

Drivers of Citizen Engagement in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): The Role of Awareness, Perceived Relevance, and Community Support

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Abstract

Citizen engagement is critical for the successful implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), yet the drivers of such engagement remain complex and multifaceted. This study explores the influence of awareness, perceived relevance, and community support on citizen participation in SDG-related activities. Utilizing a quantitative research methodology, the study surveyed 273 participants, employing robust statistical tools to ensure data reliability and validity. Results indicate that higher levels of awareness, perceived relevance, and community support significantly enhance citizen engagement. Specifically, the findings highlight that informed and motivated individuals, supported by strong community norms, are more likely to participate actively in sustainable development initiatives. These insights underscore the need for targeted interventions that increase awareness, personalize the relevance of SDGs to individuals, and bolster community support. By fostering these factors, policymakers and community leaders can enhance citizen involvement, thereby accelerating progress towards achieving the SDGs and ensuring a more sustainable future.

Keywords: Citizen Engagement, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Awareness, Perceived Relevance, Community Support, Sustainable Development.

INTRODUCTION

Citizen engagement in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is influenced by various factors such as awareness, perceived relevance, and community support. Studies highlight the critical role of citizen awareness of sustainability issues and

the SDGs, alongside education, in fostering citizen participation and effective governance (Hajduk et al., 2022). Additionally, citizen science emerges as a promising tool for achieving the SDGs, with its knowledge-based, technological, and participatory aspects significantly contributing to SDG progress (Krsnik et al., 2022). Furthermore, electronic citizen

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involvement tools, known as e-participation, are crucial for sustainable development. These tools enhance citizen engagement in decision-making processes and promote inclusive governance at both local and national levels (Vasilenko & Rumyantseva, 2023). Overall, a combination of awareness, education, citizen science, and e-participation play a significant role in driving citizen engagement toward achieving the SDGs.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent a global blueprint for achieving a better and more sustainable future. Citizen engagement is pivotal in realizing these ambitious objectives. This study explores the key drivers of such engagement, focusing on the roles of awareness, perceived relevance, and community support. Understanding these factors is essential for fostering widespread participation and commitment. By examining how informed and motivated individuals are, and the influence of communal norms, researchers aim to identify strategies that can enhance citizen involvement in sustainable development initiatives, ultimately contributing to the global effort towards achieving the SDGs.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Empowering Citizens through Awareness: Enhancing Engagement for Sustainable Development Goals

Citizen engagement in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is influenced by various factors, including awareness, education, values, and information dissemination (Masselot et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2022; Krsnik et al., 2022; Hajduk et al., 2022). Studies highlight the importance of tightening the democracy-education nexus to promote citizen participation and effective governance, emphasizing the role of civic education in fostering political interests and civic skills. Monitoring social interaction networks in citizen science projects provides insights into participatory processes and

outcomes, showing that team composition, communication, collaboration, and activity levels impact engagement and project quality. Additionally, understanding citizens' values, awareness of sustainability challenges, education levels, and trust in advertising can influence public support for the SDGs. To enhance citizen engagement, it is crucial to develop an informed and empowered citizenry, implement effective communication campaigns, and align national policies with the SDGs' scope and complexity. This study explores the key drivers of citizen engagement in SDG-related activities, focusing on the roles of awareness, perceived relevance, and community support. Understanding these factors is essential for fostering widespread participation and commitment. By examining how informed and motivated individuals are, and the influence of communal norms, we aim to identify strategies that can enhance citizen involvement in sustainable development initiatives, ultimately contributing to the global effort towards achieving the SDGs. This comprehensive approach will help identify effective methods for increasing engagement, ensuring that citizens are active participants in the journey towards a sustainable future.

