

Mechanical Engineering Student Perspectives on the Impact of Company
Sustainability on their Career Decisions

by

Sheila Kennedy-Moore

Submitted to the
Department of Mechanical Engineering
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering

at the

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

June 2021

© 2021 Sheila Kennedy-Moore. All rights reserved.

The author hereby grants to MIT permission to reproduce and to distribute publicly paper and
electronic copies of this thesis document in whole or in part in any medium now known or
hereafter created.

Signature of Author: _____
Department of Mechanical Engineering
June, 2021

Certified by: _____
Timothy Gutowski
Professor of Mechanical Engineering
Thesis Supervisor

Accepted by: _____
Maria Yang
Professor of Mechanical Engineering
Undergraduate Officer

Mechanical Engineering Student Perspectives on the Impact of Company Sustainability on their Career Decisions

by

Sheila Kennedy-Moore

Submitted to the Department of Mechanical Engineering
on May 14, 2021 in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering

ABSTRACT

Companies can be an important part of solving major world problems such as climate change, pollution, and race and gender-based inequalities. Although awareness of the need for corporate sustainability has grown, companies could be doing a lot more. During the recruiting process, students showing they care about corporate sustainability can pressure companies to do more. As the number of students who are asking companies sustainability-related questions or showing they value corporate sustainability increases, it becomes more likely that companies will feel pressured to change to attract new talent. To empower more students to pressure companies this thesis aims to understand how MIT mechanical engineering seniors currently consider sustainability with respect to their career decisions and what would make students more likely to think of sustainability as an important aspect of their career decisions. The analysis found that although the majority of students care about sustainability, they face barriers such as knowledge gaps, lack of preparation, and discomfort. These barriers prevent them from questioning companies and factoring sustainability into their career decisions. Educating students on corporate sustainability, how to evaluate, and question companies may help reduce these barriers. Additionally, students may feel more empowered if they understand the impact they can have on corporate sustainability.

Thesis Supervisor: Timothy Gutowski
Title: Professor of Mechanical Engineering

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	3
Table of Contents.....	4
List of Figures	5
List of Tables.....	6
1. Introduction	7
2. Background	7
2.1 Current State of Corporate Sustainability	7
2.2 Company Sustainability Evaluation Methods and Issues	11
2.3 Attracting Prospective Employees with Corporate Sustainability	13
2.4 Impacts of Employee Activism on Company Change	14
3. Design of Survey and Interview Guide.....	16
4. Results and Discussion.....	18
4.1 Importance of Sustainability to Students	20
4.2 Student Knowledge and Effectiveness	26
4.3 Barriers and Recommendations	29
5. Conclusion	32
5.1 Next Steps	33
6. Appendices	34
Appendix A: Survey.....	34
Appendix B: Interview Guide.....	41
7. References	42

List of Figures

Figure 1: Global greenhouse gas emissions by sector	10
Figure 2: Responses to rate how much you agree with the statement “Sustainability is really important to me.”	21
Figure 3: Responses to “Rate each factors importance when deciding where to work for either a job or internship.”	22
Figure 4: Responses to rate how much you agree with “During my time at MIT, sustainability has become less important in my career decisions.”	23
Figure 5: Responses to “What areas of sustainability do you think it’s important for companies to be responsible for?”	24
Figure 6: Responses to “What areas of sustainability do you think it’s important for companies to be responsible for?” broken up by gender	24
Figure 7: Responses to “When evaluating corporate sustainability what resources do you use?” for the 24 students who didn’t mark “N/A I don’t evaluate corporate sustainability”	27
Figure 8: Responses to rate how much you agree with “I want to learn more about corporate sustainability.”	29
Figure 9: Rate how much you agree with “I feel comfortable asking recruiters questions to figure out if a company matches my values.”	30

List of Tables

Table 1: Demographics of survey respondents	19
Table 2: Industry of employed survey respondents N =25	19
Table 3: Demographics of interviewees N = 6.....	20

1. Introduction

Companies can be an important part of solving major world problems such as climate change, pollution, and race and gender-based inequalities. ClimateVoice is a non-profit that empowers employees and students to push companies to go “all in” on climate, focusing mainly on company lobbying and advocacy for climate policy. ClimateVoice explains how students can pressure companies to change during the recruiting process by showing they care about company sustainability efforts [1]. As the number of students who are asking companies sustainability-related questions or showing they value corporate sustainability increases, it becomes more likely that companies will feel pressured to change to attract new talent. This student applied pressure could help push companies to rethink how they are approaching sustainability, but to empower more students there needs to be a better understanding of what motivates students to factor sustainability into their career decisions.

This thesis aims to understand how MIT mechanical engineering seniors currently consider sustainability with respect to their career decisions and what would make students more likely to think of sustainability as an important aspect of their career decisions. A survey was used to establish a baseline on what students care about, what their current knowledge level is, and what barriers are preventing students from factoring sustainability into their career decisions. Afterward, interviews were used to develop a more in-depth understanding and to see if students had recommendations for addressing barriers to considering sustainability. The results can hopefully help to make it easier for students to factor in sustainability and get more students involved with pressuring companies to be more sustainable.

2. Background

2.1 Current State of Corporate Sustainability

Companies can play a crucial role in addressing sustainability issues. While the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) primarily target governments they also directly call on businesses to help solve sustainable development challenges [2]. Many solutions will require innovation and creativity from businesses as “relying only on government fiat to address sustainability issues such as climate change, water scarcity, depletion of natural resources and workers’ rights in insufficient” [3]. The UN Global Compact, the world’s largest corporate

sustainability initiative, breaks corporate sustainability into five aspects: having a principled business, strengthening society, having leadership commitment, reporting progress and local action [4]. These five aspects consider a company's impact on the world rather than just its environmental impact.

