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The potential of integrating conscious living into education for generation Z in the light of primary data

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Introduction: In this study, we investigate the cognitive aspects of conscious consumer behaviour among Generation Z members. We argue that conscious consumption can greatly help to foster social responsibility, environmental and health-conscious behaviour and ethical consumerism. We believe that it is an important educational task to promote and reinforce consumer behaviour among young people that increases and creates community value.

Methods: In this study, we analysed the dimensions of young people's conscious consumer behaviour and its manifestation in concrete forms of behaviour, purchasing and consumer decisions. The primary research used a pre-tested standardised questionnaire online survey using a snowball sampling technique. Data were evaluated using bivariate and multivariate analyses in addition to descriptive statistics.

Results: The results allowed us to identify exactly what conscious living means to young people, what behavioural elements they associate with it and what activities they themselves carry out in this context. The results show that conscious living among young people is most closely linked to healthy lifestyle activities and is closely related to good self-awareness.

Discussion: The results show that the vast majority of the Generation Z respondents surveyed do not have a realistic picture of themselves in terms of a conscious lifestyle, although self-awareness and self-identity can be seen as the basis of a conscious lifestyle. Therefore, we believe that there is a great need to adequately integrate conscious living into education. Authentic, targeted education campaigns for Generation Z can best help to equip young people with the right self-awareness and the right information about conscious living.

KEYWORDS

education, consciousness, generation Z, coach, responsibility, self-knowledge, primary research

1 Introduction

The rapid change and complexity of modern society in the 21st century is presenting humanity with previously unknown or less pronounced challenges. In this rapidly changing environment, flexibility and adaptability have become essential and are experienced daily by new generations. New generations, especially Generation Z and future generations, are shaping future societies and the future, so their values, mindsets and visions will determine what the world will become. However, as these characteristics are not yet fully developed in their lifetimes, they need support and orientation to gain a deeper understanding of themselves and

their life path. Their more conscious life path planning can be most effectively supported if we have insight and understanding of the mindset, values and views on sustainable living of this generation.

Focusing on the new generations, Generation Z, they are generally characterised by their flexibility to change,^{1, 2} they have the digital world at their fingertips,³ as they are growing up in this technological change (industry 5.0), they are growing up, we could even say they are technological geniuses (Jordanou et al., 2015). Meanwhile, they are also concerned with social responsibility (Sepulveda, 2020), authenticity (Twenge, 2017), diversity and multiculturalism (Seemiller and Grace, 2016) and mental health (Barnes and Noble, 2019; Summers-Gabr et al., 2024).

Mental health is one of the pillars of conscious living, and its importance has become even more pronounced since Covid-19, with more and more research on the topic, especially for Generation Z. According to the Encyclopaedia of Mental Health, the definition of a healthy lifestyle is an approach to health that maintains, restores health and prevents illness by focusing on healthy lifestyles, key social relationships, health-related communities and opportunities for self-healing. “The approach to health that focuses on maintaining and restoring health and preventing disease by emphasising healthy behaviour, core social relations, and healthy communities, and by facilitating self-healing processes.”⁴

A healthy lifestyle includes physical, mental and spiritual health. The concept of more conscious life planning can cover all three areas. However, in the questionnaire, we have left it to the young people’s first thoughts to provide answers, giving a few examples, thus influencing them in the slightest way in their own responses.

Conscious life planning means first and foremost the formulation of a goal-oriented, meaningful vision of the future, which Generation Z young people can use to live a more fulfilling, balanced and consciously structured life. Experience and research have shown that living with purpose and finding meaning in life can contribute to physical-mental-spiritual well-being (Schippers and Ziegler, 2019).

1.1 Coaching and mentoring

Implementing coaching in education, or introducing an optional support service, would make it easier for young people to set difficult goals, take steps towards them and make decisions. We chose coaching as a method because it is a more direct, yet professional form of help to get closer to Generation Z young people and bring out their potential, reveal their potential and help them further find their own way.

The US NSHSS 2024 survey shows that 32% of Generation Z youth surveyed are interested in health and health-related issues, including mental health⁵ (Ghosh and Jena, 2022; Enos, 2020).

