



Introduction

There is widespread unawareness about Sustainable Development (SD) and whether and how libraries can contribute to a more sustainable society. However, the subject has gained prominence in recent years and discussions surrounding the role and social responsibilities of library science concerning this issue are increasing. Germany is one of the most sustainable countries in the world, and its libraries have become an international example of sustainability.

Objectives

This research aims to answer the following questions:

- Ⓐ Do librarians in Germany know what the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are?
- Ⓑ Do the German libraries have any partnership with another institution to carry out projects/ programs (supporting/ funding agencies, Friends of the Library, etc.)?
- Ⓒ Which SDGs are German public libraries addressing? Which SDGs are most pursued?

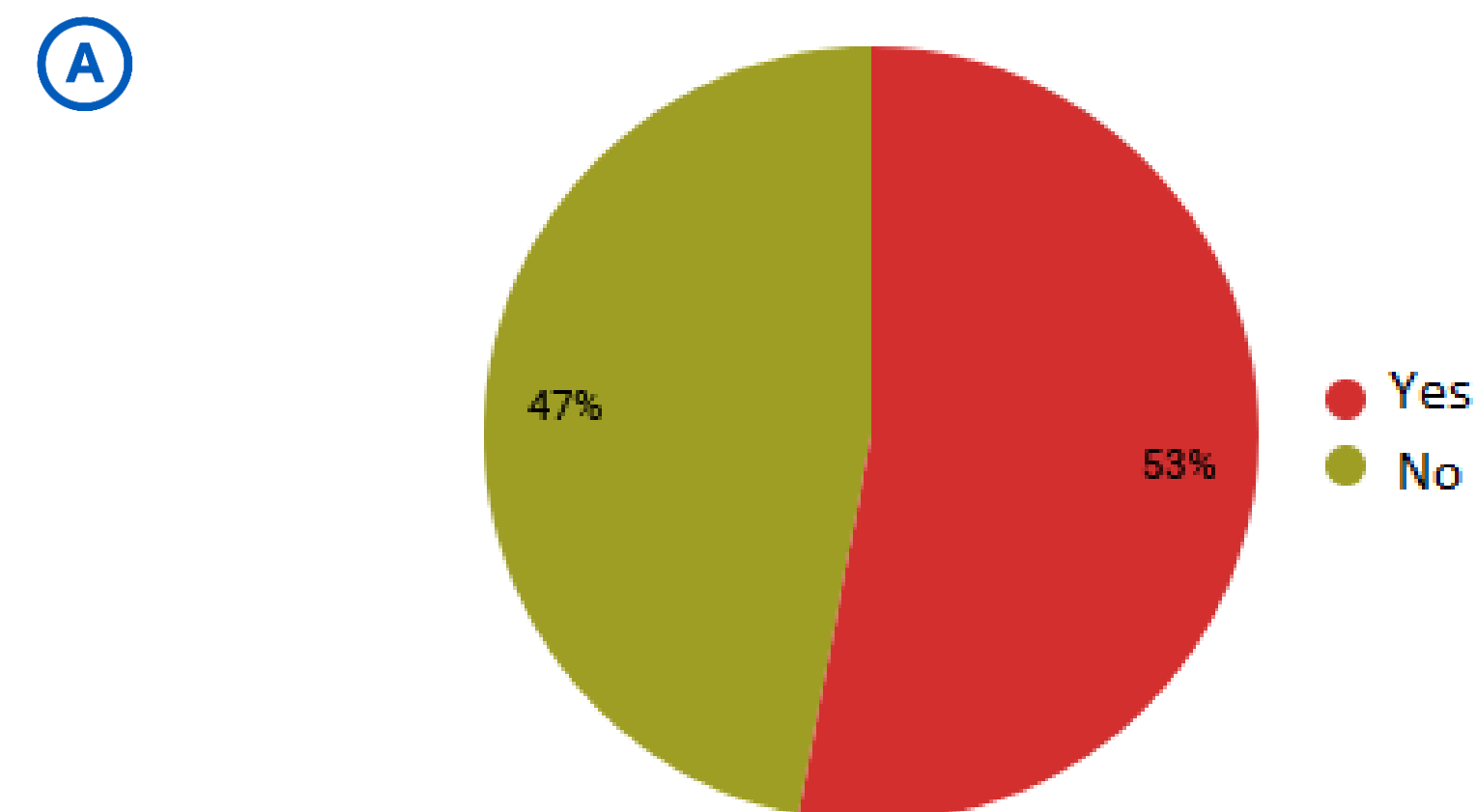
Methodology

This research used the quantitative research method, that focuses on quantifying the collection and analysis of data. The online survey was created using SoSci Survey and was spread via different libraries own channels.

