

## **KOSOVO EMPLOYEE'S PERCEPTION OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DECENT WORK ACCORDING TO SUSTAINABILITY**

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### **Abstract**

This research paper aims to identify how implementation of Goal 8 “Decent work and economic growth” deriving from the UN Sustainable Development Goals is being perceived by employees of the public sector and private sector in Kosovo. This paper aims to investigate perceptions of the employees on decent work and explore the path how employees, employers, social partners and public policymakers contribute to a united response to the implementation of sustainability dimensions to foster community cohesion and promote common vision. In a discovery seeking environment, as a research method was used survey. The sample consists of 201 respondents that targeted employees of either private or public sector in different regions of the country. Data collected were analyzed using Independent T-Test and Spearman's rank order correlations. The study reveals that there is no mean difference between perceptions of females and males about the economic growth in the country and impact on incomes. Economic growth is moderately related with the opportunity of being able to cover basic living expenses. Moreover, the perceptions of the integrity protection at workplace and being able to cover basic living expenses is moderately intertwined with the equal pay for equal value. Safety and physical security at workplace is also moderately related to protection of integrity in the workplace. Perceptions of respondents on economic growth are moderately associated with working sector.

**Keywords:** SDG8, decent work, economic growth, perception

**JEL Classification:** J 10, J 13, J40, O10, O40

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## 1. Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are an outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, followed by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States (193 states) in 2015. Kosovo is not a member state of the United Nations and subsequently is not a signatory to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In the same vein, Kosovo aims to join European Union (EU). A contractual relationship between Kosovo and EU has been established through The Stabilization and Association Agreement (SSA) that entered into force in April 1, 2016. However, the Assembly of Kosovo in January of 2018 exhibited a proclivity for commitment to develop voluntarily national sustainable development indicators to enhance global monitoring of the SDG's progress through adoption of the Resolution for Sustainable Development and establishment of the Council for Sustainable Development. The United Nations Kosovo Team is the key supporter of the Government of Kosovo to provide 'a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future' (The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2015). Activities of the United Nations development system agencies in Kosovo are guided by the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. Of particular interest is the extent to which these agencies will manage to give rise to implementation of SDGs at local and central level of government through apparatus of guiding, funding and programs. At the heart of this framework is a series of joint outcomes expected to be achieved by 2025 for helping people of Kosovo "live healthier, longer and more dignified, and have prosperous and secure lives" (United Nations Kosovo Team, 2021).

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Conceptual Frameworks: Economic Growth and Sustainability

*Economic Growth as a Pillar of Sustainability:* Economic growth is often seen as a driver of improved living standards, increased employment opportunities, and poverty reduction. However, studies emphasize the need for "inclusive and sustainable growth," which balances economic expansion with environmental and social considerations.

*Decoupling Growth from Environmental Degradation:* Research highlights the challenge of achieving growth while reducing ecological harm. Sustainable growth strategies aim to minimize the environmental footprint, a factor employees increasingly value when assessing their workplace.

### 2.2 Decent Work and Employee Well-Being

*Definition of Decent Work:* The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines decent work as "productive work that delivers fair income, security, and dignity for all." Employees perceive decent work as crucial for their economic stability and social well-being.

*Impact on Employee Engagement:* Empirical studies show that employees who experience decent work conditions, such as fair wages and safe workplaces, report higher job satisfaction and loyalty. Sustainability-focused policies further enhance this effect, demonstrating a strong link between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and employee morale.

### 2.3 Employee Perception of Sustainability Practices

*Awareness and Acceptance:* Employees are more likely to support sustainability initiatives when they understand how these practices benefit them and their communities. Studies show that transparent communication about sustainability goals positively influences employee perceptions.

*Perception Gaps:* Research often identifies a discrepancy between organizational sustainability rhetoric and actual practices. Employees may become disengaged when they perceive greenwashing or insufficient commitment to sustainable development goals.