The International Coach Federation (ICF) defines coaching as “working with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximise their personal and professional potential.” Involvement in the coaching process is always voluntary and creates a creative space for the participant to explore their own stucknesses, ask and answer questions.

It is important to note that during the coaching process, the participant can experience a different perspective on their personal challenges and opportunities, and their thinking and decision-making skills are strengthened. In addition, they develop personal effectiveness, increase their self-confidence and move closer to fulfilling their work and life roles.⁶ It is this inner work that enables change and development. Understanding is always followed by action, otherwise understanding alone will not activate actual change.

To underline that openness to innovative solutions is not only at the level of methods and innovative solutions, but also in terms of raising self-awareness questions for a more conscious life. According to an international report by the International Coaching Federation, 44% of the more than 30,000 people surveyed were aware of the meaning of coaching, more than a third had already participated in a coaching process and about a third were planning to enrol in coaching (ICF Global Consumer Awareness Study, 2022). 19% of the young people surveyed were Generation Z, 43% of whom had already participated in a coaching process and 29% of whom were already thinking about it. Based on this openness, it makes sense to bring coaching and mentoring into the educational space (Mantha and Pratapa, 2024).

The mentoring can be a reference person with many years of experience and expertise in the field, who acts as a role model for the mentee, a credible person to follow. Unlike a coach, a mentor can suggest, advise, share and exchange personal experience in order to help the mentee to develop his or her own opinion and path, using the information received. Both coaching and mentoring are becoming increasingly common in higher education, as they enable a personalised learning pathway (Moloney et al., 2023; Nuis et al., 2023).

Generation Z’s attention and attitude to learning is already substantially different from previous generations, so new and innovative solutions are needed to replace or complement frontal teaching (Novkovic et al., 2015). This openness is not only reflected in the level of methods and innovative solutions, but also in the raising of self-awareness questions for a more conscious life, which can be effectively supported by coaching methods. According to an international report by the International Coaching Federation, 44% of the more than 30,000 people surveyed were aware of the meaning of coaching, more than a third had already participated in a coaching process and about a third were planning to enrol in coaching (ICF Global Consumer Awareness Study, 2022). 19% of the young people surveyed were Generation Z, 43% of whom had already participated in a coaching process and 29% of whom were already thinking about it. Based on this openness, it makes sense to bring coaching and mentoring into the educational space.

In addition to coaching, it is also worth mentioning mentoring as a support. Whereas in coaching the coach primarily helps the coaches

1 <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/IJMCE-05-2019-0060/full/html>

2 <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/finding-a-job/generation-z>

3 <https://www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/opinion-and-blog/what-are-core-characteristics-gen-z>

4 Encyclopaedia of Mental Health (Third Edition), 2023.

5 <https://www.nshss.org/media/l3stxj5k/nshss-2024-career-and-interests-survey.pdf>.

6 ICF Hungary Charter Chapter, <https://www.coachingfederation.hu/mi-coaching/>

to achieve better performance and achieve his or her goals, in mentoring the mentor is a resource who can be available to the mentee in his or her everyday life. The mentor, unlike the coach, can suggest, advise, share personal experience and give advice in order to help the mentee to develop his or her own opinion and path, using the information provided. In his book *Coaching and Mentoring*, Nigel McLennan states that mentoring is performer-centred, whereas coaching is performer-led (MacLennan, 1995). Formerly used in sport, at the individual level and then in corporate settings to enhance performance, today coaching and mentoring are becoming increasingly common in higher education as well, as they enable a personalised learning pathway (Nuis et al., 2023).

Generation Z's perception of learning and their expectations of teaching have changed significantly. Their needs have evolved to include the implementation of new technologies in classical teaching methods, thus enabling more effective and experiential learning (Chan and Lee, 2023). They are more eager to replace the previous hierarchical teaching method with a partnership approach, sharing experiences and knowledge through storytelling.

Taking into account the changing demands of learning and the new generational mindset, there is a need for space for honest, open communication, where they can express their thoughts and opinions without judgement and are supported by appropriate professionals to help them develop (Hunaiti, 2021). Coaching can help in this, as can implementing it into the curriculum.

