

## **The Role of Behavioural Economics Mechanisms in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals**

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### **Abstract**

This study clarifies the reasons for the weakness of the efforts to achieve the sustainable development goals set by the United Nations in 2015, with the hope of realizing them in 2030, despite the global international organization harnessing all its capabilities for this, and most countries, if not all of them, have issued legislations that require or encourage the achievement of these goals, What made matters worse was the occurrence of the health crisis that struck the whole world and which stopped or at least delayed all public and private projects, including the plan to achieve the sustainable development goals, which required the search for more successful means and mechanisms in this regard, on top of which is the behavioral economy mechanisms, since the latter is involved with Sustainable development in many matters, such as seeking to control human behavior, humanize economic relations and facilitate various processes. One of the most prominent recommendations of the study was the use of behavioral economics applications for ease, social, attractiveness and timeliness to contribute to achieving the goals of sustainable development.

**Keywords:** economy, behaviour, development, sustainable, goals.

### **Introduction**

Despite the passage of nearly half a century since the emergence of the term sustainable development, however, the efforts to achieve the goals of this development are still without ambition, but those goals which are set by the United Nations in 2015 in the hope of recognizing them in 2030, there are no signs of reaching them despite the use of the global international organization all its potential for this and the issuance of most countries, if not all, legislations that oblige or encourage the achievement of these goals, and what made worse the health crisis that hit the whole world, which stopped or at least delayed all public and private projects, including the plan to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals; which requires the search for more successful means and mechanisms In this regard, primarily the mechanisms of behavioural economics.

### **Significant of the study**

The importance of the study seems to be as important as the Sustainable Development Goals for all mankind, in addition to the achievement is linked to the mechanisms of behavioraleconomics that have been at the forefront of the scientific scene in economics, social sciences, and law in the past five years.

### **The problem of the study**

The problem of the study is manifested in the futility or at least the weakness of the legislative and awareness mechanisms mandatory and encouraging and their failure to

achieve the goals of Sustainable Development, which necessitated the search for proven alternatives that can achieve remarkable results in this area in a short record time.

### **Research hypothesis**

The study proceeds from the premise that behavioural economics mechanisms can be an appropriate alternative to the mechanisms currently adopted in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, especially after the apparent failure of the mechanisms adopted today.

### **Study methods**

In our study, we will adopt the deductive analytical approach to the legal texts related to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and their applications and find out the reasons for their inefficiency or weakness in realizing their goals.

### **Limitation of the study**

The study will be divided into three demands we allocate the first to the causes of failure to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by traditional means, while we devote the second to the points of convergence between Sustainable Development and the behavioural economy, and in the third and last we address the applications of the behavioural economy in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, then we conclude with the most important conclusions and recommendations.

### **The first requirement: Reasons why traditional methods fail to achieve sustainable development goals:**

We cannot deny any achievements in achieving the Sustainable Development goals, But in contrast there are more failures on the qualitative and quantitative sides , there are still a lot of great efforts that went in vain and the huge amounts spent without being able to reach the desired results, not to mention the inadequacy or fragility or weakness in the achievement so that it does not fit with the planned goals and objectives, as follows:

### **Section One**

#### **The use of a purely utilitarian approach in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals**

When the United Nations announced the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 urged countries to achieve those goals by various means, the most prominent of these means was the use of the obligation to put some of the goals in a legally binding template so that failure to comply with it would result in falling under the penalty of criminal, administrative, tax and other sanctions, such as burning solid waste except in designated places In Article 20 of the same law, the penalty for violation is imprisonment for a period of not less than three months or a fine of not less than one million Iraqi dinars and not more than 20 million Iraqi dinars or both penalties, as well as taking the provisions of Lute so that the penalty is doubled every time the violation is repeated.

In contrast, there is another method urged by the United Nations, which is the method of encouragement and material stimulation, which has prompted some countries to grant tax exemptions to push towards achieving social goals, such as the Iraqi tax legislator in Article

(8) of the Income Tax Law No. 113 of 1982 amended to remove the Legal Maintenance from the taxable income in order to preserve the social fabric of the Iraqi family and prevent family disintegration and thus achieve the social dimension of sustainable development.(Intruder , 2019 ).

