

Reinforcing Stakeholders' Engagement to Sustainability Practices

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Abstract

The study assessed the stakeholders' engagement to sustainability practices. It described the Batangas State University stakeholders in terms of age, sex, length of service, educational attainment, academic rank, and designation. It also determined the extent of engagement relative to curriculum and teaching methods, policies and initiatives, and sustainable university operations.

The study involved 55 employee-stakeholders of the university from the different colleges in Pablo Borbon Campus. The researcher-made questionnaire served as the main data gathering instrument. Frequency, percentage and weighted mean were the statistical treatment utilized.

Findings of the study revealed that employee-stakeholders belong to 51 years old and above, female, with 21 to 25 years of service, a doctorate degree holder, associate professor in academic rank and enjoy faculty status. In relation to engagement to sustainability practices, it was revealed that since the university has taken initial preparations toward strong commitment to SDGs, results of study affirmed to a moderate extent of engagement with respect to teaching methods, policies and initiatives.

Keywords: Batangas State University, Stakeholder's engagement, sustainability practices

1. Introduction

In recent years, the rising urgency of climate change and environmental deterioration has driven universities globally to rethink their roles in advancing sustainability. Universities, like Batangas State University (BatStateU), a premier national university in the heart of Batangas, Philippines, functioning as hubs of knowledge and innovation, act not just as educational entities but also as significant influencers in their communities and society as a whole. The involvement of internal stakeholders—students, faculty, administration is essential for promoting sustainability initiatives in higher education. Stakeholder engagement requires the cooperation of all individuals who have a stake in or are impacted by the university's activities. For instance, students are more frequently promoting eco-friendly practices via groups and clubs centered on sustainability efforts. Universities are adapting by integrating student input into their sustainability plans.

Batangas State University has reached important milestones in its goal of delivering quality education, conducting research, and offering community service. The university provides a range of undergraduate and graduate degrees in various fields, including engineering, business, education, and information technology. It seeks to address the educational requirements of a varied student population by integrating innovative teaching approaches, contemporary curricula, and cutting-edge facilities. The development of new laboratory facilities and classrooms demonstrates BSU's dedication to creating an ideal learning atmosphere that aligns with technological progress. Additionally, BatStateU has actively sought internationalization through the establishment of partnerships with different educational institutions overseas. These partnerships improve the education quality provided and also give students

chances for exchange programs and collaborative research projects. These international experiences have been essential in expanding students' viewpoints and equipping them for worldwide challenges. Batangas State University places significant emphasis on research. The organization motivates both faculty and students to participate in impactful research initiatives that tackle local and national concerns. Through fostering a culture of inquiry and creativity, BatStateU aids in creating solutions that serve society. Recent research efforts have focused on sustainability, disaster preparedness, and local economic growth, highlighting the university's dedication to meaningful scholarship that aligns with current issues.

Moreover, Red spartan employees/officials, faculty members are crucial to this engagement, as they incorporate sustainability principles into the curriculum across different fields. In this way, they make sure that emerging leaders possess the knowledge and skills required to tackle environmental issues. The university administration also significantly contributes to enhancing sustainability efforts. With the series of mandates released by the Office of the University President on Policy on Waste Tracking and Management, Policy on Minimization of the Use of Plastic and Disposable Items, Zero Waste Pablo Borbon, Energy Conservation for Cost Savings, and the recent Virtual Usapang SUSTAIN: Strategic University Synergy Towards Advocacy, Innovation, and Nurturing Sustainability at BatStateU Pablo Borbon to name a few, these all enjoined every Red Spartan in Pablo Borbon community to promote, uphold and make initiatives for collective effort for sustainability.

Thus, with the desire to assess the sustainability practices of the concerned officials and faculty members among the four colleges in Pablo Borbon:

2. Literature Review

Sustainability in higher education institutions has grown more essential recently, corresponding with worldwide initiatives to address climate change and environmental damage. Recent research shows that universities are making notable progress in becoming more sustainable by implementing various initiatives. A 2021 report from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) indicates that many institutions have implemented extensive sustainability strategies that include energy efficiency, waste minimization, and sustainable transportation. As an illustration, the University of California system aims for carbon neutrality by 2025, adopting solar power systems and encouraging electric vehicle adoption among its students and employees. Additionally, creating curricula is vital for promoting sustainability in higher education institutions. Numerous institutions are embedding sustainability in their academic curricula, prompting students to thoughtfully address environmental concerns. A prominent case is the University of Edinburgh, which provides a distinctive interdisciplinary Master's program centered on Sustainable Energy Systems. These programs not only equip students for careers in sustainability but also enhance overall awareness of environmental concerns on campus.

