

Research Article

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Assessing Socially Responsible Consumption from a Consumer Perspective

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ABSTRACT

For many years, the free-market economy has promoted consumerism, which has been closely linked to rapid economic growth. Growing social exclusion, climate change, air pollution, rising landfill, and poverty are all linked to reckless and irresponsible consumption. These problems affect consumers' decisions, as consumers have become more critical of businesses, more reflective, and more responsible in their purchasing and consumption decisions. Based not only on corporate social responsibility but also on personal interests and the long-term benefits for the environment and society, consumers are determined to change their consumption behaviour towards a more socially responsible one. A questionnaire survey was carried out to find out how socially responsible consumption manifests itself in Lithuania and which stages of consumption are dominated by socially responsible consumption. Therefore, in this research, based on a devised theoretical framework and questionnaire, we attempt to reveal the concept of socially responsible consumption by identifying the stages of consumption as a process and assessing the expression of socially responsible consumption at different stages of consumption in Lithuania from the consumers' point of view.

The concept of socially responsible consumption

In the academic literature, socially responsible consumption has often been equated with ethical or sustainable consumption. Francois-Lecompte and Roberts (2006) define socially responsible consumption as the promotion of social and environmental objectives that are important to

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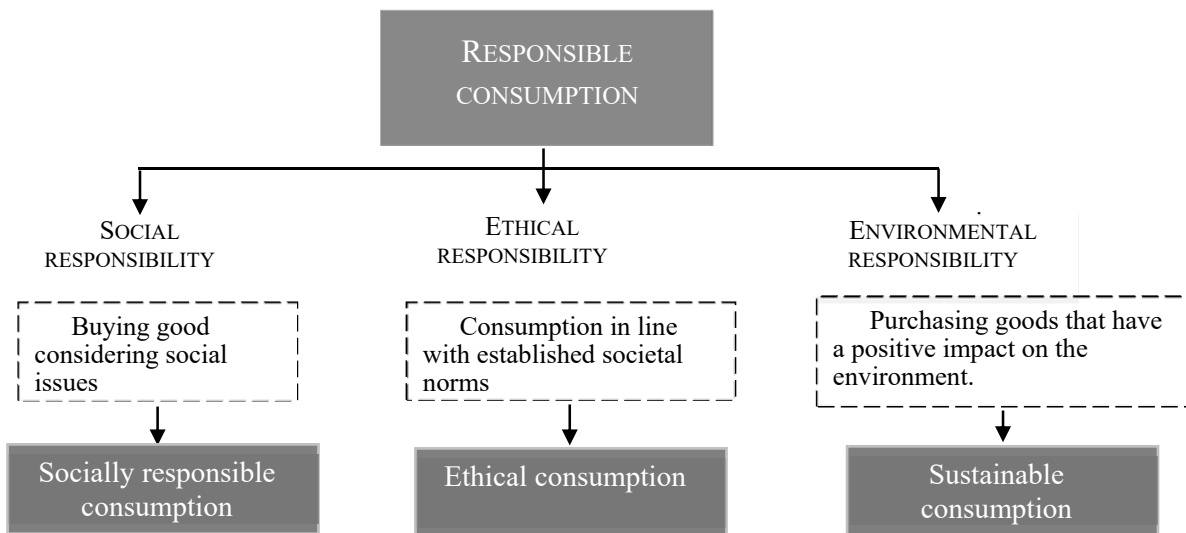
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consumers themselves. Although the researcher stresses that socially responsible consumption can also be understood as ethical consumption, there are some differences. Many consumption patterns are ethical and do not affect the well-being of others, and as Francois-Lecompte and Roberts (2006) have argued, socially responsible consumption also focuses on the well-being of the whole community, so socially responsible consumption and ethical consumption are not the same. It is commonly noted in the academic literature that socially responsible consumption is not only directed towards personal benefits for the consumer but also towards societal benefits. Socially responsible consumption can promote social goals that consumers consider important (Francois-Lecompte & Roberts, 2006). Lithuanian researchers Juščius and Maliauskaitė (2015) point out that, although scholars consider socially responsible and ethical consumption to be synonymous, these categories are not identical (see Figure 1).