According to a study published for the outsider (2020), this utilitarianism adopted by the legislator may succeed in waving material sanctions or seducing financial incentives with some of the utilitarian or rationalists of the addressees or those in charge of the legal base so that the mere issuance of the law and its publication in the Official Gazette constitutes a kind of alert in response to the provisions of the law and compliance with its binding or motivating rules. But they fall short of explaining the widespread prevalence of crimes in general, including tax evasion,prisons are overcrowded and the public treasury receives large sums of money every year in the form of fines or financial sanctions, thousands are waiting for the approval of the president of the Republic on the death sentences issued against them, as well as the numbers in which the sentence was carried out.In return, many of the legal provisions on financial incentives remain a dead letter. few private sector individuals and companies have come forward to obtain such financial incentives if they do some work that serves the community, except for some sham initiatives carried out by those close to the corrupt in the relevant state institutions.

There is no doubt that such disastrous results and the apparent inability of the traditional general principles of law in interpreting such behaviors and the absence of the required compliance with its provisions lead us to point out a defect between the beginning or the main idea on which the science of law is based and then by borrowing or using the mechanisms of behavioral economics the need to take into account psychological and social aspects and behavioral biases when developing legal rules to constitute a typical solution and lead to give a social aspect of the law that enables it to infiltrate the psychological aspect in the behavior of those in charge of the legal rule and push them to implement it and thus achieve the goals of sustainable development.

No evidence of this, according to a study conducted by Kahneman ( without a year), except that we are witnessing a remarkable development in the field of recognition of the importance of psychological and social aspects, while acknowledging of course their inadequacy and the need to devote them through clearer and deeper applications affecting the parameters of the general theory of law so as to drag them to the heart of the equation or at least to have the moral aspects parallel and equal to their peers in the material aspect on the detail that we will talk in the last requirement of this study.

## **Section Two**

### **Using the traditional awareness method in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals**

According to a study published for Hassan ( 2011), the United Nations and its various countries made the use of the traditional awareness method through the publication of publications, the establishment of workshops, conferences and seminars and the distribution of awareness brochures that explain and detail the goals of sustainable development and focus on their importance and the need to combine the efforts of teeming with media Various

awareness programs and videos that have received high viewing and listening rates, which indicates its arrival to a large number of members of the targeted community.

However, the tradition that was adopted in those videos, programs, seminars, conferences, workshops and brochures made it closer to the scientific side than to the social side so that its pioneers were specialists only, whether in economics, sociology, law, ecology or other related sciences, and did not have pioneers or followers of the general people who do not care much about these boring awareness programs Perhaps that is what prompted the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to produce and broadcast the song ( my goals ) from a group of stars of the program ( The Voice Kids ) within the initiative of ( Ayami ) launched by the program (UNDP) weeks ago to make the Sustainable Development Goals more popular and reach the community, there is no doubt that in this recognition of the futility come, where the song covered the Sustainable Development Goals in a lyrical style using the legend that mimics all categories Age in the community for the first time in Arabic, but it is nevertheless an insufficient step on its own and must be strengthened by larger steps and more related to the community and its celebrities, especially if it used the best use did not produce great results.

### **The second requirement :Convergence points between Sustainable Development and behavioural economics.**

Perhaps the most important of these points is the quest to control human relations, as well as the humanization of economic relations, not to mention facilitating various economic, social, and environmental processes, which we will try to detail in the following three sections:

#### **Section One**

##### **Seeking to control human behaviour**

According to the study of Abu Zant and Ghoneim (2006) as a result of the financial and economic crises that hit the world at different periods and as a result of the crisis experienced by public policies in most countries, and given the failure witnessed by the general theory of law in the applied field and the inability that appeared on the ordinary personal or level Social rights without being bound by a specific scope of the law through the adoption of simple mechanisms in great detail in their effects through the use of the margin of freedom approved by the legislature in all countries

Similarly, exploring the study of Al-Ghamdi (2007) which confirmed that sustainable development policies seek to control human actions and not remain abstract of any rules governing them, as behavioural economists control economic actions in a way that avoids some irrational and far from logical behaviours by relying on simple alerts with great positive effects, Sustainable Development Studies also aim to face some habits and ideas that behavioural and development Sustainable seeks to use a common means by controlling human relations and directing them in the best direction to bring good to the country and people.