Moreover, student involvement is an essential component of sustainable practices in universities. Studies indicate that student-driven projects, including on-campus gardens and recycling initiatives, play a vital role in fostering a sustainable campus environment. The University of British Columbia, for example, has achieved notable success with its student organizations centered on sustainability that advocate for initiatives covering sustainable food production and community engagement in environmental conservation efforts. While advancements have occurred, universities still face challenges in adopting effective sustainability measures. Insufficient funding, administrative obstacles, and differing degrees of commitment among institutional departments can impede the creation and implementation of sustainability initiatives. A 2022 study indicated that although certain universities lead in sustainability, others find it challenging to effectively involve stakeholders, leading to an absence of unified strategy and guidance.

In summary, universities are crucial in promoting sustainability initiatives that aid in environmental conservation while also equipping future leaders to address these issues. Current research and case studies show that although significant advancements have been achieved, organizations must persist in tackling the challenges that hinder sustainability initiatives. A collective strategy that incorporates administrative assistance, student engagement, and strong educational initiatives will be crucial for progressing sustainability in higher education. By pursuing their sustainability objectives, universities set a standard for societal change, fostering increased community involvement in environmental responsibility.

Methods

The study involved 55 officials and faculty members among the four colleges in Batangas State University Pablo Borbon: College of Teacher Education, College of Arts and Sciences, College of Health Sciences, and College of Accountancy, Business, Economics, International Hospitality Management.

3. Results and Discussion

Looking at the extent of engagement of respondents to sustainability practices

Table 1
Engagement in terms of Curriculum and Teaching Methods

Items	WM	VI
1. Integrating environmental awareness and conservation efforts into learning experiences	3.43	ME
2. Implementing hands-on activities such as fieldwork, case studies, and real-world sustainability challenges	3.43	ME
3. Encouraging interdisciplinary sustainability research projects	3.43	ME
4. Integrating sustainability topics across all disciplines	3.37	ME
5. Designing curricula to align with SDGs for a broader impact	3.27	ME
6. Partnering with local organizations for hands-on sustainability projects	3.27	ME
7. Incorporating lessons on waste sorting, composting, and zero-waste lifestyles	3.20	ME
8. Using digital resources instead of printed materials to reduce paper use	3.17	ME
9. Incentivizing research on sustainability and green innovation	3.17	ME
10. Conducting educational tours on campus sustainability efforts	3.17	ME
11. Offering workshops on sustainability for faculty development	3.13	ME
12. Developing degree programs focused on environmental sustainability	3.10	ME
13. Using games and simulations to model sustainable decision-making	2.93	ME
14. Designating sustainability hubs for faculty and student collaboration	2.80	ME
15. Partnering with local businesses to implement sustainability projects	2.77	ME
Composite Mean	3.18	ME

It can be observed from the assessment of the stakeholders that all items indicated in the table have moderate engagement in relation to curriculum and teaching methods. It implies that although the BatStateU has established policies and mandates but needs more refine stipulations relating to the curriculum and instruction. For instance, they have integrated environmental awareness and conservation efforts into learning experiences to a moderate extent. Faculty members have to establish a clearer and well-defined integration of environmental awareness and conservation efforts which would be translated into students' meaningful experiences. Likewise, as seen in the table, true enough, the BatStateU Pablo Borbon shall develop mechanism and strategies to cater partnership with local businesses. For the researchers, although the campus has the Barakahan every year where it invited local farmers to promote

their goods and products, the same initiative must be encouraged more frequent in all university events and activities. In general, it can be said that among colleges in Pablo Borbon, curriculum mapping and clarity of sustainability policies and practices must be noted and taken into consideration so as to continuously respond the growing desire and mandates of sustainability.