A more conscious life planning gives the opportunity for the development or transformation of a more conscious and balanced society, the importance of which is already demonstrated by its increasingly important role beyond the ESG aspect.

There is also the IDG (Inner Development Goals) initiative, which identifies sustainability with human sustainability, i.e., everything starts with the individual, his or her mindset, values and responses to environmental impacts. IDG, Inner Development Goals, are personal development goals that focus on the inner world, emotional and mental well-being of individuals. They may include self-acceptance, self-awareness, empathy and the development of personal values. For young people of Generation Z or Alpha, Inner Development Goals can play an extremely important role in the development of personal identity and well-being. Generation Z, the digital natives, often use online platforms for emotional expression and self-expression while searching for inner balance and self-identity. The Alpha generation, characterised by the ubiquity of technology, also needs the tools and opportunities offered by the Inner Development Goals for personal development. For both generations, understanding and unfolding their own inner world is key to their ability to cope with the challenges and opportunities of the modern world⁷ (Birney, 2023).

In the education and culture sector, the interest and commitment of new generations to social issues has triggered new initiatives and innovations. More and more educational institutions and cultural organisations are developing programmes and initiatives on sustainability, social justice and equality to support the values and

engagement of new generations⁸ (UNESCO and International Commission on the Futures of Education, 2021).

However, there is also a need to innovate educational methods, as the technology-driven and surrounded reality of the new generations is now more inclined towards AI-driven and experiential education. Recognising this could bring radical changes in education, new programme elements or even a new structure to ensure relevance, practical teaching and credibility of education (Neumann et al., 2023).

All in all, the societal shaping effect of the new generations and the growing demand for innovative solutions is affecting all sectors. Thus, in education, too, there is a need to develop solutions and programmes that are different from the usual ones and adapted to the needs of these generations (McLoughlin and Lee, 2010). Companies and organisations that can recognise, adapt and respond to the values and needs of these generations can gain a competitive advantage in the marketplace. And companies that are involved in developing these approaches will not only gain a market advantage and significant profits, but will also play a responsible role in shaping our society, whether locally or globally.

Australian social scientist McCrindle has been studying the different generations for some time, with separate studies and infographics on both Generation Z and Generation Alpha. It is important to stress, however, that generational patterns and characteristics, as well as research, are best studied and interpreted at the local level (McCrindle and Fell, 2019).

According to McCrindle's research, Z-s make up 23% of the total population. The three most important factors for them when choosing a job are (1) Accessible and approachable leadership, (2) Opportunities for learning and development, and (3) Career development opportunities (McCrindle, 2024).

Corey Seemiller and Meghan Grace shared some insights from their book "Generation Z Goes to College" (Seemiller and Grace, 2017) on how the current cohort of traditional-age students love to learn, engage and serve. This generation is a click away from the latest information, a click away from any experience. They are the ones who were already aware of 9/11, experienced through their parents the Great Depression, Covid-19, total isolation, being in the online world, and then again the experiential reality of face-to-face contact. They have also been hit by so many stimuli in this youthful period that it is difficult to find them, to figure them out and place them on their self-image. In addition, they believe they have the power to change the world, expecting education to provide them with skills and knowledge they can use immediately and apply in real life (Tan et al., 2023).

There are many good examples of practical applications at international level (Nisreen et al., 2023).

After researching online, we would highlight 5 European universities that offer bachelor's degree courses that have already integrated coaching into the curriculum (Fütterer et al., 2023).

In Belgium, coaching and mentoring programmes are already part of the curriculum in a significant part of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) undergraduate courses. The courses offered by the VUB aim to support students' personal and professional development through the use of coaching techniques.⁹

7 Inner Development Goals (2023), <https://journals.openedition.org/factsreports/7326>

8 <https://www.unesco.org/en/futures-education> (2024.07.16. 4:59).

9 <https://www.vub.be/en/studying-vub/all-study-programmes-vub/personal-development-during-your-studies/career-coaching> downloaded on 01/07/2024.

