

Exploratory Research Regarding the Involvement of the Entrepreneur and the Business in Sustainable Development

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Abstract The paper aims to present some partial results of an exploratory research, achieved based on a structured interview protocol, on the thematic of Sustainable development, designed by prof. Martine Spence, Ottawa University, Canada, in collaboration with us, within a common research project, Canada-Romania, Tunis. This research instrument has been implemented in 13 firms. The interview protocol includes questions regarding sustainable development and the implication of the entrepreneurs and the firms in this issue.

I. INTRODUCTION

The paper presents the partial results of an exploratory research, based on an structured interview, implemented in 13 firms. The interview protocol includes 37 questions regarding sustainable development and the involvement of the firms in this issue. Further on we will present some of the instrumental research, some of the answers being summarized.

The first question aimed the understanding of the significance of sustainable development in the investigated firms. The answers are summarized in table 1.

TABLE I
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE INVESTIGATED FIRMS

The significance of sustainable development	1	2	3
Nr. of respondents	6	1	6
Relative frequency %	46,15	7,69	46,15

Legend:

1 – the firm’s development without affecting the environment

2 – the long term development with saving the natural resources

3 – the development for the present and the future

46,15% of the respondents believe that sustainable development represents the firm’s development without affecting the environment, 7,69% see it as a long term development with saving the natural resources and 46,15% consider it as the development for the present and the future.

Based on the above table, the following figure can underline better the result:

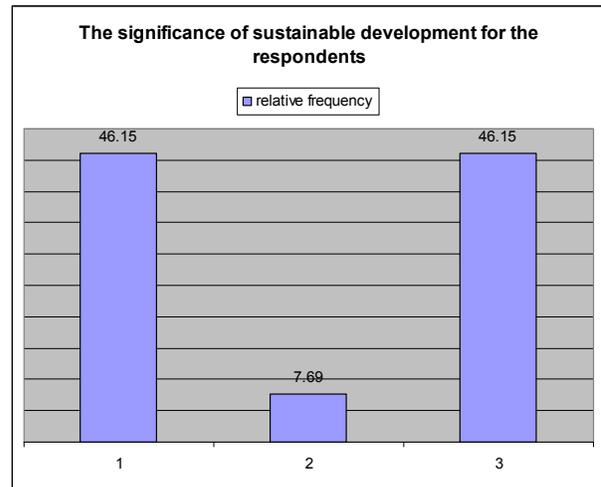


Figure 1. The significance of sustainable development for the respondents

To question number 2: “Is sustainable development a theme that interests you?”, the answers of those investigated in firms have been as follows:

TABLE II
THE INTEREST REGARDING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable development – an interesting theme for the respondents	1	2
Nr. of respondents	12	1
Relative frequency %	7,69	92,31

Legend:

1- Yes

2- No

It is extremely positive the fact that 92,31% of the respondents have answered affirmatively and only 7,69% have answered no, not being interested in sustainable development.

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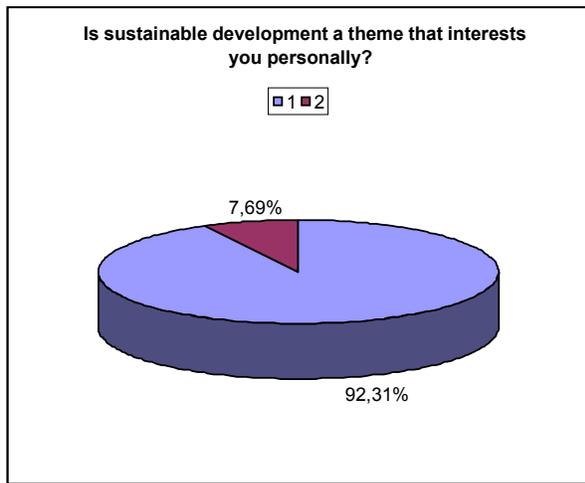


Figure 2. The interest regarding sustainable development

The following question is more concrete, aiming the real implication in activities connected to sustainable development.

TABLE III
THE INVOLVMENT OF THE RESPONDENTS IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES.

The involvement of the respondents in sustainable development	1
Nr. of respondents	13
Relative frequency %	100

Legend: 1- yes

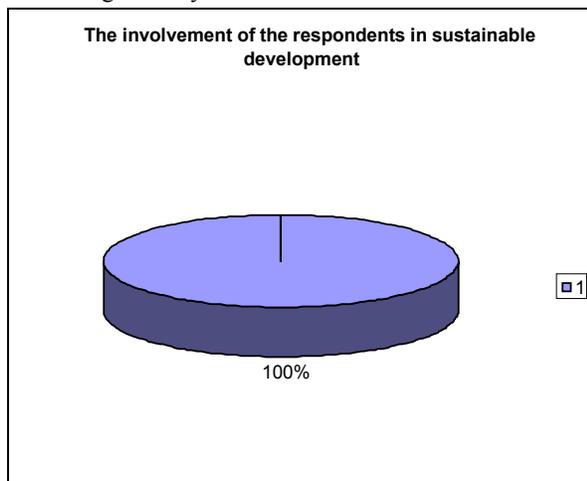


Figure 3. The involvement of the respondents in sustainable development

All the respondents have been involved in activities for sustainable development, even if at the previous question some have answered that they are not at all interested in this subject. Have they been obliged to do it? Have they not understood the concept well enough? Have they not been honest? We will try to find out.

