

# A systematic bibliometric review of the United Nation's SDGs: Which are the most related to higher education institutions?

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** This study aims to provide the current and future state of United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the higher education institutions (HEIs). Since the SDGs' proliferation, HEIs have played a crucial part in meeting the goals. Despite the central role of HEIs in accomplishing the SDGs, there has been little attention in providing a comprehensive overview of the SDGs in relation to HEIs. **Design/methodology/approach:** A total of 280 publications in the Web of Science database were analyzed through a bibliometric approach consisting of citation analysis, co-citation analysis and co-occurrence of keywords analysis. This review explores the current state of SDGs, its central themes of research streams and predicts future direction in the context of HEIs. **Findings:** The findings would assist stakeholders to strategize the SDGs on HEIs, including the government and policymakers, university top management, benefactors and academics. Three main research streams were observed sustainable curriculum; challenges and barriers of SDGs; and COVID-19 and health management. **Research limitations/implications:** Implications suggest that to achieve the stipulated goals in the SDGs, proper planning and strategy should be aligned proportionate to the national agenda. **Originality/value:** This paper presents a novel knowledge structure by mapping the most relevant SDGs in the context of HEIs based on bibliometric analysis.

## KEYWORDS

Challenge and barrier; COVID-19; Higher education institution; Sustainable curriculum; Sustainable development goals; Web of Science

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