H1: There is significant relationship between Citizen Engagement in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Awareness

2. Connecting Personal Relevance to Global Goals: Fostering Citizen Engagement in Sustainable Development

Citizen engagement plays a crucial role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by fostering participatory processes and generating social innovations (Vasilenko & Rumyantseva, 2023). Through collaboration and participatory processes, citizen science projects provide essential non-traditional data for tracking progress towards the SDGs (Masselot et al., 2023). Promoting citizen-level participation is

vital for creating a resilient society and achieving the SDGs (Ozaki & Shaw, 2022). Effective and accountable governance relies on citizen participation, which necessitates education to increase awareness, civic skills, and political involvement. Engaging citizens as co-researchers in initiatives like the X-Polli:Nation project widens participation and empowers individuals to investigate and act on global challenges. This aligns with multiple SDGs, such as Quality Education, Reducing Inequality, and Life on Land (Poppy et al., 2023). Citizen engagement, driven by perceived relevance and active participation, is a cornerstone in advancing sustainable development and addressing the complex challenges outlined in the SDGs. This study focuses on the importance of perceived relevance in driving citizen engagement in SDG-related activities. When individuals perceive the SDGs as directly relevant to their personal lives and communities, they are more likely to participate in and support initiatives aimed at achieving these goals. By examining the factors that influence perceived relevance, such as personal impact and community benefits, we aim to identify strategies that enhance citizen involvement. Understanding these dynamics is essential for fostering widespread participation and commitment, ultimately contributing to the global effort towards achieving the SDGs. Through this comprehensive approach, we seek to identify effective methods for increasing engagement, ensuring that citizens are active participants in the journey towards a sustainable future.

H1: There is a significant relationship between Citizen Engagement in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Perceived Relevance

3. Community Support: Driving Citizen Engagement in Sustainable Development Goals

Citizen engagement is pivotal in advancing

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by encouraging social participation, facilitating data collection via citizen science projects, and nurturing effective governance for SDG attainment. The United Nations underscores the significance of citizen-level involvement in SDGs, with citizen science initiatives contributing data on critical issues like plastic pollution and climate action (Gacutan et al., 2023). Promoting awareness through education is essential to enhance citizen participation, fostering civic skills and political interest, thereby aligning with the imperative for an informed and empowered citizenry to ensure effective governance (Ozaki & Shaw, 2022). However, research highlights a perception gap among citizen science practitioners regarding the alignment of their efforts with the SDGs, underscoring the necessity for enhanced support and dissemination of information to amplify their contributions to the SDGs.

H1: There is significant relationship between Citizen Engagement in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Community Support

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study utilized a quantitative research methodology with an empirical survey design to delve into the intricate dynamics of citizen engagement in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)-related activities. Through purposive sampling, 273 citizens were selected as participants, ensuring a diverse representation across various demographics. Data collection transpired over a three-month period, commencing from January 2024 to March 2024, facilitated by a structured questionnaire distributed via a Google form. Leveraging social media platforms for dissemination ensured broad accessibility and outreach, maximizing the potential for diverse participation and robust data collection. To ensure the reliability and validity of the study's findings, rigorous methodological approaches were employed. Internal

consistency of the questionnaire items was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, yielding satisfactory values above 0.7 for all variables, affirming the instrument's reliability. Additionally, normality tests, including the one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, were conducted to ascertain data normality, also skewness and kurtosis values falling within acceptable limits.

Furthermore, subject experts meticulously validated the questionnaire content for both face and content validity, ensuring the accurate measurement of key constructs. Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the research process, with participants assured of confidentiality and voluntary participation. Measures were implemented to screen responses for completeness and interest, ensuring data integrity and quality. Participants were granted adequate time to complete the questionnaire, with provisions for voluntary withdrawal to uphold ethical standards and participant well-being. By

employing robust methodological strategies, the study aimed to enhance the reliability and validity of its findings, contributing valuable insights into the determinants of citizen engagement in SDGs-related activities. These insights hold significant implications for policymakers, organizations, and community leaders, guiding the development of strategies to foster active citizen participation and drive progress towards achieving the SDGs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Awareness, Perceived Relevance, Social Norms and Community Support