The following question asked for more clear data, being taken into consideration the previous experience or training as far as sustainable development (SD) is concerned.

TABLE I
PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE OR TRAINING IN THE FIELD OF SD

Existing experience/training	1	2
Nr. of respondents	4	9
Relative frequency %	30,76	69,23

Legend:

1- Yes

2- No

The results might be alarming, given the fact that only 30,76% have answered “yes” and the majority has answered “no”.

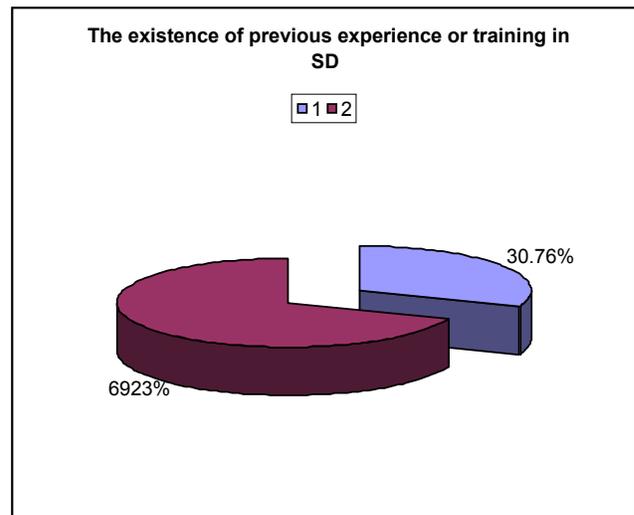


Figure 4. The existence of previous experience or training in SD

If up to now the questions aimed the opinions and the respondents’ situation, the following questions refer to their organization.

Thus, to the question “Is sustainable development a concern for your enterprise, for the partners and the employees?”, the answers were as follows:

TABLE V
THE FIRM’S INVOLVEMENT IS SD

The firm’s involvement is SD	1	2
Nr. of respondents	12	1
Relative frequency	92,31	7,69

Legend:

1- yes

2- no

The result is unexpectedly good! 92,31% answered yes and only 7,69% answered no. Is that so?

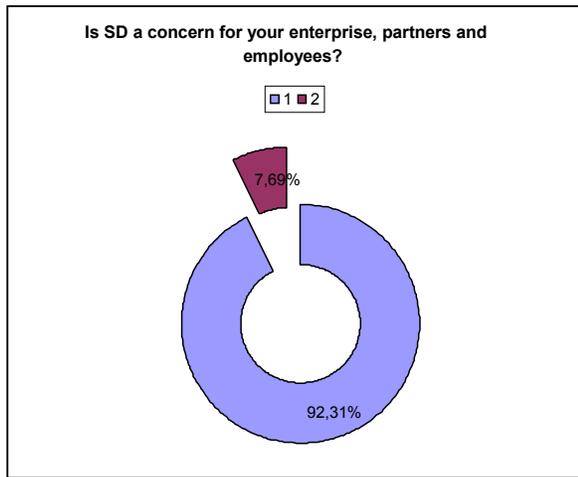


Figure 5. The firm's involvement in SD
Question 6 refers to the knowledge of the national legislation in the field of sustainable development.

TABLE VI
THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE NATIONAL LEGISLATION IN THE FIELD OF SD

Knowledge of the laws	1	2	3
Nr. of respondents	4	8	1
Relative frequency	30.76	61.53	7.69

Legend:
1- yes
2- a part of them
3- no

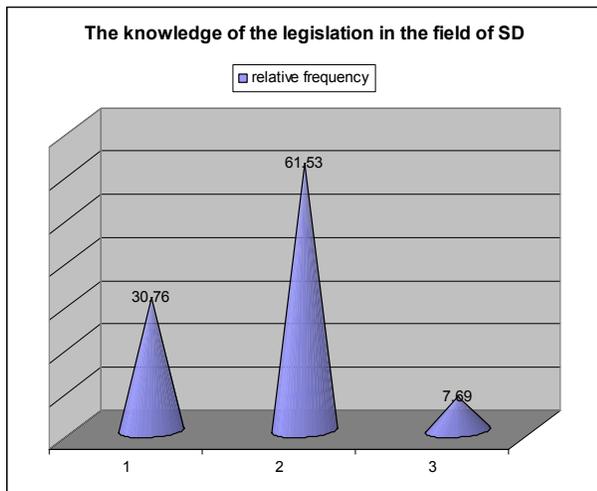


Figure 6. The knowledge of the legislation in the field of SD

Thus, 30,76% of the respondents declare that they know the legislation in the field of sustainable development, 61,53% know only a part of them and 7,69% say they don't know them at all. When there are so many firms which don't know the legislation in the field, how should it be fulfilled?