Figure 1.

Categories of responsible consumption (own elaboration based on Juščius ir Maliauskaitė, 2015)



Juščius and Maliauskaitė (2015) argue that socially responsible consumption is based on the social problems of society and cannot be identified with ethical consumption. The following example is perfectly applicable: the age of a child is fudged to pay a lower price for a ticket.

Socially responsible consumption may be motivated by entirely selfless desires, but the benefits to society will include benefits to the consumer. Researchers Juščius and Maliauskaitė (2015) point out that socially responsible consumption can be simultaneously motivated by both personal and social interests. According to the researchers, ethical consumption is more about honest consumer behavior and social norms than about purchasing. Therefore, different concepts are used to describe socially responsible consumption, but the basis is the same: the rational and efficient use of resources, taking into account the impact on society and the environment (Juščius & Maliauskaitė, 2015). Socially responsible consumption is sometimes referred to as sustainable or ethical consumption, as both socially responsible and ethical or sustainable consumption include similar

categories of prosocial behaviour (Prendergast & Tsang, 2019).

The importance of socially responsible consumption was highlighted at the 1992 World Summit in Rio de Janeiro, where all heads of state called on both producers and consumers to promote responsible consumption, which would have a lower environmental impact, address socio-economic problems and, at the same time, better appreciate the role of consumption in the process (Ministry of the Environment of the Republic of Lithuania, 2022). The National Programme for the Development of Corporate Social Responsibility 2009-2013 defines socially responsible consumption as consumption in which the consumer chooses a product or service taking into account not only the price, but also the environmental impact of the product or service, the social conditions of its production, and the desire to consume in a resource-efficient manner (Government of the Republic of Lithuania, 2010).

It is therefore important to note that in the scientific literature, many authors (Yan & She, 2011; Balderjahn et al., 2013; Ertz, 2016; Xu et al., 2019; Paužuolienė and Pikturnaitė, 2020; Betzler et al., 2021) analyse socially responsible consumption from the environmental, social and economic approach.

The environmental criterion is more often expressed in terms of consumer concern about environmental issues. The environmental criterion has been studied by researchers as responsible use of resources, waste separation, and recycling (Xu et al., 2019). For example, concern for natural resources is often expressed in terms of concern for the protection of endangered animals or plants (Jastrzębska, 2017), the possibility of rejecting products containing animal bones, fur, or skin, the protection of rare plants (Francois-Lecompte & Roberts, 2006) commonly used in the cosmetics and perfumery industry, and the testing of products on animals (Yan & She, 2011). Rejecting these irresponsible consumption patterns can help ensure the responsible use of natural resources worldwide.

The most common approach in the academic literature is to analyse the purchase of green, sustainable products (Geiger et al., 2018) as a set of demonstrated behaviours that deliberately maximise the positive impacts on the environment, the economy, society, and culture (Xu et al., 2019). When analysing the scientific literature, it is observed that the environmental criterion often includes consumer actions related to the purchase and use of goods that can reduce water and air pollution, such as giving up polluting cars and choosing alternatives to use public transport, walking or cycling, or using ride-sharing programmes (Jastrzębska, 2017). Although researchers in the field (Jastrzębska, 2017; Palacios-González and Chamorro-Mera, 2020) note that consumers are not yet willing to buy and consume goods that reduce the carbon footprint of their consumption.

It is important to note that the environmental criterion of socially responsible consumption can also include corporate social responsibility (Crane, 2001; Mohr et al., 2001). When purchasing a product, consumers often pay close attention to the activities of a company that uses materials responsibly, does not pollute the environment, and does not test on animals (Betzler et al., 2021).

The social criterion relates to consumer behaviour and the desire to help other individuals, groups, and communities. Researchers Gandhi and Kaushik (2016) have identified the social aspect of consumption as the desire to protect people from poverty, oppression, and exploitation. The desire to help the poor is often associated in the academic literature with buying for a cause.

