

Article

Employer Branding in the Context of the Company's Sustainable Development Strategy from the Perspective of Gender Diversity of Generation Z

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Abstract: Applying the principles of sustainable development is an element of building the image of an organisation as an employer. The opinions of young people commencing their professional career in this regard may prove important for companies. The aim of this article is to identify a dependence between generation Z's opinions on employer branding measures based on sustainable development taken by companies and the respondents' gender. The article presents the results of primary research conducted on a sample of 291 students of higher education institutions in Poland. The methods include questionnaire surveys and statistical data processing. The results of the research suggest that sustainable development measures undertaken by employers increase the candidates' motivation to apply for a job in the organisation. The analysis demonstrated that generation Z's opinions on sustainable development activities carried out by employers and on the significance of employer branding are dependent on the respondents' gender. The main conclusion is that women are more ecologically oriented than men, and following a sustainable development strategy is more important for them. Companies building employer branding should consider the adoption of various factors identified in the article, such as the Employee Value Proposition (EVP), especially when their workforce is gender-diverse.

Keywords: sustainable development; employer branding; generation Z; gender; Employee Value Proposition



Citation: Rzemieniak, M.; Wawer, M. Employer Branding in the Context of the Company's Sustainable Development Strategy from the Perspective of Gender Diversity of Generation Z. *Sustainability* **2021**, *13*, 828. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13020828>

Received: 13 December 2020

Accepted: 12 January 2021

Published: 15 January 2021

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1. Introduction

The challenges faced by contemporary organisations are highly varied. Dynamic changes to market, economic, demographic, social, technological, and environmental processes occurring in communities and organisations are combined with a growing demand for employees with a broad set of hard skills connected strictly with their practised professions but also, primarily, displaying expected types of behaviour and professing specific values [1–3].

The degree to which employees identify with the values of a given organisation has a great impact on their level of involvement and loyalty and, consequently, on market success.

In this respect, special focus should be placed on sustainable development considered in the context of employer branding and how it is perceived by potential employees from the youngest generation who are currently entering the employment market. Although analysing the relationship between these areas seems quite logical and obvious, there is not much research in this area in the scientific literature. This subject matter has become the focus of the theoretical and empirical studies presented in this article.

Modern corporations are increasingly motivated to adopt proactive CSR strategies and promote sustainability activities to meet current environmental and social challenges [4–6].

Amorelli and Garia-Sanchez pointed to changes in gender diversity studies and the benefits related to the presence of women in bodies responsible for their business strategy [7]. Al-Shaer and Zaman's studies confirmed the hypothesis concerning the impact of gender diversity in corporate governing bodies on the implementation of sustainable development strategy [8]. The results of the study by Orazalin and Baydauletov also confirm that gender diversity in governing bodies is positively associated with environmental and societal results, which corroborates the hypothesis that gender diversity in company boards promotes sustainable development [9]. Therefore, they examine the effects of CSR strategies on corporate sustainability performance and investigate whether this relationship is moderated by board gender diversity [10,11].

The issue of a gender-diversified approach to sustainable development has been discussed in the literature on this subject, but only at the level of managers and individuals responsible for developing the economic policy. The research conducted and published so far has focussed on managers with professional experience. There are no studies in the literature in the context of young people without professional experience. The authors identified a gap in the research carried out so far consisting of the lack of verification of the gender diversity issue from the perspective of generation Z, which is just entering the employment market.

Therefore, the main aim of the article is to identify a dependence between generation Z's opinions on the employer branding measures based on sustainable development taken by companies and the respondents' gender.

Bridging this gap made it possible to formulate the following research questions:

1. Is the opinion on sustainable development activities carried out by employers dependent on the gender of the respondents from generation Z?
2. Is the opinion on the significance of employer branding based on sustainable development dependent on the gender of the respondents from generation Z?

This study differs from previous studies and contributes to the current literature in various ways. First, the authors contribute to the literature of employer branding and sustainability by conceptually and empirically investigating whether the opinion on the sustainable development activities carried out by employers is dependent on the gender of the respondents from generation Z.

Second, most prior studies have mainly focussed on the direct effects of managers' gender diversity on corporate sustainability performance. Considering this research gap, this study analyses whether the opinion on the significance of employer branding based on sustainable development is dependent on the gender of the respondents from generation Z. The study conducted and described in this article fills the research gap and provides conclusions for other researchers. The obtained research results confirm that the evaluation of sustainable development measures taken by employers and the assessment of the significance of employer branding (EB) based on sustainable development are significantly dependent on the gender of the respondents representing generation Z.

In this article, the authors first concentrate on a literature review concerning three main areas: the essence of sustainable development, the characteristics of generation Z on the employment market, and the significance of employer branding (EB) in a contemporary organisation. Then, a description of the research subject, the research period, and the sampling procedure are given. Afterwards, the data are analysed, and the results are explained and discussed. On the basis of the studies carried out, it is possible to state that the evaluation of sustainable development measures taken by employers and the assessment of the significance of EB based on sustainable development are significantly dependent on the gender of the respondents representing generation Z. Finally, the implications and limitations of this study are provided.

1.1. The Essence of Sustainable Development

The notion of sustainable development is multifaceted and has great research potential, especially from the perspective of interdisciplinary projects. It encompasses ecology,

ethics, economy, management, development studies, sociology, and many other disciplines. Sustainable development research is carried out by higher education institutions teaching economics, medicine, technology, and humanities [12]. Furthermore, sustainable development research results provide a basis for formulating recommendations not only for social policy [13] and for the identification of ways to improve quality of life and the state of the natural environment, but also for building business strategies.

The notion of sustainable development is simple, but it can be defined in a variety of ways [14,15]. The idea was created in the 1980s and has since become one of the major contemporary theories of economic development. The concept of sustainable development is believed to have been formulated by D. Pearce, E. Barbier, A. Markandya, R. Turner, P.F. Barlett, and G.W. Chase [16] who claim that “sustainable development involves responding to current needs in such a way as to make it possible for future generations to also meet their needs”. According to H. Komiyama and K. Takeuchi [17], a strong emphasis in the concept of development has been placed on removing barriers to growth, fighting poverty, introducing innovative solutions, developing intangible assets, and also environmental protection and the renewability of resources.

Sustainable development has been an important notion in the literature on the subject for many years [18]. The notion of sustainable development is now very popular both in science [19] and business practice [20]. It is not only one of the best known and most frequently quoted concepts combining natural environment and development but also best accounted for in publications such as, i.a., World Conservation Strategy IUCN 1980 [21,22], “Our common future” (the Brundtland Report) [23–25], and concluding documents from the 1992 Rio De Janeiro Conference and the Earth Summit in Johannesburg in 2002, the 2015 Report on the Millennium Development Goals [26], and the Agenda for Sustainable Development [27] passed at the UN Summit in New York on 25 September 2020, with 17 objectives to be met by 2030. The agenda is addressed not only to governments and parliaments, international institutions, local authorities and residents but also to businesses and the private sector [28]. The provisions of the agenda refer directly to businesses: “We acknowledge the role of the diverse private sector, ranging from micro-enterprises to cooperatives to multinationals. We call upon all businesses to apply their creativity and innovation to solving sustainable development challenges” (point 67 of the Agenda) [29].