In the Netherlands, at the University of Amsterdam, several undergraduate courses are taught entirely in English, where coaching plays an important role. The university offers 21 different English-language bachelor programmes, including some that develop students' personal development and leadership skills through coaching methods.¹⁰

Also in the Netherlands, Leiden University and Maastricht University have a number of bachelor courses on how to integrate coaching into the curriculum.^{11 12}

Last but not least, in Sweden, Lund University, as part of several undergraduate courses, is also introducing coaching as a technique and method for developing leadership and personal skills.¹³

These universities are good examples of how coaching can be effectively integrated into the undergraduate curriculum, supporting students' personal and professional development.

Looking beyond Europe, the University of Tokyo provides coaching opportunities for students in the curriculum and the National University of Singapore has a dedicated Health & Wellbeing area, where coaching is a major focus for personal wellbeing and conscious life planning.¹⁴

1.2 Options/solutions

A solution to this can be found by setting up talent programmes for young people at course level in higher education, so that everyone can benefit equally and make use of the knowledge and experience that is most relevant to them. In this way, a personalised solution can also emerge, as there is a framework within which progress and change is individual and varies from person to person. The greatest strength can be in building community, as by supporting each other, seeing each other's development and change, each person can be encouraged to take their own steps, while receiving ongoing support from a coach and mentor (Lynden et al., 2024).

Decision-makers in higher education should think and decide strategically on this issue, because it is not just an element in the university ecosystem, but a pillar on which to build¹⁵ (Leal Filho et al., 2023).

Higher education actors can work together with NGOs and businesses to develop programmes that bring educational content to new generations from secondary school level. Through regular lectures and festival-style events, they can listen to and discuss topics such as more conscious life planning, self-awareness, how deepening self-awareness can help them to find their career path, their own way, and to develop their personal life.

If such a programme could become part of the curriculum, then it could truly fulfil its transformative nature and the new generation in their early 20s could embark on life in the big letters with a much more conscious vision.

2 Materials and methods

2.1 Participants

As part of a primary research project, we carried out a quantitative survey among the domestic Generation Z. The online survey resulted in 202 evaluable questionnaires. The sample consisted of 40% male and 60% female respondents, all of whom were members of Generation Z. 37% live in the capital, 41% in cities and only 22% in villages. 37% currently have a secondary education, the rest are still in secondary education.

2.2 Instruments and data collection

Among the sampling procedures, the homogeneous snowball sampling procedure was used. In the snowball sampling, the primary population—the snowball sample seeds—were the students of generation Z of Óbuda University by age, and their inclusion was used to further expand the number of subjects included in the sample. Within the snowball procedure, we used homogeneous snowball sampling, which aimed at recruiting participants with similar characteristics and life experiences into the sample. Considering the characteristics of Generation Z, we decided to use this sampling technique to take into account generation-specific characteristics in the sampling process, including the seed-assisted procedure, in order to expand the sample by exploiting the own network of Generation Z subjects. In line with the snowball sampling, we asked the 'seeds' to share the survey link with their friends, in a way that could be shared on social media.

The research tool was a pre-tested, standardised questionnaire, which covered the topics of perception and practice of conscious living, analysis of individual life goals and value orientation. The questionnaire typically used closed questions, with three open questions in the form of free association. Among the closed questions, both nominal (single- and multiple-choice selective, ranking questions) and metric level questions (Likert and semantic differential scales) were used.

Scaling questions were asked on a scale of 1 to 4. One reason for this is the individual scale preference of Hungarian respondents: due to the school grading system, our Hungarian respondents are most stable in interpreting a scale of up to five grades as opposed to scales of 1–7, 1–9 or 1–10. The even scale was chosen because the middle value (3) for the odd (1–5) scale is an escape route for respondents and the presence and possible overrepresentation of "indifferent" consumers choosing the middle value complicates the segmentation process from both a statistical and a professional point of view. Therefore, we opted for an even scale, which, by excluding the middle value, leads the respondent to take a more rigorous stance, thus contributing more to the successful conduct of the segmentation (Malhotra and Simon, 2017.)