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for awareness, perceived relevance, and social norms and community support regarding the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Table 1 : Descriptive Statistics of Awareness, Perceived Relevance, Social Norms and Community Support

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I have heard about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).	273	3.25	1.140
I can identify the main objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals.	273	3.08	1.130
I am aware of the specific SDGs that are most relevant to my community.	273	2.96	1.101
I understand how the SDGs impact global issues such as poverty, education, and climate change.	273	4.20	.721
I frequently encounter information about the SDGs through media, social networks, or other sources.	273	4.13	.746
I am familiar with the actions and initiatives my local government or community organizations are taking to achieve the SDGs.	273	3.99	.764
Awareness	273	3.6032	.76205
The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are relevant to my personal life and daily activities.	273	2.99	1.152
The SDGs address issues that are important to my community.	273	2.77	1.124
Achieving the SDGs will have a positive impact on my local area.	273	3.34	1.212
I believe that my actions can contribute to the success of the SDGs.	273	3.20	1.260
The goals outlined in the SDGs reflect my personal values and priorities.	273	3.51	1.138
Perceived Relevance	273	3.1626	.86666

My friends and family support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).	273	3.51	1.131
There is a strong sense of community support for initiatives aimed at achieving the SDGs.	273	3.36	1.161
I feel social pressure to participate in activities that support the SDGs.	273	3.36	1.171
Community leaders and local organizations actively promote the SDGs.	273	3.14	1.117
There are community groups or networks that encourage and facilitate participation in SDG-related activities.	273	3.81	1.074
Social Norms and Community Support	273	3.4374	.81992

Source: Field data, 2024

The study reveals a high awareness level (mean = 3.60) regarding the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) among respondents. However, perceived relevance scores slightly lower (mean = 3.16), suggesting room for improvement in personalizing the SDGs to individuals. Social norms and community support are moderately positive (mean = 3.44), indicating community backing for SDG initiatives. Strategies to enhance personal relevance and strengthen community support could further boost citizen engagement in sustainable development efforts.

2. Citizen Engagement

Table 2 displays the descriptive statistics for various aspects of citizen engagement in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)-related activities. The study found a high mean score of 4.01 for citizen engagement in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)-related activities, indicating active participation across various measures. Respondents are notably involved in initiatives, volunteering, attending events, advocating for policies, contributing financially, and discussing SDGs within their communities. These findings underscore a proactive approach towards sustainable development efforts, vital for achieving SDG objectives.

Table 2 : Descriptive Statistics of Citizen Engagement

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I actively participate in community initiatives that support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).	273	3.66	.919
I volunteer my time to organizations or projects aimed at achieving the SDGs.	273	3.68	1.021
I attend events or meetings related to the SDGs in my community.	273	3.89	.868
I advocate for policies and actions that promote the SDGs.	273	4.21	.807
I contribute financially to causes or organizations that work towards the SDGs.	273	4.43	.678
I regularly discuss the importance of the SDGs with others in my community.	273	4.20	.804
Citizen Engagement	273	4.0104	.48967

Source: Field data, 2024

Further analysis may unveil factors influencing engagement disparities among demographic groups, informing targeted strategies for enhancing citizen involvement and maximizing impact in SDG implementation.

3. Multiple Correlation

Table 3 shows significant positive correlations between citizen engagement and awareness, perceived relevance, and social norms, and community support regarding the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): awareness ($r = 0.629, p < 0.01$), perceived relevance ($r = 0.664, p < 0.01$), and social norms, and community support ($r = 0.624, p < 0.01$).

Table 3 : Multiple correlation

		Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Citizen Engagement	Awareness	3.6032	.76205	273	.629**	.000
	Perceived Relevance	3.1626	.86666	273	.664**	.000
	Social Norms and Community Support	3.4374	.81992	273	.624**	.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Source: Field data, 2024

These results underscore the vital relationship between citizen engagement and these factors, highlighting the importance of enhancing awareness, perceived relevance, and community support to promote active participation in SDG-related activities.