## **Section Two**

### **Humanization of economic relations**

Considering the introduction of behavioural economists according to Thaler's study (without a year) of psychological factors and neurological determinants at the heart of the process of economic analysis of the behaviour of individuals. It has made that economic behaviour more agreement or interest or in harmony with the human side, which means that this science seeks to humanize economic relations like the rest of the relations that permeate social behaviour, the origin of human relations the human side is the core of these relations, but since the inception of Economics and because of the dominance of Behavioural economists were alerted to the need to include the psychological and behavioural aspect in the subject because by adding it to other factors of material analysis can reach a more comprehensive understanding of these behaviours and thus the need to humanize economic relations.

The fact is that the behavioural economy shares according to a study conducted by the Al Afandi (2019) in this goal with the Islamic economy, which is based on faith, faith and piety of the causes of economic prosperity, which is the cause of the achievement of the welfare society, given that the Islamic economy from a divine source and not the outcome of Islamic investing its validity for every time and place.

The same is true with sustainable development, as stated in the fifth report of the International Labour Conference (2013), as it is based on humanizing economic relations and not keeping them with purely material conflicts that depend on obtaining economic growth through achieving material profit and increasing production regardless of the present and future social and environmental impacts. The survival of these relations in this way will strengthen and consolidate their negative effects in various fields, despite the fact that they have achieved good results at the level of economic growth, which seemed clear before the adoption of sustainable development policies, where the growth rates in the countries were very high because they care only to increase production and reach profits to advanced levels, which made economic relations far from the human side, so that the plans and goals of sustainable development must return to the principles of humanity to be committed.

### **The third requirement: Facilitate various processes**

If the mechanisms of behavioural economics according to a study published by Halpern (2019) work according to the most likely opinion within four axes are social, attractive, easy, and timely, the bulk of the subject lies in facilitating decision-making on the addressees marketing rules, legal, political and others. Behavioural economists distinguish between two types of people, the first human and the second economic. Since the first section is the majority and the second is the minority, we often deal with two meditative systems that are needed when making decisions on more complex topics such as marriage, study and work. While we use the second, an automatic system in other things that are less interested in US, which may include dealing with tax circles or choosing a particular savings route or buying clothes or other tasks that they consider secondary do not need much reflection and that human beings like to use the second system for its ease more than the first and therefore the Civil society or international organizations or various media by placing a specific alert according to the type of transaction offered; For example, when the state wants to encourage individuals to consume healthy foods without unhealthy foods, it seems easy to us when it is

fixed on the food product packaging number of calories by which people can know the amount of benefit that results from eating them, but the truth is that in fact the process of calculating calories is complex and it enters or needs to use the system of reflection, since human beings tend to exclude that system and resort to the system to perform such a calculation, which makes them mistake or rather not focus on calories and buy and consume high-calorie food. What prompted behavioural economists to experiment with a method that makes the process easier and keep it within the automatic system by placing easy-to-recognize labels on food cans, which are marked with traffic signs, Green is placed on the lowest-calorie food, yellow on medium-calorie food and red on high-calorie food. This has resulted in great results that have enhanced good choice, facilitated decision-making, and removed some ideas and proposals to impose taxes on the production and consumption of unhealthy foods, or granting exemptions or reducing tax prices on the production of healthy and low-calorie foods.

In the same way woven policies and studies of sustainable development, as stated in a study of the Arab Centre for legal and judicial research (2018) as it seeks its various dimensions to abandon the complex physical calculations and to facilitate all processes of economic, social and environmental through the use of modern technologies , as well as achieving a balance between the northern and southern parts Exploitation the environment will be exposed to pollution and the rights of future generations will be denied. As well as the rights of the poorest and Least Developed Countries, which is rejected by studies of sustainable development and seeks to live the level of easy life and closer to innate than to modernity without denying the ways of development and the requirements of the desired welfare, which is in fact an innate tendency of man to balance the resources of nature and the requirements of well-being.