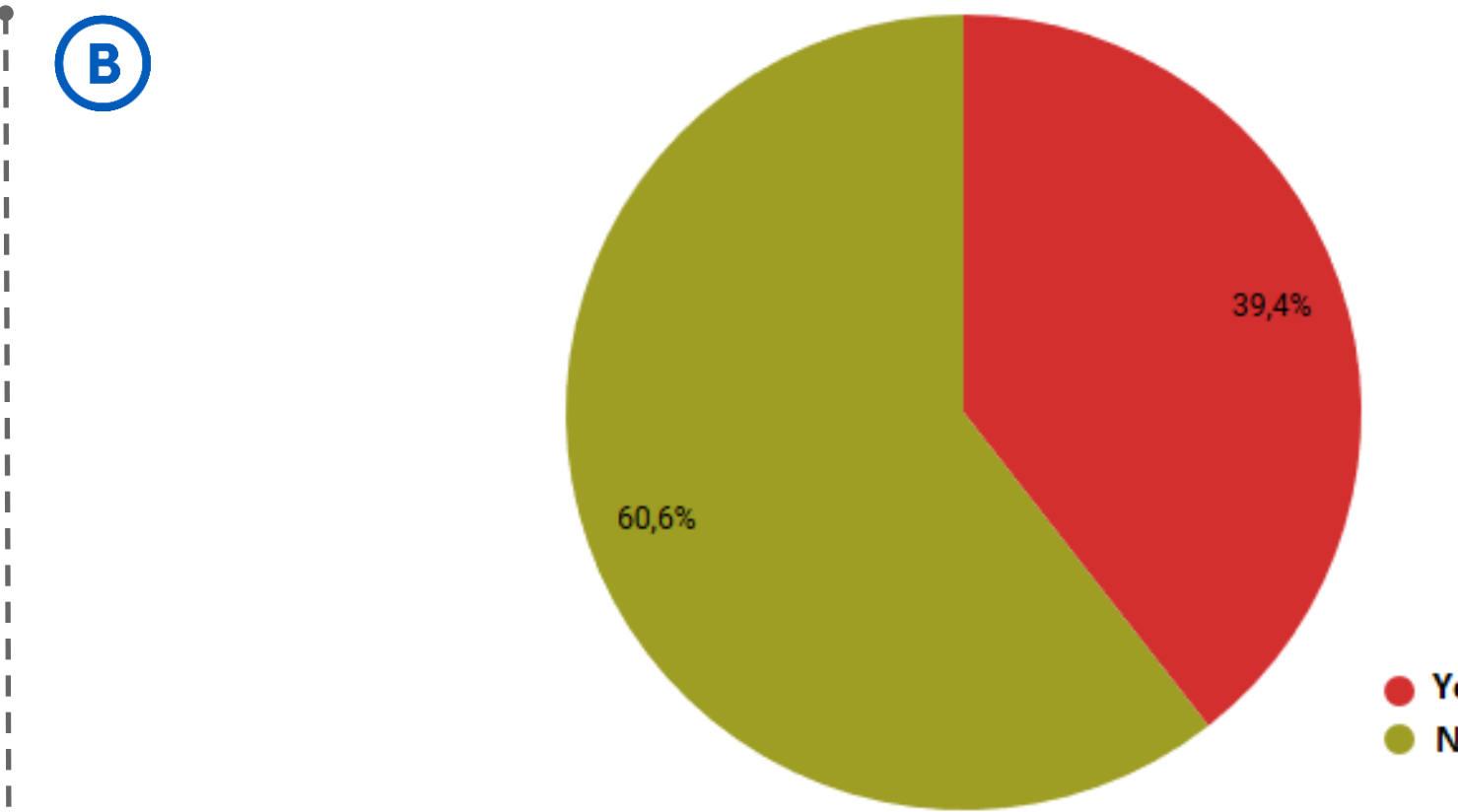
Data Analysis

The survey was open from 17 March to 17 July 2020 and it addressed all libraries in Germany, regardless of their type or size. The survey had 691 respondents from different library types, the majority being public libraries (69,4%). Only one person per library should answer the questionnaire. Due to repetitive and incomplete answers, only 432 answers were considered. Considering the total amount of around 9.297 libraries in Germany (Deutsche Bibliotheksstatistik, 2019) this gives the research a 4,6% error margin for a confidence interval of 95%.