Researchers Francois-Lecompte and Roberts (2006) have argued that this can include the purchase of goods, part of the price of which is transferred to humanitarian aid, suggesting that consumption is not meaningless. Paužuolienė and Pikturnaitė (2020), in a study conducted in Lithuania, noted that activities such as volunteering, participating in local community activities, or being a blood donor can also contribute to the social dimension, although the results of the study revealed that these are rarely activities practised by young people that require a physical or time investment.

It is important to note that this criterion for socially responsible consumption is particularly relevant for companies and businesses that are socially responsible. In socially responsible consumption studies, this criterion is often linked to the social and ethical behaviour of companies (Francois-Lecompte & Roberts, 2006). Research shows that consumers refuse to buy from socially irresponsible companies that discriminate against workers in their labour practices, exploit children, or promote illegal work (Villa Castano et al., 2018; Betzler et al., 2021).

Therefore, in summary, it can be argued that corporate social responsibility activities are also important in the socially responsible consumption phase and are often brought to the attention of consumers before they purchase and use a company's goods.

The economic criterion in the scientific literature refers to the long-term economic benefits for consumers and the environment. Economic socially responsible consumption is often defined as reducing consumption, consuming frugally, and refusing to buy goods that are not essential (Yan & She, 2011). These consumers want to reduce negative environmental impacts, such as significant environmental damage during production, disproportionate energy consumption, unnecessary waste generation, and the use of materials produced in hazardous environments (Karaca, 2019). Researchers Balderjahn et al. (2013) noted that if consumers want to buy responsibly, they can choose organic and fair-trade products, although consumers often believe that organic and fair-trade products are more expensive on the market (Boccia & Sarno, 2019). However, the economic criterion of socially responsible consumption also raises another question: should the product be bought at all or not? Due to the negative consequences of overconsumption on the environment and society without any benefit to others, consumers are increasingly trying to reduce harmful forms of consumption or abstain from consumption (Balderjahn et al., 2013).

The financial consequences are linked to the consumer and his/her budget, as the consumer may suffer financially by consuming irresponsibly (Balderjahn et al., 2013) or, conversely, as Yan and She (2011) argue, by opting for socially responsible consumption, the consumer may save, for example, on electricity, heat, transport costs, or by including the act of sharing items (Balderjahn et al., 2013). The second aspect is related to the enhancement of economic well-being in a country in terms of economic progress, production, and capacity (Sheth et al., 2011).

Summarising the concept of socially responsible consumption as presented by different scholars in the scientific literature, it can be stated that socially responsible consumption is a consumer behaviour that is environmentally friendly and benefits not only the consumer but also society and covers actions from the purchase to the disposal stage.

Methodology

Data collection and sample

To find out consumer behaviour, the empirical study on socially responsible consumption was carried out in Lithuania in November 2022 by surveying consumers who buy consumer goods. Consumer goods can include food, clothing, footwear, household goods, and so on. According to the data of Statistics Lithuania, essential expenditures (food, clothing, housing, water, electricity, fuel) accounted for 63.9% of the total consumption expenditures of the population in 2021. The rising consumption expenditure only proves that irresponsible consumption raises environmental and social concerns, and to address them, it is necessary to assess the development of socially responsible consumption in the consumer goods market in Lithuania.

Based on the literature reviewed (Mohr et al., 2008; Gupta & Agrawal, 2017; Geiger et al., 2018; Karaca, 2019), the study uses the stages of socially responsible consumption analysed in the theoretical part of the research: purchase - buying, exchanging, sharing or renting; use - displaying, possessing, actually consuming; and disposal - discarding, giving away, selling, donating.

The survey sample is based on the number of permanent residents of Lithuania who, according to the data of the Lithuanian Statistics Department (2022), are adults aged 18 years and over and who use the Internet. The survey was posted on the online survey website Manoapklausa. It and on the social network platforms facebook.com and instagram.com. The population of Lithuania on 1 January 2022 was 2.805 998 million. The population aged 18 years and over was 2.310 380 million. According to the Lithuanian Statistics Department, 82 percent of people aged between 18 and 74 use the internet, i.e. approximately 1.848.304 million people.

The sample size was determined using the Piano formula after first establishing a 95% confidence interval (with a 5% margin of error) and a population size of 400 respondents.

