

Building Responsible Leadership: The Voice of European University Students

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Abstract

Sustainability constitutes one of the greatest social and organizational challenges today, and within this context, responsible leadership is recognized as an essential competency in university education. However, its presence in curricula is limited, especially in technical degrees. This study aims to analyse European university students' perceptions of the training received in responsible leadership and examine the gap between the importance attributed to them and the perceived learning. The research is part of the Erasmus+ RESPRO project and adopts a quantitative approach, with a non-experimental, cross-sectional design. A structured survey in English, using a five-point Likert scale, was administered to a sample of 175 students from four European universities (Spain, Finland, Latvia, and Austria). The analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics and comparisons between degree programs. The results show that, although students place high importance on skills related to responsible leadership, they perceive insufficient learning. The gap is more pronounced in STEM programs compared to project management and administration. The study adds value by highlighting the voices of European students and generating evidence that justifies redesigning curricula, incorporating innovative methodologies aimed at strengthening transversal skills in responsible leadership.