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SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE INVESTING (SRI) AS A FACTOR OF COMPETITIVENESS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF ORGANIZATIONS IN YOUNG CONSUMERS' OPINION^{*}

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Abstract. Young consumers belonging to Generation Z stand out from previous generations of consumers. The authors are interested in whether its representatives are familiar with the assumptions of corporate social responsibility and identify CSR activities implemented within the organisation. It is because CSR practices and activities undertaken by the companies influence the decision about SRI. The main objective of the paper is to analyse of use the SRI in organisations to build their competitive advantage in the market. This objective has been achieved by analysing and interpreting the results of our own research, conducted using the CAWI technique, among Polish representatives of Generation Z (n = 642). There were formulated hypotheses that the implementation of CSR in an organisation determines the decision about socially responsible investing and that socially responsible investing supports the building of a company's competitive advantage in the market. The hypotheses were verified on the basis of data obtained during the own questionnaire. There are used the correlation analysis using the chi-square independence test and Tschuprow's T- coefficient. The obtained results indicated that the Polish Z generation is a group knowledgeable about the CSR concept and aware of its importance in terms of influencing an organisation's positive reputation. The study has lasting value for the academic discussion on the impact of CSR and SRI on building an organisation's competitive advantage.

Keywords: CSR theory; SRI concept; competitive advantage; Generation Z

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1. Introduction

The growing number of organisations implementing the assumptions of the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) concept indicates an increasing interest of the business sector in environmental, social, ethical, and corporate governance activities. Organisations' embrace of the CSR concept is characterised by a more comprehensive approach to organisational management and the setting of objectives of functioning other than solely profit maximisation (*Raport „Odpowiedzialny Biznes w Polsce 2021. Dobre Praktyki” - Forum Odpowiedzialnego Biznesu*, n.d.). Corporate socially responsible engagement is also increasingly of interest to a variety of groups of their stakeholders relevant to building competitive advantage in the marketplace, which include consumers, shareholders, and investors. The relevance of CSR has been pointed out from the perspective of seeking competitive advantage (Gómez-Bezares et al., 2017), especially in the context of improving an organisation's image (Famiyeh et al., 2016; Sánchez et al., 2015; Streimikiene & Ahmed, 2021). In the context of growing awareness and social interest in CSR issues, it becomes important to verify whether the implementation of the concept of corporate social responsibility in organisations provides an impulse to undertake socially responsible investments in these entities and results in building their competitive advantage in the market.

The goal of this paper is to analyse and evaluate the use of socially responsible investment (SRI) in terms of its application to building an organisation's competitive advantage. In the context of the defined research gap, it is important to recognise that the research objective adopted in this study fulfills the purpose of identifying new knowledge on the topic under discussion.

2. Theoretical background

Socially Responsible Investing (SRI) is an alternative to traditional forms of investment. It is characterised by its multi-faceted dimension, including economic, environmental, social, and institutional factors that are more and more taken into account in investment decision-making processes (del Carmen Valls Martínez et al., 2022; Gangi & Varrone, 2018; García et al., 2019). The concept of socially responsible investing is closely related to corporate social responsibility (León-Gómez et al., 2022; Czerwonka, 2011; Zaleśkiewicz, 2020). The CSR concept is a view from the perspective of companies, while SRI is a view from the perspective of market participants investing their capital in securities of socially responsible companies (Cheah et al., 2011). Therefore, socially responsible investments cannot be considered without taking into account social responsibility at organisational level. And on the other hand, the concept of CSR cannot be analysed without looking at it more broadly from the point of view of socially responsible investment (Borek, 2014). The SRI takes into account the CSR practices and activities undertaken by the companies in which investors invest capital. Analysing the SRI in the context of the implications of the CSR concept it is found that socially responsible investors focus their attention on sustainability-oriented and socially responsible companies. This entails choosing these companies for investment portfolios. Hence, socially responsible investing can be considered as investing in the assets of companies that operate based on the CSR concept (Matuszewska-Pierzynka, 2021, Czerwonka, 2013). From this perspective, socially responsible investing is one of the instruments for implementing the assumptions of socially responsible business (Jedynak, 2017), which may also include ethical programmes, social campaigns, corporate governance, socially engaged marketing, eco-labelling and social labelling, as well as social reports (Łukasiewicz-Kamińska, 2011). According to the point of view outlined above, a responsible investor will invest capital in companies whose policies are in line with personal views oriented towards social goals in addition to achieving certain financial returns. If the policy carried out by the company differs from the investor's convictions, then the investor will decline to allocate the capital and invest in another socially responsible company (Rogowski & Ulianiuk, 2012). The study in this area shows that an increasing number of investors are using negative screening to eliminate from their portfolio companies operating in contradiction to the CSR concept (Arribas et al., 2019).

As mentioned above, organisations are increasingly incorporating factors related to the concept of corporate social responsibility into their management strategies (Wilburn & Wilburn, 2014; Hejduk, 2014; Grudzewski et al., 2010). There is extensive evidence pointing to the advantages of implementing the CSR concept in companies. The most important are:

- a source of creating competitive advantage in the market (Apospori et al., 2012; Battaglia et al., 2014; Bernal-Conesa et al., 2017; Boulouta & Pitelis, 2014; Charucka, 2015; Mohtsham Saeed & Arshad, 2012; Torugsa et al., 2012; Saeed, Arshad, 2012; Torugsa et al., 2013)
- higher recognition of the organisation from its competitors (Gupta et al., 2013; Marín et al., 2012),
- maximisation of corporate value (Luo & Bhattacharya, 2006; Orlitzky et al., 2003),
- increasing long-term returns (Jedynak, 2017; Hediger, 2010; Almeida Abreu et al., 2017).

The implementation of a social responsibility strategy in companies, in addition to the above advantages, generates benefits in the form of more interest from investors. More than 90% of the SRI studies did not indicate a negative impact of applying ESG criteria on companies' financial performance (Friede et al., 2015). It can be assumed that corporate social responsibility can be a strong and sustainable source of competitive advantage assuming that the organisation's CSR activities are implemented in a feasible manner and are an integral part of the company's business strategy (Cegliński & Wiśniewska, 2017).

