THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN PORTUGUESE HIGHER EDUCATIONS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF STUDENTS PERCEPTIONS

ANA MARTA ALEIXO, SUSANA LEAL & ULISSES M. AZEITEIRO

POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE OF SANTARÉM

CONTENTS

1. PURPOSE
2. METHOD
3. FINDINGS
4. RESULTS
5. ORIGINALITY/VALUE
6. REFERENCES
**PURPOSE**

A descriptive and exploratory research about the understanding of sustainable development (SD) among public higher education institutions’ students, in Portugal.

- the student’s perspectives about SD through the analysis of their attitudes, skills and experiences on the theme.
- The student’s knowledge about SDGs and about the importance of SD as future professionals.

**METHOD**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Design</th>
<th>Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ A descriptive and exploratory approach</td>
<td>✓ A sample of 1257 students from the Portuguese HEIs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ On-line questionnaire, adapted from the National Union Students (2018)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN PORTUGUESE HIGHER EDUCATIONS
THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN PORTUGUESE HIGHER EDUCATIONS

FINDINGS

STUDENTS
- Show an interest in SD and are keen to learn more about, but also want to see action by their HEI, and to see it embedded in all courses.
- Say they have experienced some teaching related SD, however, almost 20% say it hasn’t been covered at all.
- Recognise the action taken by their HEI to address negative impacts.
- Show a desire to work in companies that perform strongly in relation to SD.
- Consider that secondary education was the educational path that most encouraged to think and act in ways that help the environment and people.
- Already have heard of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and know what they.

Students of Portuguese HEIs show an interest in SD

95.7% HEI should actively incorporate and promote SD

90.9% SD actively incorporated and promote through all courses

89.6 % SD is something they would like to learn more about

Note: cumulative value (agree + strongly agree)
Students of Portuguese HEIs say they have experienced some teaching related to SD

However, almost 20% say it hasn't been covered at all.

HEIs action for SD

HEI takes action to limit the negative impact it has on the environment and society

HEI provides opportunities to get involved in action to limit the negative impact
HEIs action for SD

Studies are helping to learn how to make changes lifestyle to help the environment

Studies are helping to learn how to have a positive impact on the world

50.3% heard of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and know it
34.0% heard of the UN Sustainable Development Goals but they don’t know it
15.7% never heard of the UN Sustainable Development Goals
Students show a desire to work for companies that perform strongly in relations to SD

A - 90.2% would be willing to accept a salary 5% lower than average to work in a company with a good social and environment record

B - 65.9% would accept a salary 15% lower than average to work in a job with a good social environment record

C - 65.0% would accept a salary 15% lower than average to work in a company with a good social and environment record

SD Students’ Perceptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Governments from across the world should do whatever it takes to address climate change</td>
<td>71.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am concerned about the effects of climate change</td>
<td>64.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate change will negatively affect me and my lifestyle</td>
<td>60.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would vote for a government that increased action to tackle climate change</td>
<td>52.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: strongly agree %
To better understand the students’ perceptions about SD and the role of HEIs to improve it, namely in Portugal where the studies about the theme are scarce.

The results could be used by HEIs to introduce the SD topics in formal and informal education, as well as to improve it integration on campus activities.
OBRIGADO | THANK YOU

ANA MARTA ALEIXO, SUSANA LEAL & ULISSES M. AZEITEIRO