Thus, due to EU legal regulations [30–32], the issue of environmental care has not only become a priority but also a duty. A change to a more environmentally friendly lifestyle is the main method of preventing negative phenomena resulting from the global ecological crisis [32–35]. This environmentally friendly approach results from the ecological awareness and sensitivity of a conscious human being [36,37]. Developing an environmentally friendly approach and a healthy lifestyle in society through raising awareness is one of the main goals of sustainable development-oriented education, regardless of the age of citizens [38–42]. In line with the definition taken from social psychology, an attitude is understood as an individual’s permanent approach to someone or something [43]. The approach includes three components: cognitive, affective, and behavioural, with mutual interactions between them [44,45].

For the purpose of this study, it was assumed that sustainable development is based on attempts to achieve the best possible economic result while respecting the natural environment and social development [46]. The essence of the sustainable development concept is the management of global public assets understood as knowledge gathered by previous generations, cultural heritage, environmental protection, the right to live in peace and to meet one’s basic needs, as well as sustainable development [47]. The basis of the sustainable development concept is people impacting the environment, the planet as the area (subject) of human impact, and the operating method, i.e., partnership, as only integrated measures will make it possible to achieve the objective, i.e., well-being and peace in the world. The issue of a gender-dependent approach to sustainable development has been numerously addressed in the literature on the subject [7,9,48], but only at the level of corporate bodies and individuals responsible for developing the economic policy. The

objective of the research carried out by the authors was to expand knowledge in the area of gender diversity from the perspective of generation Z.

1.2. Characteristics of Generation Z and Its Expectations towards Work and Employers

Social and demographic changes in the world have resulted in a situation in which employers simultaneously hire employees from five different generations, who must be able to cooperate in their organisations [49,50]. However, differences between these groups manifesting themselves, i.e., in the way of thinking, their approach to work, behaviour and system of values, as well as flexibility and expertise, may become a source of numerous conflicts in organisations [51,52].

Awareness of the diversity of behaviours and values in various groups of employees determines the need to use the concept of diversity management, which is currently under the consideration of both the academic literature [12,53–56] and business practice [57–62]. Many authors emphasise the significance of the key dimension of diversity, i.e., the age of the hired employees [63] and the necessity for employers to adjust their attitudes towards different generations [49,64,65]. The analysis of academic publications indicated that a considerable proportion of studies in this area refer to elderly people [66–68]. However, age management rarely focusses on the youngest generation which is just entering the employment market or has only initial professional experience. The research context referring to the young age of respondents may therefore constitute an interesting area of empirical studies.

Each generation is characterised in various contexts, and so far, the researchers' focus was often on identifying differences between selected age groups [69,70]. However, it should be emphasised that the youngest generation in the employment market has not been described in as much detail as other generations. This stems from the fact that there are few representatives of generation Z in the job market, and their professional experience is limited. Many publications released so far have focussed on the characteristics of these individuals in the context of, i.e., communication [71,72] and teaching methods [71,73–77]. However, subjects related to the generation entering the employment market and its professional and environmental values are relatively rarely considered, especially in the context of gender [78,79].

Numerous publications discussing generational diversity most often share terms denoting specific generations. These are the silent generation, baby boomers, generation X, generation Y, and generation Z. The diversity of generations results from the specific characteristics of the times in which they lived, determined by their date of birth, assuming that generations, like people, have personalities [80]. Dates are approximate and, in the literature, overlap because there are no standard definitions for when a generation begins and ends. Defining generations depends on the selected authors and sources, the country and culture, and the specific historical events that shaped them. Therefore, the boundaries of individual generations may differ in different sources. The silent generation is the oldest and currently, few of its representatives are professionally active. These are individuals born between 1925 and 1943 [81]. They are loyal to their employers and expect the same in return. Their characteristics include high work ethics, discipline, laboriousness, and responsibility [82]. Baby boomers are people born between 1940 and 1959. The post-war period in which they were born had an impact on their ideological standpoint. The baby boomers generation represents the so-called “loyal formalists”. They like the sequential actions, structure, and a predetermined order of things. They are in favour of seniority-dependent promotions and a vertical professional development structure. It is difficult for them to accept events which diverge from the rules that they follow, which may result in reluctance towards changes. They are usually patient—they are able to wait for a long time for a promotion because they believe in and respect the set rules. Their main assets are patience, responsibility, communicativeness, and the ability to deal with difficult situations [83]. For the representatives of generation X (born between 1960 and 1979), status is of primary importance. This a mature generation of

professionally active people, trustworthy and loyal to their employers. Although they are able to use electronic technology, they do not trust Internet resources. They rely on face to face contacts and hard-copy documentation. Employees from generation X often spend many years in one company and identify with their workplace to a great extent. They often believe that a respectable workplace is a reward in itself, for which they are able to accept other unfavourable conditions [84]. They are usually highly responsible people, effective and loyal to their employers [83]. For generation Y (Millennials) (born between 1980 and 1994), experiences and communication via the Internet are crucial [85], and communication technologies are an integral part of their lives. They value innovativeness, individual development opportunities, and independence in the performed duties. They prefer project-based tasks and flexible work programmes with no specific rules or vertical hierarchy. Gaining new skills at work and professional development are of great importance to them [84]. In this context, they do not want to wait many years for their career to develop, as they are used to short-term results, including quick promotions. Therefore, they are not very loyal to their employers and do not hesitate to change jobs if they are unsatisfied with the conditions [84]. For generation Z (1995–2010), searching for truth is the main motivator both in the individual and social context. Their search for authenticity contributes to their greater freedom of expression and a better understanding of human diversity aspects [86].

It should be emphasised that the provided birth year ranges are of an arbitrary nature, and the literature on the subject contains various classifications [71]. Due to the subject matter considered in the article, based on the literature review, the authors assumed that generation Z includes individuals born after 1995 [50,60,87].

Generation Z is currently at the stage of completing education as students and beginning professional careers [87], becoming of interest to the employment market. It is estimated that generation Z already makes up 24% of the global workforce, and that proportion is only going to grow in the coming years [61].

Generation Z has been called many names, e.g., “Sharing Generation”, “All Technology All Time” generation, and “Born Digital” [88]. People from generation Z are often referred to as “digital natives”, as they have had access to the Internet, mobile networks, and mobile systems 24/7 from their earliest years. In this specific context, this generation has become perfect at collecting and comparing information from various sources and integrating virtual and offline experiences.

Generation Z is also referred to as the “iGeneration”, “iMillennials”, or “Post-Millennials” [80]. The term iGen, coined by Jean Twenge, refers to people who have never known a time without smartphones [89]. Many of them had an Instagram or Snapchat account already in secondary school. They grew up functioning in an online world, which provided them with instant satisfaction in the form of likes and comments. In the real world, gratification is not that simple, so young people are increasingly often experiencing mental problems resulting from fear and anxiety [90]. Many of these problems are related to being unable to deal with a life situation without a smartphone. This strong need to be constantly in contact with the world causes the fear of missing out (FOMO) and the fear of being offline (FOBO). These are often manifested by the need to use the smartphone to check on others and striving to achieve high recognition in social media [91]. The key fact is that generation Z prefers video communication to using text or voice, which was characteristic of generation Y [92].