The questionnaire consisted of 45 statements, including 4 demographic questions. The questionnaire assesses the statements related to consumer behaviour on a 5-level scale (from 1 - strongly disagree to 5 - strongly agree). The consistency and reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's α , which was 0.916 (with a recommended minimum of 0.7), suggesting that the questionnaire is reliable and reveals the phenomenon under study.

The questionnaire was administered to 328 women (81%) and 77 men (19%). The analysis of the data shows that the largest proportion of participants (38%) were aged between 18 and 34 years. The 35-44 age group accounted for (24%) of the respondents, while the smallest (3%) were in the 65+ age group. Almost half of the respondents (49%) had completed tertiary education, while 14% of the respondents indicated that they had completed tertiary education. A quarter (25%) of the respondents had a secondary education. The income of the participating respondents was evenly distributed between those with an income of €1,100 or more (28%) and those with an income of €901-1100 (21%).

Analysis

The first set of statements (1-9) sought to find out how consumers purchase consumer goods based on environmental, social, and economic criteria. Statements 1 to 3 covered the environmental criterion (see Table 1).

Table 1.*Expression of the environmental criterion in the purchase phase*

Statement	Distribution of respondents' answers (percentage)				
	Totally disagree	Disagree	Partially agree	Agree	Totally agree
1. I avoid buying goods made from animal fur, skin, or bones.	9,1	20,0	28,4	20,5	22
2. Avoid buying goods with excess packaging.	5,4	16,5	35,1	27,9	15,1
3. I prefer organic food products.	5,7	15,3	43,2	22,2	13,6

The first statement "I avoid buying goods made from animal fur, skin or bones" was agreed (20.5%) and strongly agreed (22%). More than half of the respondents do not pay attention to it. Therefore, it can be concluded that respondents tend to buy goods made of animal fur, skin, or bones. The second statement aimed to find out whether consumers avoid buying goods with excess packaging. The results showed that 27.9% of respondents agreed and 15.1% strongly agreed with the statement. Since less than half of the respondents agreed with this statement, it can be concluded that respondents are not likely to switch away from goods with excess packaging. The third statement aimed to determine whether consumers prefer organic products. The results show that 22.2% and 13.6% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that they prefer organic products, suggesting that consumers do not prefer organic products. In summary, it can be concluded that respondents do not take environmental criteria into account when purchasing consumer goods.

Statements (4-6) were used to find out whether respondents take the social criterion into account when purchasing consumer goods (see Table 2).

Table 2.*Expression of the social criterion in the purchase phase*

Statement	Distribution of respondents' answers (percentage)				
	Totally disagree	Disagree	Partially agree	Agree	Totally agree
4. I prefer to buy goods from companies, employing people with disabilities.	8,6	25,7	42,2	17	6,4
5. I buy goods where part of the price goes to humanitarian causes to support a third country (against war, poverty, famine).	5,9	15,8	42,5	27,2	8,6
6. I buy handmade products to support Lithuania's artisans.	3,5	19,3	35,1	27,2	15,1

Table 2 shows that consumers are reluctant to buy from businesses employing people with disabilities, as only (17%) and (6.4%) of respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively, while the vast majority of the respondents partially agreed (42.2%). The next statement sought to determine whether consumers buy goods if part of the price of the product goes to support

humanitarian aid to a third country. This statement was agreed with (27.2%) and strongly agreed with (8.6%) the respondents, while it was partially agreed with (42.5%) of the respondents. Therefore, it can be said that many respondents do not buy goods that are partly priced for humanitarian aid. The aim was also to determine whether consumers buy handmade products to support Lithuanian artisans. The respondents agreed (27.2%) and strongly agreed (15.1%), while the respondents partially agreed (35.1%). This shows that consumers are not inclined to support Lithuanian artisans when buying their handmade products.

The data on the dimension of purchase according to the economic criterion are presented in Table 3.

Table 3.