4. Multiple Regression

Table 4 : Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.734a	.539	.534	.33429	1.843

a. Predictors: (Constant), Awareness, Perceived Relevance, Social Norms and Community Support

b. Dependent Variable: Citizen Engagement

Source: Field data, 2024

Table 4 summarizes a regression model exploring the relationship between awareness, perceived relevance, social norms, and community support, and citizen engagement in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)-related activities.

Table 5 : ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	35.160	3	11.720	104.879	.000 ^b
	Residual	30.060	269	.112		
	Total	65.221	272			

a. Dependent Variable: Citizen Engagement

b. Predictors: (Constant), Awareness, Perceived Relevance, Social Norms and Community Support

Source: Field data, 2024

The model explains a significant portion of engagement variance (R-square = 0.539), highlighting the importance of these factors. The adjusted R-square (0.534) remains robust after accounting for predictors. These findings underscore the pivotal role of awareness, perceived relevance, and community support in driving citizen involvement in SDGs, offering insights for targeted interventions. The Durbin-Watson statistic (1.843) suggests no significant autocorrelation in the residuals, affirming the model's validity.

Table 5 displays ANOVA results for the regression model examining awareness, perceived relevance, social norms, and community support's relationship with citizen engagement in SDGs. The model is highly significant (F = 104.879, p < 0.001), indicating predictors collectively explain significant variance in engagement, underscoring their importance in driving citizen involvement in SDGs-related activities.

Table 6 presents coefficients for the regression model linking awareness, perceived relevance, social norms, and community support to citizen engagement in SDGs. All predictors show positive and significant coefficients, indicating higher levels correlate with increased engagement. These findings stress the importance of addressing these factors to foster active citizen participation in achieving the SDGs.

Table 6 : Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.310	.103		22.528	.000
	Awareness	.185	.037	.288	5.054	.000
	Perceived Relevance	.205	.033	.362	6.129	.000
	Social Norms and Community Support	.112	.037	.188	3.018	.003

a. Dependent Variable: Citizen Engagement

Source: Field data, 2024

The regression equation is:

$$\text{Citizen Engagement} = 2.310 + (0.185 * \text{Awareness}) + (0.205 * \text{Perceived Relevance}) + (0.112 * \text{Social Norms and Community Support})$$

For each one-unit increase in Awareness, Citizen Engagement is expected to increase by 0.185 units. Similarly, for each one-unit increase in Perceived Relevance, Citizen Engagement is expected to increase by 0.205 units. For each one-unit increase in Social Norms and Community Support, Citizen Engagement is expected to increase by 0.112 units.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate the role of awareness, perceived relevance, and social norms and community support in driving citizen engagement in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)-related activities. Through a comprehensive methodology involving data collection and regression analysis, key findings emerged. The results underscored the significance of these factors in predicting citizen engagement, with higher levels of awareness, perceived relevance, and community support positively associated with increased engagement. This study contributes to understanding the mechanisms underlying citizen participation in sustainable development initiatives. Moving forward, targeted interventions should focus on enhancing awareness, fostering perceived relevance, and strengthening community support structures to promote active citizen involvement, thus advancing progress towards achieving the SDGs.

Theoretical and Managerial or Practical Implications

Theoretical and managerial or practical implications of this study highlight the importance of addressing awareness, perceived relevance, and community support to enhance citizen engagement in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The

findings provide theoretical insights into the factors driving citizen participation in sustainable development initiatives, informing future research in this area. From a managerial or practical perspective, understanding the significance of these factors can guide policymakers, organizations, and community leaders in designing targeted interventions to promote active citizen involvement, ultimately contributing to the effective implementation and achievement of the SDGs.

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