### 2.4 Actions, Organizations and Definition of Terms

Recognizing the urgency of understanding and correctly interpreting the variety of terms and fostering the knowledge on sustainable development goals, since sustainable development has a different meaning to different people and different countries, because some countries are very rich and others are poor, a holistic approach of describing appropriately a range of terms for all SDG's is addressed

within 17 volumes, each one considering one of the 17 SDGs within the Encyclopedia of the UN Sustainable Development (2020). Volume 8 of the above-mentioned Encyclopedia provides fundamental explanations towards “attainment of more just and empowering economic models, and putting at the forefront the well-being of workers by striving to provide employment and better working conditions that respect the dignity of workers”.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is mandated to set up international labour standards and to provide support and guiding to all countries. This organization defines decent work as “productive work under conditions of freedom, equity, security and dignity, in which rights are protected, adequate remuneration and social coverage are provided” (ILO, 1999). Kees van der Ree (2020) believes that the major challenge for ILO is to “ensure social justice in the evolving transition and chartering the course towards a sustainable future that is decent and green for all”. In moving toward implementation of SDG 8, European Commission in cooperation with various partners, including International Labour Organization (ILO) is committed to implement the best social standards through implementation of the Pillar of Social Rights between all its member state, region of Balkan, candidate countries and potential candidate countries. The European Pillar of Social Rights Action plan is built upon three pillars and a summary of each is provided in the following:

- Equal opportunities and access to the labor market: education, training and life-long learning, gender equality, equal opportunities and active support to employment,
- Fair working conditions: secure and adaptable employment, wages, information about the employment conditioned and protection in case of dismissals, social dialogue and involvement of workers, work-life balance, healthy, safe and well adopted work environment and data
- Social protection and inclusion: child care and support to children, social protection unemployment benefits, minimum income, old-age income and pensions, healthcare, inclusion of people with disabilities, long-term care, housing and assistance for homeless, and an access to essential services (European Commission, 2021).

Economic growth as a compelling topic in research and as an independent discipline is defined as an increase in the quantity and quality of the economic goods and services that a country produces and consumes. The World Bank and OECD (2022) defines annual percentage growth rate of GDP per capita as in the following:

“... based on constant local currency. GDP per capita is gross domestic product divided by midyear population. GDP at purchaser's prices is the sum of gross value added by all resident producers in the economy plus any product taxes and minus any subsidies not included in the value of the products. It is calculated without making deductions for depreciation of fabricated assets or for depletion and degradation of natural resources”.

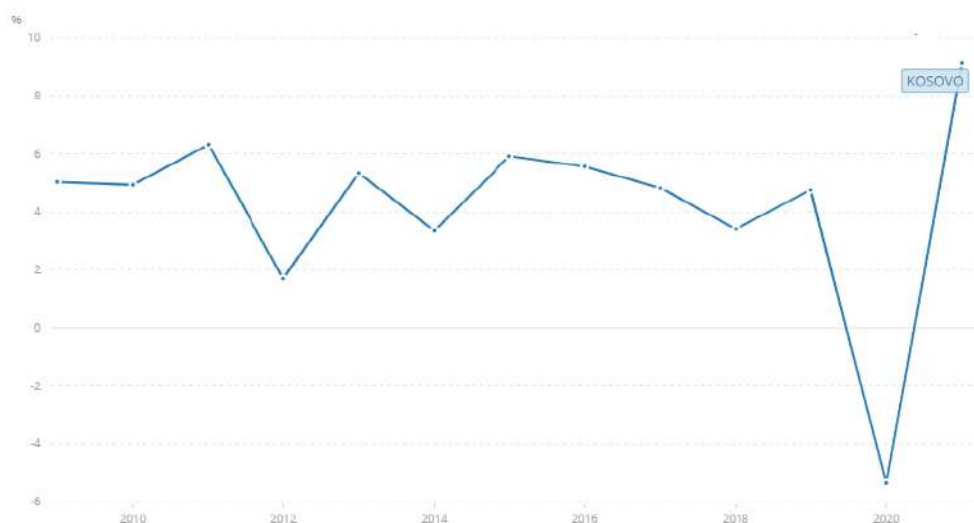


Figure 1: GDP growth (annual %) – Kosovo

Source: World Bank national accounts data, and OECD National Account data files, 2022

Based on the Sustainable Development Goal 8, Target One, the least developed countries shall achieve at least 7% gross domestic product in managing to sustain. Trends of annual growth in Kosovo vary significantly among years and data is provided within Figure 1. During the 2021, GDP growth for Kosovo marked 9.1% (World Bank & OECD 2022). In 2020, the world's annual growth marked a decrease from -4.29%, whereas Kosovo was doing badly -5.41% compared to the Albania with -3.40%.% (World Bank & OECD 2022). In 2019, the world's annual growth was 1.52%, whereas Kosovo marked 5.24%% (World Bank & OECD 2022). In 2018, the world's annual growth was 2.14%, whereas Kosovo marked 3.06%% (World Bank & OECD 2022). In 2017, the world's annual growth was 2.22%, whereas Kosovo 4.04% (World Bank & OECD 2022). In 2016, the world's annual growth was 1.64%, whereas Kosovo marked 6.20% (World Bank & OECD 2022).