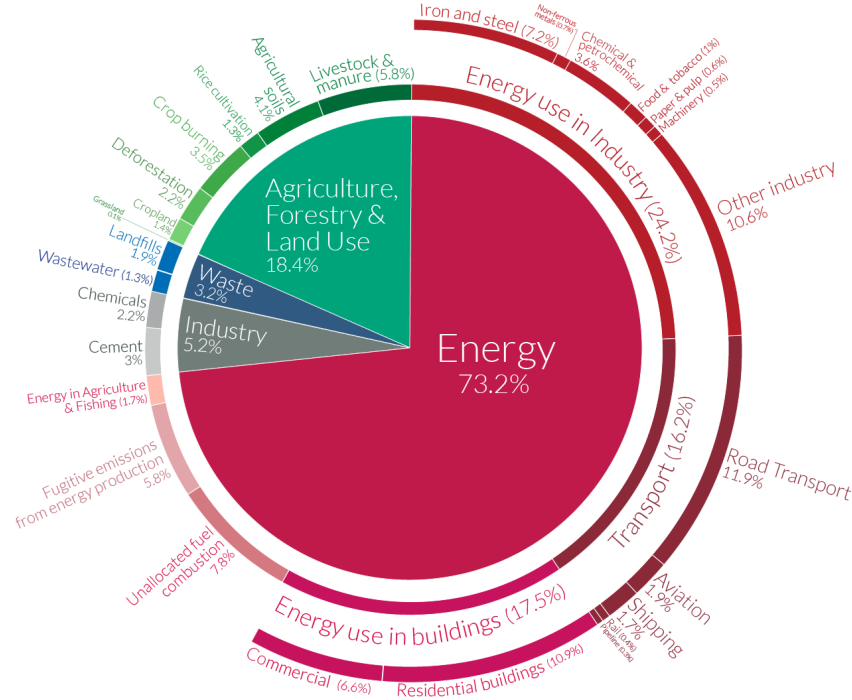
Awareness of the need for corporate sustainability has grown, but the actions companies are taking are not enough. Currently, over 9,500 companies have volunteered to participate in the UN Global Compact committing to operate responsibly in the areas of human rights, labor, environment and anti-corruption. Of the over 8,000 companies involved in the UN Global Compact in 2015, "84% of the CEOs believe that companies should play a leading role in addressing global sustainability challenges," but only "33% feel that business is currently making sufficient efforts" [4]. According to an annual survey of over 60,000 respondents conducted by MIT Sloan Management Review in partnership with The Boston Consulting Group between 2009 and 2017, "90% of executives see sustainability as important, but only 60% of companies have a sustainability strategy" and only 25% of companies have a clear business case for incorporating sustainability [3]. Companies understand that they have to do something, but are struggling to do something effective.

Oftentimes the companies that say they do have a sustainability strategy only have short term plans for small changes or complying with regulations [3]. These companies can piece together "projects, anecdotes, and examples [and make them] available to shareholders, regulators, and consumers in the form of glossy sustainability reports" [3]. For this reason, Alberto Carrillo Pineda, a founder of Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi), a global effort to assess corporate plans to reduce emissions, is skeptical of sustainability reports. He said, "when you look at what is behind [a sustainability report], you'll see there is not a lot of substance behind those commitments or the commitments are not comprehensive enough" [5]. Analysis of the S&P 500 companies' targets for emission reductions by the Institutional Shareholder Services, a firm that provides investors with governance and responsible investment solutions, declares that just over a third of the companies have ambitious targets, while 215 companies have no targets at all [5]. For corporate sustainability to be effective companies need to set specific, measurable and time-bound sustainability goals and select key performance indicators to keep track of their performance [2].

Focusing specifically on emissions, the contribution from industry and the emissions each company are responsible for varies depending on the scope of emissions included. Scope 1 and 2 emissions are direct and purchased energy emissions, while scope 3 emissions are emissions from both upstream and downstream an organization's main operations. Looking at Figure 1, adding up the emissions from energy use in industry, shipping and commercial building with the fugitive emissions from energy production and the direct industry emissions is 43.7%. Adding the agriculture industry which contributes another 17.8%, the total scope 1 and 2 emissions are about 61.5% [6]. This is a significant portion of emissions, and the scope 3 emissions of a company are on average 5.5 times higher than their operational emissions [7]. CDP Carbon Majors Report from 2017 states the fossil fuel industry and its products account for about 70% of all anthropogenic GHG emissions [8]. Therefore, factoring in scope 3 emissions 20 fossil fuel companies are responsible for 35% of all carbon dioxide and methane emissions since 1965 [9]. However, this doesn't mean that companies outside of the fossil fuel sector are off the hook. The scope 3 emissions of one company are the scope 1 and 2 emissions of another company. Since scope 3 emissions are 90% of fossil fuel company emissions, both fossil fuel companies and other sectors will play a critical role in reducing overall emissions [8,9].

Global greenhouse gas emissions by sector

This is shown for the year 2016 – global greenhouse gas emissions were 49.4 billion tonnes CO₂eq.



OurWorldinData.org – Research and data to make progress against the world’s largest problems.
 Source: Climate Watch, the World Resources Institute (2020). Licensed under CC-BY by the author Hannah Ritchie (2020).

Figure 1: Global greenhouse gas emissions by sector [6]

It’s crucial for companies to take responsibility for their entire value chain, not just in terms of scope 3 emissions, but for all areas of sustainability. Considering the entire value chain enables system-wide change that is necessary for meeting sustainable development goals. Oftentimes companies can have a greater impact when they create change either upstream or downstream in their value chain [2,7,10]. For example, when Unilever analyzed their entire value chain they found that a considerable portion of their footprint came from consumer use. They realized there were consumer behavior issues like consumers disposing of their products incorrectly and using more product than they needed. This analysis helped Unilever create a sustainability strategy and lead to the creation of their Sustainable Living brands [3]. While leading companies like Unilever have made significant changes, a global study of over 40,000 companies found that “80 percent of evaluated suppliers [lack] supply chain due diligence measures” and “57 percent [are] not monitoring working conditions” [10].