Corporate social responsibility is also defined through the stakeholder concept by Freeman (1984). It refers to respecting and taking into account the interests of all parties in and around the organisation. It means that stakeholders are groups or individuals that are influenced or affected by an organisation (Freeman, 1984), creating a relationship that is reciprocal in nature and important for a company's existence in the market (Friedman & Miles, 2006). Stakeholder theory clarifies the fundamentals of doing business as building transparent, long-term relationships with all stakeholders, including owners, customers, employees, suppliers, communities, creditors, NGOs, subsidiaries, and the media. In the context of CSR and SRI it seems particularly important to create and maintain relationships with consumers of goods and services, as well as investors. They are two stakeholder groups essential to the functioning of companies and creating an organisation's competitive advantage in the marketplace (Freeman, 1994). Building relationships with stakeholders through socially responsible actions and a green corporate image is a profile that consumers are becoming more and more likely to seek (Çera et al., 2022; Goh, Lee, 2018). Building relationships with stakeholders through socially responsible actions and a green corporate image is a profile that consumers are becoming more and more likely to seek (Goh, Lee, 2018). It is particularly noticeable in Generation Z customers (Bedard & Tolmie, 2018). According to most researchers, these are young market participants born after 1995 (Kouloupoulos, Keldsen, 2014; Chaney et al., 2017; Williams, Page, 2015), although some authors point to those born after 1997 (Tulgan, 2013) or after 1998 (Tapscott, 2008). Generation Z, compared to others, is more knowledgeable about environmental issues, tends to be more concerned about the environment and considers pro-environmentalism as a positive, valuable social norm (Nikolić et al., 2022; Kanchanapibul et al., 2014). They have more trust in brands that declare engagement to CSR (Uche, 2018) and positively perceive the activities of such companies (Ariker & Toksoy, 2017).

With regard to SRI market participants, there is still the dominance of institutional investors. Nowadays, from a global perspective, the SRI market gathers 75% institutional investors and 25% individual investors. Although between 2012 and 2020 institutional investors have consistently been the largest segment of the SRI market participants, this trend is, however, slowly changing and individual investors are beginning to play an increasingly important role (Global Sustainable Investment Review 2014; Global Sustainable Investment Review 2020). The reasons for this change are mainly attributed to an increase in public awareness of climate change and environmental protection. The environmental aspect is pointed out as one of the most important determinants of SRI (Dorfleitner & Nguyen, 2016), as well as a key element in the identification of companies as CSR organisations (Berry, Junkus, 2013). Research on participants in the SRI market shows that they are usually younger, have a better education, are more likely to be women with their own families, have higher income levels, come from larger cities, are involved in volunteering, and are characterised by pro-social attitudes, trust in investing funds operating in line with CSR policies, and a belief in the relevance of pro-environmental activities

(Williams, 2007; Dorfleitner & Nguyen, 2016; Cheah et al, 2011; Wins, Zwergel, 2016). The motivations for undertaking SRI, besides achieving a certain rate of return on investment, include contributing to social change, achieving personal satisfaction, as well as being concerned about the image and sense of worth of investors (Benabou & Tirole, 2010).

A global survey of investors, conducted on a group of 23,000 people, indicates that 78% of Polish market participants would not undertake an investment contrary to their beliefs. This result ranked Poland in 15th place among the surveyed countries. The highest percentage was noted for China (90%). Among European countries, Italy and Portugal were the best with 82% each. An overwhelming majority of survey participants indicated that activities of companies in the area of CSR are very important and will have a positive impact on the future performance of organisations (Globalne Badanie Inwestorów, 2020). A study of the views of entities listed on the Warsaw Stock Exchange regarding SRI found that 17 of the 21 entities participating in the study noted the relationship between undertaking CSR activities and the creation of value for these companies. In terms of the impact of the implementation of the CSR concept on the interest of investors, the largest number of respondents indicated that CSR strongly influences the interest of institutional and foreign investors. According to the respondents, compliance with the CSR concept by listed companies does not influence or is difficult to assess whether it influences individual and domestic investors. The most frequently mentioned factor by respondents to motivate organisations to implement the concept of corporate social responsibility was building a competitive advantage (Kłobukowska, 2019). Based on the research results, research gaps can be observed regarding the insufficient analysis of the impact of implementing CSR concepts in organisations on the motivation of current and future market participants to decide about socially responsible investing. In particular, it relates to the value-creating potential and competitive advantage of companies whose activity is in line with sustainable development.

3. Research objective and methodology

The aim of this study is to analyse and evaluate socially responsible investing in terms of its application to building an organisation's competitive advantage. The theoretical aspect of the research relates to the analysis of the literature, the identification of the research gap and the attempt to fill it, while the practical part covers the applicability of the research results for organisations to create value and competitive advantage.

Based on the literature analysis, the following research questions were set:

1. Does the implementation of the CSR concept in an organisation affect the decision about socially responsible investment?
2. Can socially responsible investment be a means of building a company's competitive advantage in the marketplace?

Therefore, during the research process, the following hypotheses were set:

1. The implementation of CSR in the organisation determines the decision about socially responsible investing.
2. Socially responsible investing supports building a company's competitive advantage in the market.

A diagnostic survey method was used to achieve the objectives of a research. A questionnaire was the survey technique. The survey took the form of an online survey, carried out using the CAWI (Computer-Assisted Web Interviewing) technique. The survey was anonymous and included closed-ended questions, most of which were multi-variant (so-called cafeteria questions). The questions asked to respondents were both conjunctive, allowing several possible answers to be selected, as well as disjunctive, allowing only one answer to be marked. The intention of the survey authors was to create questions that were unambiguous and understandable to the respondents, not suggesting a scale of importance of the answers, which would provide information for the verification of the adopted research hypotheses. Non-random sampling was used. Participation in the study was voluntary and anonymous. Respondents took part in the survey between April and September 2022.

