

## ORIGINAL RESEARCH

65. **Perceived Knowledge, Perception and Readiness of University Students regarding Sustainability Education and Practice**Pui Ee Seow<sup>1</sup>, Pui Ee Seow<sup>1</sup> Medical School, Malaysia

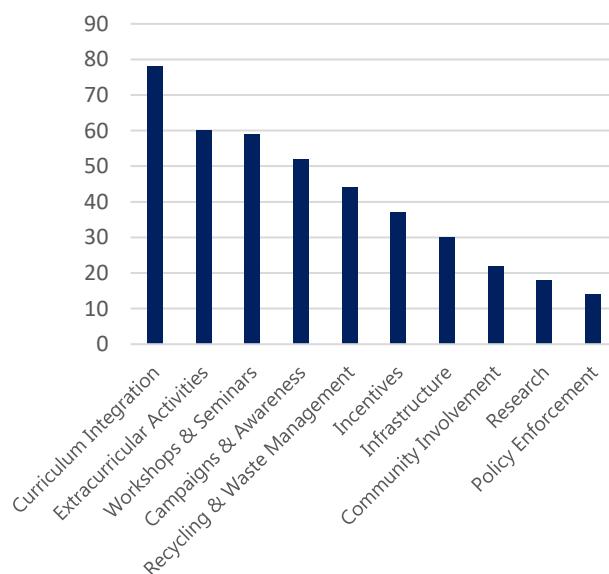
**Background:** Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) empowers individuals to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values necessary for fostering a sustainable future. As global concerns regarding climate change, resource depletion, and environmental degradation intensify, higher education institutions play a vital role in preparing students to adopt and champion sustainable practices. This study aims to assess perceived knowledge, perception, and readiness toward sustainability education and practice among IMU University students, with the goal of informing institutional strategies and designing impactful educational interventions.

**Methods:** A cross-sectional study was conducted among students enrolled in foundation, undergraduate, and postgraduate programs in IMU University. Data were collected using a validated, self-administered online questionnaire disseminated through institutional emails and social media platforms. The online survey included a combination of closed-ended multiple-choice questions, Likert scale ratings, and open-ended questions. A minimum sample size of 426 students was calculated to ensure representativeness, factoring in a 20% non-response or attrition rate. The survey assessed students' demographic characteristics, prior exposure to sustainability content, perceived knowledge of sustainability concepts, attitudes toward environmental and planetary health, and readiness to engage in sustainability initiatives. Data were analyzed descriptively to summarize trends and identify potential gaps in knowledge and participation.

**Results:** A total of 427 respondents participated in the study; 328 were female, and 351 were Malaysian. The majority (83.6%) were enrolled in undergraduate programs, and 81% had not attended any course related to sustainability. In terms of environmental and planetary health, 92.3% and 87.2% of respondents, respectively, rated their knowledge as fair or good. Climate change, pollution, and deforestation were identified as the key sustainability challenges facing the planet. Over 89% of respondents were very concerned about climate change, while over 74% were concerned about biodiversity loss challenges. Nearly 64% of respondents agreed that sustainability education should be a required part of the university's curriculum. Most preferred workshops or seminars to include sustainability education in the curriculum, while others preferred extracurricular activities or integration into existing courses. Approximately 83% of respondents expressed willingness to participate in sustainability initiatives. The most commonly suggested campus-level changes to promote sustainability were recycling improvements, reducing the use of single-use plastic, and energy conservation. The level of concern of the respondents about current sustainability challenges was measured. The maximum possible score was 24 and the median score was 13.

**Conclusion:** The present study revealed that respondents demonstrated generally good knowledge and perceptions regarding environmental health and sustainability issues. However, fewer than 20% had undertaken formal courses on these topics. Hence, courses should be introduced and offered through workshops, symposia, or practical sessions to strengthen understanding and engagement. Student engagement in sustainability-related initiatives on campus should be actively promoted and further strengthened. Findings from this study can guide the university in integrating sustainability into its curriculum and fostering sustainable practices among students. By highlighting knowledge gaps and attitudes, the study will contribute to the development of targeted educational strategies and institutional policies.

**Figure 1.** ways to incorporate sustainability education and practice in universities.



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