

The perception of students of the Universidad Autónoma de Nayarit regarding sustainable development in organizations**La percepción de estudiantes de la Universidad Autónoma de Nayarit ante el desarrollo sustentable en las organizaciones**

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Abstract

The main objective of this research is to know the perception that young students of different profiles have about the existing problems regarding sustainable development, their awareness and actions to be taken as agents of change. The perception of university students, specifically from the Bachelor's Degrees in Administration, Marketing and International Business who are currently in their second semester at the Academic Unit of Accounting and Administration. The study arises from the importance for our country to be proactively aligned with the 2030 agenda about the 17 goals of the United Nations. The purpose of the article is to make a qualitative statement, making a comparison with different researches. Due to its scope and approach, the research is descriptive in nature with a mixed approach. For the collection of data, an instrument was designed, which is the Google Forms survey, to know the perception of students on sustainable development in organizations. As main results, it is concluded that students have the vision to carry out concrete actions that have a positive impact on society

Resumen

El objetivo principal de la presente investigación es conocer la percepción que los jóvenes estudiantes de distintos perfiles tienen sobre la problemática existente acerca del desarrollo sustentable, su concientización y acciones a tomar como agentes de cambio. La percepción de los estudiantes universitarios, específicamente de las Licenciaturas en Administración, Mercadotecnia y Negocios Internacionales que actualmente están cursando el segundo semestre en la Unidad Académica de Contaduría y Administración. El estudio surge por la importancia que tiene para nuestro país el estar alineados de forma proactiva con la agenda 2030 acerca de los 17 objetivos de las Organización de las Naciones Unidas. La finalidad del artículo es enunciar de forma cualitativa haciendo una comparativa con distintas investigaciones. Por su alcance y forma de abordaje, la investigación es de carácter descriptivo con un enfoque mixto. Para el acopio de los datos se diseñó un instrumento que es la encuesta de Google Forms, para conocer la percepción de los estudiantes sobre el desarrollo sustentable en las organizaciones. Como resultados principales, se concluye que el estudiante tiene la visión de realizar acciones concretas que tengan un impacto positivo en la sociedad.

Sustainable development, Organizations, Perception

Desarrollo sustentable, Organizaciones, Percepción

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Introduction

University students' perceptions of sustainable development in organisations is an increasingly important issue in higher education. In a world where concern for the environment and sustainability is increasingly evident, students are in a unique position to influence change and advocate for more sustainable practices in business. Research and studies have revealed that university students value sustainable development and believe that organisations must take concrete steps to ensure a better future. For them, it is imperative that companies take responsibility for their impact on the environment and society by implementing sustainable practices throughout their operations.

However, despite this widespread awareness, there is a lack of knowledge and understanding about the specific actions and policies that organisations implement to achieve sustainability. Many students are unaware of the efforts and progress that some companies have made in terms of environmental and social responsibility. This lack of information hinders their ability to adequately assess the real commitment of organisations to sustainable development.

It is therefore essential to promote education and the active participation of students in sustainable development. The Autonomous University of Nayarit plays a crucial role in this regard, as it can provide comprehensive training on sustainability and encourage critical reflection on current business practices.

Similarly, the Autonomous University of Nayarit, with its high commitment to society, can offer courses, diploma and/or master's degrees in business sustainability, where students can learn about best practices, case studies and the economic and social implications of adopting a sustainable approach.

Active student participation is also essential. Student groups dedicated to sustainability can be organised and participation in environment-related projects and activities can be promoted. This will allow them to apply the knowledge acquired in the classroom and contribute directly to positive change in their communities and organisations.

Furthermore, it is necessary to foster a responsible mindset towards the environment in future generations of professionals. This implies not only transmitting theoretical knowledge, but also cultivating ethical values and principles that promote sustainability in all areas of personal and professional life. University students' perception of sustainable development in organisations is a powerful driving force for change. Their voice and actions can influence business policies and practices, leading to a transformation towards more sustainable models. However, the lack of awareness and specific knowledge about business actions in this area needs to be addressed.

Education and active participation of students are key to overcoming these barriers. Universities and other educational institutions have a responsibility to provide comprehensive training in business sustainability and to foster an environmentally responsible mindset. Only in this way can we ensure a more sustainable future for generations to come and promote a business culture that values the well-being of people and the planet. University students' perception of sustainable development in organisations is an area of research that has gained relevance in recent years.

These young people represent a generation that is increasingly concerned about environmental and social issues, and their views on sustainable business practices can have a significant impact on business decision-making. Like almost every country in the world, Mexico faces a real challenge. Undoubtedly, the most important of all times: to achieve a new form of progress. Therefore, sustainable development emerges as a possible alternative, but what is meant by sustainable development? Bohne, A., Bruckman, M. & Martínez, A. (2019).

"Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" Estenssoro, F. (2018).