Regarding the knowledge of the organisms, programs or support funds for enterprises in the field of sustainable development, the answers were as follows:

TABLE VII
KNOWLEDGE OF THE ORGANISMS, OR SUPPORT FUNDS FOR ENTERPRISES IN THE FIELD OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Knowing the programs	1	2	3
Nr. of respondents	8	3	2
Relative frequency %	61,53	23,08	15,38

Legend:
1 – yes, and they are participant firms
2 – yes, but non-participative firms
3 – no

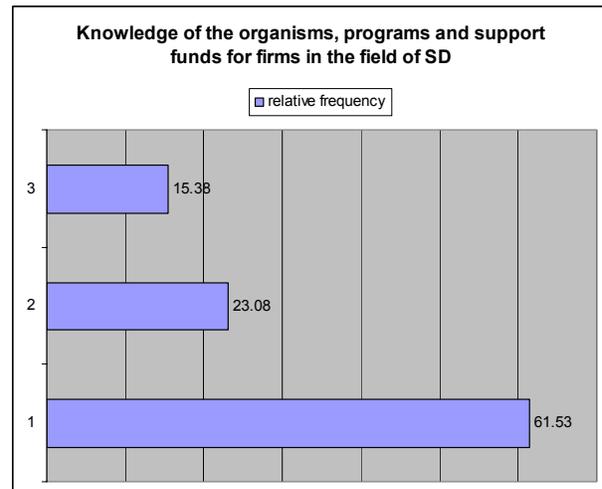


Figure 7. Knowledge of the organisms, or support funds for enterprises in the field of sustainable development

61,53% of the respondents answered that they are participant firms to such programs and the main sources of information have been the Internet and the media, 23,08% answered that they have heard of such programs and funds but are not participant and 15,38% have not heard of them.

To question nr. 8: "Since when has your firms been involved in SD problems?" the answers were:

TABLE VIII
THE HISTORY OF THE FIRM'S INVOLVEMENT IN SD ACTIVITIES

Period of time	3	2	1
Nr. of respondents	3	2	3
Relative frequency %	37.5	25	37.5

Legend:
3 – between 5-10 years
2 – between 3-5 years
1 – less than 3 years

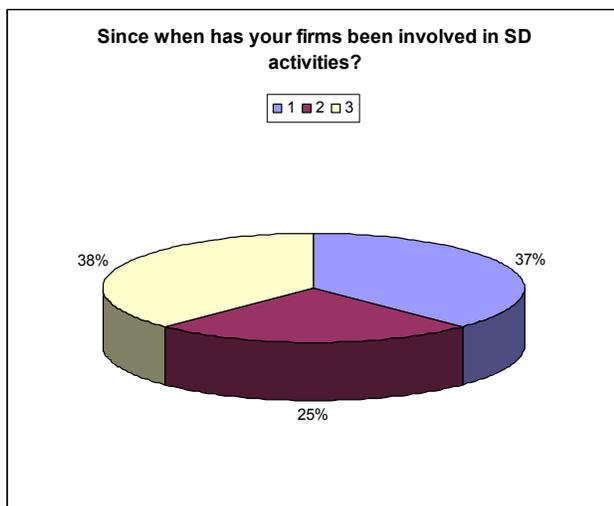


Figure 8. The history of the firm's involvement in SD activities

Out of the total of 8 respondents who participate at programs of support funds for firms in the field of SD, which represent 100%, only 3 (37,5%) are involved in SD activities for a period between 5 and 10 years, 2 (25%) between 3 and 5 years and 3 (37,5%) have been involved for less than 3 years.

The following question is a daring one: "Do you believe that your enterprise achieves more than required in the field of SD?", the answers were surprising, but not at all modest!

TABLE IX
THE ATTITUDE REGARDING SD, BEYOND THE LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Achievement	1	2
Nr. of respondents	3	5
Relative frequency %	37	63

Legend:

1 – yes

2 – no

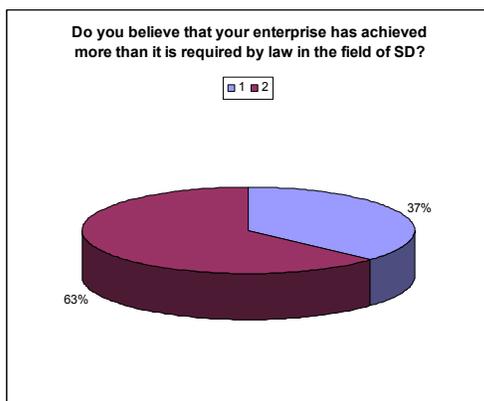


Figure 9. The attitude regarding SD, beyond the legislative requirements

37% of the respondents believe that they do more than required by law in the field of sustainable development.

II CONCLUSION

Sustainable development lately represents a theme of general interest for the majority of the enterprises. Still, not all the investigated respondents are interested in this issue or know the legislation in the field of sustainable development and only 61,53% participate to the programs and support funds in this field. For the participant firms the allocated funds are not enough, thus they cannot achieve more than the things required by law. Their own values have been the ones that determined the respondents to participate to these programs.

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