The research hypotheses and the research tool were finalised as a result of both the inference from secondary sources and the pre-study we used. The pre-research involved qualitative individual interviews using a semi-structured interview schedule. A total of 20 interviews were conducted, with Generation Z subjects selected arbitrarily. The results were evaluated using a traditional content analysis method and used to finalise the conceptual design of the quantitative research.

10 <https://www.uva.nl>

11 <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl>

12 <https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl>

13 <https://www.lunduniversity.lu.se>

14 <https://nus.edu.sg/hwb/coaching/>

15 <https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals/quality-education>

TABLE 1 Analysis of behaviours associated with conscious living (where 1 = not at all prevalent, 4 = prevalent to a large extent).

Behavioural elements of conscious living	Mean	Std. deviation
I eat healthily	2.67	0.815
I drink enough water	2.91	0.973
I exercise regularly (at least 2 times a week)	2.76	1.067
Listen to self-development lectures/podcasts/videos	2.21	0.995
I'm in a self-help group	1.28	0.635
I regularly ask a professional for help (coach, mentor, psychologist, etc.)	1.58	0.958
I have regular health check-ups	1.95	0.960
I relax and meditate regularly	1.82	0.941
I spend a lot of time in the fresh air, in nature	2.91	0.931
I make sure I get enough sleep	2.65	1.055

4 Discussion

In the analysis of the internal correlates of the analyses of variance, we found that the practice of behaviours associated with conscious living was very much the most prevalent among those who did not consider themselves conscious. Regular attendance at health check-ups, purchasing products with the Fair Trade logo, selective waste collection, consumption of seasonal fruit, preference for domestic products when shopping, conscious use of lights, and a perception of the importance of generation for sustainability were all more or almost as prevalent among the self-conscious nonconscious than among the fully conscious group.

Lifelong learning and self-development are essential for a sustainable and more conscious lifestyle, as Titrek's research confirms. This research confirms that sustainable leadership and management thinking are essential for sustainable living.¹⁷

This was also the case for participation in self-awareness training and life coaching from professionals. This cognitive dissonance is, in our opinion, caused by the fact that a significant proportion of young people are unable to judge themselves correctly. The 2023 annual report of Organisational Psychology and Behaviour also underlines the importance of self-awareness, the way we see ourselves and the way we affect those around us. Mindfulness, coaching and mentoring, as well as regular feedback, also help us to develop a realistic view of ourselves, a process that is useful to be undertaken in the educational space before we start work (London et al., 2022). The lack of a realistic image of oneself causes significant problems: the underestimation of oneself or the existence of an overly positive image of oneself.

TABLE 2 Conative elements of conscious behaviour.

Conative elements of conscious behaviour	Mean	Std. deviation
I typically buy products that I know are made in an environmentally friendly way	2.16	0.744
I prefer products with the fair trade logo	1.89	0.840
I give preference to domestic products	2.52	0.935
I do not use a shopping bag	2.58	1.005
I typically buy seasonal fruit and vegetables	2.89	0.978
I collect waste separately at my place of residence	3.33	0.908
I always turn off the light when I am not in the room	3.46	0.742
I unplug the phone charger when I take the phone off the hook	2.53	1.223
I do not leave my phone, laptop, Ipad, etc. on the charger if it's already charged	2.80	1.062
I am actively involved in litter picking and environmental conservation activities	1.58	0.817
I regularly take part in volunteer programmes	1.68	0.861
I encourage others to live consciously	2.19	0.943

We believe that the education system has a major responsibility and an important role to play in addressing these significant problems.

The importance of self-awareness is also felt by young people, and the responses clearly showed that Generation Z members are also aware that self-awareness is essential for a conscious lifestyle. The literature reviewed, counselling reports and the WHO survey also suggest that self-awareness is often cited as a starting point for mental health, well-being and work-life balance, which also confirm that it is the basis for a conscious lifestyle (Ghosh and Jena, 2022; World Health Organization, 2022). Vitality, an active life, a sense of belonging, a sense of happiness and the development of a realistic self-image are also mentioned as part of these (Gila Cohen Zilka Bar-Ilan University and Achva Academic College, Israel, 2023).