#### **The fourth requirement :Applications of Behavioural Economics in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.**

We do not intend here to delve into the details of the applications of Behavioural Economics in their huge numbers as much as we will focus on some of those applications that lead to the realization of the goals of sustainable development through the division of this requirement on four branches, we devote the first to applications of ease in achieving the goals of sustainable development and address the second social applications. In the third we talk about attractive applications, and in the fourth and last, we talk about timely applications, and as follows:

#### **Section One**

##### **Applications of ease in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals**

A human tends to choose the easiest and automatically tends to move away from the options that put in front of him obstacles and obstacles, and among the most prominent applications of Behavioural Economics show a set of applications that contribute to achieving the goals of sustainable development, including:

**First:** in a step to pay attention to the future situation and not rely on the current situation only, behavioural economists have devised according to a study conducted by al-Najjar (2019) the method of default mode after all attempts to urge workers to enrol in retirement and savings programs failed even by increasing financial support, where automatic enrolment was adopted while leaving the option for workers to choose not to enrol and the result was impressive, as only a small percentage of workers did not choose to join the pension or savings system. This greatly increased the percentage of workers enrolled in the system, achieving a sustainable development goal in an easy way and without the need to lose more money.

**Second:** According to a study conducted by Halpern (2019) was used as a means of facilitating energy rationalization in England after the failure of other material means of reducing prices or instalment amount and other means, in urging citizens to adopt the method of isolating the upper part of the house from the lower part of it, which increases energy consumption in winter for Prices, on the contrary, may be rather high. The results were favourable, and this method achieved one of the most important sustainable development goals, saving a lot of energy that was consumed in heating the underneath of the property after complete insulation.

**Third:** instead of taxing goods with bad health effects on human life and exempting goods with good health effects, according to a study conducted by Banerjee and Duflo (2016), manufacturers are required to put signs similar to traffic signs on the packaging of those foods: red indicates an increase in calories, yellow indicates a moderate and green indicates a decrease. This enables individuals to easily identify its advantages and risks and thus avoid risks, while at the same time achieving an important goal of sustainable development.

**Fourth:** According to a study of the intruder (2020), the state can produce or import scales and sell them to The Citizen at cost price or a little more and work on the buttocks of a major awareness campaign on the need to use them and benefit from them in the pursuit of human weight developments sequentially, and each department allocates a general balance placed unhealthy and binge drinking remains available for those who want to eat it, but those who do so must bear its impact in the functional side, as well as the health side and the look and feel side, thus achieving other goals of sustainable development.

## **Section Two**

### **Social applications in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals**

The human psyche naturally tends to pay attention to the social aspect and try to follow the same approach of the community in which they live in, which is also reflected on giving great importance to some aspects such as fear of loss and imitation of celebrities or influential people, love of publicity and others, and here should be put some examples of those applications that contribute:

**First:** the establishment of sovereign wealth funds by most countries of the world according to a study of the outsider (2018), including the diversification of sources of public revenues

and the preservation of the rights of future generations, although not in the natural wealth of those countries, but in the revenues of those wealth, and based on what is called in the literature of behavioural economics herd behaviour made it shameful for countries that did not establish these funds to continue on that policy, and therefore the need to abandon that approach and accelerate the establishment of funds and catch up with the countries that have created them and then achieve an important goal of sustainable development.

**Second:** After the awareness programs were limited to commendation and praising the idea to be promoted or even a simple mug of the idea to stay away from it through the publication of awareness ads and educational brochures and support and funding of scientific events such as conferences, seminars and workshops, the business organizations in the marketing of their products turned to the use of a new method of advertising. By showing the experiences of people who have purchased the products or benefited from the services of those entities. Similar to this modern method of advertising, it will be appropriate to hold interviews with Lay people (individuals) or entities ( companies, associations, organizations, countries ) who are interested in actually achieving some of the goals of sustainable development, prompting them to talk about or share their experience with their peers who have not yet done so, there is no doubt in the impact ease in achieving the goals and Conversely, if the meetings are not real or representative, they will not reach the recipient smoothly and will be discovered and therefore the results will be completely negative.

