

COMPLETION REPORT

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Leadership Capabilities and Managerial Competencies for Sustainability in Higher Education: A Comparative Study between Malaysia and Japan

Given the increased emphasis on embedding the 17 UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the curriculum, research, engagement activities and operations of higher education institutions, our comparative study replicates an earlier international study of Turnaround Leadership for Sustainability in Higher Education (TLSHE) in the unique context of Malaysia and Japan. Our research also presents a case for closer focus on developing Education for Sustainability (EfS) leaders in institutions of higher learning.

In terms of research design, this study is a quantitative comparative research. We collected data for EfS-related variables from lecturers affiliated with Malaysian and Japanese public and private universities. Building on the data and results from the TLSHE study, we made a series of within- and between- sample descriptive comparisons from different angles and levels. To generalize our findings, we used gender and experience outside higher education as control variables and compared the academics from the Malaysian and the Japanese institutions through the path modeling framework.

Our comparisons showed that except for two domains, namely, contextual factors influencing EfS leadership and the EfS leadership development approaches, the means of all other domains based on the data collected from the Malaysian sample were the highest, followed by means from the international TLSHE sample, and finally the means from the Japanese sample. We also observed that transparency, engagement with EfS initiatives at different levels, passion for teaching and learning, and creative and lateral thinking were amongst the top indicators. Our inferential tests revealed significant differences between the academics from Japan and Malaysia as well.

The findings of our analyses can be used to ensure that the selection and development of EfS leaders (in our case, lecturers who may be formal or informal EfS leaders), not just at the central but at the local level in the distinctive context of Japan and Malaysia, focus on what counts and the good ideas embodied in the 17 UN SDGs are actually put into practice. We have also highlighted the policy implications with respect to the gender and the previous work experience of lecturers outside higher education sector in more detail in this study.

In terms of originality, our research compares the perceptions of two samples of academics from Asian countries with the perceptions of the international TLSHE sampled EfS leaders in terms of EfS leadership-related issues and therefore, increases the awareness of academic community in this regard. It also highlights the role of lecturers (e.g., professors) as intellectual academic leaders in achieving SDGs. Moreover, our study shows that lecturers' gender and previous work experience outside higher education should be considered when developing and implementing policies on EfS leadership.

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.) <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Elwood, J. A. & Ghasemy, M. (2022). Group differences in practice-based approach to Education for Sustainability (EfS) leadership development: The application of the PLSe2 method in running simultaneous comparisons through the SEM framework. <i>International Conference on Research in Education and Science (ICRES), March 24-27, 2022, Antalya (Turkey)</i>2. Ghasemy, M., & Elwood, J. A. (2022). Education for Sustainability (EfS) expertise and self-organization to achieve personal and interpersonal outcomes: A comparative study in the context of the Malaysian and the Japanese higher education systems. <i>International Conference on Research in Education and Science (ICRES), March 24-27, 2022, Antalya (Turkey)</i>
Thesis (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.) <p>No thesis.</p>
Book (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.) <p>No books</p>
Articles: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ghasemy, M., & Elwood, J. A., Scott, Geoffrey (2022). A Comparative Study on Turnaround Leadership in Higher Education and the Successful Implementation of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. <i>International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education</i>. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSHE-01-2022-00012. Ghasemy, M., & Elwood, J. A. (2022). Job satisfaction, academic motivation, and organizational citizenship behavior among lecturers during the COVID-19 pandemic: a cross-national comparative study in Japan and Malaysia. <i>Asia Pacific Education Review</i>. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12564-022-09757-63. Ghasemy, M., & Elwood, J. A. (2022). A comparative study on the Education for Sustainability (EfS) skills and in-role performance effectiveness in the context of the Malaysian and the Japanese academic ecosystems [Submitted to Higher Education Forum (Hiroshima University) and decisioned (minor revision)]4. Ghasemy, M., & Elwood, J. A., Scott, Geoffrey (2022). Approaches to education for sustainability (EfS) leadership development: An international comparative study based on the PLSe2 and ML methodologies [Submitted to Higher Education (Springer) and under consideration at present]