Candidates from generation Z are generally perceived as expecting a career with a fast progression to higher positions and impatiently awaiting promotions [93]. According to a report by Deloitte, generation Z-ers prefer individual-based tasks rather than working in a group [94]. According to Goh and Lee [87], Generation Z-ers demonstrate a stronger tendency towards a positive approach (i.e., being people-engaged, interesting, fulfilling, and equipped with travel opportunities) than negative attitudes (e.g., having challenges in dealing with people, long/odd working hours, and language proficiency).

Questionnaire surveys carried out by McKinsey show four main types of behaviour of generation Z, all related to searching for the truth. Therefore, it is possible to state

that generation Z is the “True Gen” [86]. Young people from generation Z appreciate individual expression and avoid stereotypical statements. They are convinced that dialogue is important for conflict solving and for making the world a better place. They make decisions and approach organisations in a highly analytical and pragmatic way. As a consequence, from the perspective of candidates and employees from generation Z, all activities of companies should be based on truth and be directly connected with the organisation’s ethics, especially in the area of work ethics [86]. Similar research results are presented in the Deloitte report, which emphasises that employees from generation Z seek a transparent organisational culture and corresponding transparency from their leaders. They also expect open conversations around business strategy and decisions [94]. The research in question motivated the authors to verify whether the discussed behaviour of generation Z is gender-diversified.

Generation Z-ers entering the employment market should be provided with an environment supporting their hiring and retaining [61]. Understanding the values and expectations of the members of this generation has become more important than ever, especially when generation Z is joining the workforce and will soon dominate the industry. Employers should understand that the significance of recruitment processes adjusted to the characteristic features of generation Z-ers is increasing substantially, and communicating values consistent with their expectations, taking into account the context of the diversity of candidates determined by their gender, is becoming particularly vital [95]. Such measures will have an impact on the assessment of the employer’s image by future employees.

1.3. The Essence and Significance of Employer Branding in a Contemporary Organisation

Contemporary organisations owe their competitive position largely to the potential of their employees. Recruiting employees and engaging them in the performance of the company’s objectives is one of the key factors enabling it to effectively compete on the market. Creating an attractive image of the employer is beginning to play a significant role in management.

The term employer branding (EB) was introduced in the 1990s and is associated with talent management practice and the need to attract and retain talents. It is also one of the most recent organisation management concepts. The literature provides several dates for the origin of EB:

- 1990—during a conference organised by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development [96];
- 1996—S. Barrow, the author of the book *The Employer Brand: Bringing The Best Of Brand Management To People At Work*, and T. Ambler, published a pioneering article on employer branding [97];
- 2001—experts from the McKinsey company published the results of research pointing to the problems of US companies with the recruitment of employees, and popularised the term “talent hunting”. The expression referred to the phenomenon of the scarcity of highly talented people, the lack of well-trained employees to replace managerial staff, and the company’s success lying in superseding its competitors in recruiting exceptionally talented candidates [98,99].

At the same time, the subject matter of employer branding came under the scrutiny of scholars, such as M. Jo Hatch, M. Schulz, G. Martin, K. Backhaus, S. Tikoo, and D. Ulrich—their first book was published in 2010 [100]. However, it is difficult to identify one specific date when the concept was created or to ascribe it to a single author [101–103]. The increased interest in employer branding in business and academic communities could be noticed in the early 21st century [104]. It is possible to state that building the employer’s image had been present before it was defined, as employers have nearly always focussed on recruiting and retaining staff with the best qualifications [105].

Regardless whether a given employer carries out its operations in a conscious manner, information about the company is available to the potential and current employees, who are the recipients of various types of information in different media [106–108]. All operations

performed by a company between itself and the potential candidate are external employer branding [109]. Enterprises with a positive image on the labour market are able to recruit the most talented employees, often incurring lower employment costs. Such companies have lower staff turnover and absenteeism rates and at the same time, a more committed and satisfied team of employees, which often translates to the company's better financial results and higher competitiveness [110]. Attracting the best candidates successfully can be achieved by creating the company's image as an attractive employer and combines the right personnel strategy and a strategy for the company's communication with its environment [111].

Currently, one of the major challenges faced by employers is to find, recruit, and retain individuals with the proper skills, experience, and knowledge that meet the company's expectations [112,113]. In addition, companies seek employees with values consistent with those declared by the organisation [114,115]. An important benefit demanded and taken into account by candidates is not only the basic and additional pay but also the company's contribution to the employees' development, the available career paths, and a specific set of values [116]. Each company wishing to recruit an appropriate candidate needs an Employee Value Proposition (EVP) [117], stating why being employed in the given organisation is better than working for competitors. An EVP is a set of attributes which are perceived as valuable in the organisation and outside of it, making people willing to take up a new job at the organisation or stay with the current employer. The EVP includes benefits that employees receive for their work in a given organisation. If according to the employee the sum of benefits is commensurate (or higher) to the effort put in the work, they are more satisfied and motivated [118]. A reverse situation causes a decrease in productivity and satisfaction, contributing to increased staff turnover. The EVP should be viewed primarily from the perspective of unique elements impacting on the value of the brand as an employer. Born and Kang [119] identify the most important components that shape a strong employee brand. These include assessment and shaping an authentic, consistent message of what your organisation values, communicating the company's message by leveraging the right channels and developing employer branding metrics. Employer branding represents what makes an organisation attractive to its current, and especially for future, employees [120].

The above review of academic papers and empirical research indicates that the respective issues are broadly discussed in the literature on the subject. However, it can be noticed that the research combining the three discussed areas has not been extensive, and there is an information gap in this regard. This may result from the fact that the current generation Z is just beginning to join the employment market as job candidates for organisations, so there are few analyses focussing on these young people. The awareness of the new situation has inspired the authors to discuss in this article the subject matter which forms a common ground for the issues of sustainable development, generation Z in the employment market, and employer branding.

The main aim of the article is to identify the dependence between generation Z's opinions on employer branding measures based on the sustainable development undertaken by companies and the respondents' gender. The authors decided to focus on an analysis taking into consideration the respondents' gender, as in numerous studies, this variable showed statistically significant dependences for the sustainability of activities undertaken in companies [8,121–125].

The following two hypotheses have been defined:

Hypothesis 1 (H1). *The opinion on sustainable development activities carried out by employers is dependent on the gender of the respondents from generation Z.*

Hypothesis 2 (H2). *The opinion on the significance of employer branding based on sustainable development is dependent on the gender of the respondents from generation Z.*

2. Materials and Methods

To achieve the research goal, the diagnostic survey method was used, along with statistical data processing. The authors developed a questionnaire consisting of 15 simple and compound questions, with 2 questions in the introductory part verifying the respondents' knowledge of the subject of sustainable development. The first 5 main questions (part A) were aimed at identifying generation Z's opinions on sustainable development strategies introduced in companies. The following two questions (part B) referred to the assessment of the impact of these measures on the motivation to take up employment in enterprises applying such strategies. In the following 6 questions (part C) of the questionnaire, the opinions of generation Z's members on their perception of the significance of EB of potential or current employers based on sustainable development were investigated. The last section of the questionnaire, to obtain detailed information about respondents, contained questions referring to their gender, level of study, years of study, place of residence, and overall job seniority.