Expression of the economic criterion in the purchase phase

Statement	Distribution of respondents' answers (percentage)				
	Totally disagree	Disagree	Partially agree	Agree	Totally agree
7. I usually buy in small shops in small businesses (bakeries, butcher shops).	4,4	21,5	31,4	28,4	14,3
8. My preference is always Lithuanian products.	3,5	9,9	27,9	35,1	23,7
9. I plan my shopping, making a shopping list.	4,7	9,6	31,1	28,9	25,7

The analysis of the data presented in Table 3 for the purchase of consumer goods according to the economic criterion shows that the preference for Lithuanian products was always shared by (35.1%) and strongly agreed (23.7%). More than half of the respondents agreed (28.9%) and strongly agreed (25.7%) that they plan their shopping by making a shopping list. The data show that respondents tend to buy consumer goods from non-small businesses, with 28.4% (28.4%) and 14.3% (14.3%) of respondents agreeing and strongly agreeing. In summary, respondents consider the economic criterion the most when purchasing consumer goods.

The second block of questions (10-21) sought to find out how consumers use consumer goods taking into account environmental, social, and economic criteria.

The statements (10-12) covered the environmental criterion (see Table 4).

Analysis of the data in Table 4 shows that the distribution of respondents' answers was as follows: respondents agreed (18.5%) and strongly agreed (22.2%) with the statement "I walk, cycle or use public transport more often. The statement "I avoid using products that harm the environment (chemical detergents, cleaning products, pesticides) in my household" was agreed to by (17.8%) and strongly agreed to by only (10.4%) of respondents. Only (13.6%) of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed with the statement "To reduce CO2 emissions, I refuse animal products".

Table 4.*Expression of the environmental criterion at the usage stage*

Statement	Distribution of respondents' answers (percentage)				
	Totally disagree	Disagree	Partially agree	Agree	Totally agree
10. I walk more, ride more, walk, cycle, or use public transport more often than I use my car.	9,6	24	25,7	18,5	22,2
11. I avoid using products in my household that are harmful to the environment (chemical detergents, washing-up liquid, pesticides).	5,9	26,9	39	17,8	10,4
12. I limit the use of energy, such as natural gas or solid fuels to reduce my environmental impact.	6,2	17,8	41,7	25,4	8,9
13. I give up animal agriculture to reduce CO2 emissions from products of animal origin.	28,4	38,3	19,8	7,2	6,4

Therefore, in summary, it can be stated that respondents do not follow the environmental criterion in their consumption habits, the vast majority of respondents are not inclined to refuse the use of consumer goods that cause environmental damage.

The data on the use of goods according to the social criterion are presented in Table 5.

Table 5.*Expression of the social criterion at the usage stage*

Statement	Distribution of respondents' answers (percentage)				
	Totally disagree	Disagree	Partially agree	Agree	Totally agree
14. I prefer goods or services from companies that support my local community.	7,2	24	41,7	21,2	5,9
15. I prefer to buy goods or services from companies that are involved in charitable activities.	5,2	21	44,9	23,5	5,4
16. I volunteer with the Food Bank or other organisations that help address poverty issues.	32,1	28,9	22,7	9,9	6,4

The analysis of the data presented in Table 5 on how consumers use consumer goods in relation to the social criterion shows that only (9.9%) and (6.4%) of the respondents agreed with the descriptive statement "I volunteer at the Food Bank or other organisations that help to solve the problems of poverty" and only (6.4%) strongly agreed with the statement. The results also show that respondents who do not prefer to buy goods from companies that support the local community agreed (21.2%) and strongly agreed (5.9%). Therefore, in summary, it can be stated that the vast majority of respondents do not take into account the social criterion at all in their use of consumer goods, do not engage in volunteering, do not give preference to the goods of companies that support

the community or are engaged in charitable activities.

The data on the use of goods according to the economic criterion are presented in Table 6.

Table 6.