**Third:** it seems to us that the spread of corruption in Iraq and in other countries is is regarded to the so-called herd behaviour. It has become very common for the person in charge to be corrupt. This is the result of corrupt people spreading information that corrupt people are more than honest people, the latter group, a few, will not be able to do anything against the majority. Studies, Research, and various media may have contributed to this, thus increasing the number of corrupt people and the spread of corruption. This prompted some countries, on the advice of behavioural economists in the fight against some rampant phenomena to hide the reality of the size of these phenomena so as not to be considered a familiar behaviour, including the publication of inaccurate statistics that reduce the real rates of obesity in the United States.

This prompts us to call on the responsible authorities and the various media not to give negative phenomena, especially with regard to moving away from achieving the goals of Sustainable Development larger than their real size or at least not to highlight them as a widespread phenomenon such as lack of justice, inequality, pollution policies and others, because such a measure will give a negative message on the impossibility of confronting them, prompting the public to surrender to them and not fight them.

**Fourth:** Given the spread of the idea of imitating celebrities in art, sports, governance and in adherence to what they do, according to a study by Halpern (2019) Investing in the fan base of these celebrities, both nationally and globally, to send a message to taxpayers that the artist or player Doe is achieving some of the Sustainable Development Goals. At the same time, he calls on those celebrities in charge to follow their example in this regard and take the initiative to contribute to the achievement of the goals of sustainable development and remind



them of the consequences that result, whether in the material side or in the moral side or even in the social side, as the experiments conducted by behavioural economists proved the success followed and imitated by many citizens or persons, and That some of them imitated him in his call and assume his role in this regard to call on the rest of his peers to abandon those habits that are not in line with the goals of sustainable development-and the song ( my goals ) within the initiative ( Ayami ) launched by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) although a step in this direction, although it is insufficient and needs to be strengthened and dedicated.

### **Section Three**

It does not make sense to stop the wheel of development in the state and its public bodies from catching up with the accelerated pace of public life and in all its fields, otherwise if it remains so, it will lose the Battle of competition with the private sector and perhaps even with public bodies in other countries or with the bodies of international organizations, everyone must Using some attractive applications to achieve these goals, including the following:

**First:** the fact that the effectiveness of the awareness messages to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals sent through the (SMS) messages or social media according to what the intruder (2020) doubles if the explicit name of the addressee is mentioned in the message, which gives it an attractive aspect added to the social aspect in the subject, where the recipient will feel excessive it is known that these messages are addressed to an unspecified number of The number of people may have increased so much that they could not be identified by name and therefore came in general, making the message less effective. If the message is by name, it makes it more credible and more specific and gives it greater effectiveness and thus the rush of the recipient to obey this smart, simple, and inexpensive alert.

**Second:** instead of insisting on the use of physical sanctions purely financial or negative to freedom alone, we can also use some moral sanctions that mimic the psychological aspect of the violator of the provisions of the law binding to achieve some of the goals of sustainable development and have an impact on the violator himself and the rest of the community the first and deter the second, which brings good results in the field of application. Perhaps in the classification by some state institutions of persons committed to the duties achieved the goals of sustainable development and has a moral incentive aspect for those who have the highest ranks in that classification, there is also a moral sanction aspect for those who are at the bottom of the annual classification list that we propose to issue and circulate the criteria for that classification so that everyone seeks to arrange their legal status according to them. This will make them rush to implement these duties because of the existence of these moral sanctions rather than physical sanctions, as well as the possibility of using a blacklist that can be prepared for individuals and companies that operate without understanding the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Third:** The fact is that we do not seek according to the study of the Al Dakheel (2020) to cancel directly and definitively the idea of financial incentives because in that denial of the materialism that is characterized by humans estimated what we want to add to it elements or psychological factors, because the human acting as proven studies of behavioural economics rationally limited and subject to comply without need or rather without sanctions Examples of such incentives include letters of appreciation and obtaining the highest ranks in the rankings of commitment to achieve the goals of sustainable development that can be carried out by the state and its public bodies, civil society organizations and international organizations.