The general population in the study was based on persons over 18 years old, who were of working and post-working age according to the classification of Statistics Poland. It was assumed that the research population consists of people of Polish origin. According to Statistics Poland, the size of the general population was determined to be 81.8% of the total Polish population in 2020, which totaled 38 265 013 persons. Therefore, the size of the general population was assumed to be 31 300 781 persons, among which the population of the Polish Z generation aged 18-27 was identified, comprising 4 063 682 persons (Table 1).

Table 1. Population by age group in Poland in 2020

	Age 18-27 Generation Z	Age 28-44 Millennial (Generation Y)	Age 45-57 Generation X	Age 58-76 Baby Boomer	Age over 76 Silent Generation
Number of people	4 063 682	10 148 752	6 349 595	8 484 618	2 254 134
% of general population*	13.0%	32.4%	20.3%	27.1%	7.2%

*General population = 31 300 781

Source: own study based on: Local Data Bank - Population by single age and sex, GUS, 2020,

<https://bdl.stat.gov.pl/bdl/dane/podgrup/tablica> [accessed: 07.06.2022].

The sample size was determined in the next stage of the study. Taro Yamane's (Yamane, 1967) calculation method was used to estimate the sample size of the population according to the formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

where:

n – the sample size,

N – the population size,

e – the acceptable sampling error.

We assumed the error tolerance of 0.05, so this means a 95% confidence that our data are going to be reflective of the population. Finally, by approximation, minimum sample size is 400. The participants of the sample were 642 people aged between 18 and 27, representing the Polish generation Z. The sample is considered representative because its participants reflect the structure of the general population in terms of the gender criterion in the survey (the structure of survey respondents has to include approximately 52% female and 48% male). The actual survey participant structure was 51.4% female and 48.6% male.

The first part of the survey included metric questions of a demographic-social nature. They allowed the identification of the characteristics of the research sample in terms of gender, education, place of residence, professional situation, self-assessment of material situation, and monthly income. The overall demographic and social data of the research sample are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Demographic and social characteristics of the research sample

Gender:	Female			Male		
% of respondents	51.4%			48.6%		
No of respondents	330			312		
Education level:	Primary	Lower secondary	Secondary	Vocational	Post-secondary	Higher
% of respondents	0.8%	0.0%	42.5%	0.2%	1.2%	55.3%
No of respondents	5	0	273	1	8	355
Place of residence:	Village	City up to 50,000 inhabitants	City 50,000-150,000 inhabitants	City 150,000-500,000 inhabitants	City above 500,000 inhabitants	
% of respondents	14.3%	12.2%	8.9%	25.2%	39.4%	
No of respondents	92	78	57	162	253	
Work situation:	Employment contract	Civil law contract	Business contract	Agricultural household	Not working (student)	Not working (unemployed)
% of respondents	30.5%	27.3%	3.6%	0.6%	37.1%	0.9%

No of respondents	196	175	23	4	238	6
Self-assessment of financial situation:	Good	Rather good	Average	Rahher bad		Bad
% of respondents	20.1%	42.5%	30.4%	6.2%		0.8%
No of respondents	129	273	195	40		5
Monthly income (net amount):	< 2 363.56 PLN		2 363.56 - 4240.00 PLN	4240.00 zł - 8 000.00 PLN		> 8 000.00 PLN
% of respondents	43.3%		43.0%	13.2%		0.5%
No of respondents	278		276	85		3

n = 642 respondents

Source: own study

In order to verify the research hypotheses, there was conducted analysis of survey questions that derive young customer opinions. Moreover, statistical analyses were carried out by using a correlation measure (Tschuprow's T- coefficient) and Inference statistic. The level of significance was set to be $\alpha = 0.05$. There was used independence test χ^2 which allowed for examining whether the indicated variables from the research questions are dependent on the knowledge of the SRI. This made it possible to answer whether SRI can be considered a factor for building competitive advantage and sustainable development of organisations in the opinion of Generation Z.

4. Results and Discussion

In line with the research questions, first, there will be presented the results concerning the impact of an organisation's CSR implementation on its decision about socially responsible investment.

In relation to the first research question, respondents answered the following five questions:

1. How do you assess the impact of implementing CSR concepts by organisation on investors' opinion of this organisation?
2. Does the implementation of the CSR concept in an organisation have a positive impact on the valuation of its shares/bonds?
3. Does the implementation of the CSR concept in the organisation affect the investor's decision to buy its shares/bonds?
4. Would the implementation of the CSR concept in an organisation be a significant factor in the decision to invest your capital in this organisation?
5. Would you give up your investment in an organisation if it were operating inconsistently with the CSR concept or unethically?

Those survey questions were disjunctive in nature. Respondents selected one answer from a five-point scale ranging from 'definitely not'/'definitely insignificant' to 'definitely yes'/'definitely significant' and were included also a neutral response of 'difficult to say'. The results of the responses are presented in Figures 1-5.

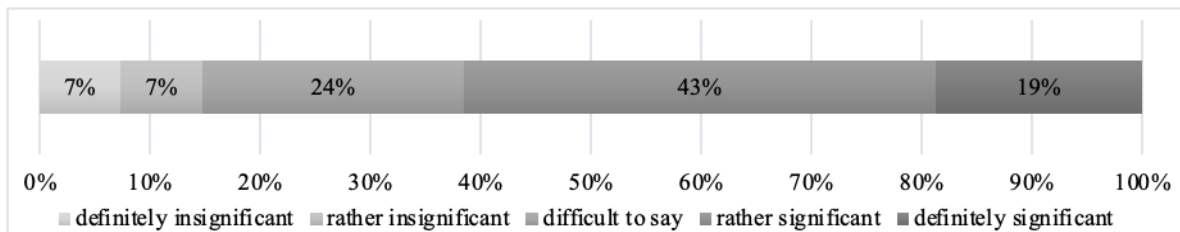


Figure 1. How do you assess the impact of implementing CSR concepts by organisation on investors' opinion of this organisation?

Source: own study.

In the opinion of more than 60.0% of respondents, the implementation of the CSR concept in an organisation has an impact on investors' opinions of companies. Almost one in four respondents had no opinion on this issue. The reasons for this lack of opinion can be explained by the young age of the respondents and their insufficient knowledge of the subject.