The questionnaire used in the survey was designed by the authors on the basis of previous empirical studies carried out by them [108,111,115,126,127] and the literature review mentioned above. The article by M. Felonneau and M. Becker constituted an important point of reference, as it described the results of a study on pro-environmental attitudes and behaviour in the gender context [78].

A 5-point Likert scale was applied for the questionnaire, used for measuring attitudes in social sciences [128]. Before analysis of the results, the variables were ranked from 1 (strongly disagree or strongly irrelevant) to 5 (strongly agree or strongly relevant).

In the pilot study carried out on a group of 20 students of various majors, i.e., management, computer science, mechatronics, logistics, psychology, and pedagogy, the accuracy of the formulated questions and the applied scale was verified. As a result, several questions which had been found to be ambiguous were reformulated for greater precision. Within the following study preparation stage, the reliability of the questions was assessed by calculating Cronbach's alpha and analysing the correlation matrix between the questions.

It was confirmed that the set of questions in part A of the questionnaire could be considered coherent (Cronbach's alpha at 0.75), and the reliability level of the questions was found to be high. Similarly to part B, Cronbach's alpha amounted to 0.92, and the reliability level was high. For the last part of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha was 0.94, pointing to its very high reliability level.

The developed and verified research tool was ultimately applied to students born after 1995, representing generation Z. The choice of this research group was non-random (targeted) and justified by the fact that its members already had some professional experience from employment in companies or were preparing to enter the employment market, and therefore, may have opinions on the significance of the employer's image perception in the context of sustainable development.

The survey was carried out in April and May 2020. It was conducted among students at universities located in Poland (of technology, humanities, economics, medicine, and agriculture). The respondents represented various fields of study: marketing, management, economics, logistics, psychology, pedagogy, mechanics, mechatronics, computer science, manufacturing engineering, biomedical engineering, construction, mathematics, and medicine. All of them were full-time students, and 33.8% of the surveyed represented the master's level of study. The survey was conducted among students of whom 76.3% were professionally active.

Emails with a link to the online questionnaire were sent to over 1200 persons. The data were collected with the use of Computer-Assisted Web Interviewing (CAWI), a technique suitable for the respondent group characterised by very high computer literacy.

A total of 462 responses were received for this study. To ensure the quality of the data, all respondents' entries were carefully scrutinised and verified to ensure that the study included only fully completed questionnaires. Those which did not contain answers

to each question were excluded. A total of 450 questionnaires were accepted for further analysis.

Obtaining a representative sample was crucial for the reliability of the results. The number of women and men included in the sample was based on analysis of the population of students in Poland derived from Statistics Poland data [129]. In 2019, women accounted for 58.0% of students, and men constituted 42.0%. In order to ensure appropriate gender proportions in the sample, among all the accepted questionnaires, $n = 123$ questionnaires completed by men (42.3% of the sample) and $n = 168$ questionnaires filled in by women (57.7%) were selected. The final sample consisted of 291 persons. A description of the research sample broken down by gender is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Sample structure.

Group	Total Number of Respondents (Percentage)	Women Number of Respondents (Percentage)	Men Number of Respondents (Percentage)
Overall sample structure			
	291 (100%)	168 (57.7%)	123 (42.3%)
Level of studies			
University First Level (Bachelor)	193 (66.2%)	112 (66.7%)	81 (65.9%)
University Second Level (Master)	98 (33.8%)	56 (33.3%)	42 (34.1%)
Years of study			
up to 1 year	56 (19.2%)	30 (17.8%)	26 (21.1%)
up to 2 years	30 (10.3%)	15 (8.9%)	15 (12.2%)
up to 3 years	98 (33.7%)	66 (39.3%)	32 (26.0%)
up to 4 years	49 (16.9%)	29 (17.3%)	20 (16.3%)
up to 5 years or more	58 (19.9%)	28 (16.7%)	30 (24.4%)
Place of residence (number of inhabitants)			
urban area, up to 15,000	30 (10.3%)	18 (10.7%)	12 (9.8%)
urban area, up to 150,000	41 (14.1%)	21 (12.5%)	20 (16.3%)
urban area, up to 300,000	30 (10.3%)	17 (10.1%)	13 (10.6%)
urban area, over 300,000	74 (25.4%)	35 (20.8%)	39 (31.7%)
rural area	116 (39.9%)	77 (45.9%)	39 (31.7%)
Overall seniority			
I have never worked	69 (23.7%)	43 (25.6%)	26 (21.1%)
Up to 1 year	110 (37.8%)	59 (35.1%)	51 (41.5%)
Up to 2 years	36 (12.4%)	19 (11.3%)	17 (13.8%)
Up to 3 years	33 (11.3%)	20 (11.9%)	13 (10.6%)
Over 3 years	43 (14.8%)	27 (16.1%)	16 (13.0%)

This approach is consistent with the authors' research assumption for performing analyses taking into consideration the respondents' gender, based on the results of studies by various researchers which demonstrate statistically significant dependences on gender in the area of research on sustainable development [8,121–125].

Statistical calculations were carried out in the R 3.4.2 environment (Short Summer 28 September 2017). Comparative studies were carried out with the Mann–Whitney U test (for dependent and independent samples). Dependences between categories were examined with the Chi-squared test with Yates' continuity correction. In the discussion of the results, p -values in the Chi-squared test were given in parentheses. The reliability of the respective blocks of questions was verified with Cronbach's alpha. In order to determine variables carrying similar information, the groups of questions were subjected to a factor analysis. The questions were grouped with the use of factor analysis with a varimax rotation.

In order to determine whether the common method variance issue occurred in the study [130,131], Harman's single factor test [132] was carried out. For this purpose, a factor

analysis without rotation was performed on all questions in the questionnaire and the percentage of explained variance was verified. It was demonstrated that a single general factor explained 34% of the variation of the entire design. Therefore, the CMV problem does not apply to the data collected from the questionnaire.

Dependences between questions in the questionnaire were found using the ordered logit regression model. Independent variables for the regression model were selected by summing up the values of questions with high loads (>0.6) for each factor in variables obtained from the factor analysis. The significance of the logit model was tested with the type 1 log-rank test, and the significance of the respective coefficients was verified with the Wald test. Outliers in the model were checked with Pearson's residual and predicted values plot. The goodness of fit was evaluated with the use of the scaled Chi-squared coefficient. The scaled Chi-squared coefficient checks for the excessive dispersion of data in the model. A value close to or lower than 1 means that the model is accurate.

Variance inflation factor values were also under analysis. The results did not exceed 3, which shows a low correlation between independent variables in the obtained regression models.