According to (Castro, 2018, p. 5-6), the conception of sustainability has undergone transformations. At the beginning it was limited to an approach focused on the deterioration of the environment; today it includes several aspects linked to the quality of life of human beings.

It is based on the recognition of the limits and potential of nature and environmental complexity, which leads to a new understanding of the world in order to face the challenges of humanity. The concept of sustainability promotes a new form of organisational culture, by establishing a different economy, by reorienting the potentials of science and technology, and by building a new politics based on an ethic of values, beliefs and feelings that transform existential meanings, life and the way of inhabiting the planet.

One of the concepts that has raised controversy as to its definition is the term sustainable development (SD), also known as sustainable development. Some specialists in the field have affirmed that they are synonyms, with the differentiation of the term falling on how to translate it. Both come from the English translation "sustainable development". The term sustainable or sustentable establishes the same idea, in Spain the term sostenible is used, and in Mexico and other countries the term sustentable is adopted, which refers to the same definition. Larrouyet, M. C. (2015).

The mission of promoting sustainable development at a global level means the responsibility to ensure that the needs of today's societies in terms of consumption of natural resources, but also in terms of social and economic life, do not compromise the satisfaction of the needs of future generations. This concept was recognised in 1987 in the report *Our Common Future*, better known as the Brundtland Report. Thus, sustainable development is the fundamental commitment to ensure a decent future for the next generations (Government of Mexico, n.d. p.8).

On the other hand, according to (García-Arce et.al, 2021, p.1) the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) constitute a framework to fulfil the purposes of sustainability in its multiple social, economic and environmental dimensions. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) can be considered as a decisive social actor to promote their fulfilment.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide guidelines for a necessary global transformation. (Rieckmann, 2020) refers to the 17 sustainability goals that constitute the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The aim of these is to enable a sustainable, peaceful, prosperous and just life for all, now and in the future.

In another area, higher education is considered as a fundamental entity for sustainable development and should be geared towards the integration of transversal competences in the cognitive, methodological and attitudinal areas, which will enable students to think critically about socio-environmental problems, and to put into practice procedures and decision-making in order to carry out relevant actions in favour of the development of a sustainable society. (Solís-Espallargas, 2019).

Derived from the above, it can be inferred that sustainable development in organisations implies the integration of environmental and social considerations into all dimensions of business management. Environmental management, corporate social responsibility, employee involvement and sustainable supply chain management are some of the key aspects that need to be addressed.

Furthermore, it has been shown that the adoption of sustainable practices can have a positive impact on both the natural environment and the financial performance of organisations and with regard to university students' perception of sustainable development in organisations is a relevant issue in higher education. Their positive attitude and awareness of the importance of sustainability can influence future business practices. However, there is a need to address the lack of specific knowledge and to foster comprehensive education and experience.

Methodological strategies or materials and methods

The present research work on the perception of students of the Universidad Autónoma de Nayarit regarding sustainable development in organisations, specifically in the academic programmes of Bachelor's Degree in Administration, Bachelor's Degree in Marketing and Bachelor's Degree in International Business, who are currently in their second semester at the Academic Unit of Accounting and Administration, has been developed mainly with a qualitative approach.

Both narrative and descriptive, generating a new perspective from a subjective point of view, analysing through logical reasoning a series of comparisons of different authors that lead to a discernment of the most relevant and important concepts and definitions of the topic in question.

At the same time, the research is of an exploratory type, since during the development of the research, a systematic review of the literature of various scientific articles on this topic has been carried out using the following scientific databases: Direct Science, Emerald, Scopus, Scielo, Redalyc, Google Académic. Likewise, for this article, search criteria were applied based on search engines or descriptors, achieving the best results with high impact articles.

In this research, variables that allow us to identify the disposition and perspective of students regarding this topic are analysed.

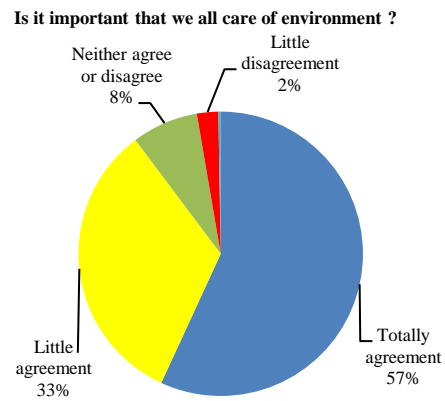
A population of 97 students was considered and a survey was used as a data collection instrument, randomly applied to a sample of 78 students who voluntarily answered. The survey was carried out on the Google Forms platform on a Likert scale and comprised 4 items relating to environmental care, the relevance of sustainable development in Mexico, the impact of university students on sustainable development and governmental implications.

Results and discussion

Analysis and interpretation of the surveys to determine the perception of the students of the aforementioned degrees.