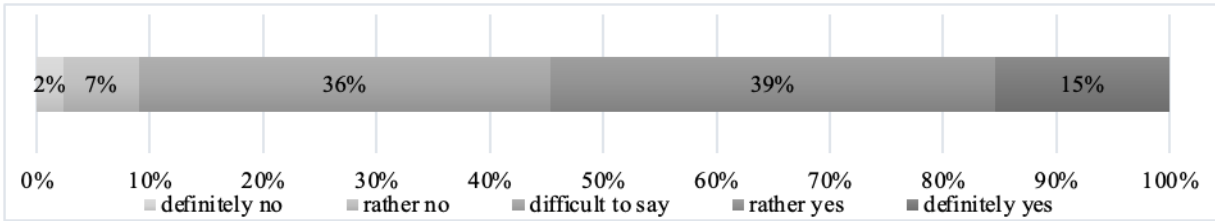


Figure 2. Does the implementation of the CSR concept in an organisation have a positive impact on the valuation of its shares/bonds?
Source: own study.

More undecided respondents were in the assessment of the detailed impact of the CSR concept on the organisation (questions/figures 2-5). On average it was every third respondent. More than half of the respondents are of the opinion that the implementation of the CSR concept in an organisation has a positive impact on the valuation of its shares or bonds. Only 9% of respondents see this impact as negative.

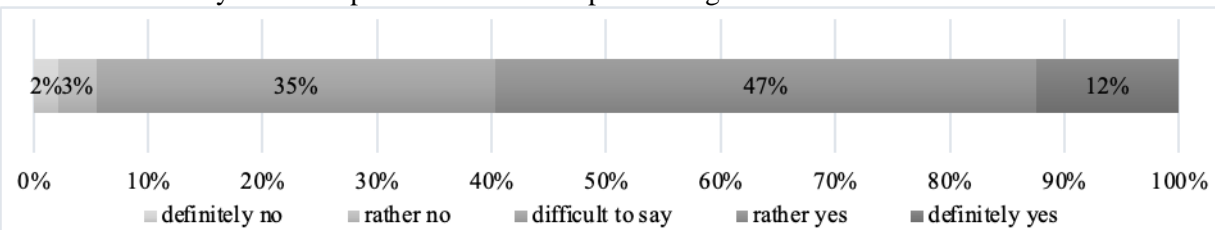


Figure 3. Does the implementation of the CSR concept in the organisation affect the investor's decision to buy its shares/bonds?
Source: own study.

Regarding the impact of the implementation of the CSR concept in an organisation on the decision of investors to buy its shares or bonds, almost 60.0% of the respondents considered that such an impact exists. Only 5% of the survey participants have the opposite opinion.

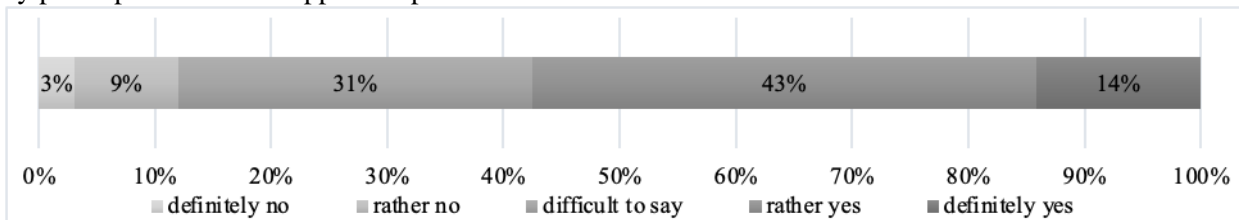


Figure 4. Would the implementation of the CSR concept in an organisation be an important factor in the decision to invest your capital in this organisation?
Source: own study.

More respondents (57%) have indicated the implementation of the CSR concept in an organisation is an important factor in the decision to invest capital in it. Almost one in three respondents had no opinion on this issue.

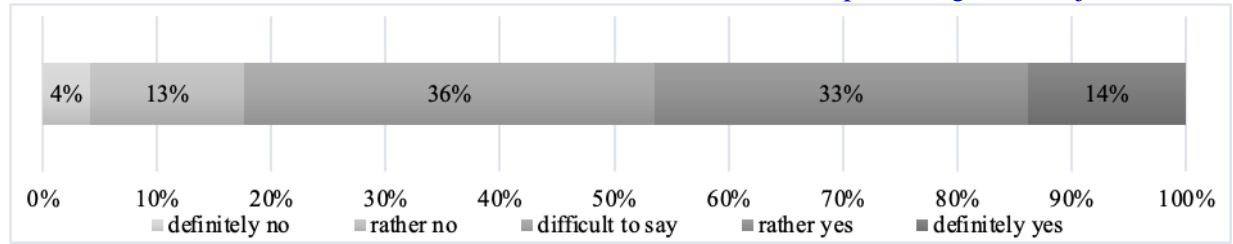


Figure 5. Would you give up your investment in an organisation if it were operating inconsistently with the CSR concept or unethically?

Source: own study.

The highest number of respondents (36%) had no opinion on the question of abandoning investment in an organisation due to its unethical operation or functioning not in line with the assumptions of the CSR concept. Nearly half of respondents would give up investment and 17% of individuals would nevertheless make this investment.

The obtained results indicate that the implementation of CSR in an organisation influences the decision of Generation Z about SRI. Confirmation of this finding is provided by the results of the independence test χ^2 presented in Table 3. The analysis of the relationship between the categorical variables was carried out using the results of the questionnaire on the five questions discussed above and the question on awareness of the SRI concept. Awareness of the SRI concept was declared by 37% of respondents, while the remaining respondents indicated not knowing this concept.