3. Results

In order to verify the respondents' basic knowledge of sustainable development, the first part of the questionnaire contained two general questions. The obtained results confirmed that, regardless of gender, most of the surveyed, i.e., 85.3%, were able to accurately point to the correct descriptive definition of sustainable development, and 63.7% were familiar with its various aspects. This confirms a relatively high level for the respondents' knowledge of sustainable development.

As a result of the analysis of the first question from part A regarding the respondents' opinions on the need for companies to undertake environmental protection and ecology-oriented measures, a significant dependence between answers was found with respect to the gender criterion. The average assessment in the Likert scale was 4.6 for women and 4.31 for men ($p < 0.001$). The question was followed by another related question about the need for companies to undertake measures expressing care for current and future employees. The average assessment in the Likert scale was 4.65 for women and 4.46 for men ($p = 0.006$). This means that Hypothesis H_0 on the lack of dependence between the opinions on the above subject and the respondents' gender should be rejected in both cases to the benefit of an alternative hypothesis that there is a dependence between the two factors. After that, the dependence between the answers and the respondents' gender was confirmed in the question about the size of companies which tend to follow environmentally friendly principles as part of sustainable development ($p = 0.001$). This dependence was also confirmed in the question of whether it is beneficial for employers to follow environmentally friendly principles. The average assessment in the Likert scale was 3.6 for women and 3.24 for men ($p = 0.002$).

Further statistically significant dependences were confirmed in the question aimed at identifying various benefits from sustainable development measures applied by companies. These include building a positive image of the company in its environment ($p < 0.001$), building a community of loyal clients ($p < 0.001$), building loyalty among employees ($p < 0.001$), recruiting employees who share a similar system of values ($p = 0.004$), and the fulfilment of real values and beliefs by the company ($p < 0.001$). All these benefits were far more often noticed by women. Hypothesis H_0 on the lack of dependence between opinions referring to the mentioned benefits achieved by companies as a result of the application of sustainable development principles and the respondents' gender should, therefore, be rejected to the benefit of an alternative hypothesis that there is a dependence between these factors.

Dependences of similar strength, relative to gender, were identified in answers to the question from part B referring to the respondents' increased motivation to take up employment in a company which implements the following measures: reduction of greenhouse gas emissions ($p < 0.001$), reduction of energy and water consumption ($p < 0.001$), using

sustainable energy sources ($p < 0.001$), responsible waste and wastewater management ($p < 0.001$), responsible approach to the extraction and transport of raw materials ($p < 0.001$), selection of business partners in terms of assessment of their environmentally friendly activities ($p < 0.001$), recognising the importance of diversity in the workplace ($p < 0.001$), respect for human rights ($p = 0.002$), shaping an ethical organisational culture ($p = 0.013$), responsible investing ($p = 0.031$), as well as concern for employee safety in the workplace ($p = 0.035$). In these questions, the average assessment of all women's responses was higher than men's, which means that women more often noticed the positive impact of the mentioned measures on their motivation to apply for a job in a given company.

The results show that Hypothesis H_0 on the lack of dependence between women's and men's attitudes to the measures taken by organisations as a factor motivating them to take up employment in those organisations should be rejected, and the alternative hypothesis should be considered that there is a dependence between the above mentioned aspects. However, the answers regarding three measures mentioned in the question were not dependent on gender. These are: ensuring optimal conditions in the workplace ($p = 0.368$), care for employees' health ($p = 0.056$), and concern for ensuring work-life balance ($p = 0.217$). With regard to these issues, there is no basis for rejecting Hypothesis H_0 on the lack of dependences between the responses and the respondents' gender.

The second question in part B verified the importance of environmentally friendly activities carried out by employers for respondents as potential candidates analysing job offers. The significance of the diversity of opinions relative to gender is expressed by the Likert scale average for women (3.45) and for men (3.15). In this case, Hypothesis H_0 on the lack of dependence between answers and gender should be rejected and replaced with an alternative hypothesis that the dependence exists ($p = 0.014$).

Questions in part C referred to employer branding. The first question was to diagnose the respondents' opinions on whether companies implementing sustainable development strategies should inform their stakeholders of this fact. Significant dependences were identified in the following groups: raw material and subassembly suppliers ($p < 0.001$), recipients and customers ($p < 0.001$), hired employees ($p < 0.001$), potential job candidates in the employment market ($p = 0.004$). In these areas, the average assessment of all women's responses was higher than that of men's responses. No significant dependences were identified in the following groups: employees' families ($p = 0.084$), local communities ($p = 0.085$), media ($p = 0.148$), universities ($p = 0.723$), external institutions ($p = 0.737$). With regard to these issues, there is no basis for rejecting Hypothesis H_0 on the lack of dependence between the responses and the respondents' gender.

The following question supplementing the previous one referred to whether informing stakeholders that a company follows a sustainable development strategy has an impact on building its positive image. The result of the average for women was 4.3 and for men, was 3.99. Hypothesis H_0 on the lack of dependence between opinions on this issue and gender should be rejected to the benefit of an alternative hypothesis that the dependence exists ($p = 0.001$). A similar subject is the focus of another question, which was aimed at diagnosing whether the fact of informing job candidates that undertaking environmentally friendly measures is an important value adopted in the given organisation has an impact on its positive image among candidates from generation Z. The result, i.e., the average opinion of women—4.24 and men—3.93, shows that Hypothesis H_0 on the lack of dependence between opinions on this issue and gender should be rejected and replaced with an alternative hypothesis that the dependence exists ($p = 0.002$).

The results obtained in the following question are related to values fostered by organisations identified by the respondents as key in the assessment of their EB. The average assessment of all these answers was higher for women than for men. These are: involvement ($p < 0.001$), social dialogue ($p < 0.001$), employee volunteering ($p < 0.001$), teamwork ($p < 0.001$), care for the environment ($p < 0.001$), respect for people ($p < 0.001$), work atmosphere ($p = 0.002$), sharing knowledge ($p = 0.002$), diversity ($p = 0.003$), responsibility level ($p = 0.004$), open communication ($p = 0.005$), inspirational goals ($p = 0.006$), and also

training package ($p = 0.017$), non-wage benefits ($p = 0.031$), friendly work environment ($p = 0.038$), professional development ($p = 0.048$). Hypothesis H_0 on the lack of dependence between the respondents' opinions on the significance of values in the assessment of an employer and gender should be rejected and replaced with an alternative hypothesis that the dependence exists for the aforementioned values. However, for seven values, no statistically significant dependence between responses and gender was identified: salary ($p = 0.056$), innovation ($p = 0.081$), stable employment ($p = 0.165$), prestige of work ($p = 0.221$), challenging work ($p = 0.261$), work–life balance ($p = 0.366$), satisfaction ($p = 0.663$). With regard to these values, there is no basis for rejecting Hypothesis H_0 on the lack of dependence between the responses and the respondents' gender.

The last question in the discussed part and the questionnaire verified whether environmentally friendly activities matter in the selection of a potential employer. Hypothesis H_0 on the lack of dependence between opinions on this issue and gender should be rejected to the benefit of an alternative hypothesis that the dependence exists ($p = 0.033$). The average assessment was 3.33 for women's opinions and 3.03 for men's opinions.

