

Sustainable Campus: Students' Willingness to Pay for Water Refill Stations

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Plastic pollution is a critical societal challenge, driven largely by the incorrect disposal and management of plastic waste. Among plastic products, single-use water bottles represent a major opportunity for reducing plastic waste due to their easy substitutability with reusable alternatives. University campuses provide an ideal setting to address this issue by promoting sustainable practices, such as the use of reusable bottles and the installation of water refill stations. This study assesses the willingness of university students to pay for the installation of 10 water refill stations across two campuses, Azurém and Gualtar, as part of a sustainability initiative to reduce plastic waste. It also explores the factors that influence students' willingness to contribute financially through a one-time fee at the beginning of enrollment. This research was conducted as a part of the Environmental Economics course and employs the Contingent Valuation Method (CVM) to assess students' attitudes towards this sustainability project.

The methodology involves a structured survey using Google Forms to collect data on students' attitudes towards sustainability, water consumption habits, and financial comfort. The survey was divided into four sections: an introduction to the sustainability initiative, questions on attitudes and behaviors, an assessment of willingness to pay, and sociodemographic information. Data from 62 respondents were collected, encompassing 32 variables. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression models in RStudio to identify key factors influencing willingness to pay.

Statistical analysis of the data reveals that most respondents demonstrate a positive willingness to pay for the implementation of water refilling stations. Financial comfort and students' attitudes toward environmental and sustainability issues are significant determinants of students' willingness to pay.

These findings provide valuable insights for university policymakers in designing effective sustainability strategies and engaging the academic community in environmentally responsible practices.

Keywords: Contingent Valuation Method, Campus Sustainability