2.2 Company Sustainability Evaluation Methods and Issues

As more companies realize corporate sustainability is important there have become more methods to evaluate how companies are doing. Companies themselves are creating sustainability reports and putting sustainability strategy information on their websites. There are a number of different frameworks and models that companies use to write their reports. The five main frameworks and standard setting institutions are the CDP (formally the Carbon Disclosure Project), the Climate Disclosure Standards Board (CDSB), the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), the International Integrated Reporting Council (IIRC) and the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB). The GRI is used by 75% of the world's largest companies [3,11]. However, according to a 2018 assessment of the S&P 500 97% of the companies that had reports chose to customize their report rather than following one framework with 25% of reporters not referencing any framework [11].

One main issue with evaluating companies is the lack of standardization. Companies can publicly report on their sustainability progress, but “determining how hard companies are really trying can be very difficult when there are no regulatory standards that require uniform disclosures of important information like emissions” [5]. Even the companies working with the SBTi are struggling to report their emissions targets' progress in a useful way. Half of the companies reported in a way that lacked information or contextual data or was incomparable to the reportings of other companies [7]. In addition, only 3% of the 2018 S&P 500 companies that reported had their report fully externally verified [11]. An ordinary person is not going to be able to look at a company's sustainability report or website and understand how the company is doing relative to other companies or if the report fully represents the status of the company's sustainability efforts.

Third party rating, ranking, and certification methods have also grown in number. Companies have increasingly been submitting data to ESG (environmental, social and governance) rating agencies like Sustainalytics and MSCI. ESG ratings are primarily used by investors to inform their investment decisions. While ESG ratings encompass all areas of sustainability there are many other ratings and rankings that focus on a specific area of sustainability. The CDP scores companies on climate change, forests and water security in addition to providing a reporting framework [12]. InfluenceMap provides rankings to the CA100+ target companies, companies that are crucial to reaching global net-zero emissions, on

their climate lobbying practices [13]. DiversityInc creates an annual list of the top 50 US companies for diversity[14]. There are also certifications companies can receive like being a certified B corporation, defined as a company that meets the highest standards of verified social and environmental performance, public transparency, and legal accountability [15]. Lastly, companies can sign up to participate in networks and initiatives like the UN Global Compact and the Ceres' Company Network. Participating in these networks and initiatives requires companies to meet certain standards showing a certain level of commitment to sustainability [4,16]. With so many different ways to evaluate companies' problems arise in knowing where to look, how to compare different companies and understanding whether certain evaluations can be trusted.

Rankings and ratings of companies should make it easier for the ordinary person to understand how a specific company is doing, but it's not straightforward. Looking specifically at ESG ratings, the same company can receive very different ESG ratings from different agencies. A working paper from MIT Sloan "Aggregate Confusion: The Divergence of ESG Ratings" splits the divergence of ratings into three main causes. Scope divergence is when the ratings include different sets of attributes, so one rating agency could factor in a company's lobbying efforts while the other doesn't. Measurement divergence is when the rating agencies use different indicators to measure the same attribute. When considering a company's labor practices one firm could measure the turnover rate of employees while another measures the number labor cases filed against the company. Lastly, weight divergence is when the level of importance of an attribute in the overall ESG score varies between rating agencies, such as one rating valuing GHG emissions more than lobbying efforts while the other values them equally. The paper found that measurement divergence is the most significant, followed close behind by scope divergence. Weighting divergence was the least important cause of divergence. The paper also found that if a rating agency gave a company a good score in one area it was more likely to give the company good scores in other areas [17].

Scope and weight divergence aren't necessarily negative as they represent a difference of opinions on what attributes of ESG are most important. However, rating agencies don't offer enough transparency on how they define ESG performance. Measurement divergence is more problematic as it represents a disagreement about the underlying data of a rating. Overall divergence of ESG ratings makes it more difficult to use them to make decisions regarding corporate sustainability. In September 2020, the CDP, CDSB, GRI, IIRC and SASB announced a

shared vision for a comprehensive corporate reporting system [18]. Hopefully as this vision turns into reality better company reporting can lead to ratings and rankings that are easier to understand and use.

2.3 Attracting Prospective Employees with Corporate Sustainability

Many factors go in to deciding where to work, but research has shown corporate sustainability attracts employees [19–22]. An organization reputation is linked to its corporate sustainability efforts [20,22]. In the ‘war for talent’ corporate sustainability is becoming a more important factor as job seekers tend to reject companies with negative reputations [2,20,22]. While pay and location tend to be similar among the jobs an applicant is considering, corporate sustainability can be more of a differentiator since companies make very different decisions about corporate sustainability [21]. This means corporate sustainability can make a job stand out to prospective employees compared to jobs that are similar in other aspects.

In one study participants were asked to rank three hypothetical companies based on the information available on a print out of their websites. The study looked at two factors of corporate social performance (CSP), community and environmental. When the target company website included information on CSP – community 80.00% of participants ranked it first and when the target company website included CSP – environment information 73.33% of participants ranked it first. In contrast when no CSP information was listed only 23.33% of participants ranked it first. Additionally, when asked to explain their ranking over 85% of the participants who ranked a company with CSP information first mentioned CSP in their reasoning for choosing their first choice.

