

Exploring the Contribution of Higher Education to Sustainable Development: A Bibliometric Analysis of Research on Social Sustainability

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Abstract : Sustainable development, aimed at meeting current needs while safeguarding the needs of future generations, is a global imperative. Higher education stands as a pivotal force in fostering sustainable values and behaviors. However, most scholars and governments primarily focus on environmental and economic aspects. Consequently, this study examines the distribution patterns of higher education for social sustainability. The study highlights overall annual scientific production trends, leading journals and countries in scientific publication, most researched topics, and frequently used keywords. The study utilized a bibliometric method with the aid of the R Studio program. The analysis reveals Sustainability (Switzerland) as the leading journal, with 292 articles published, followed by the International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education, which published 186 articles. Additionally, the USA is identified as the leading country, with Spain ranking second in producing research related to higher education for socially sustainable development. Among the 54 African countries, only South Africa ranks 13th, contributing fifty-nine scientific articles. Furthermore, higher education for sustainability, sustainable education, sustainable development goals, etc., emerge as the most researched topics, while the term "higher education" is prevalent in 29% and "sustainability" in 28% of the documents. Notably, according to the analysis, social sustainability is the focus of only 3% of articles. This suggests that academics researching sustainable development and higher education have overlooked social sustainability, a crucial human component of sustainable development. Consequently, the researchers concluded that social academics who are interested in studying sustainable development and higher education should give priority to social sustainability.

Keywords : higher education, bibliometric analysis, social sustainability, sustainable development

Conference Title : ICTES 2024 : International Conference on Teaching and Education Sciences

Conference Location : New York, United States

Conference Dates : June 03-04, 2024