The vast majority of young people consider it very necessary to have a mature, realistic image and knowledge of themselves, which is the basis of a conscious way of life. We believe that it is of great importance in education to provide young people with orientation lectures and counselling that will help them to understand themselves. They clearly have a need for this, and they themselves perceive and understand the importance of it. Self-awareness, as part of lifelong learning, can also contribute to successful leadership and a more fulfilling life, which can be significantly enhanced through higher education (Taşçı and Titrek, 2020).

In a free word association, we asked the boys what they would change in education, what suggestions they would like to see in order to make it more self-aware and sustainable. The responses showed that the most frequently mentioned suggestion was to make education more practical: young people would like to see more practical lessons, training and programmes. For them, an empirical way of learning through experience is important. In addition, it is suggested to increase the possibility of community building and experiential learning, which is also a generation-specific characteristic, as it gives young people a sense of belonging. In education, they propose more

¹⁷ <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/12/1/22>

TABLE 3 Correlation between the behavioural elements of conscious living and the subject's self-perception of self-awareness.

Behavioural elements of conscious living		N	Mean	Std. deviation	sig
I eat healthily	Not at all conscious	6	1.00	0.000	0.000
	Unconscious	44	2.23	0.803	
	Conscious	129	2.80	0.617	
	Fully aware	21	3.29	1.007	
	Total	200	2.67	0.815	
I drink enough water	Not at all conscious	6	1.33	0.516	0.000
	Unconscious	44	2.68	1.029	
	Conscious	129	2.97	0.918	
	Fully aware	21	3.48	0.680	
	Total	200	2.91	0.973	
I exercise regularly (at least 2 times a week)	Not at all conscious	6	1.67	1.033	0.005
	Unconscious	44	2.45	1.170	
	Conscious	129	2.87	0.955	
	Fully aware	21	3.05	1.244	
	Total	200	2.76	1.067	
Listen to self-development lectures/podcasts/videos	Not at all conscious	6	1.67	0.516	0.010
	Unconscious	44	2.14	1.025	
	Conscious	129	2.16	0.942	
	Fully aware	21	2.81	1.167	
	Total	200	2.21	0.995	
I'm in a self-help group	Not at all conscious	6	1.67	1.033	0.028
	Unconscious	44	1.14	0.347	
	Conscious	129	1.26	0.593	
	Fully aware	21	1.57	1.028	
	Total	200	1.28	0.635	
I regularly ask a professional for help (coach, mentor, psychologist, etc.)	Not at all conscious	6	2.33	1.366	0.026
	Unconscious	44	1.36	0.838	
	Conscious	129	1.56	0.901	
	Fully aware	21	1.95	1.244	
	Total	200	1.58	0.958	
I have regular health check-ups	Not at all conscious	6	2.00	1.549	0.015
	Unconscious	44	1.55	0.663	
	Conscious	129	2.09	0.944	
	Fully aware	21	1.95	1.203	
	Total	200	1.95	0.960	
I relax and meditate regularly	Not at all conscious	6	1.33	0.516	0.016
	Unconscious	44	1.68	1.157	
	Conscious	129	1.79	0.817	
	Fully aware	21	2.38	1.071	
	Total	200	1.82	0.941	
I make sure I get enough sleep	Not at all conscious	6	2.00	0.894	0.000
	Unconscious	44	2.05	1.033	
	Conscious	129	2.84	1.004	
	Fully aware	21	2.90	0.944	
	Total	200	2.65	1.055	

Bold values used to highlight the highest average values.

TABLE 4 Relationship between the conative elements of conscious living and the subject's perception of self-awareness.