Taking into consideration all the discussed results, it is worth noticing that one of the most extensive, compound questions in the questionnaire, and at the same time, one with the strongest connection to the subject of the research, i.e., whether the fact that a potential employer undertakes various activities associated with sustainable development, would increase the respondents' motivation to apply for a job in the organisation (question No. 8). Due to the significance of the issue, 14 activities listed in the question were analysed. On the basis of the performed factor analysis, activities were divided into three factors, for which the percentage of explained variance was 69%. Activities with high factor loads were grouped. The analysis led to the division of the activities into systems of contextually related latent variables (Table 2).

Table 2. Group of variables in question No. 8.

Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
The company's reduction of greenhouse gas emissions	Concern for the safety of employees in the workplace	Shaping an ethical organisational culture, implementing a code of ethics
Reduction of energy and water consumption	Recognising the importance of diversity in the workplace	
Using renewable energy sources	Respect for human rights	
Responsible waste and wastewater management	Concern for the health of employees	
Responsible approach to the extraction and transport of raw materials	Ensuring optimal conditions at the workplace	
Responsible investing	Concern for ensuring work–life balance	
Selection of business partners in terms of the assessment of their environmentally friendly activities		

Another very important question (No. 14) refers directly to the subject matter of the research and to the significance of 23 values fostered by an organisation which are taken into consideration in the assessment of its image as an employer.

The factor analysis pointed to the possibility of identifying three groups of values with high factor loads (Table 3). The division of values is as clearly contextually motivated as in question No. 8.

Table 3. Group of variables in question No. 14.

Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Open communication	Salary	Non-wage benefits
Teamwork	Stable employment	Inspirational goals
Responsibility level	Work–life balance	Innovation
Commitment	Training package	Diversity
Employee volunteering	Professional development	Prestige of work
Sharing knowledge	Friendly work environment	Challenging work
Social dialogue	Work atmosphere	
Care for the environment	Satisfaction	
	Respect for people	

The groups of activities/values obtained from the factor analysis were used to investigate the impact of the respective aspects on responses to question No. 3—whether contemporary businesses should focus on their core operations, caring for their economic results, or show concern for the natural environment and ecology—and in question No. 4, correspondingly, whether they should show concern for their current and future employees.

Under the first stage, in order to minimise correlations between questions 8 and 14, a factor analysis was performed. On the basis of the results of the factor analysis, all activities/values significant for every latent variable obtained from the factor analyses were aggregated into variables. After that, models were constructed with the dependent variable being questions 3 and 4 and independent variables were aggregated questions with high factor loads in variables obtained from the factor analysis. The results of the factor analysis were used in the logistic regression model. To answer the question about the dependence between responses to questions 8 and 14 and to questions 2 and 3, rank-order logistic regression models were constructed.

- Model I—dependent variable question No. 3; independent variables—factors from question No. 8.
- Model II—dependent variable question No. 4; independent variables—factors from question No. 8.
- Model III—dependent variable question No. 3; independent variables—factors from question No. 14.
- Model IV—dependent variable question No. 4; independent variables—factors from question No. 14.

The models were prepared with a breakdown by gender. The following model selection procedure was applied.

1. The log-rank test was carried out for all factors.
2. The factors significantly improving the model with the absolute term were selected on the basis of the log-rank test comparing the likelihood function values. This information made it possible to verify whether the model significantly improved the model with the absolute term only.
3. After that, the model was tested for significance of the coefficients with the Wald test; also, the scaled chi-squared coefficient was used to check for any excessive dispersion of data in the model, which could distort the results of the model. Outliers in the model were verified with Pearson's residuals.
4. In the case of an excessive dispersion, parameter estimations were carried out with the dispersion assessment using the Chi-squared (Pearson's) test.
5. The coefficient values in the model were calculated, together with confidence intervals for these values and the scaled Chi-squared coefficient.
6. Subsequently, the VIF = $\frac{1}{1 - R_j^2}$ net inflation was determined for each factor in the obtained models in order to check for the multicollinearity of factors in the model, where R_j is the multiple correlation coefficient between the factors. If the VIF is higher than 10, the collinearity of factors in the model is too high, and

the elimination of a factor or the aggregation of a factor with another should be considered.

Each model was verified with the previously described tests. Table 4 presents the results with a significant impact on the dependent variables in the respective models.

Table 4. Factors with a significant impact on the dependent variable in models I–IV.

Model	I			II			III			IV	
		IF			IF			IF		IF	
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2
LR of the 1st type	0.0000	0.0059	0.0231	0.0000	0.0000	0.0164	0.0002	0.0000	0.0119	0.0015	0.0000
Wald test	0.0000	0.0155	0.0223	0.5453	0.0003	0.0139	0.2705	0.0003	0.0109	0.3756	0.0000
Scaled Chi ² /Df		0.81			1.00			1.03		0.80	
Value of the coefficient	−0.1210	−0.1036	−0.3626	−0.0169	−0.1565	−0.3939	0.0533	−0.1329	−0.0817	0.037	−0.2003
Unit odds ratio	11%	10%	30%	2%	14%	33%	−5%	12%	8%	−4%	18%
−95%	−0.1758	−0.1874	−0.6737	−0.0717	−0.2419	−0.7076	−0.0416	−0.2050	−0.1447	−0.0449	−0.2751
+95%	−0.0662	−0.0197	−0.0516	0.0379	−0.0710	−0.0801	0.1482	−0.0607	−0.0187	0.1190	−0.1256
VIF	1.5	1.5	1.2	1.5	1.5	1.2	2.5	1.7	2.1	2.5	1.7

For the first model, all factors proved to be significant factors. Due to the negative coefficient for the factors and a unit increase in factor values, the odds for accumulated values $P(Y \leq 1)$, $P(Y \leq 2)$, $P(Y \leq 3)$, $P(Y \leq 4)$, and $P(Y \leq 5)$ decreased, so the odds for the higher values in question No. 3 rose by, respectively, 11% for factor 1, 10% for factor 2, and 30% for factor 3. Confidence intervals for the coefficients are presented in the last two lines. For the second model, one insignificant and two significant factors were obtained. Factor 2 and factor 3 were significant. Coefficients for these factors were negative and, similarly to those in the previous model, the odds for assuming lower levels decreased, so there was an increase in the odds for obtaining higher levels with unit changes for factor 2 (of 14%) and factor 3 (33%). In model 3, the unit change resulted in greater odds for obtaining higher values in question No. 3—a rise of 12% for factor 2 and 8% for factor 3. In model 4 factor 2 was the significant factor. With the unit change of factor 2 in question No. 14, the odds for higher levels in question No. 4 increased by 18%.

Corresponding statistical analyses (the factor analysis and the regression analysis) were conducted with regard to gender. The tables below present the results of the factor analysis for questions 8 and 14 with respect to gender (Tables 5–8).

Table 5. Group of variables in question No. 8 (women).

Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
The company's reduction of greenhouse gas emissions	Concern for the safety of employees in the workplace	Shaping an ethical organisational culture, implementing a code of ethics
Reduction of energy and water consumption	Respect for human rights	
Using renewable energy sources	Recognising the importance of diversity in the workplace	
Responsible waste and wastewater management	Concern for the health of employees	
Responsible approach to the extraction and transport of raw materials	Ensuring optimal conditions at the workplace	
Responsible investing	Concern for ensuring a balance of professional and personal life	
Selection of business partners in terms of the assessment of their environmentally friendly activities		

Table 6. Group of variables in question No. 8 (men).

Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
The company's reduction of greenhouse gas emissions	Concern for the safety of employees in the workplace	Shaping an ethical organisational culture, implementing a code of ethics
Reduction of energy and water consumption	Respect for human rights	Recognising the importance of diversity in the workplace
Using renewable energy sources	Concern for the health of employees	Responsible investing
Responsible waste and wastewater management	Ensuring optimal conditions at the workplace	
Responsible approach to the extraction and transport of raw materials	Concern for ensuring a balance of professional and personal life	
Selection of business partners in terms of the assessment of their environmentally friendly activities		

Table 7. Group of variables in question No. 14 (women).

Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Salary	Non-wage benefits	The prestige of work	Training offer
Stable employment	Open communication	Challenging work	Professional development
Work-life-balance	Commitment	Teamwork	Inspirational goals
Friendly work environment	Employee volunteering	Responsibility level	Innovation
Work atmosphere	Sharing knowledge		Diversity
Satisfaction	Social dialogue		
Respect for people	Care for the environment		

Table 8. Group of variables in question No. 14 (men).

Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Diversity	Friendly work environment	Salary
Teamwork	Inspirational goals	Stable employment
Employee volunteering	Innovation	Non-wage benefits
Sharing knowledge	Open communication	Work-life-balance
Social dialogue	Work atmosphere	Training offer
Care for the environment	The prestige of work	Professional development
	Satisfaction	Respect for people
	Challenging work	
	Responsibility level	
	Commitment	

The groups of activities/values obtained from the factor analysis were used to investigate the impact of the respective aspects on responses to question No. 3 in terms of gender—whether contemporary businesses should focus on their core operations, caring for their economic results, or show concern for the natural environment and ecology—and in question No. 4, correspondingly, whether they should show concern for their current and future employees.

For this purpose, an ordered logit regression model was developed, where summed up responses from each group of activities/values were independent variables, and responses to questions 3 and 4 constituted the dependent variable. Four models were constructed for each gender (Tables 9 and 10).

Table 9. Factors that have a significant impact on the dependent variable in models I–IV (women).

Model	I		II		III		IV	
	IF		IF		IF		IF	
	1	2	1	1	1	1	4	
LR of the 1st type	0.0017	0.03873	0.0007	0.0164	0.0378	0.0049		
Wald test	0.0848	0.0375	0.0019	0.0123	0.0431	0.3781		
Scaled Chi ² /Df	0.83		1.00	0.81	0.99			
Value of the coefficient	−0.0997	−0.0815	−0.1826	−0.1367	−0.1500	−0.0672		
Unit odds ratio	9%	8%	17%	13%	14%	6%		
−95%	−0.2131	−0.1583	−0.2798	−0.2438	−0.2954	−0.2167		
+95%	0.0137	−0.0047	−0.0855	−0.0297	−0.0047	0.0823		
VIF	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.6	−		

Table 10. Factors that have a significant impact on the dependent variable in models I–IV (men).

Model	I		II		III		IV	
	IF		IF		IF		IF	
	1	2	2	2	3	1		
LR of the 1st type	0.0000	0.0077	0.0000	0.0002	0.00332	0.0000		
Wald test	0.000	0.0006	0.0000	0.0185	0.0039	0.0000		
Scaled Chi ² /Df	0.98		1.01	1.01		0.63		
Value of the coefficient	−0.2042	−0.1965	−0.2978	−0.1242	−0.1223	−0.2508		
Unit odds ratio	18%	18%	26%	12%	12%	22%		
−95%	−0.2882	−0.3378	−0.4352	−0.2276	−0.2053	−0.3537		
+95%	−0.1202	−0.0552	−0.1606	−0.0208	−0.0394	−0.1478		
VIF	1.6	1.2	1.2	2.5	1.9	1.8		

In models with a breakdown by gender, the following dependences were obtained for women: in the first model, the unit change of values in question No. 8 resulted in a growth of odds for a higher result in question No. 3 of 9% for factor 1 and of 8% for factor 2. For model 2, factor 1 was the significant factor, with an increase in odds for a higher value in question No. 4, with the unit level change in factor 1 of question No. 8 amounting to 17%. In model 3, there was a corresponding increase in odds for a higher result in question No. 3 with the unit change of factor 1 being 13%. In model 4, factor 1 was the significant factor, and the unit level change in question No. 14 caused a 14% rise in odds for a level increase in question No. 4.

In models with a breakdown by gender, the dependences for men were as follows: in the first model, the unit change of the value in question No. 8, correspondingly to the previous models, resulted in a growth in odds for a higher result in question No. 3 of 18% for both factor 1 and 2. For model 2, factor 2 was significant, with an increase in odds for a higher value in question No. 4, with the unit level change in factor 2 of question No. 8 amounting to 26%. In model 3, there was an increase in odds for a higher result in question No. 3, with the unit change of factors 2 and 3 of 12%. In model 4, factor 1 was the significant factor, and the unit level change in question No. 14 caused a 22% rise in odds for a level increase in question No. 4.

Concluding the presentation of the received research results, it is worth emphasising that only in one question of the questionnaire, a significant statistical dependence between the respondents' opinions and their gender was not confirmed. The question referred to the importance of analysing job offers by potential candidates in the context of their perception of the company's image. The average assessment in the Likert scale was identical, amounting to 4.0 for men and women ($p = 0.690$).

4. Discussion

A considerable majority of respondents (85.3%), regardless of their gender, identified the accurate descriptive definition of sustainable development, although 36.3% of the surveyed were unable to identify which aspects were not directly related to the term. This may indicate an intuitive understanding of the notion. This fact is also confirmed by the

results of a study carried out among Austrian and Slovenian students. The students had intuitive associations with the notion of sustainable development, but were unable to identify specific aspects, and lacked an understanding of mutual correspondences between the environmental, economic, and social dimension [133,134].

Detailed analysis of the obtained results pointed to numerous dependences between opinions expressed in responses to questions and the gender of the respondents. Among all 60 potentially statistically significant dependences between the gender and the analysed areas included in the questionnaire, at the significance level $p < 0.05$, only 44 were confirmed, i.e., 73.3%.

The diversity of opinions relative to gender obtained in the study confirms that contemporary enterprises should be concerned not only about their core operations and economic results but also the natural environment and ecology, thus contributing to modern research trends [122]. The literature on the subject demonstrates the impact of the presence of women in management boards on organisations' results in the area of finances and sustainable development [121]. The results obtained in the authors' research confirm statistically significant opinions presented by women that this impact can be exerted not only in large companies (employing more than 250 people) but also in medium-sized and small companies and microenterprises.

