

FUTURE OF EDUCATION CONFERENCE 2024

Key Competencies in sustainability: Views of Greek Public Servants

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Florence, 21/6/2024

Sustainable Development (SD)

- One of the most important challenges of our time
- It has become a catalyst for policy makers
- Since the concept was popularized by WCED (1987)
- a development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

Rio Conference 1992 - UN

- Agenda 21
- Constitutes a comprehensive plan of action
 - Global
 - National
 - Local
 - Level
- Achieving sustainable development in its 3 dimensions (environmental, social, economic)
- 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's)

Sustainable Development & Public Servants

- Familiarization of PS with the issues of SD
 - Great Importance
 - Take into account their decisions
 - Promote measures that respect the 3 dimensions
- The characteristics of a person who may act as a transformative change agent towards SD should be reflected in the learning objectives
- This framework involves four (4) competence categories/classes:
 - Key competencies
 - Disciplinary competencies
 - General competencies
 - (other) professional competencies

A novel unified framework of 8 key competencies in sustainability has been adopted

- System – thinking Competence
- Anticipatory or Futures-thinking Competence
- Normative or Values-thinking Competence
- Strategic or Strategies-thinking Competence
- Interpersonal Competence
- Intrapersonal Competence
- Implementation Competence
- Integration Competence

Methodology

- The qualitative research approach is considered the most appropriate for a detailed understanding and viewing the subjective side of a participant
- Specifically, content analysis of data gathered via the interview method with open-ended questions was chosen
- Since it is considered most appropriate when probing people's perceptions of a topic

- The sample consisted of a total 44 executives
- Serving in Greek Public Administration
- A purposeful sampling method was employed
- In order to select participants
- That represented the variance of the targeted group
- With regard to
- Gender
- Age
- Work experience
- Position ranking &
- Academic / educational background

Questionnaire

- The Q. was divided into three parts (A, B, C)
 - Part A. included demographic information
 - Part B. included 6 questions aiming to explore the participants perceptions with regard to the concept of SD and their views on the skills and abilities required in order to cope with an administration that is oriented towards SD
 - Part C. included 5 questions regarding the policies and educatory/training initiatives concerning the promotion of SD

Table 1: List of key competencies in sustainability recognized by interviewees

No	Key competence	Frequency (No of interviewees)
1	Systems-thinking	4
2	Anticipatory (Futures-thinking)	6
3	Normative (Values-thinking)	24
4	Strategic (Strategies thinking)	5
5	Interpersonal	13
6	Intrapersonal	8
7	Implementation	8
8	Integration	1

Table 2: Distribution of the quantity of key competencies recognized by the interviewees

Quantity of recognized key competencies	Frequency (No of interviewees)
0	5
1	17
2	19
3	2
4	-
5	-
6	-
7	-
8	1

Conclusions

- All eight key competences in sustainability were recognized by the group of the interviewed Greek public servants, with the normative (values-thinking) and interpersonal competencies being the most prevalent. The least mentioned competencies were the systems thinking, the strategies-thinking and the integration competence.
- Among the interviewees who recognized at least one competence (39), the large majority (36) mentioned a maximum of only two competencies. This provides evidence for an overall low level of awareness of the competencies required in order to deal with issues related to sustainability transitions. These results bring out the need for educational interventions specifically designed for the empowerment of Greek public servants in the field of sustainable development via increased awareness and development of all eight relevant key competencies.

Thank you for your attention!

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