It should be noted that the results of the surveys of 78 students were analysed.

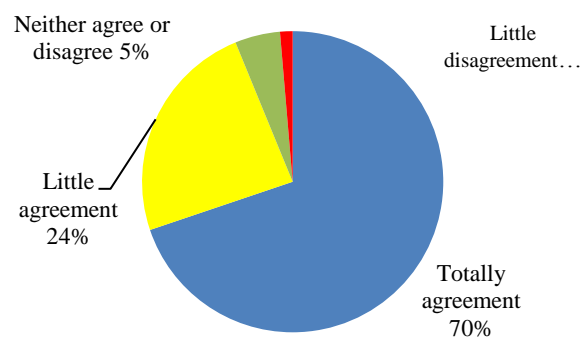
The detailed information is shown below:



Graph 1 It is important that we all take care of the environment?
 Source: Own Elaboration

With respect to graph 1, the highest percentage of students who expressed a preference was that they totally agreed on the importance that we should all take care of the environment, which means that they are mostly aware of this situation that afflicts us in our country. A percentage of 33 % expressed a little agreement, due to lack of interest, knowledge or motivation to learn about the problems that this generates. The 8% of those who showed a little apathy or lack of interest in this item, which indicates a lack of awareness, and finally there are 2% of respondents who reflected a little disagreement, which is fortunately a very minor indicator of the students interviewed who are not interested in this topic of environmental care.

Do you consider sustainable development to be a relevant issue for México ?

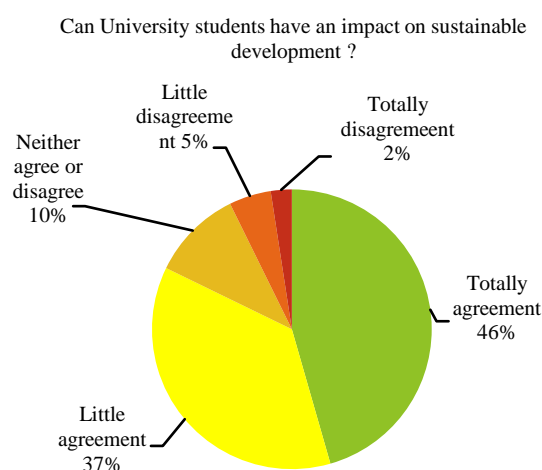


Graph 2 Do you consider sustainable development to be a relevant issue for Mexico?
 Source: Own Elaboration

In relation to the interpretation of graph 2, the most outstanding percentage that students expressed the highest preference was that they totally agreed on the relevance and importance of sustainable development in our country, fortunately students perceive the relevance and what it means for a country as important as Mexico.

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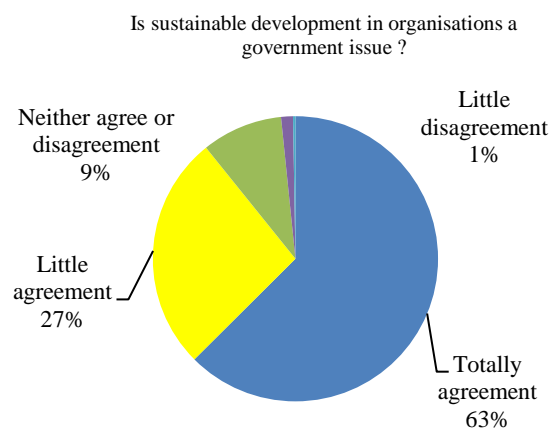
A percentage of 24 % expressed a little bit of agreement, due to the lack of interest or vision in recognising the seriousness of the problem that this represents. It is worth noting the 5% of those who showed a little apathy or disinterest on this item, which indicates a lack of awareness or knowledge and finally there is 1% of respondents who reflected a little disagreement, which is an indicator with a very low value of the students interviewed who are not interested in the issue of sustainable development.



Graph 3 Can university students have an impact on sustainable development?

Source: Own Elaboration

With regard to the interpretation of graph 3, the highest percentage was 46%, which corresponds to students who expressed total agreement, which can have an impact with favourable and effective actions on sustainable development. A percentage of 37 % expressed little agreement, due to a lack of interest or vision, to recognise the seriousness of the problem this represents. 10 % expressed apathy or disinterest in the issue, 5 % strongly disagreed, indicating a lack of awareness or knowledge, and finally 2 % of respondents expressed a lack of knowledge or commitment to the indicator, which certainly reflects a lack of relevance or commitment to the fact that, thanks to their youth and energy, university students could impact with well-executed actions for the benefit of sustainable development.



Graph 4 Is sustainable development in organisations a government issue?