A study considering why corporate sustainability matters to prospective employees found positive correlations between the anticipated pride of working at a company with corporate social performance (CSP) and the perceived value fit in relation to a company’s CSP values [21]. Social identity theory suggest that someone’s organization choice can be driven by their self-perception of being part of that organization [20]. Being associated with an organization with a good reputation can increase an individual’s feeling of self-worth [21,22]. When it comes to perceived fit individuals try to choose organizations that match their values and ideas about what

common good is [20]. Through the analysis of many studies person-organization fit was found to be one of the strongest predictors of recruiting outcomes [21]. However, this does suggest that corporate sustainability is more likely to attract employees who have values pertaining to the areas of corporate sustainability that a company has.

A positive relationship was found between students who took social justice courses in college or participated in volunteering activities and the students sensitivity to a prospective employees social responsibility [19]. However, if a prospective employee expects a company to only focus on profit-making they may be discouraged from applying to companies with corporate sustainability efforts [20]. Therefore, corporate sustainability attracts certain types of employees. One study suggests that CSP attracts better applicants as CSP was more influential for MBA participants compared to non-student unemployed individuals. It was assumed that MBA students have more prospective job opportunities and therefore are able to use CSP as a differentiator [21].

2.4 Impacts of Employee Activism on Company Change

As mentioned in the previous section, potential employees are more likely to be attracted to companies with corporate sustainability efforts. While some companies are internally motivated to be sustainable, companies that aren't could be motivated to change in order to attract potential employees and recruit more competitively [19]. This suggests that prospective employees indicating that they value corporate sustainability during the recruiting process could provide external pressure to encourage companies to become more sustainable. A 2016 poll found that younger generations are more likely to want work that's meaningful and has purpose rather than just a way to make money, and that younger generations have lower levels of loyalty to their current employer [23]. This is relevant to this paper as students are part of the younger generations, and therefore are more likely to be part of the external pressure from prospective employees.

As students and younger generations join the workforce they have the ability to provide internal pressure as employees to improve corporate sustainability [19]. Employee activism is becoming more popular as employees become more aware of how companies contribute to social and environmental issues [24]. In a 2019 survey, 75% of employees in the United States agreed

with the statement “employees are right to speak up against their employers”[23]. Additionally, 38% said that they have “spoken up to support or criticize [their] employer’s actions over a controversial issue that affects society” [23]. Employees are even willing to leave a company if they don’t agree with company actions. For example, when Coinbase announced it would no longer “engage in broader societal issues when they’re unrelated to our core mission” and would help any employee who wanted to be at “an activism-focused” company to find a new job 60 employees chose to leave [24].

Employees are often more effective than external activists at getting a company to change. Employees can be more persuasive due to their knowledge of how the company works and access to higherups in the company [25]. For example, in 2015 when Indiana was about to pass the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which would allow business owners to deny service to individuals if serving them would conflict with their religion, the Salesforce CEO spoke out against the law. When asked why he spoke out he said “I had no choice, as the largest tech employer inside Indiana. My employees were ... so rattled by what was going on” [25]. This shows how the employee’s access to the CEO enabled them to put pressure on him to do something. Corporations, like Salesforce, speaking out lead to the partial-repeal of the Indiana Religious Freedom Restoration Act and to the blocking or repealing of other anti-LGBT state laws [25]. Additionally, employees at Nike were able to use their knowledge of current company infrastructure to improve corporate sustainability. Nike already had a supplier rating system that evaluated suppliers based on aspects including delivery timeliness and quality. Employees got Nike to add another category for evaluating suppliers on their sustainability practices [23].

Employee activism is increasingly becoming a part of the business world and leading to increased corporate sustainability. Employee groups are often how managers become aware of the importance of political struggles of marginalized groups [25]. Since the 1990s some managers have started seeing employee activists “not as agitators but as champions of efforts” [23]. Companies are realizing that employee activists not only lead to positive change in the world, but can also lead to innovation, business opportunities, improved company reputation and attracting new talent [23]

3. Design of Survey and Interview Guide

To learn about student's current career decision practices and how sustainability fits into them both a survey and interviews were conducted. The goal of the survey was to get a baseline on what students care about, what their current knowledge level is and what barriers are preventing students from factoring sustainability into their career decisions. The interviews were conducted after the survey to get more in-depth responses and to better understand what would help students ask recruiters questions about sustainability and factor sustainability into their career decisions.

The survey was designed to be short and straightforward to maximize the number of students who would answer every question. Therefore, none of the questions were open ended except for including the option to add a response that wasn't listed when relevant. This meant the survey had to include options for responses that most students would choose, but not have so many options that it would feel overwhelming. See Appendix A for the full survey.

The first four questions on race, gender, and what they are doing after graduation were asked to know the demographics of the respondents. Asking these questions enabled analysis on trends based on demographic data to see if different groups of students think about their careers and sustainability differently. The industry question was copied from MIT's graduating student survey [26].

Then students were asked to rate the importance of job factors from not at all important to very important to find out how important to a student's career decisions the sustainability efforts of company are compared to other job factors. The factors students were asked to rate were decided by researching job factors used in previous studies. One study analyzed students' job selection preferences based on location, salary, distance to natural resource amenities, size of city the job is in and commuting times [27]. Another study tested how interest in subject, ease in subject, financial outcomes and future job opportunities affected career choices. The background of the study also mentioned social factors like family influence and job prestige [28]. A previous survey included career progression, company reputation, location/length of commute, flexible working, meaningful work, pay & benefits, work-life balance and working culture [29]. All of these factors were considered and grouped together while keeping corporate sustainability separate to enable comparisons. The resulting factors for the survey were salary and benefits, location, cultural fit, company reputation, parental expectations, interest in subject, sustainability

efforts of company and company values. An other option was also included so students could write in an additional factor if there was a factor not listed that was relevant to them.