Table 3. CSR implementation in the organisation and its impact on investment versus awareness of the SRI concept

H ₀ : two categorical variables are independent H ₁ : two categorical variables are dependent			
Awareness of the SRI concept versus	Tschuprow's T-coefficient	Test χ^2	Inferences
1. Existence of the impact of implementing CSR concepts by organisation on investors' opinion of this organisation	T = 0.261	$\chi^2 = 21.945 > \chi^2_{0,05} = 9.488$	H ₁ : variables are dependent
2. Positive perception of the impact of the implementation of CSR concepts in an organisation on the valuation of its shares/bonds	T = 0.251	$\chi^2 = 20.267 > \chi^2_{0,05} = 9.488$	H ₁ : variables are dependent
3. Existence of the impact of the implementation of the CSR concept in the organisation on the decision to buy its shares/bonds by investors	T = 0.303	$\chi^2 = 29.375 > \chi^2_{0,05} = 9.488$	H ₁ : variables are dependent
4. Perception of the implementation of the CSR concept in an organisation as an important factor in the decision to invest capital in this organisation	T = 0.304	$\chi^2 = 29.719 > \chi^2_{0,05} = 9.488$	H ₁ : variables are dependent
5. Abandonment of investment in an organisation if it were operating inconsistently with the CSR concept or unethically	Not applicable	$\chi^2 = 3.751 < \chi^2_{0,05} = 9.488$	Failure to reject H ₀

Source: own study.

The results of χ^2 test indicate that only once the null hypothesis was not rejected (awareness of the SRI vs abandonment of investment). There was a relationship between awareness of the SRI concept and the other four variables. Although the correlation was weak in all cases studied (T value were from the interval 0.251-0.304).

The second research question investigated respondents' opinions regarding the following issues:

- The understanding and characteristics of the SRI phenomenon (conjunctive questions allowing the selection of several possible answers),
- Opportunities for SRI development on the Polish capital market and determinants of socially responsible investment decisions (disjunctive questions).
- The undertaking of socially responsible investment (alternative questions, allowing selection among yes/no answers, and filtering questions, aimed at identifying survey participants who made socially responsible investments). This group was also asked about the types and investment strategies used by them (conjunctive questions).

Regarding the first issue, the results are shown in Figures 6-7.

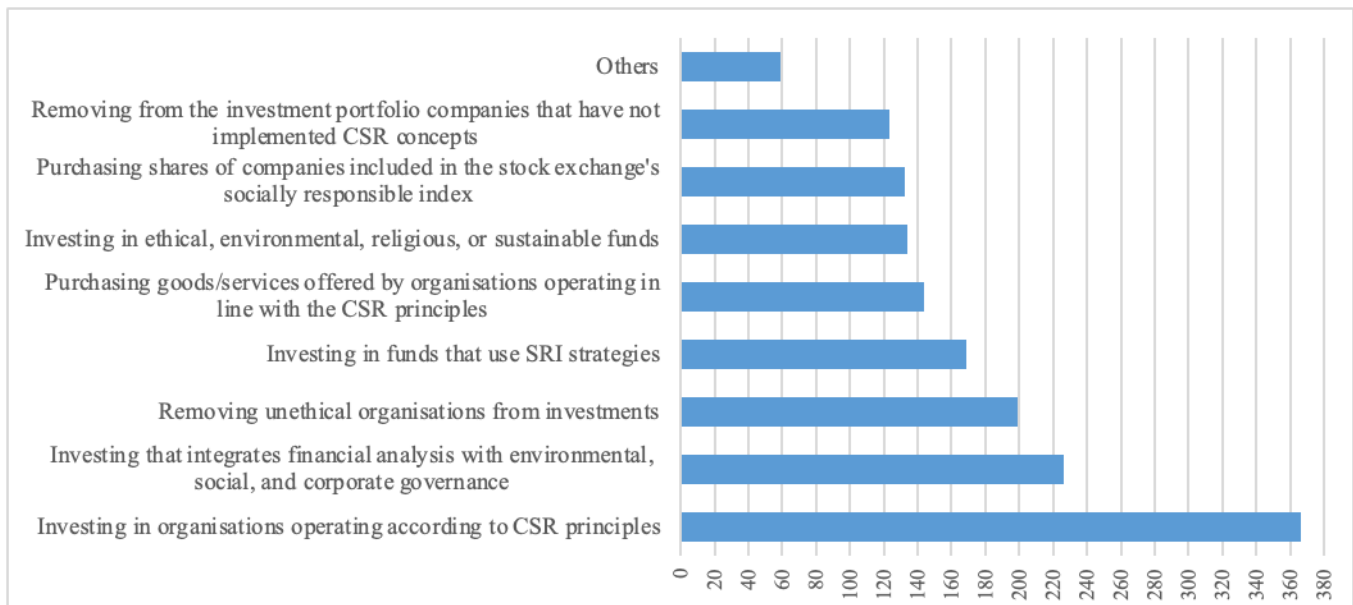


Figure 6. With which statements do you identify the term SRI? (multiple choice)

Source: own study.

There were a total of 1552 responses to the above question. SRI is most often considered to be investing in organisations that operate in accordance with the CSR concept (366 responses). This finding also confirms the first research hypothesis. Respondents also frequently identified SRI as investing that integrates financial analysis with environmental, social, and corporate governance (226 responses), as well as eliminating unethical organisations from investments (199 responses) and investing in funds that use SRI strategies (169 responses).