Expression of the economic criterion at the usage stage

Statement	Distribution of respondents' answers (percentage)				
	Totally disagree	Disagree	Partially agree	Agree	Totally agree
17. I use household items bought from second-hand shops.	6,2	14,6	32,6	28,4	18,3
18. I always unplug electrical appliances as soon as I stop using them.	6,2	12,3	24,9	28,4	28,1
19. I use water sparingly.	4,7	10,1	30,4	29,6	25,2
20. I choose energy-efficient household appliances.	4,9	8,1	25,7	36,8	24,4
21. I don't buy things that I can make myself.	4,7	17,3	37,5	22,7	17,8

An analysis of the data presented in Table 6 on consumer use of consumer goods based on the economic criterion shows that the results for this economic criterion are statistically different from the environmental and social criteria. This indicates that consumers are guided by the economic criterion in their consumption patterns. Almost half of the respondents agreed (36.8%) and strongly agreed (24.4%) that they prefer energy-efficient household appliances. "I always unplug electrical appliances as soon as I stop using them" was agreed (28.4%) and strongly agreed (28.1%). Water efficiency was agreed (29.6%) and strongly agreed (25.2%). Therefore, it can be said that more than half of the respondents take into account the economic criterion in their use.

The third block of statements (22-29) sought to find out how consumer behaviour in the disposal process is influenced by environmental, social, and economic criteria. Statements (22-24) covered the environmental criterion (see Table 7).

Table 7.

Expression of the environmental criterion in the disposal phase

Statement	Distribution of respondents' answers (percentage)				
	Totally disagree	Disagree	Partially agree	Agree	Totally agree
22. I sort household waste.	2,5	5,7	24	29,9	38
23. I only deliver to designated sites (galvanic cells, batteries, paints, etc.).	3,2	6,2	22,5	34,1	34,1
24. Food waste compost.	12,1	21,7	24,9	17,3	24

An analysis of the data presented in Table 7 on how consumers dispose of their household waste

in relation to the environmental criterion shows that the statement: "I sort household waste" was agreed (29.9%) and strongly agreed (38%). Respondents agreed that only take hazardous waste to designated sites (34.1%) and strongly agreed (34.1%). Therefore, it can be concluded that respondents dispose of hazardous waste responsibly, taking it only to designated sites.

The data on the disposal dimension according to the social criterion are presented in Table 8.

Table 8.

Expression of the social criterion in the disposal phase

Statement	Distribution of respondents' answers (percentage)				
	Totally disagree	Disagree	Partially agree	Agree	Totally agree
25. Things I don't need I give away to people in my neighbourhood.	1,7	4,9	24,4	38,8	30,1
26. I give things I don't need to charity (Red Cross, Caritas, etc.).	5,9	19,3	30,4	27,4	17

The analysis of the data on the disposal dimension of the social criterion presented in Table 8 shows that the majority of respondents give away items that they do not need to people in their immediate environment, as they agreed with the statement (38.8%) and strongly agreed (30.1%). Therefore, in summary, it can be stated that the majority of the respondents in the survey give away the things they accumulate in their households that they do not need to people in their immediate environment.

The data on the disposal dimension according to the economic criterion are presented in Table 9.

Table 9.

Expression of the economic criterion in the disposal phase

Statement	Distribution of respondents' answers (percentage)				
	Totally disagree	Disagree	Partially agree	Agree	Totally agree
27. I sell things that I do not need and do not use	7,7	22,5	31,1	24,2	14,6
28. I reuse things, thereby reducing resources usage	2,7	10,4	35,3	33,8	17,8
29. I am happy to rent or lend my belongings	7,4	18,5	29,4	27,4	17,3

After analysing the results of disposal based on the economic criteria presented in Table 9, it was found that respondents mostly reuse items, thus reducing the use of resources, with this statement agreed (33.8%) and completely agreed (17.8%) of the respondents. The results also revealed that less than half of the respondents are happy to rent or lend their belongings, 27.4%

agreed with the statement and 17.3% completely agreed with the statement. In conclusion, it can be said that in the disposal dimension, the respondents consider the economic criterion, because they reuse things, thus reducing the use of resources.

A summary of means for purchase, use, and disposal dimensions is presented in Table 10.

Table 10.