Figure 2: Population growth since 1960

Source World data, 2022

Kosovo has a high population growth and based on the World Data (2022) from 1960 until 2021 the population numbers increased from 947, 000.00 to 1.81 million as given in Figure 2. During the war year 1999, Kosovo had its biggest decrease on population with -10.38%. The current average age is 30 years old. In countries with high population growth and low-income, there is most likely the possibility of having a slow development (Peterson, 2017).

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Inconsistencies and Contradictions

By emphasizing sustainable dimensions in academic research and literature, during last three decades, various aspects of the economic growth and decent work are treated in many disciplines. On the other hand, due research on the implementation of the SDGs is still at its early phase at developing countries and it requires in-depth scientific analysis, covering fully the decent work concept, monitoring and undertaking political action. (Bilek-Steindl et al. 2022, Pereira et al 2019). Rahman (1970) supports the fact that there is a need for public sector in less developed countries to develop adequate planning for initiating, directing and leading the process of economic growth. Hence, measuring economic growth and decent work in Kosovo it's not without problems because many aspects that make countries' well-being are not part of gross domestic product (GDP).

Research shows that proposals that highlight the private sector vis-à-vis the public sector rest largely on theoretical considerations. Moreover, negative relationship are found between government size and economic growth and adverse effects are reported on marginal factor productivities in the public and private sector Dalamagas (2000).

Approaching the problem of decent work and dignity from the concept of management perspective has taken a new turn and dimensions such is emotional labour that is deeply explored (Grandey et al , 2015; Humphrey et al 2015), emphasizing the importance of the wages. The issue of "minimum wages" in Kosovo is regulated by national Law on Labour No.03/L-212. In addition to national laws, some countries apply collective bargaining (International Labour Organization, 2013). Yao et al (2017) found that "respondents adjudged the effectiveness and legitimacy ("fairness") of pay in multi-

dimensional terms, relating to perceptions of personal inputs (skills and attributes), treatment at work, and pay relative to others and according to their own contingent household needs. All of these factors provide the context for the impact of pay on well-being". Finally, the literature reviewed here indicates that economic growth is the main driver of the impact on decent work and sustainability. There are, however, important caveats to the impact magnitude on incomes and based on this foundation, the following hypothesis is raised:

H<sub>0</sub> There is no mean difference on economic growth perceptions and its impact on income increase among females and males.

H<sub>1</sub> There is a mean difference on economic growth perceptions and its impact on income increase among females and males.

In fact, a growing body of literature on SDGs with a pedigree suggests that continued economic growth and decent work is perhaps the most deeply entrenched human rights obligations of all governments. Frey (2017) concludes that "the ambiguity in SDG 8 presents both opportunities for human rights monitoring and accountability but also enhanced legitimacy for the business approach". Bali and Yang-Wallentin (2020) suggest that sustainable development in developing countries requires a strategic policy focus. This approach shall serve as an equalizer in fulfilling targets of SDG8 in private and public sector. Despite the different views, deficit on the work agenda and the quality of employment is evident in many countries (Tadjoeddin, 2014) and in ensuring work engagement, the focus shall be directed towards sustainability, growth, and success of workers (Navajas-Romero, 2019). In this research, differences on economic growth perceptions, equal pay, safety and physical protection, integrity and wellbeing and respect of employee rights towards impact for employees working in private and public sector are addressed through the following hypothesis:

H<sub>0</sub>: Perception of respondents on integrity protection at workplace and perception of respondents on equal pay are not related.

H<sub>2</sub>: Perception of respondents on integrity protection at workplace and perception of respondents on equal pay are related.