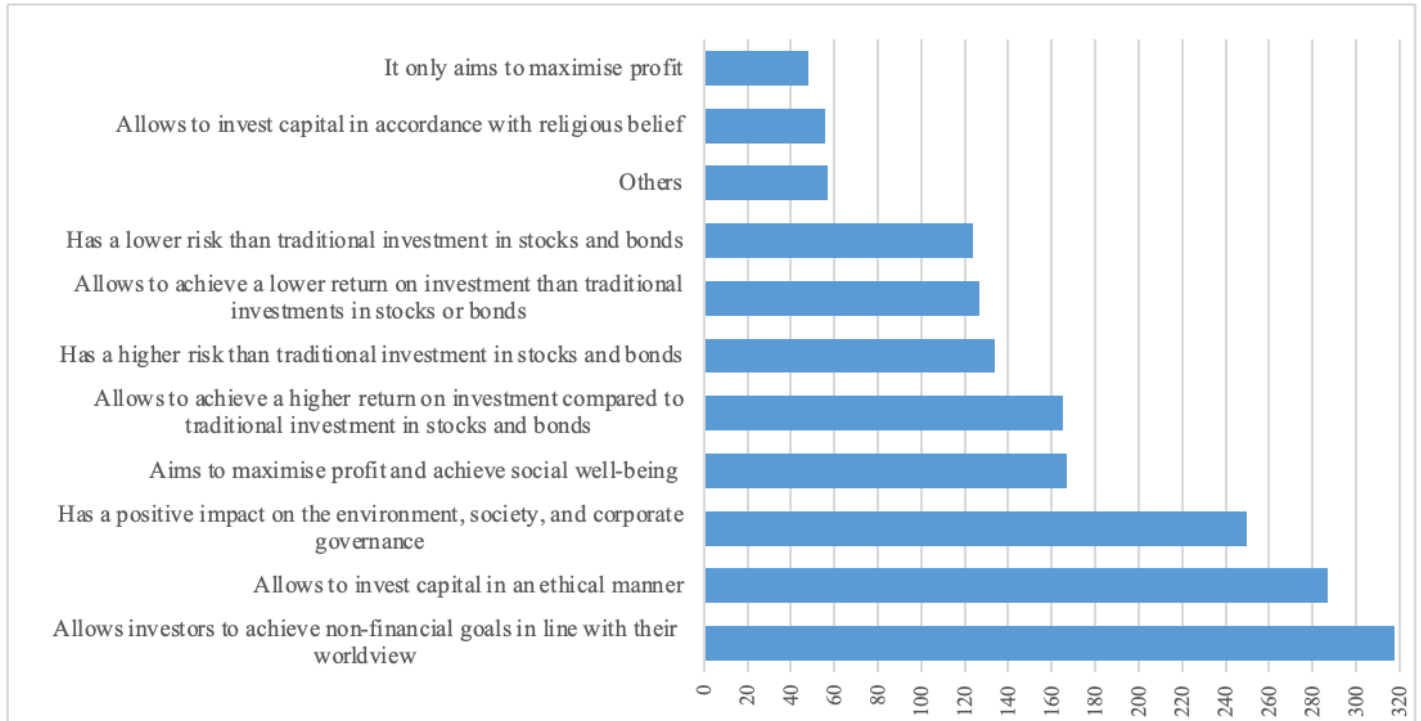


Figure 7. Which statements characterise SRI? (multiple choice)

Source: own study.

There were 1,733 responses on the characteristics of the SRI phenomenon. According to the largest group of respondents, SRI allows investors to pursue non-financial goals that are in line with their worldview (322 responses). Nearly 45.0% of the respondents consider that SRI allows capital to be invested ethically. According to almost 39.0% of them, SRI has a positive impact on the environment, society, and corporate governance.

The SRI concept was least characterised as a strictly financial activity undertaken to maximise profit (48 responses). A relatively small number of respondents also identified SRI with investing capital in accordance with religious beliefs (56 responses).

The opinion of Generation Z about opportunities for SRI development and factors in the organisation determining SRI decision-making is shown in Figure 8.

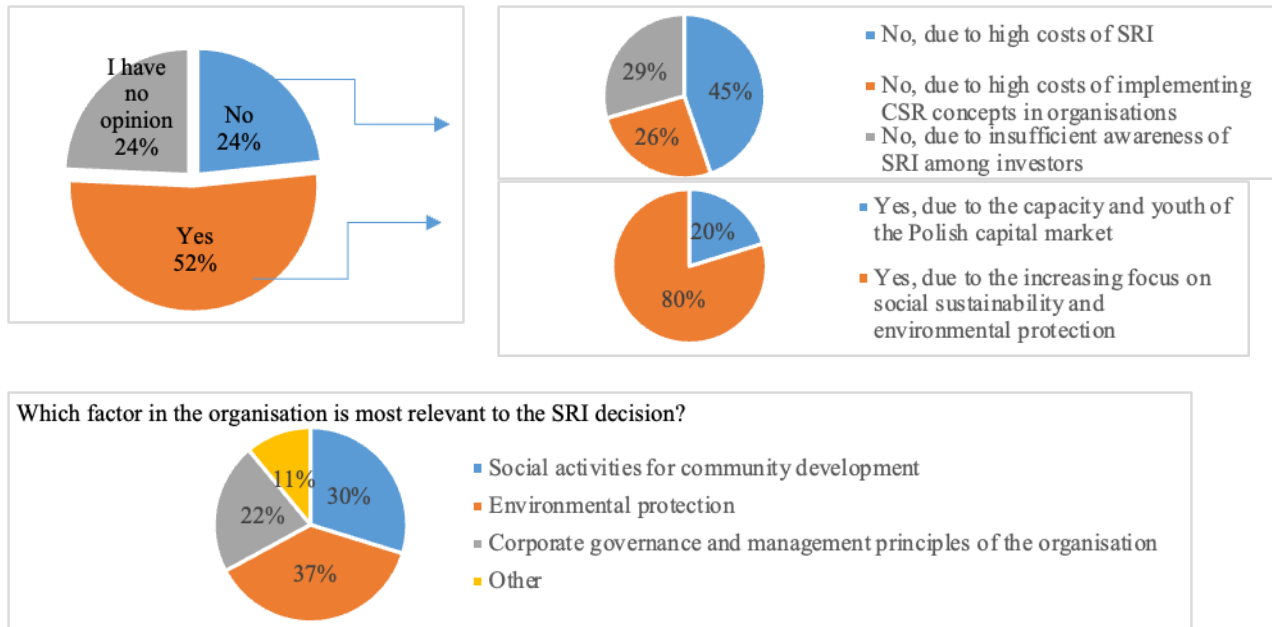


Figure 8. Does SRI get a chance to succeed and develop in the Polish capital market?

Source: own study.

More than half (52.0%) of the survey participants considered that SRI has a chance of success and development in the Polish capital market. The majority of respondents who answered positively are of the opinion that the growing popularity of social equity and environmental issues will be the reason for the development of the SRI in Poland. Those who responded negatively consider the high costs of such investments and the high costs of implementing CSR concepts in organisations to be the major obstacles to the development of SRI in the Polish capital market.