In the next section students were asked to rate how much they agree with statements from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The first statement is: Sustainability is really important to me. This question enabled knowing how the respondents feel about sustainability in general. The next statement is: I feel comfortable asking recruiters questions to figure out if a company matches my values. Since students asking recruiters questions is a way to let companies know they care this question served as a starting point to understanding a potential barrier to students having impact on companies. After that students were asked to rate how much they agree with the statement: During my time at MIT, sustainability has become less important to my career decisions. At MIT students sometimes talk about deciding to “sell out” or go into certain industries for the money, so this question helps with understanding how students think being at MIT has affected their values. The last statement is: I want to learn more about corporate sustainability. This question provides information on whether students think they have knowledge gaps when it comes to sustainability and if this is something they want to change.

Since corporate sustainability can include many different aspects the next section asked students to rank from not at all important to extremely important how important it is for a company to be responsible for different areas of sustainability. The areas of sustainability asked about were originally going to be the 17 SDGs, but that would have been a long and tedious question for students to answer. Additionally, some of the SDGs are more related to companies than others. Therefore, the SDGs were consolidated with the help of the SDG compass and the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact. The SDG compass is a website that provides guidance on how business can incorporate the SDGs and describes the role of business for each goal [30]. The Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact describe the minimum responsibility a company should have in the areas of human rights, labor, environment and anti-corruption [31]. The resulting areas were gender equality in the workplace, ethical treatment of workers throughout the supply chain, climate and human rights policy advocacy, minimizing greenhouse gas emissions, diverse and inclusive workplace, consistent reporting tracking progress toward sustainability goals, mitigation of harm caused to local communities and ecosystems, and community engagement. Respondents also had the option to fill in another sustainability area to rank.

Lastly, respondents were asked about the resources they used to evaluate companies on their corporate sustainability. The goal of this question was to find out how familiar students are with different resources and whether students are evaluating corporate sustainability of companies. Students could indicate that they don't evaluate corporate sustainability or indicate their familiarity with a certain resource from never heard of it to used it many times. The resources respondents were asked about were ESG ratings, the CDP, company website, InfluenceMap, asking current employees, Ceres' company network, B Corps, DiversityInc, and UN Global Compact Participants. These resources are described in more detail in the background section of this paper. Respondents were also asked if they use a resource that wasn't listed. At the end of the survey a link was provided to a document with descriptions of the resources, so students could learn more if interested.

Respondents were asked at the end of the survey if they were interested in being interviewed. All interviews were conducted after the survey was closed, so the interview questions could be tailored to the results of the survey. The survey served as a good starting point, but left some questions about the impact of corporate sustainability on students' career decisions unanswered. The interviews provided an opportunity to ask open ended questions on the effectiveness of what students are already doing in terms of using resources and questioning recruiters, students comfort and concern levels, what students want to know and how students like to receive information. See Appendix B for the full list of questions.

4. Results and Discussion

In total the survey received 42 responses. Since the survey was only sent out to MIT mechanical engineering seniors it is assumed that all the responses are MIT mechanical engineering seniors. The MIT mechanical engineering class of 2021 is 143 students total, 51% female, 11.89% Black or African American, 1.40% American Indian or Alaska Native, 0.70% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, 22.37% Hispanics or Latino, and 25.87% Asian [32]. This means the survey was answered by 29.37% of the class. When breaking out data by race/ethnicity there were no significant trends. When broken out by gender there was one significant trend as shown by Figure 6. Table 1 shows the demographics of the survey respondents. The survey respondents were disproportionately female, but in terms of race/ethnicity matched the

class distribution pretty well. Except for one student for part of one question all respondents answered every question.

Gender	Female	28	66.67%
	Male	14	33.33%
Race/ Ethnicity	White	19	45.24%
	Asian	11	26.19%
	Hispanic or Latino	6	14.29%
	White and Hispanic or Latino	3	7.14%
	Black or African American	1	2.38%
	Black or African American and Hispanic or Latino	1	2.38%
	White and Asian	1	2.38%
Plans after graduation	Employment	25	59.52%
	Still figuring it out	8	19.05%
	Graduate School	7	16.67%
	Fellowship	2	4.76%

Table 1: Demographics of survey respondents

The 25 students with post-graduation employment plans were asked what industry they are going into as seen below in Table 2. Due to the small number of students in each industry seeing if there are trends based on industry is not possible. It could have been more helpful to ask students if the job they were going into was directly related to sustainability.

Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (including Consulting)	6	24.00%
Other Manufacturing	4	16.00%
Information/ Computer Technology	3	12.00%
Other	3	12.00%
Health Care, Pharmaceuticals, Medical Devices	2	8.00%
Government	2	8.00%
Transportation	2	8.00%
Finance and Insurance	1	4.00%
Energy and Utilities	1	4.00%
Non-profit and Membership organizations	1	4.00%
Academic Institutions	0	0.00%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	0	0.00%
Chemicals and Materials	0	0.00%

Table 2: Industry of employed survey respondents N =25

Seven students indicated in the survey that they were interested in being interviewed. However, one student was unavailable during the timeframe interviews were conducted. Therefore, in total six students were interviewed. The demographics of the interviewees can be seen below in Table 3. They interviewees are even more disproportionately female.

Gender	Female	5	83.33%
	Male	1	16.67%
Race/ Ethnicity	White	3	50.00%
	Asian	2	33.33%
	White and Asian	1	16.67%
Plans after Graduation	Employment	3	50.00%
	Graduate School	3	50.00%

Table 3: Demographics of interviewees N = 6

4.1 Importance of Sustainability to Students

The first goal was to understand what students care about. Figure 2 below shows responses to rating the statement “Sustainability is really important to me”. 83.33% of respondents either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed with the statement. Therefore, most students think sustainability is important in general. When asked to rank the importance of sustainability when deciding where to work for either a job or internship 11.90% said very important, 40.48% said moderately important, 33.33% said slightly important, and 14.29% said not at all important. This means 85.71% of students factor sustainability into their career decisions to some extent.