H<sub>0</sub>: Perceptions of respondents on being able to cover basic living expenses and perceptions of respondents on equal pay distribution are not related.

H<sub>3</sub>: Perceptions of respondents on being able to cover basic living expenses and perceptions of respondents on equal pay distribution are related.

H<sub>0</sub>: Perceptions of respondents on safety at workplace and perceptions of respondents on integrity protection are not related.

H<sub>4</sub>: Perceptions of respondents on safety at workplace and perceptions of respondents on integrity protection are not related.

H<sub>0</sub>: Perceptions of respondents on economic growth are not related with the respondents working sector.

H<sub>5</sub>: Perceptions of respondents on economic growth are related with the respondents working sector.

H<sub>0</sub>: Perceptions of respondents on economic growth are not related with being able to cover basic living expenses.

H<sub>6</sub>: Perceptions of respondents on economic growth are not related with being able to cover basic living expenses.

In what follows, criticism about inconsistencies and contradictions of SDG's (Ponte & Rodríguez-Enríquez, 2016), provides convincing reasons why some developing countries with low incomes such as Kosovo does not have enough "national capabilities for participation and implementation of Decent Work Country Programmes" (Rantanen, 2020) including decent work research. Yet, it is unclear in Kosovo if its current economic growth trend is sustained and what is the right action or research method to address any of the SDG's, especially when considering "several overlaps and trade-offs between the different goals" (Barbier and Burgess 2019), and considerations of the business as a consisting part of the solutions of all SDG's (Aerni, 2021). Kreinin and Aigner (2021) raise the need to revise and reformulate SDG 8 framework, so that other new sub goals could possibly take place.

Historically, the increase in efforts to conceptualize economic empowerment of women; to set up research priorities in trying to respond to the question of the female representation in different

industries; and, in identifying key impediments of females in decent employment especially during the rapid employment changes, has helped predominantly in modelling projection series of employment in many countries (Grantham et al, 2021; Granada et al, 2019; Evans, 2017; Floro & Mieke, 2009; Sarfraz, 2021; Kabeer, 2012).

### **3.2 Structure of the survey**

The aim of this study is to identify how few dimensions of Goal 8 “Decent work and economic growth” deriving from the UN Sustainable Development Goals are being perceived by employees of the public sector and private sector in county. According to the United Nations General Assembly (2015) this global goal aims to “promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”.

To find out what are the perceptions of employees in Kosova concerning the above-mentioned dimensions, the present study is conducted by applying quantitative method. The survey was administered by bachelor students of the Department of Business and Management at “Universum” College in Municipality of Lipjan and Municipality of Ferizaj in Kosova. The field distribution of the questionnaire and data collection of questionnaire took place during the month of February and March 2022. The sample consists of 201 respondent’s that are working either in private or public sector and represent different regions within the country.

In developing a survey questionnaire, the most helpful approach was collection of the opinions from the academic staff within the College in compiling question. The first part of the questionnaire includes demographic information such as gender, age and sector of employment that served as independent variables in this research. The second part of the questionnaire is composed of close-ended questions that contain six questions using Likert scale ranging from very satisfied (4), to a great extent (3), somewhat (2), very little (1) not at all. The questionnaire is structured around the perceptions that respondent’s hold toward economic growth, income increase, equal pay, safety and security in the workplace, integrity and wellbeing, and having employee rights respected.

The six questions of the questionnaire, recognized as part of this survey, intend to identify how employees of public sector and private sector perceive trends of economic growth and how they feel about the impact on monthly incomes, standard and quality of well-being, equal treatment at work, security, integrity and mutual respect at workplace. Questions of the survey are stated as in the following: (Q1) Do you believe that country’s economic growth influenced the increase on your incomes? (Q2) Are you earning enough monthly incomes to cover basic living expenses? (Q3) Do you believe that your organization is distributing equal pay between genders, employees with same occupations and employees with disability? (Q4) Do you feel safe and physically secured at your working place? (Q5) Is your integrity and wellbeing protected at your workplace? And, (Q6) Are your rights protected at workplace?

After the collection of the data from the survey, inputs are recorded on Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) software (version 20) for analysis and further synthesizes of the results are conducted. Two hypotheses in this paper are tested by using Independent t-Test.

