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Communications of Sustainability Practices in the Higher Education Sector: Evidence from the UTS Social Impact Dashboard

Jayan Chirayath Kurian
University of Technology Sydney, jayanchirayathkurian@uts.edu.au

Simon Thompson
ANU, Simon.Thompson@anu.edu.au

Blooma John
University of Canberra, blooma.john@canberra.edu.au

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Communications of Sustainability Practices in the Higher Education Sector: Evidence from the UTS Social Impact Dashboard

TREO Talk Paper

Jayan Chirayath Kurian

University of Technology Sydney
Jayanchirayathkurian@uts.edu.au

Simon Thompson

Australian National University
Simon.Thompson@anu.edu.au

Blooma Mohan John

University of Canberra
Blooma.John@canberra.edu.au

Abstract

The aim of this research is to explore the content and the extent of sustainability disclosure in the higher education sector in Australia. Several studies have been conducted to examine sustainability (Wang & Zhang, 2023; Cheng et al., 2023), but there are limited studies on sustainability disclosure in the higher education sector. Some of the drawbacks with existing studies are the lack of standardization and transparency across sustainability dimensions. Other gaps are limited studies on the micro levers of sustainability, exploring the issues of all stakeholders (e.g. board members, donors, alumni etc.), and the social dimensions of sustainability. Additionally, limited research was conducted on addressing high-end sustainability strategies, partnerships, and theory-based research on sustainability in the higher education sector. To address these gaps, a content analysis on the UTS social impact dashboard and the ANU's public website will be employed to examine the Universities' current sustainability disclosure practices in accordance with the United Nations Sustainability Development Goals (GSDR, 2023). The outcome from the content analysis will inform the development of a sustainability framework suitable for the communications of sustainability practices in the Australian higher education sector. We use the ESG (Environment, Social and Governance) framework to reflect on sustainability disclosure in the higher education sector. Since the UTS social impact dashboard promotes UTS's social justice agenda, our primary focus in this study will be on the social dimension of the ESG framework. The social dimension will be evaluated based on the work of Lundy et al. (2022), where the authors examine working environment & culture, student learning environment, employee and student health and safety, compensation practices, diversity, inclusion, policies to prevent sexual harassment, training, and professional development.

References

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