Table 2
Engagement in terms of Policies and Initiatives

Items	WM	VI
1. Encouraging recycling, composting, and reducing single-use plastics.	3.40	ME
2. Encouraging staff and faculty to adopt sustainable practices in their workspaces.	3.33	ME
3. Sourcing eco-friendly, fair-trade, and locally-produced goods.	3.27	ME
4. Ensuring that sustainability initiatives are accessible and inclusive to all communities.	2.97	ME
5. Reducing waste, energy use in research labs by implementing green lab programs.	2.93	ME
6. Hosting competitions or awareness campaigns like plastic-free weeks or energy-saving contests.	2.93	ME
7. Setting university-wide goals to reduce carbon footprints.	2.90	ME
8. Implementing plant-based menus, reducing food waste, and eliminating single-use plastics.	2.90	ME
9. Upgrading lighting systems, and implementing smart energy management.	2.87	ME
10. Supporting student-led clubs focused on environmental activism and initiatives.	2.83	ME
11. Implementing LED-certified or energy-efficient buildings on campus	2.83	ME
12. Providing grants for faculty and students to work on sustainability projects.	2.80	ME
13. Investing in solar panels, wind energy, or other renewable energy sources.	2.70	ME
Composite Mean	2.97	ME

In terms of policies and initiatives, the BatStateU has well-disseminated and monitored compliance among units and departments. Considering the number or series of memo in relation to waste segregation and others, assessment revealed that employee-stakeholders have not fully grasp the value of pursuing recycling, composting and reducing singly use of plastics. Likewise, encouraging faculty and staff to adopt sustainable practices in their workstation were assessed to a moderate extent. This would mean that there were instances that their habits become their norms and thus they have not fully captured the policies mandated by the university. Further, the standard time for turning on and off the air-condition units, lights and others, these at times have been the usual violations. Moreover, items were all assessed to a moderate extent as some may be for future plans and policy making since there were BatStateU among other areas like San Juan, Nasugbu, Balayan where items would be more applicable and contextualized.

Table 3
Engagement in terms of Sustainable School Operations

Items	WM	VI
1. Provide recycling bins for paper, plastic, metal, and electronic waste	3.30	ME
2. Promoting "lights-off" and "power-down" campaigns for classrooms and offices	3.27	ME
3. Promote reusable decorations, and compostable items at university events.	3.27	ME
4. Encouraging water conservation awareness programs among students and staff.	3.23	ME
5. Implementing energy-efficient lighting, such as LED bulbs, throughout the campus.	3.00	ME
6. Encouraging the use of renewable energy sources, such as solar panels or wind energy.	2.97	ME
7. Encouraging carpooling and ride-sharing among faculty and students.	2.93	ME

8. Set up composting facilities for food waste from cafeterias and gardens.	2.90	ME
9. Encouraging paperless policy by digitizing administrative and academic documents	2.90	ME
10. Utilizing smart building technologies to monitor and reduce energy consumption.	2.80	ME
11. Establishing policies to reduce excessive air conditioning and heating usage.	2.73	ME
12. Implementing pedestrian-friendly campus designs to reduce vehicle dependency.	2.70	ME
Composite Mean	3.00	ME

For sustainable school operations, the University stakeholders have started gearing towards its full engagement in relation to the items presented in the table. Providing recycling bins for paper, plastic, metal, and electronic waste, promoting "lights-off" and "power-down" campaigns for classrooms and offices, and reusable decorations, and compostable items at university events were assessed to a moderate extent. This shows that stakeholders have recognized the policies but at times have not fully complied with. Moreover, the university has not also spare itself from having paperless policy by digitizing administrative and academic documents which is main concern if sustainability practice is taken into consideration.

4. Conclusion

Findings of the study revealed that employee-stakeholders belong to 51 years old and above, female, with 21 to 25 years of service, a doctorate degree holder, associate professor in academic rank and enjoy faculty status. In relation to engagement to sustainability practices, it was revealed that since the university has taken initial preparations toward strong commitment to SDGs, results of study affirmed to a moderate extent of engagement with respect to teaching methods, policies and initiatives.

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