This study has limitations that require to be addressed in any future research conducted in country. First, the data derives from the survey targeting population that was employed during administration of the questionnaire. More data from random sampling might advance the knowledge on the subject being studied. Second, this study focused only on SDG 8 and future research design including all SDGs can tell details that coalesce into an implementation framework

## **4. Results and Discussion**

### **4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondent’s**

The statistical analysis of this survey are coded on SPSS in nine items and the first step of analysis involved measuring of internal consistency to figure out the scale reliability of data using Cronbach’s alpha in trying to measure the degree to which scales are free from error. From our case, the

Cronbach's alpha is 0.443 which indicates an acceptable reliability coefficient level of internal consistency between scales.

The sample consists of 55% females and 46% males. Respondent's that work in in public sector make up 45% of this sample, and 55% work in private sector. The age of employed respondent's is categorized in three groups: the first category includes respondent's that ranges from 25 to 34 years old; the second category includes respondent's that range from 35 to 54 years old; and the third category includes respondent's that range from 55 to 65 years old. Respondent's aged 25 to 34 years old are the majority group making up 60% of the sample, and it is followed by 31% of respondents who are aged from 35 to 55 years old and the third group of respondent's are aged from 55 to 65 years old and count 9 % of this sample. Most respondent's (69%) aged 25 to 34 years old of all surveyed respondent's work in private sector, compared to 25 % respondent's aged 35 to 54 years old and 6 % of respondent's aged 55 to 65 years old.

Respondents were asked about their perceptions on different work-related and well-being dimensions. First question: Do you believe that country's economic growth influenced the increase on your incomes?, using Liker's likelihood four scale measure indicates that 20% are satisfied to a great extent, 40% are somewhat satisfied, 30 % are very little and 10% not at all. Second question: Are you earning enough monthly incomes to cover basic living expenses?, respondent's indicated the only 17% earn money to cover expenses to a great extent, 41% somewhat, 34% very little and 8% not at all. Third question of the survey: Do you believe that your organization is distributing equal pay between genders, employees with same occupations and employees with disability?, indicates that 62% believe on equal pay to a great extent, 32% somewhat, 5% very little and 1% not at all. Forth question: Do you feel safe and physically secured at your working place?, indicates that 51% of employees feel safe and physically secured at their working places, 40 % somewhat, 7% very little and 2% not at all. Fifth question: Is your integrity and wellbeing protected at your workplace?, indicates that 63% of respondent's feel that their integrity and wellbeing is protect at the workplace to a great extent, 25 % somewhat, 8% very little and 4% not at all.

The first part of the survey is consisted of three variables: gender, age and working sector. In general, there are more females than males who work in private sector (64%). In contrast, 58% of males work in public sector, and only 36% of male work in private sector.

#### 4.2 Cross tabulation Analysis of Respondent's Perception

In this part is presented a summary of respondent's distribution based on gender, workplace and age and what are their perceptions on economic growth and its impact on incomes; perceptions on the amount of money earned and its sufficiency to cover basic living expenses; perceptions on equal pay based on occupation, gender and people with disability; perception on integrity and wellbeing in the workplace; perception on safety and physical security in the workplace; and, perception on respect of employees rights in the workplace.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics

<b>Variables</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
<b>Gender</b>	187	1.4492	.49875
<b>Institution</b>	184	1.5000	.66939
<b>Age</b>	198	1.5505	.49870
<b>Q1</b>	200	2.3300	.91942
<b>Q2</b>	200	2.3250	.85618
<b>Q3</b>	197	1.4365	.61635
<b>Q4</b>	198	2.0707	.98982
<b>Q5</b>	198	1.5909	.70482
<b>Q6</b>	200	1.5100	.78292

Source: Author's data

Descriptive statistics are provided for all variables within Table 1. Summary of all means and SD for every single variable is as follows: gender (M=1.4492, SD=.49875); institution (M=1.5000, SD=.66939), age (M=1.5505, SD=.49870); Q1 economic growth (M=2.3300, SD+.91942), Q2 basic living expenses (M=2.3250, SD=.85618), Q3 equal pay (S=1.4365, SD=.61635), Q4 integrity (M=2.0707, SD=.98982), Q5 safety (M=1.5909, SD=.70482), and Q6 rights (M=1.5100, SD=.78292). Table 2 presents results based on cross tabulation of variable perception on economic growth and the influence income increase and other independent variables gender, institution and age. Females (9%) perceive that the economic growth didn't had an impact on the increase of their incomes and respondent's representing the private sector (10%) indicated the same. Approximately 20% of all respondent's working in public or private sector and belonging to any of the three age groups perceive that economic growth influenced incomes to a great extent.