Results

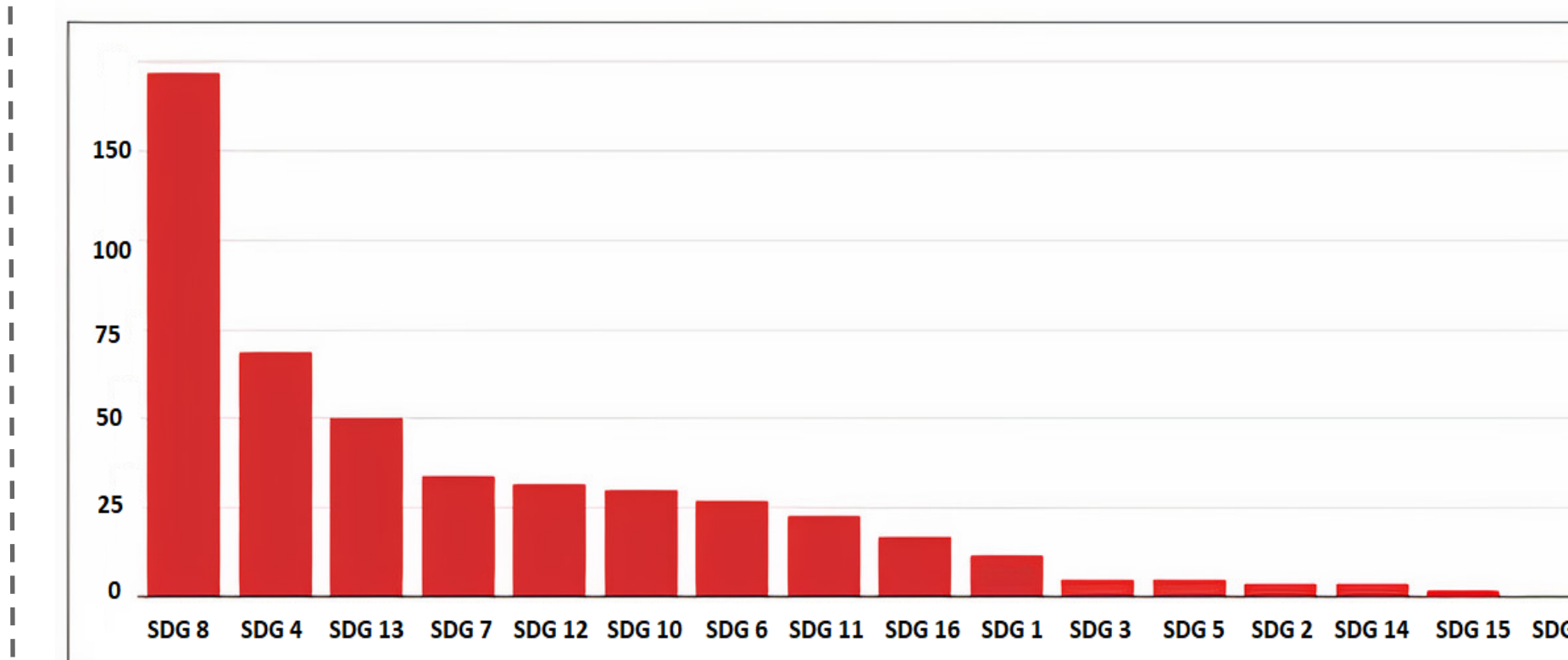


The results show that 53% of the respondents, librarians working in German libraries, were aware of the Sustainable Development Goals and 47% had no awareness of them at all.



When the respondents were asked “Do the library have any partnership with another institution to carry out projects/ programs?”, only 39.4% replied that they have partnerships with other institutions and 60.6% answered that there are no partnerships.

Ⓒ Which SDGs are most pursued?



It is noticeable that SDG 8 (Decent work and Economic Growth) is the one that is being worked on the most in libraries in Germany.

SDG 4 (Quality Education), which is usually the most associated to libraries, occupies the second position. Maybe this is related to the factor that the German school system has an excellent reputation: according to a OECD/PISA study (2018), German students scored higher than the OECD average in reading, mathematics and science. It is worth remembering that many actions related to SDGs 8 are also related to SDGs 4, so the two complement each other. The survey also suggests that SDG is not being worked on at all.

Conclusion

Although 47% of librarians do not know what the Sustainable Development Goals are, they develop actions and projects that contribute to the SDGs. It would also be important that the 60,6% of libraries that have no partnerships to carry out their actions and projects start thinking about partnerships, because through them it is possible to increase or even improve the services provided by libraries.

References

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