Source: Own Elaboration

When interpreting graph 4, the most notable percentage of students expressing 63% strongly agree that the government has a very broad competence and could be of great support for public policies that are generated in sustainable development in organisations. A percentage of 27% of the students surveyed expressed little agreement, due to a lack of knowledge of the subject. Nine percent expressed indifference or lack of interest in the subject and finally, only 1% of the students surveyed expressed their opinion of not being in agreement, possibly because they perceive that the government is distant from this subject.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the perception of university students on sustainable development in organisations is of utmost importance in higher education. The above-mentioned research has shown that students recognise the need for organisations to adopt sustainable practices to ensure a better and more balanced future. However, there is a lack of awareness of the specific actions and policies that organisations implement to achieve sustainability.

It is essential to promote education and the active participation of students in sustainable development. Educational institutions play a key role in providing comprehensive sustainability training and encouraging critical reflection on current business practices. Higher education institutions should be committed to providing students with specialised courses and programmes that enable them to understand the challenges and solutions related to sustainable development.

It is also important to provide students with practical opportunities to engage in related projects and activities, as these experiences will allow them to apply the knowledge acquired in the classroom and develop practical skills in the field of business sustainability. In addition, it is essential to establish partnerships with external companies and organisations to provide them with internships and real-world experiences.

The lack of awareness about the concrete actions that organisations implement to achieve sustainability can be addressed through transparency and disclosure of information by companies. Organisations should clearly and accessibly communicate their sustainability policies, practices and results. This will enable students and society at large to evaluate and support those organisations that are truly committed to sustainable development.

Furthermore, it is necessary to foster an environmentally responsible mindset in future generations of professionals. This implies not only transmitting theoretical knowledge, but also cultivating ethical values and principles that promote sustainability in all areas of personal and professional life. Students must understand that their role as future leaders and decision-makers is crucial in driving change towards more sustainable practices in organisations.

Proposal

This proposal aims to promote the linking of sustainable development in organisations through the active participation of university students. The importance of sustainability in business is recognised and it is proposed that future professionals become agents of change in the implementation of sustainable practices. To achieve this, a multidimensional approach is proposed that involves education, practical training, collaboration with companies and the promotion of a responsible mentality towards the environment. Therefore, it is considered relevant to mention the following points:

Sustainability education:

It is essential that management students receive a comprehensive education in business sustainability. The inclusion of specific subjects on sustainable development is proposed, where topics such as environmental management, corporate social responsibility and business ethics are addressed.

In addition, participation in seminars, conferences and workshops related to sustainability can be encouraged to broaden students' knowledge and awareness.

Practical training:

Theory must go hand in hand with practice. It is suggested that university students undertake internships in companies committed to sustainability. These internships will allow them to apply the knowledge they have acquired, to learn about the sustainable policies and practices of organisations and to develop practical skills in the implementation of sustainable strategies.

Collaboration with companies:

It is essential to establish partnerships between universities and companies to promote sustainable development. Joint research and development projects can be carried out, where students and professors work in collaboration with organisations to identify areas for improvement and develop innovative solutions in terms of sustainability. In addition, mentoring and internship programmes can be set up in companies, where students can receive direct guidance and feedback on their ideas and projects.

Creation of networks and exchange spaces:

It is important to create spaces where university students can share experiences, knowledge and ideas related to sustainable development. This can be achieved through the creation of discussion groups, clubs or student associations focused on entrepreneurial sustainability. These networks will enable students to strengthen their commitment to sustainability and generate joint proposals for the implementation of sustainable practices in organisations.

Awareness raising and advocacy:

University students can play an important role in raising awareness on sustainable development. The organisation of events, awareness-raising campaigns and informative talks in the university community and in society in general is proposed. Student social responsibility projects can also be developed, where students collaborate with non-governmental organisations or local communities to promote sustainable actions.

Linking sustainable development in organisations through the active participation of university students is a promising strategy. Sustainability education, practical training, collaboration with companies, networking and exchange, awareness raising and advocacy are key actions to achieve this goal. University students have the potential to become agents of change and contribute to building a sustainable future in business. It is essential that universities, businesses and society in general support and promote these initiatives to achieve long-term sustainable development.

This research shows that students believe that organisations should adopt sustainable practices to ensure a better future. However, there is a lack of awareness of the concrete actions and policies that organisations implement to achieve sustainability. It is paramount to promote education and active participation of students in sustainable development, thus fostering an environmentally responsible mindset in future generations. Sustainable development has become an imperative for organisations seeking to balance economic growth with social and environmental responsibility.

University students represent a potential force for driving change towards more sustainable practices in business. This proposal aims to present a series of actions that enable students to play an active role in linking sustainable development in organisations. In summary, university students' perception of sustainable development in organisations highlights the need to promote education, active participation and awareness of sustainable business practices. Educational institutions, business and society must work together to ensure that future professionals are prepared to address the challenges of sustainable development and contribute to building a more balanced and environmentally responsible future.

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