Table 2: Perception of employees on economic growth and influence on incomes

<b>Q 1: Perceptions on economic growth influence on an income increase</b>				
	To a great extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all
<b>Gender</b>				
<b>Female</b>	10%	19%	17%	9%
<b>Male</b>	10%	20%	12%	3%
<b>Sector</b>				
<b>Public Sector</b>	11%	20%	13%	1%
<b>Private Sector</b>	8%	21%	16%	10%
<b>Age</b>				
<b>Age 25-34</b>	10%	20%	20%	10%
<b>Age 35-54</b>	5%	14%	9%	2%
<b>Age 55-65</b>	3%	4%	2%	1%

Source: Author's data

Table 3 presents results based on cross tabulation of variable perception on the amount of money earned to cover basic living expenses and other independent variables gender, institution and age. Respondent's working in private sector seem to be able to cover their living expenses (12%) to a great extent compared to those working in public sector (6%). On the other hand, 7% of the respondent's working in private sector are not able or very little (20%) to cover all basic living expenses. No significant variation is found between females and males concerning all measuring scales. Respondent's aged 25 to 34 (28%) indicate that they are very little or not at all able to cover their basic living expenses, which is more than half of the respondent's belonging to this group age.

Table 3: Perceptions of employees on sufficiency of earned money to cover basic living expenses

<b>Q 2: Perceptions on the amount of money earned to cover basic living expenses</b>				
	To a great extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all
<b>Gender</b>				
<b>Female</b>	8%	20%	23%	4%
<b>Male</b>	9%	20%	11%	5%
<b>Sector</b>				
<b>Public Sector</b>	6%	24%	13%	2%
<b>Private Sector</b>	12%	16%	20%	7%
<b>Age</b>				
<b>Age 25-34</b>	11%	20%	22%	6%
<b>Age 35-54</b>	6%	15%	9%	1%
<b>Age 55-65</b>	2%	5%	2%	1%

Source: Author's data



Table 4 indicates that equal pay is more a concern for respondent's working in private sector compared to those in public sector (10% very little and 9% not at all), whereas there is no highlighted difference in terms of age and gender in this regard.

Table 4: Data from survey on perceptions of employees on equal pay

<b>Q 3: Perceptions on equal pay</b>				
	To a great extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all
<b>Gender</b>				
<b>Female</b>	17%	20%	11%	7%
<b>Male</b>	16%	16%	8%	5%
<b>Sector</b>				
<b>Public Sector</b>	19%	15%	8%	3%
<b>Private Sector</b>	15%	21%	10%	9%
<b>Age</b>				
<b>Age 25-34</b>	17%	24%	10%	8%
<b>Age 35-54</b>	14%	10%	4%	3%
<b>Age 55-65</b>	4%	2%	3%	1%

Source: Author's data

Table 5 perceptions of respondent's towards the integrity protection and wellbeing at workplace. In general, the results reveal that only 4% of all respondent's being females or males, in any of the group ages and working either in public or private sector feel that integrity and wellbeing is not protected in the workplace. On the other hand 62% of respondent's feel that integrity and wellbeing is being protected in the workplace to a great extent.

Table 5: Data from survey on perception of employees on integrity and wellbeing

<b>Q 4: Perceptions on integrity and wellbeing on workplace</b>				
	To a great extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all
<b>Gender</b>				
<b>Female</b>	37%	13%	4%	1%
<b>Male</b>	28%	10%	4%	3%
<b>Sector</b>				
<b>Public Sector</b>	26%	12%	5%	2%
<b>Private Sector</b>	36%	14%	3%	2%
<b>Age</b>				
<b>Age 25-34</b>	42%	12%	4%	2%
<b>Age 35-54</b>	16%	11%	2%	1%
<b>Age 55-65</b>	5%	3%	1%	1%

Source: Author's data

Table 6 presents results on perception of employees on safety and physical security. Based on the outputs, it is evident that still a small percentage (2%) of employees do not feel safe at work even in terms of physical security. The majority of the respondent's feel safe at workplace to a great extent and private sector is perceived more safe (30%).