### **The fifth requirement : Applications of timeliness in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals**

After the studies of behavioural economics proved the importance of choosing the right time in any of its applications to be productive, we had to invest this axis of Behavioural Economics in the field of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, examples of which are the following:

First: we all noticed on Friday, March 13, 2020, how the mosques of Iraq were free from performing Friday prayers in implementation of the directives of religious institutions in the country to abandon the performance of religious rituals on Friday to guard against the spread of the new corona virus without the need to impose sanctions or give attractive incentives, because the call came at the right time and invested fear of this epidemic, but if it had happened at any other time, the results may be dire and to describe those calling for it as blasphemy and atheism and trying to detract from religion and religious people.

Second: Studies of behavioural economics according to the study of Thaler (without a year) proved the importance of the element of time in donating money or services, whether to the state or one of its public bodies or civil society organizations or even to members of society, the human being is more psychologically ready to donate and therefore the buttocks of the role Providing assistance to all or some groups of society, thus contributing to the achievement of the goal of sustainable development in achieving balance among the members of society.

For example, if we take the holy month of Ramadan for Muslims, we find that it is the best religious period that can be invested to encourage donation and provide services, especially for the poor, destitute and unemployed, while the rest of the months of the year are not so by virtue of the great spiritual feelings that dominate the Muslim in the month flour and do Perhaps by collecting it from one of the public bodies to distribute it more fairly to the beneficiaries rather than taking some of the beneficiaries more than once, while some of them do not take anything from those donated funds, some countries have worked to create funds for Zakat, collect it and distribute it to the beneficiaries, while other countries have left such an Islamic obligatory for arbitrary wishes and different perceptions of those subject to it Shari'a, which allowed multiple parties to exploit it, perhaps even contrary to the provisions of the Shari'a.

Third: According to a study published for Philly (2018) it is no longer accepted at present that the law includes the element of surprise so that it is issued without prior warning and is not known to the members of the community and without any introductions or preparations or

alerts, it has become normal to issue the law after it is preceded by everyone, including those in charge. In addition to contributing to the strengthening of knowledge and understanding of the law, it will inevitably lead to the choice of the appropriate timing of the promulgation of the law and to the timeliness of some of the obligations it contains or imposes on its addressees and assignees.

### **Conclusion**

1-despite the passage of nearly five decades since the emergence of the term sustainable development, the implementation of its goals is still not ambitious.

2-the use of a purely utilitarian approach is one of the most important reasons for the failure to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals as a result of neglecting the moral and behavioural aspect of the subject.

3-the use of the traditional awareness method in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals is one of the reasons for failure to achieve them.

4-the points of convergence and convergence between behavioural economics and sustainable development should be invested, including seeking to control human behaviour, as both aim to reach those behaviours for the better.

5 .the facilitation of different processes is one of the other points of convergence between behavioural economics and sustainable development, as both aim to reach facilitation in all areas.

6. both behavioural economics and sustainable development seek to humanize economic, social, and environmental relations and not keep them locked in the purely material side.

Second: recommendations: based on the above we recommend the adoption of Behavioural Economics Applications in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals as follows :

1-adopting the method of facilitation in solving the problems of the Sustainable Development Goals, including the use of the default mode and others.

2-the use of social applications that make the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals familiar to those targeted and vice versa make the practices of not achieving the Sustainable Development Goals is socially unacceptable.

3-using applications of attractiveness in order to make the policies of implementing the Sustainable Development Goals more attractive so that people rush towards achieving them voluntarily and without the need for financial incentives by compensating them with sanctions and moral incentives.

4- Invest the right time to intervene in achieving the goals of sustainable development, whether it is times of crisis such as the corona crisis or times of well-being such as holy months such as Ramadan.

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