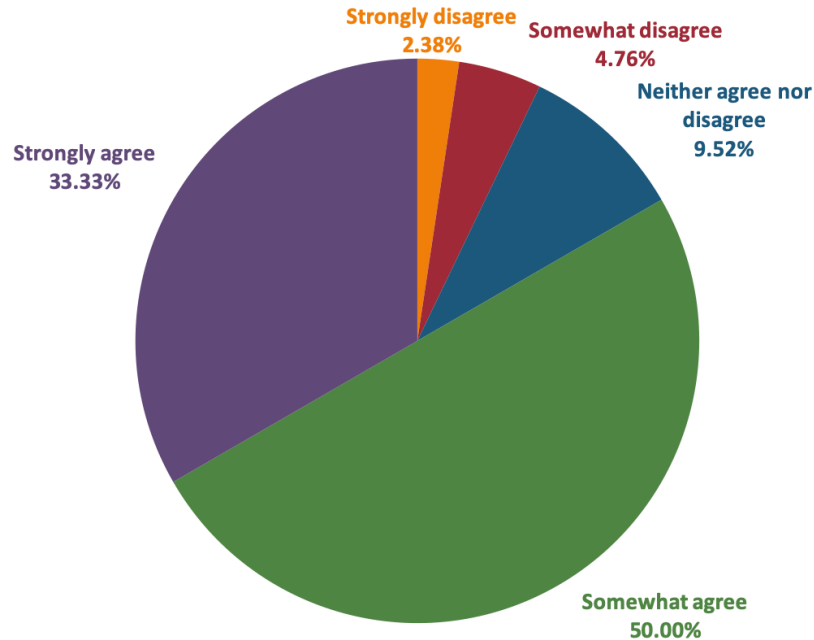


Figure 2: Responses to rate how much you agree with the statement “Sustainability is really important to me.”

Figure 3 shows sustainability efforts of a company compared to other factors that go into job decisions. While students are considering sustainability, it is less important to them than all the other factors ranked besides parental expectations. The most important factor to students is in interest in subject with 64.29% of students saying it was very important, 28.57% saying moderately important and 7.14% saying slightly important. Company reputation was rated most similarly to the sustainability efforts of the company. As mentioned in section 2.3 corporate sustainability has been previously linked to company reputation, so it makes sense that the two factors received similar ratings [20,22]. One respondent filled in the other option with company future. Additionally, one respondent suggested that jobs and internships should be two different questions since reasons for accepting those are very different. It would be interesting to explore how the ratings differ between full time jobs and internships in future research.

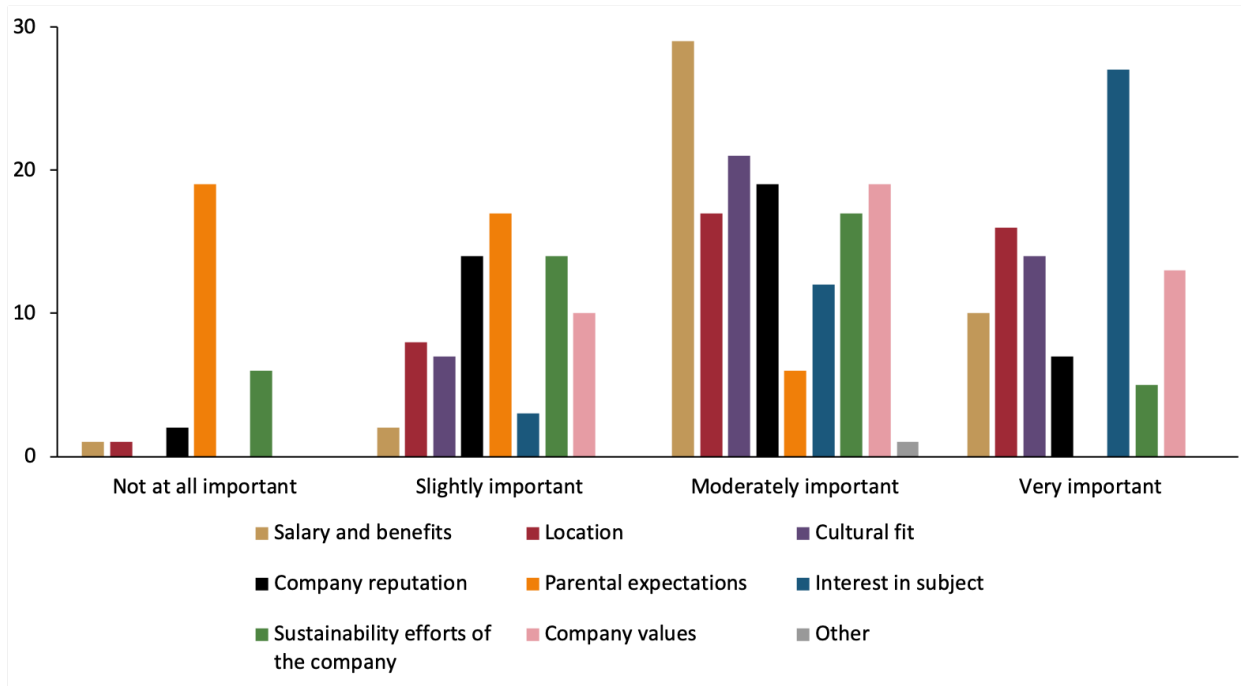


Figure 3: Responses to “Rate each factors importance when deciding where to work for either a job or internship.”

Figure 4 shows how views of sustainability have changed while at MIT. During their time at MIT 88.10% say sustainability has not become less important to their career decisions. Therefore, for despite talk about “selling out” most students say the importance of sustainability either increases or remains the same during their time at MIT. It would be interesting to investigate this question further to see if being at MIT increases the importance of sustainability and if so, what makes students value sustainability more.