Table 6: Data from survey on perception of employees on safety and physical security

<b>Q 5: Perceptions on workplace safety and physical security</b>				
	To a great extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all
<b>Gender</b>				
<b>Female</b>	30%	22%	3%	1%
<b>Male</b>	23%	17%	3%	1%
<b>Sector</b>				
<b>Public Sector</b>	21%	20%	2%	1%
<b>Private Sector</b>	30%	19%	4%	1%
<b>Age</b>				
<b>Age 25-34</b>	31%	24%	3%	1%
<b>Age 35-54</b>	17%	11%	2%	0%
<b>Age 55-65</b>	5%	4%	1%	1%

Source: Author's data

Table 7 presents data of respondent's' perceptions on their rights being respected at the workplace. As shown below, in general respondent's feel that their rights are respected regardless the gender, age or type of sector. Approximately 64% of respondent's declare that to a great extent their rights are respected and only 1% at group age 55-65 from private sector declare that rights are not being respected at all.

Table 7: Data from survey on perception of respect of rights to employees

<b>Q 6: Perceptions on respecting of employee rights</b>				
	To a great extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all
<b>Gender</b>				
<b>Female</b>	34%	19%	2%	0%
<b>Male</b>	30%	11%	3%	1%
<b>Sector</b>				
<b>Public Sector</b>	29%	14%	1%	0%
<b>Private Sector</b>	33%	18%	4%	1%
<b>Age</b>				
<b>Age 25-34</b>	40%	16%	3%	0%
<b>Age 35-54</b>	17%	13%	1%	0%
<b>Age 55-65</b>	6%	3%	0%	1%

Source: Author's data

### 4.3 Hypothesis Test

To test our first hypotheses in this paper is used independent t-test. The hypothesis questions the mean difference on economic growth perceptions of respondent's and its impact on income increase among females and males. The aim is to determine and understand whether the mean (perceptions of respondent's toward economic growth and its impact on income increase) is different based on gender (Table 8). Here, the dependent variable is "mean perception on economic growth", and the independent variable is "gender", which has two groups: "females" and "male". The level at which it is considered that the independent t-test result is statistically significant is given as alpha level which is set at  $\alpha = .05$ , with 95 % confidence interval percentage. Based on the independent t-test, the p-value is 0.41, the mean difference in the dependent variable (perceptions of respondent's on economic development) between the two groups of the independent variable (females and males) is statistically significant based on the sample data.

Table 8: Independent T test for first hypothesis

Independent T test	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig. (2-tailed)	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
				Lower	Upper
Perception on economic growth by female respondent's	2.45	.957	0.041	.011	.543
Perception on economic growth by male respondent's	2.17	.866			

Source: Author's data

Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis that there is no mean difference between the two groups in the population and accept the alternative hypothesis that there is a mean difference between the two groups in the population. A 95% Confidence interval of the difference suggests that the mean difference in perceptions toward economic growth between the first group (females) and second group (males) in the population might be somewhere between 0.01 and 0.54 where 0.11 reflects the lower bound of the 95%CI and 0.54 reflects the upper bound. Therefore, between the two gender groups, it appears that perceptions on economic growth are more negative among females compared to perceptions on economic growth among males.

Hence, the remaining hypothesis presented below are being tested by applying Spearman's rank order correlations (see Table 9).

Table 9: Correlations Hypothesis Test

Hypotheses	Correlation Coefficient	Sig. (2-tailed)	Number of respondents	Test
H <sub>2</sub> :	.347**	.000	197	Accepted
H <sub>3</sub> :	.289**	.000	198	Accepted
H <sub>4</sub> :	.350**	.000	198	Accepted
H <sub>5</sub> :	.215**	.002	197	Accepted
H <sub>6</sub> :	.310**	.000	200	Accepted

Source: Author's data

When handling results of testing the remaining hypotheses from H<sub>2</sub> to H<sub>6</sub>, the Spearman's rank-order correlation was run to determine the relationship between different variables. The correlation tests outputs indicate that all null hypotheses are rejected (see Table 9).