Almost 70.0% of the whole respondents considered that the most important factors determining decision about SRI are related to environmental and social nature.

In the question about the personal motivations for undertaking the SRI decision, respondents indicated minimisation of investment risk, achieving financial profit, and caring for the natural environment and ethical standards as key factors.

Table 4 shows the key factors that characterise investments and influence the decision to undertake SRI.

Table 4. Key factors that determine the decision to undertake SRI

Factor	% of respondents (multiple choice: 2774 answers)
Minimisation of investment risk	55%
Achieving a financial profit	48%
Concern for the environment	39%
Concern for ethical standards	35%
Concern for the well-being of society	33%
Inflation protection	33%
Long-term investment growth potential	27%
Caring for future generations	25%
Satisfaction with the ethical and moral action	24%

Diversification	20%
Sense of 'mission' in taking care of society and the environment	20%
Balancing between economic return and non-financial motives	18%
Concern for corporate governance and management	17%
Pursuing private goals related to one's beliefs	12%
Absolute rate of return	9%
Volatility management/low correlation	7%
Respecting religious norms	6%
Other	6%

Source: own study.

The last issue was investigating the survey participants who have made SRI. Only 10% of respondents (61) indicated that they have made SRIs. This is mainly due to the age of the research sample, which consisted of young people with limited funds to invest (see Table 2). A summary of the instruments and investment strategies they use is shown in Figures 9 and 10.

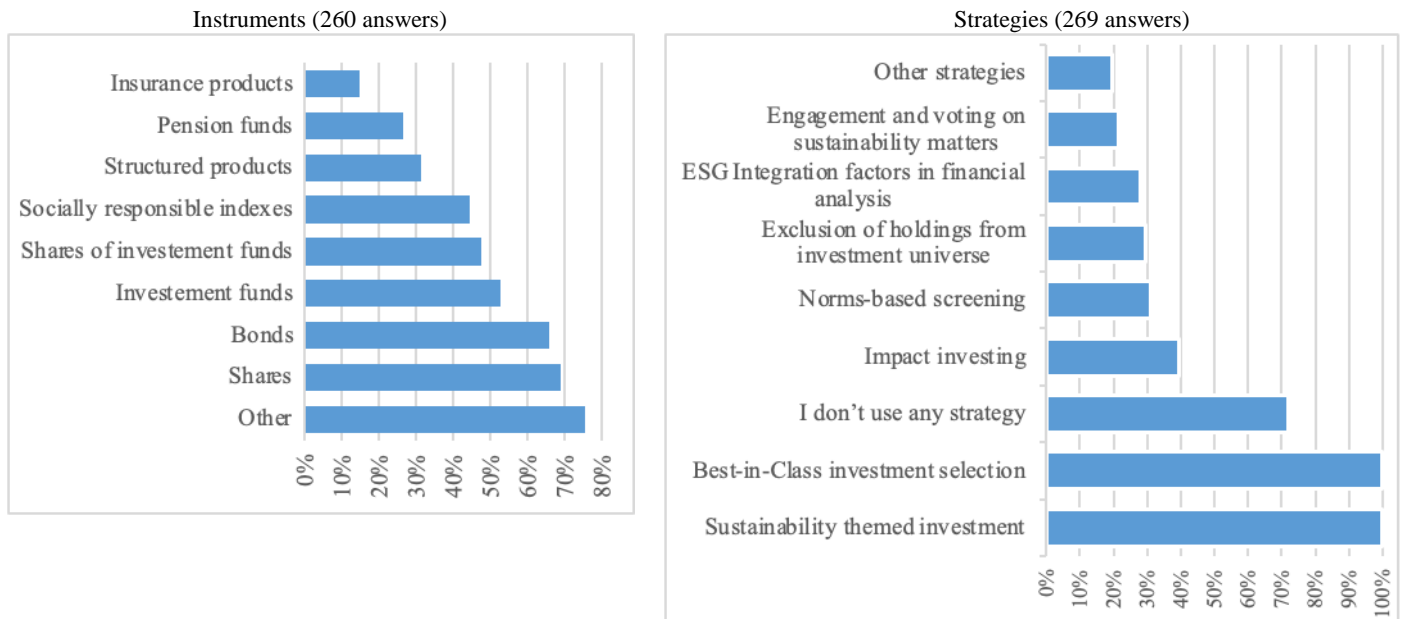


Figure 9. Instruments and investment strategies used by respondents (multiple choice).

Source: own study.

The results of the survey indicate that respondents declaring to undertake SRI investments most often chose shares (42 responses), and bonds (40 responses). The least used in socially responsible investing were insurance products (9 responses), pension funds (16 responses), and structured products (19 responses).

All respondents used a 'best-in-class' investment selection and a sustainability thematic investment strategy in their SRI. The least frequently used strategies were related to engagement and voting on sustainability matters (13 responses) and other strategies (12 responses).

The final view of Generation Z about SRI as a part of CSR which builds competitive advantage is presented in Figure 10.

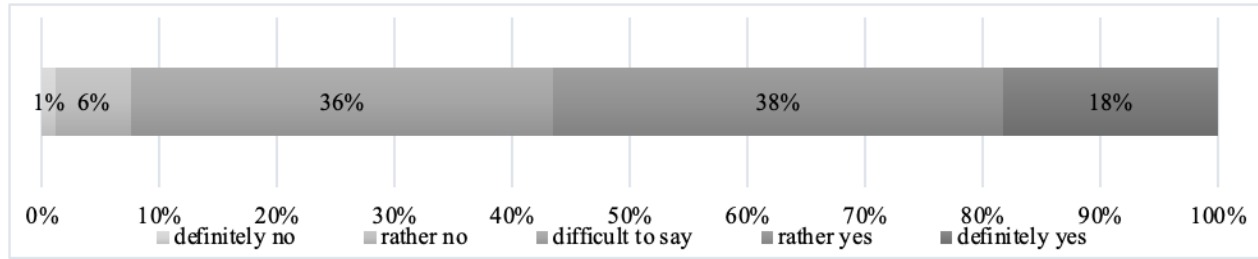


Figure 9. Does investing in organisations operating according to the CSR concept increase their competitive advantage?