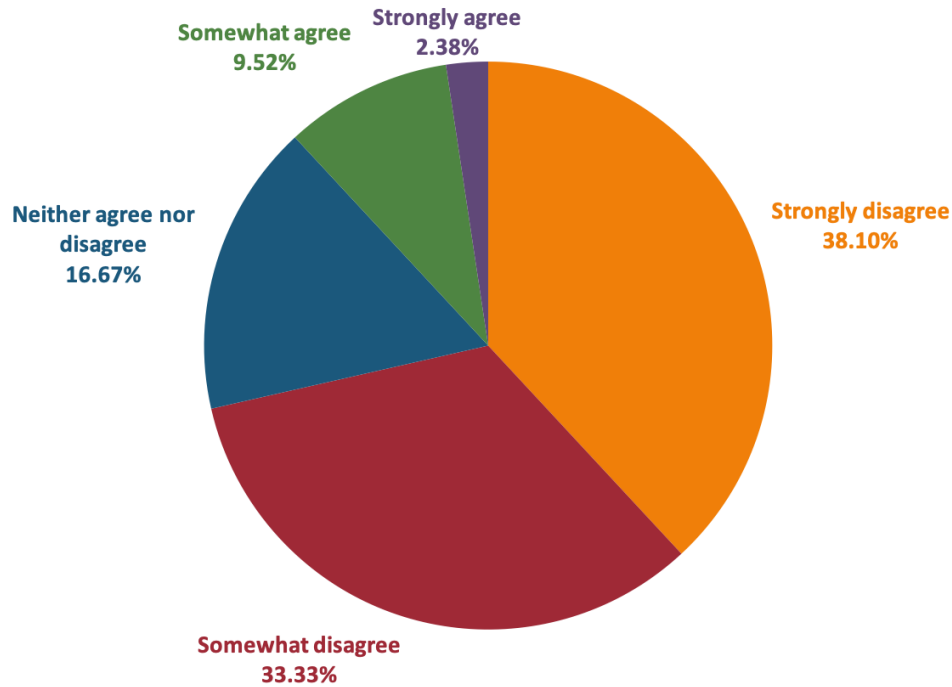


Figure 4: Responses to rate how much you agree with “During my time at MIT, sustainability has become less important in my career decisions.”

Most students think all areas of corporate sustainability asked about are important as seen in Figure 5. The most important area to students is the mitigation of harm caused to local communities and ecosystems with 64.29% of students saying it’s extremely important. This is closely followed by diverse and inclusive workplace, ethical treatment of workers throughout the supply chain, and gender equality in the workplace. This suggests that students may value social and human rights areas of sustainability more than purely environmental areas. One student added transparency with employees as an additional area of sustainability. Figure 6 shows the same question broken up by gender. This shows females are slightly more likely to rate the importance of areas of corporate sustainability higher, especially in the areas of gender equality in the workplace, diverse and inclusive workplace and community engagement.

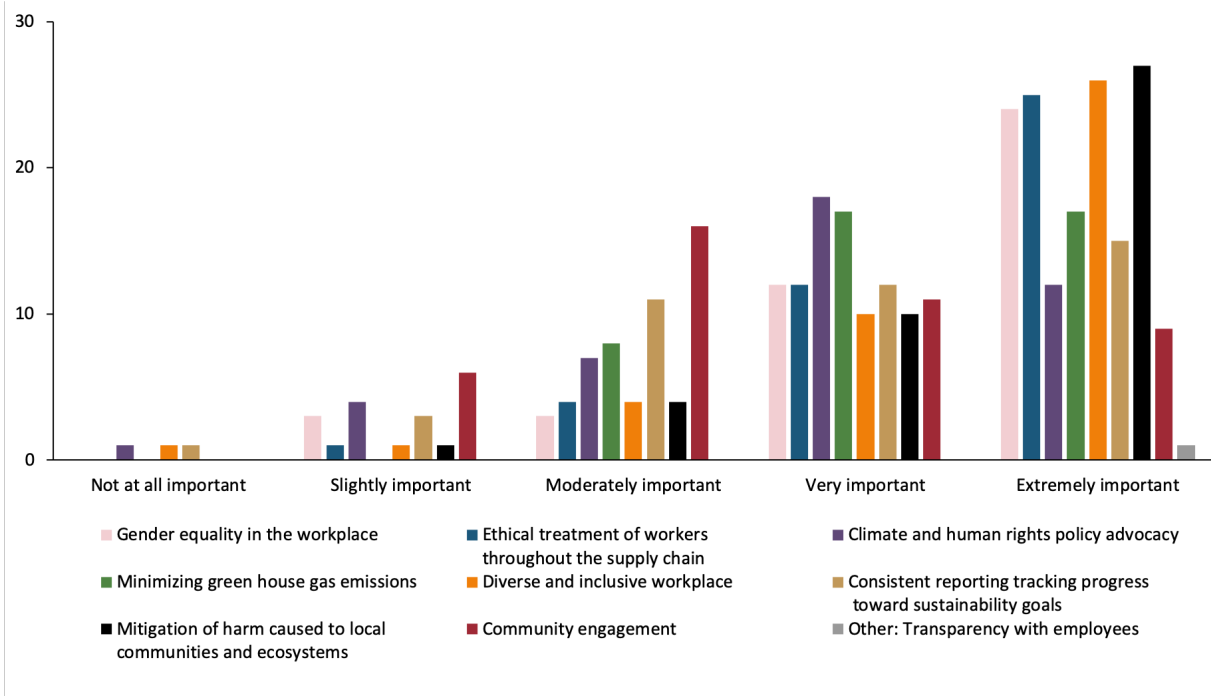


Figure 5: Responses to “What areas of sustainability do you think it’s important for companies to be responsible for?”