Means of purchase, use, and disposal dimensions

Dimension	Criterion	Scale average (M)
Purchase	Environmental	3,27
	Social	3,11
	Economical	3,51
Overall dimension average		3,30
Usage	Environmental	2,89
	Social	2,76
	Economical	3,52
Overall dimension average		3,06
Disposal	Environmental	3,68
	Social	3,61
	Economical	3,33
Overall dimension average		3,54

After analyzing the results of the stages of consumption: purchase, use, and disposal dimensions presented in Table 10, it can be seen that the average of the disposal dimension is the highest and statistically significantly different from other averages (M-3.54). Also, the obtained results show that the mean of the environmental criterion differed statistically significantly from the other criteria in the disposal dimension (M-3.68). Therefore, it can be said that the expression of socially responsible consumption was most evident in the disposal phase when the respondents were guided by environmental criteria.

After evaluating the expression of socially responsible consumption in the Lithuanian consumer goods market, and summarizing the results, it can be said that the strongest expression of socially responsible consumption appeared in the disposal phase. It was established that the respondents are most strongly guided by the environmental protection criterion when disposing of waste: they sort household waste and deliver hazardous waste only to designated places. Also, in the disposal stage, a strong expression is found in the social criterion. It became clear that most of the respondents give the things they don't need to people close to them. It was found that the respondents strongly consider the economic criterion when disposing, as they usually sell things they no longer use or reuse them, thus reducing the use of resources.

At the purchase stage, the expression of socially responsible consumption was weak, as it was found that the respondents do not take environmental and social criteria into account when purchasing consumer goods. Most of the respondents buy products made from animal skin and fur, as well as goods with excess packaging, and they also do not prefer organic products. It was found that the expression of socially responsible consumption was weak in the social criterion since the

majority of respondents refuse to buy goods, part of the price of which is allocated to support the humanitarian needs of a third country. It became clear that when purchasing, the respondents consider the economic criterion the most since more than half of the respondents confirmed that they plan their shopping.

In the usage phase, the expression of socially responsible consumption was the weakest. It was established that most respondents do not take social criteria into account when using consumer goods, do not engage in volunteering, and do not prefer the goods of companies that support the community or engage in charitable activities. It was also found that the respondents do not follow the criteria of environmental protection in their usage habits, the vast majority of respondents are not inclined to give up the use of consumer goods that cause great damage to the environment. In the use phase, the respondents are guided only by the economic criterion. Respondents noted that they choose energy-saving household appliances, always turn off electrical appliances from the network when they are no longer in use, and use water sparingly.

Conclusions

The analysis of scientific literature revealed that the concept of socially responsible consumption originated from green or ecological consumption. Although socially responsible consumption has often been equated with ethical or sustainable consumption, it is evident that socially responsible consumption can help solve not only environmental but also social problems. Since socially responsible consumption is defined as such consumption when the consumer chooses a product or service, taking into account not only the price, but also the impact of the product or service on the environment, the social conditions of its production and the pursuit of resource-saving consumption, it can be assumed that socially responsible consumption has become the main driving force to direct the changes in society's consumption in the right direction. Therefore, it can be stated that socially responsible consumption is consumer behaviour that does not harm the environment and benefits not only the consumer, but also society and includes actions from the acquisition to the disposal stage.

Based on the results of the conducted empirical research, it is possible to evaluate the manifestation of socially responsible consumption in Lithuania: it was found that socially responsible consumption in the consumer goods market is most strongly manifested in the disposal phase, when consumers take environmental protection into account. This is reflected in the behaviour of consumers when sorting household waste, delivering hazardous waste to designated places and composting food waste. It was also established that consumers consider the social criterion in the disposal stage, give away or donate unnecessary items, and the economic criterion showed that Lithuanian consumers reuse items, thus reducing the use of resources. In the stages of acquisition and use, the expression of socially responsible consumption is assessed as weak, consumers do not take environmental and social criteria into account.

In summary, it can be stated that consumers of two age groups: younger (18-34 years) and older (65 years and over) are more socially responsible when purchasing goods than consumers of other age groups. It can be concluded that women with higher education and higher incomes are more inclined than men to consider environmental protection at the stage of their purchase, while for men

the social consequences of consumption are more important, they volunteer more often at "Food Bank" or other organizations that help solve poverty problems. It was also found that as the age group, level of education and amount of income of the research participants increases, the expression of more responsible disposal increases.

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Conflict of Interests

No, there are no conflicting interests.