

The Function of Campus Managers in Sustainable Innovation Implementation

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Abstract

The desire to create a sustainable built environment is become more pressing on a global scale. This goal, along with unmatched access to cutting-edge technologies for sustainable growth, encourages universities to use new solutions more frequently and more often. The university campus is ideally suited to serve as a framework for living labs, deploying and testing cutting-edge technology in a genuine setting. However, putting innovations into practise on campus calls for a clear vision, deliberate action, and cross-disciplinary teamwork, while innovations themselves present a number of difficulties for the way things are done in business as usual. A literature analysis and a qualitative research among campus managers at 13 Dutch universities were done to examine the role of campus real estate managers in decisions about the adoption of innovations on university campuses.

Keywords: Innovation • Campus • Categorization framework • Innovation implementation • Decision support tool • Sustainability • Living labs

Introduction

Universities play a crucial role in sustainable development through their work in education and research, but more recently they have also taken on initiatives to combat climate change and environmental problems by forming alliances with the general public and outside parties. They aim to "become 'change-maker' universities; collaborating with each other in the knowledge economy; placing students at the centre of the teaching and learning process; and fulfilling their 'third mission' to partner with external stakeholders and society" through their ambitious and cutting-edge inter-disciplinary research on resource efficiency, carbon capture, and mitigation measures. Because it provides the environment for knowledge creation, sharing, and value creation, the actual university campus has progressively merged into an ecosystem for research and innovation for sustainable development. The "dynamic process of mutual adaptation between innovation and organisation" is how this article defines the application of innovation for sustainability. The dynamic process in question in this instance is the mutual adaptation of the organisation, the university campus real estate management units, and technologies that enhance sustainability. These entities, referred to as campus managers going forward, are responsible for organising and facilitating the application of these cutting-edge solutions to campus real estate [1-3].

Methods

Additionally, the adoption of sustainable innovation that is possible on campus could play a crucial role in fostering a networked economy, a "process of innovation [because of] changing social values and growing environmental pressures" that, over time, would alter organisations, institutions, and communities. Universities can be crucial in exploiting this networked

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Received: 13 August 2022, Manuscript No. jbm-22-82622; **Editor Assigned:** 15 August 2022, PreQC No. P-82622; **Reviewed:** 27 August 2022, QC No. Q-82622; **Revised:** 03 September 2022, Manuscript No. R-82622; **Published:** 10 September 2022, DOI: 10.37421/2161-5833.2022.12.457

technology. In order to ensure a thorough investigation of campus real estate managers' experiences with innovation implementation, a qualitative method was used in this study [4]. Semi-structured interviews with campus managers of 13 Dutch universities were undertaken between October 2020 and February 2021. In-depth descriptions of campus management's experiences (drivers, impediments, and solutions) with innovation implementation projects on campus (as well as a list of innovation projects that campus managers have dealt with) were the two main goals of the interviews.

Discussion

Thus, favourable conditions arise when the goal of achieving sustainability on a university campus is clear, the campus manager's anticipated role in implementing innovations for sustainable development is supported by "some financial room," and an expert in innovation and opportunity matching acts as a knowledge broker. One instance of campus managers acting in a facilitation capacity was to see to it that facility management coordinated with the owner of the coffee vendor to supply coffee grounds for experiments on mushroom gardening and urban farming on campus. Another illustration shows how college administrators implemented solar bicycle charging stations provided by outside partners and provided data on usage while students evaluated user experience [5,6].

Conclusion

If this framework for categorising projects is continuously used to identify and choose novel initiatives that help sustainable development, it might also support the crucial monitoring and evaluation of these initiatives carried out on campuses. If done so, colleges might become the "change-makers" of the future, strengthening the networked economy and providing chances for cross-campus execution of creative projects that support sustainable development. The non-generalizable assessment of the difficulties faced by a specific responder group (Dutch university campus managers) in a constrained situation is one of the research's limitations (the university campus). Therefore, it might not be applicable to colleges in other nations or innovation implementation managers in other industries.

Acknowledgement

None.

Conflict of Interest

None.

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How to cite this article: Pre, Mathilda Du. "The Function of Campus Managers in Sustainable Innovation Implementation." *Arabian J Bus Manag Review* 12 (2022): 457.