Source: own study.

More than half of the respondents (56.0%) consider that investing capital in socially responsible enterprises increases their competitive advantage. Only 7.0% of all respondents stated that there was no link between investing in CSR organisations and an increase in their competitive advantage in the market. The remaining respondents had no opinion on this issue.

The last step was verifying the hypotheses related to the research questions. Therefore, correlation analysis was carried out and it was verified by using χ^2 independence test. This made it possible to answer whether SRI can be considered a factor for building competitive advantage and organisational sustainability in the opinion of representatives of Generation Z. Correlation analysis and inference statistics could only be conducted for single-choice indications. Therefore, they covered only three categorical variables. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Relationship between selected variables describing SRI and awareness of the SRI concept

H ₀ : two categorical variables are independent H ₁ : two categorical variables are dependent			
Awareness of the SRI concept versus	Tschuprow's T-coefficient	Test χ^2	Inferences
1. Succeed and develop of SRI in the Polish capital market	T = 0.433	$\chi^2 = 53.763 > \chi^2_{0,05} = 11.070$	H ₁ : variables are dependent
2. The factor in the organisation that is most relevant to the decision to SRI	T = 0.224	$\chi^2 = 18.621 > \chi^2_{0,05} = 7.815$	H ₁ : variables are dependent
3. Investing in organisations that operate according to the CSR concept increases the competitive advantage of these organisations	T = 0.281	$\chi^2 = 25.393 > \chi^2_{0,05} = 9.488$	H ₁ : variables are dependent

Source: own study.

The results of χ^2 independence test indicate that the null hypothesis should be rejected in favor of the alternative hypothesis. This means that the relationship between the analysed variables is significant. There was a weak correlation (T = 0.224, T = 0.281) and a moderate correlation (T = 0.433).

5. Conclusions

Based on the results of the survey, it can be concluded that the Polish Z generation is a group knowledgeable about the CSR concept and aware of its importance in terms of influencing an organisation's positive reputation. The majority of respondents considered that the implementation of the CSR concept in an organisation influences the opinion of investors about that company, positively affects the valuation of its shares and bonds and determines the decision of investors to purchase its shares and bonds. The most respondents also stated that the implementation of the CSR concept in an organisation is an important factor in deciding whether to invest capital. They also confirmed the abandonment of the investment in the organisation due to its unethical operation or

functioning contrary to the CS concept. It should be noted that from 24.0% to 36.0% of survey participants had no opinion on the examined issues. The smallest group of respondents expressed the opinion that the examined issues do not affect the opinion and actions of investors towards the organisation.

With regard to SRI, more than half of the survey participants considered that it has a chance of success and development in the Polish capital market. In their opinion, this is because of the growing popularity of issues related to social equality and environmental protection. The majority of respondents also considered environmental and social factors to be the most important in an organisation for socially responsible investing. An important finding of this study is that more than half of the respondents were of the opinion that investing capital in socially responsible companies increases their competitive advantage. All the opinions of the Polish generation Z, excluding the issue of abandoning the investment in case of unethical or contrary to CSR activities of the organisation, depend on their knowledge of the SRI phenomenon. The obtained results indicate the hypothesis has been positively verified. It means that the implementation of CSR in an organisation determines the decision about socially responsible investment and that SRI supports the building of a company's competitive advantage in the market.

Concluding the SRI takes into account the CSR practices and activities undertaken by the companies in which investors allocate their capital. There is a focus on ethical programmes, social reports, corporate governance, and social marketing. Therefore, the SRI is one of the instruments for implementing the assumptions of the CSR concept. According to the view presented above, a responsible investor will not invest capital in companies whose policy is not in line with CSR theory.

The results obtained in this study are in line with the other examination of this issue. Generation Z's behaviour appears to differ from the behaviour of older generations, which may lead to changes in consumer behaviour (Casalegno et al., 2022). They appear to be more sensitive to environmental and social issues compared to previous generations (Nikolić et al., 2022; Kanchanapibul et al., 2014; Puiui, 2016). Seemiller & Grace (2017) also report that they want to contribute to social goals. Widening common information access has fostered to gain knowledge among Generation Z about CSR activities undertaken by different organisations. This has an impact on their perception of CSR activities as an important factor when choosing a brand (Pencarelli et al., 2020). This also results in their greater trust in organisations that declare a focus on CSR issues (Uche, 2018).

In the framework of current knowledge, the conducted survey confirmed the high awareness and understanding of CSR assumptions by young market participants in Poland. It also proved the positive assessment of socially responsible companies on the market. The study provided a new view on the opinion of the Polish Generation Z on the impact of CSR implementation in organizations on investment decisions, as well as on the increase in the competitive advantage of these companies on the market. The study also identified the attitudes of young consumers in Poland to the concept of socially responsible investing (SRI), its features and importance, and also opportunities for development in the Polish capital market. The Polish SRI market is at an early stage of development, and the SRI concept is not sufficiently known among Polish investors. It is because of the perception of the stock exchange by Polish investors mainly in the category of achieving financial profit. Despite the growing awareness of sustainable investing, most investors still consider profit as the most important, and achieving long-term benefits as a result of business ethics, company reputation or brand management is further down the line. Therefore, SRI as a young, innovative, and still developing concept needs to be introduced to more participants in the financial market. The enhancement of SRI at the global level can lead to the improvement of well-being for future generations.

Like other studies, this research has some limitations. One of them is using an original research questionnaire. Another one was that the survey covered one geographical area (the sample was limited to representatives of Generation Z in Poland). In further studies, it seems desirable to extend the research to young consumers from other geographical areas. Cross-cultural research can facilitate the identification of differences in opinion, as well

as provide a more comprehensive understanding of different approaches to SRI. It also seems interesting to extend questionnaires to other generations for future research. This will allow for a better understanding of the differences in opinions and approaches to CSR and SRI depending on the belonging of a particular generation of consumers.

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