The second hypothesis questioning the relationship of respondent's perception on integrity protection and perceptions on equal pay reveals that relationship is moderate ( $r_s=.347$ ,  $n=197$ ), and it is statistically significant ( $p=.000$ ). The third hypothesis questioning the fact of being able to cover basic living expenses and receiving the same pay as all others for the same job/profession has a weak positive relationship ( $r_s=.289$ ,  $n=198$ ), but it is statistically significant ( $p=.000$ ). The fourth hypothesis on feeling safe at the workplace and having the integrity protected at workplace has a moderate positive association ( $r_s=.350$ ,  $n=198$ ), and it is statistically significant ( $p=.000$ ). The fifth hypothesis on perceptions of respondents on economic growth and representing working sector has a weak positive relationship ( $r_s=.215$ ,  $n=197$ ), but still it is statistically significant ( $p=.002$ ). The sixth hypothesis on respondent's perceptions on economic growth and being able to cover basic living expenses indicates a moderate positive association ( $r_s=.310$ ,  $n=200$ ) and is statistically significant ( $p=.000$ ). In sum, following the above-mentioned outputs, it is concluded that there is a moderate positive relationship among all variables within.

## 5. Conclusions

One simple way to implement Sustainable Development Agenda in Kosovo is a holistic institutional approach and a clear understanding of the importance that SDG - related initiatives hold. A first approach to consider is that "global problems are too big and the public sector is too weak to solve them alone" (Martens, 2020). In this regard, the paper examined how respondent's who are working do perceive the domestic trends of economic growth, impact on an increase of their incomes, protection of the integrity, rights, safety and wellbeing based on gender and employment sector.

Importantly, the mean difference between perceptions of males and females about the economic growth in the country and impact on incomes was statistically significant which is in harmony with other studies on SDG8 revealing that there are gendered gaps constraining the parameters of SDG 8 (Shirin et al, 2019). Economic growth is moderately related with the opportunity of being able to cover basic living expenses. Moreover, the perceptions of the integrity protection at workplace and being able to cover basic living expenses is moderately intertwined with the equal pay for equal value. Safety and physical security at workplace is also moderately related to protection of integrity in the workplace. Some perceptions of respondents on economic growth are moderately associated with working sector as follows:

- Employees increasingly recognize the importance of aligning workplace practices with sustainability principles. However, their perceptions often vary depending on organizational transparency and communication about these goals.
- Perceptions of economic growth are linked to job stability, fair wages, and opportunities for career advancement. Employees view sustainable economic growth positively when it leads to tangible benefits such as improved workplace conditions and equitable pay structures.
- Decent work (fair income, job security, and a safe working environment) is central to employee satisfaction and engagement. Workers value ethical practices, respect for labor rights, and inclusivity in their workplace.
- Employees feel more motivated and loyal when organizations adopt sustainable practices, such as reducing environmental impacts, promoting ethical labor, and contributing to community well-being.
- Many employees report gaps between organizational claims and actions regarding sustainability and decent work. For example, while policies may exist, they are not always effectively implemented or monitored.
- In transitional economies, such as Kosovo, economic and institutional challenges significantly impact employee perceptions. Workers may prioritize basic job security and wages over broader sustainability goals due to economic constraints.
- Leadership commitment to sustainability and decent work strongly influences employee perceptions. Clear strategies, regular communication, and participatory decision-making are essential for aligning organizational goals with employee expectations.
- Employees value organizations that integrate economic, social, and environmental dimensions into their operations. These companies are often perceived as better employers, fostering long-term commitment and productivity.
- Employees in Kosovo emphasize the need for stability in job markets, especially in industries like agribusiness and tourism. They see potential in sustainable tourism initiatives but express concerns about inadequate enforcement of labor rights and fair wages.

Government of Kosovo and all its partners shall clearly put forward directions on how SDGs shall be addressed at this stage and decide on a united response to the implementation of all SDGs to foster community cohesion and common vision through enhanced mechanisms of sustainable economic growth, employment, and decent work for all.

In sum, the Kosovo institutions, the national private business sector, and the local community, has crucial moment to clearly put forward directions on how SDGs shall be addressed at this early stage and decide on a united response to the implementation of all SDGs to foster community cohesion and common vision through enhanced mechanisms of sustainable economic growth, employment, and decent work for all.

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