and services without polluting the environment, etc.).	65.1	76.5	3.14	0.078
If in the educational institution (school, higher education institution) the sustainable development topics were discussed.	56.6	55.7	0.018	0.892
If more meetings were organised with authoritative specialists in their field, who would speak on the topics of sustainable development and the implementation of its goals.	27.7	27.0	0.014	0.907
If innovations were implemented, modern technologies were applied (e.g., in production).	41.0	47.8	0.912	0.341
If there was an increase in the attention of the authorities and politicians in promoting sustainable development.	38.6	42.6	0.325	0.569
If more funding were allocated to the implementation of the SDGs	44.6	42.6	0.075	0.784

After summarising the results, to promote the implementation of SDGs, it is crucial to choose appropriate measures and methods, taking into account the individual characteristics of users based on values, creating innovations, and initiating dialogue with interested parties. On the other hand, using as many different means as possible fosters a deeper understanding of the meaning of sustainable development among consumers through self-education, participation in training, and using the possibilities of television and social networks. In addition, promoting the active involvement of young people in the processes of implementing SDGs and promoting awareness and a sense of responsibility for their behaviour, as well as cooperation with experienced specialists and encouraging them to use the potential of collaboration, involving experts in sustainable development, the formation and implementation of development policy both at the levels of educational institutions and organisations, and examining and making proposals when making decisions on sustainable development issues at the policy level (changing laws, creating new rules) can be a prerequisite for the formation of a sustainable development identity. On the other hand, as a prerequisite for constructively orienting and transforming users' attitudes and value orientations, contributing to a change in mindset and perception by promoting the principles of sustainable development, communication tools can be applied.

Conclusions

1. Moving towards sustainable development goals is the central aim of the development of modern society. Still, their implementation faces many obstacles that arise from the inability of the market to solve the arising problems. Therefore, businesses must solve these issues together with the state.

2. The results of the research revealed the experience of respondents' involvement and efforts in contributing to the implementation of SDGs:

2.1. The highest estimated averages show that research participants combine various means of transport during their trips and participate in environmental management campaigns, help poor and vulnerable people, allocate funds to charity, support and look for ways to decrease inequality (social, gender, religion, age, etc.).

2.2. The lowest averages of the estimates indicate weaker efforts to contribute to the implementation of SDGs by sorting waste/garbage, saving paper and electricity, and respecting the rights and needs of every person, regardless of their social status.

2.3. The comparative analysis of the data showed that the younger research participants, belonging to the age group under 35 years, evaluated their efforts in contributing to the implementation of SDGs in both the social and environmental fields with significantly higher estimates than the elder respondents belonging to the age group over 36 years. In that group, the considerably lower estimates indicate the latter's passivity and less expressed efforts to contribute to the implementation of SDGs through their behaviour.

3. According to the research participants, when creating social and environmental well-being, an essential aspect of ensuring sustainable development is enhancing personal awareness in the family and educational institution, as well as encouraging young people to become more actively involved in implementing SDGs. Also, television, mass media and social networks can be essential tools that can influence the change in the mindset and attitudes of users, decision-making, awareness and responsibility formation, contributing to the implementation of SDGs. Meanwhile, seminars, trainings and meetings are organised on the topics of sustainable development with authoritative specialists in their field, who would speak on the issues of sustainable development and the implementation of their goals, as well as the information provided on the topics of sustainable development in publications or literature are evaluated as less effective ways of contributing to the promotion of the implementation of SDGs.

The findings may facilitate devising better-tackled policies.

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