An interesting result is the gender-based diversity of responses, pointing to benefits for organisations arising from applying sustainable development principles. Creating a positive image of an organisation in its environment and building loyalty among employees and a community of loyal clients are definitely qualitative benefits with a relational profile. A study carried out among 1085 academic teachers demonstrates that greater openness to diversity is strongly connected with team results. Luring and Villeseche [135] confirmed the moderating impact of the degree of gender diversity. The effect of openness to diversity as a positive approach to heterogeneity at the team level is stronger when the team is dominated by women. These conclusions link the critical mass theory with research on diversity and results, establishing a combined impact of compositional and contextual characteristics on the results of gender-diversified teams.

It is worth emphasising that the sustainable development activities pointed to by respondents, which are undertaken by employers, increase the candidates' motivation to seek employment in a given company. The results obtained by the authors can therefore be recommended to organisations as guidelines for building employer branding based on sustainable development principles.

Statistically significant gender diversity is associated with benefits, such as the Employee Value Proposition, expected by employees in return for their work for a specific organisation. Among the desired values were relational values: recognising the importance of diversity in the workplace, shaping an ethical organisational culture based on the implemented codes of ethics, concern for the safety of employees in the workplace, respect for human rights, and concern for the health of employees. These values correspond with the previously discussed expectations of generation Z regarding the necessity to remain in contact with employees in conflict solving and the performance of all activities of the organisation on the basis of truth and ethics, especially in terms of work ethics [86], seeking a transparent organisational culture, and noticing the importance of open communication [94]. For members of generation Z, typical ecological values are essential, i.e., the company's reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and energy and water consumption, responsible waste and wastewater management, responsible investing and transport management, as well as the selection of business partners in terms of the assessment of their environmentally friendly activities.

In reference to the above conclusions, interesting results were obtained from the factor analysis in two areas essential for the research. Three groups of variables were identified (Table 2), which are coherent and, in the opinion of the surveyed, concentrate on activities key to the company's operations (in addition to its core operations and care for economic results):

- Environmentally friendly and ecological measures grouped into factor 1;
- Safety and work–life-balance measures grouped into factor 2;
- Ethical and tolerance-promoting measures for diversity grouped into factor 3.

These groups of measures are expected from employers by members of generation Z when they seek employment in specific companies.

It should be noted that the groups of factors presented in Table 3 correspond with the above-described groups of variables. The three groups of values fostered by companies presented in this table, according to the respondents, are important in the assessment of employer branding. The identification of these groups of values makes it possible to formulate the key EVPs for generation Z:

- Factor 1 represents the group of communication values with the last element corresponding to the subject matter of ecology and environmental protection;
- Factor 2, emphasising both tangible (salary, training package) and intangible values (associated with work–life balance), fits perfectly into the assumptions of the sustainable development concept;
- Factor 3, with intangible values (of ethics- and tolerance-promoting nature) oriented at reputation and challenges, providing opportunities for development, self-fulfilment and satisfaction.

The definition of the above groups of values should form clear guidance for companies from which EVPs are expected by potential employees from generation Z.

To sum up the logistic regression analysis results, it can be stated that the fact that contemporary businesses, in addition to their core operations, should care for the environment and ecology, and also for current and future employees, is highly influenced by activities which they should implement, i.e., shaping an ethical organisational culture, implementing a code of ethics and recognising the importance of diversity in the workplace. In addition, the organisation's care for the natural environment and ecology is influenced by the following factors: factor 2—stable employment, work–life balance, work atmosphere, friendly work environment, respect for people, professional development, salary, and factor 3—non-wage benefits, the prestige of work, challenging work, inspirational goals, innovation, and diversity. The results clearly point to the directions of employer branding activities to be undertaken by enterprises, addressed both to job candidates and current employees.

The results of the factor analysis with regard to gender for question No. 8 did not indicate any key differences. The factor analysis of question No. 14 with regard to gender showed the grouping of factors around three groups of values for all respondents and men also around four groups of values for women. The thematic profiling of the factors was similar as in the case of the overall research sample, although it can be noticed (for all respondents) that their structure is more similar to the factor grouping for men. This observation leads to the conclusion that employer branding activities based on overall results are more expected by men. Women expect communication with an emphasis on the following groups of factors (Table 7): values associated with social and communication values grouped into factor 1, communication values grouped into factor 2, and values focussing on the intangible aspect (teamwork, challenging work, the prestige of work and responsibility level) grouped into factor 3. This is confirmed by the results of the logistic regression analysis performed with regard to gender (Table 9).

To recapitulate, it should be stated that the research results confirm the existence of numerous statistically significant dependences, showing that both opinions on sustainable development activities implemented by employers and on the significance of employer branding of a company based on sustainable development are dependent on the gender of the respondents from generation Z. However, not all of the analysed areas turned out to be significantly dependent on gender variation. This means that Hypothesis H₁—The opinion on sustainable development activities carried out by employers is dependent on the gender of the respondents from generation Z—was confirmed only in some aspects. Hypothesis H₂—The opinion on the significance of employer branding based on sustainable

development is dependent on the gender of the respondents from generation Z—was also confirmed only in certain aspects.

5. Conclusions and Limitations

The aim of this article was to identify a dependence between generation Z's opinions on employer branding measures based on sustainable development taken by companies and the respondents' gender. As demonstrated in the findings of the study, building employer branding in the context of sustainable development is very important for generation Z, which is just entering the employment market.

In the literature on the subject, there are studies on the EVP [118,135–138]; however, they lack focus on sustainable development and were not carried out among respondents from generation Z or analysed with regard to the gender criterion. The broad context of the performed research makes it possible to recognise a new research area, and the obtained results can be recommended to enterprises as guidelines for building employer branding based on the sustainable development principle.

The research results confirm the existence of numerous statistically significant dependences, showing that both opinions on sustainable development activities implemented by employers and on the significance of employer branding based on corporate sustainable development are dependent on the gender of the respondents from generation Z. It should be noted that women from generation Z are more ecologically oriented than men, and following a sustainable development strategy is more important for them.

Companies building employer branding should consider the adoption of various factors identified in the article, such as the EVP value, especially when their workforce is diversified with regard to the gender criterion. The results for all respondents are consistent with EVPs expected by men. In the case of employer branding oriented at women, EVP communication should definitely be diversified according to the presented research results.

The findings of this study should be read in light of its limitations. The study sample, although quite numerous, cannot be considered fully representative of the entire population of generation Z. The sample consisted of students of various higher education institutions in Poland; it is worth carrying out similar surveys in other countries in the future, taking into consideration economic and market circumstances. It seems that interesting results could also be obtained by performing similar research with breakdowns by respondents' field of study and professional experience. Another major limitation is the young age of the respondents and the phase of the life cycle in which the representatives of generation Z find themselves, as their preferences regarding pro-ecological activities and expected values may change over time.

Author Contributions: Conceptualisation, M.R. and M.W.; methodology, M.R. and M.W.; validation, M.R. and M.W.; formal analysis M.R. and M.W.; investigation, M.R. and M.W.; data curation, M.R. and M.W.; writing—original draft preparation, M.R. and M.W.; writing—review and editing, M.R. and M.W.; visualisation, M.R. and M.W.; project administration, M.R. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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