Conative elements of conscious behavior		N	Mean	Std. deviation	sig
I typically buy products that I know are made in an environmentally friendly way	Not at all conscious	6	1.67	0.516	0.000
	Unconscious	44	1.82	0.495	
	Conscious	129	2.24	0.726	
	Fully aware	21	2.48	1.030	
	Total	200	2.16	0.744	
I prefer products with the fair trade logo	Not at all conscious	6	2.00	0.000	0.008
	Unconscious	44	1.68	0.883	
	Conscious	129	1.86	0.788	
	Fully aware	21	2.43	0.978	
	Total	200	1.89	0.840	
I give preference to domestic products	Not at all conscious	6	3.00	0.894	0.010
	Unconscious	44	2.18	0.947	
	Conscious	129	2.51	0.876	
	Fully aware	21	3.10	0.995	
	Total	200	2.52	0.935	
I typically buy seasonal fruit and vegetables	Not at all conscious	6	2.33	0.516	0.025
	Unconscious	44	2.68	0.983	
	Conscious	129	2.90	0.975	
	Fully aware	21	3.38	0.921	
	Total	200	2.89	0.978	
I collect waste separately at my place of residence	Not at all conscious	6	1.67	1.033	0.000
	Unconscious	44	3.45	0.791	
	Conscious	129	3.33	0.887	
	Fully aware	21	3.52	0.814	
	Total	200	3.33	0.908	
I always turn off the light when I am not in the room	Not at all conscious	6	3.00	0.000	0.029
	Unconscious	44	3.59	0.497	
	Conscious	129	3.49	0.772	
	Fully aware	21	3.10	0.944	
	Total	200	3.46	0.742	
I encourage others to live consciously	Not at all conscious	6	1.00	0.000	0.010
	Unconscious	44	1.68	0.771	
	Conscious	129	2.29	0.896	
	Fully aware	21	2.95	0.865	
	Total	200	2.19	0.943	
Your generation's impact on sustainability	Not at all conscious	6	3.00	0.894	0.000
	Unconscious	44	2.59	0.726	
	Conscious	129	2.79	0.787	
	Fully aware	21	3.43	0.926	
	Total	200	2.82	0.819	

Bold values used to highlight the highest average values.

interactive lessons, guidance counselling and programmes to support self-awareness and self-development, and life management training, which clearly highlights the importance of developing soft skills. Technological development, rapid and constant change, and

transformation are already present in higher education and can unfold in sustainable leadership. Lifelong learning and the transfer of knowledge in higher education are inevitably in need of renewal, which contributes to sustainable leadership (Titrek and Celik, 2011).

4.1 Limitations and suggestions for future research

One of the limitations of the research is the sample size and the single-generation focus of the research. In this respect, the results cannot be extended to a single population and some segmentation procedures (K-means) are not applicable due to the sample size.

As a continuation of the research, we plan to expand the sample size and include additional generations in the sample to conduct comparative analyses. In addition, in order to analyse the discrepancies that emerge during this phase of the research in a more sophisticated way, a qualitative procedure will be conducted in the form of individual interviews as a post-research phase.

5 Conclusion

The research analysed Generation Z in terms of their perception and practice of conscious living. The aim of the research was to analyse the extent to which the young people surveyed have a realistic view of themselves in terms of their perception of their consciousness and, overall, how important they consider self-awareness to be for the practice of conscious living. The results show that Generation Z members perceive self-awareness as essential and decisive: they consider correct self-awareness to be important and see it as one of the foundations of a conscious lifestyle. Conscious living is mostly linked to health and healthy living, and less to social activities and social responsibility. This suggests that young people are still more dominated by an individualistic approach, linking the form of conscious living to individual values (health) and feeling little ownership of its broader social, environmental and ethical aspects. This value approach, i.e., understanding the importance of social and environmental values in addition to individual target values, is thought to be an important educational task. As is the development of young people's self-awareness. The results of the research have shown that the majority of young people do not correctly assess their self-conscious lifestyle, which we believe can be improved by the appropriate integration of self-awareness training and coaching activities into education. There are many good examples presented in the study of how well and effectively these self-awareness training courses can be integrated into the education system. We believe that the development of these competences will be very much needed in order to increase the awareness of Generation Z. This should be approached with openness by the education system, using appropriate methods and professionals.

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Data availability statement

The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

Ethics statement

Ethical review and approval were not required for the study on human participants in accordance with the local legislation and institutional requirements. Written informed consent from the participants or participants legal guardian/next of kin was not required to participate in this study in accordance with the national legislation and the institutional requirements.

Author contributions

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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