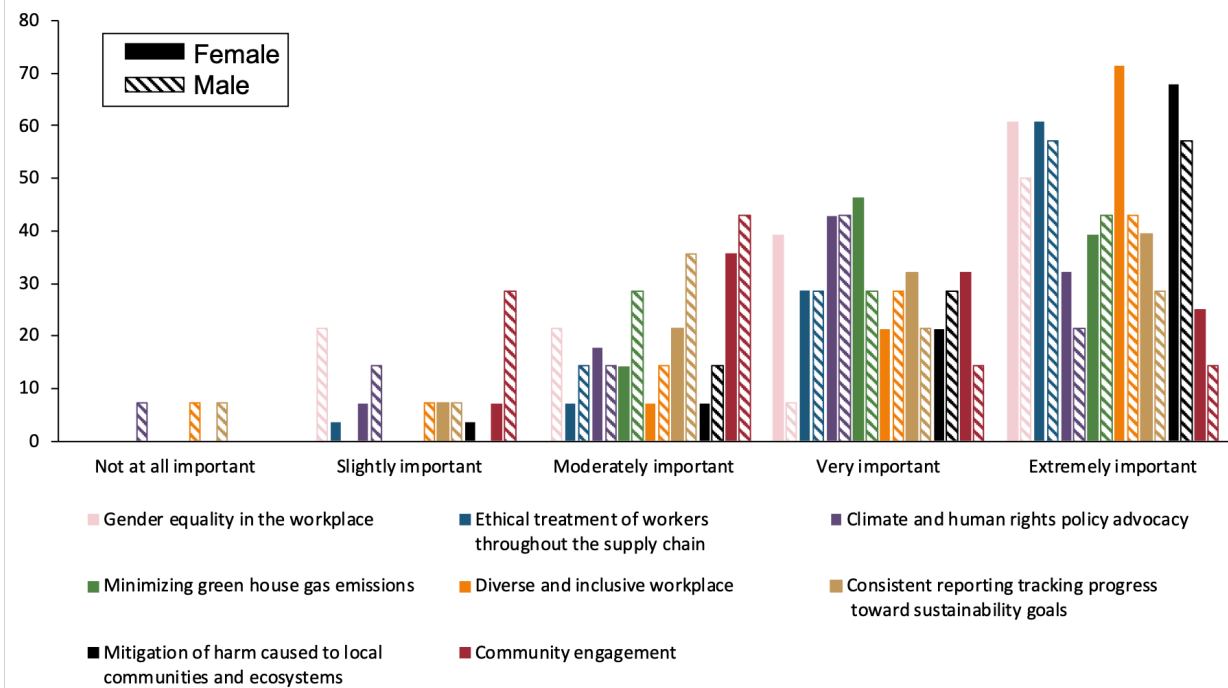


Figure 6: Responses to “What areas of sustainability do you think it’s important for companies to be responsible for?” broken up by gender

During the interview’s students were asked to define sustainability and say how much of an issue or concern it is to them. All interviewees mentioned the effects of climate change or the

deteriorating state of the world and making changes to prevent continued damage. One interviewee defined sustainability as a mindset for how to live your life. He described the mindset as thinking “We are living on a planet that’s dying. What can I do to prevent aggravating that problem?” Another interviewee mentioned that she knew sustainability can be defined to include things like human rights, but when she thinks about sustainability she’s mainly thinking about environmental sustainability. The environmental aspects of sustainability seem to be what most people think of since none of the other interviewees explicitly mentioned anything other than environmental sustainability in their definitions. Four of the interviewees said sustainability is really important or a priority. Another said it’s a moderate to high concern for her in her personal life and she’s trying to increase how much she factors in sustainability in other areas like where she buys things or where she works. The last interviewee said she knows sustainability is important, but “I sometimes struggle to make it a reality”. Comparing these answers to the survey responses where only a third of students strongly agreed that sustainability is really important to them suggests that the students who volunteered to be interviewed may be more concerned with sustainability than the average MIT mechanical engineering senior.

When asked about the role sustainability played in their career decisions four of the interviewees mentioned sustainability had an impact. Of those four, two mentioned wanting to have their job have a larger purpose, one said sustainability inspired her and she specifically chose to go into clean energy for sustainability reasons, and the last one mentioned he tries to incorporate sustainability into everything he does. The other two hadn’t really thought about sustainability in terms of their careers besides one of them saying she wouldn’t want to work for an oil and gas company. The interviewees were then asked to define corporate sustainability and explicitly state what they cared about in terms of corporate sustainability. In their definition all of them mentioned emissions or carbon footprint. This was also something all of them mentioned they cared about. One of them singled out large corporations defining corporate sustainability as “the responsibility that large corporations have to run in a way that could go on forever without destroying the Earth.” Half of the interviewees went beyond environmental sustainability in their definitions. One mentioned the treatment of workers and local communities. Another mentioned equity and included it as something she cares about. The third included diversity, equity and inclusion and ethics in both his definition and what he cares about. Two of them included having a plan to reduce impacts and another two mentioned investments. One of them highlighted that

she cared more about whether a company was trying than the actual state of corporate sustainability. In contrast to the survey responses regarding the importance of different areas of corporate sustainability, there was much more of a focus on environmental sustainability. When looking back at the interviewees' survey responses all of them rated diverse and inclusive workplace, ethical treatment of workers throughout the supply chain and gender equality as either very important or extremely important. This suggests some people only think of the environmental aspects of corporate sustainability unless otherwise prompted.

The results of both the survey and the interviews show that most students care about sustainability and think most areas of corporate sustainability are important. While students factor sustainability into their career decisions, it's not as important as most other factors that go into choosing a job. However, as mentioned in section 2.3 the jobs an applicant considers are often very similar across the factors people find most important, so sustainability can serve as a differentiator between jobs that are otherwise very similar [21].

4.2 Student Knowledge and Effectiveness

The next goal was to understand what students already know about factoring sustainability into their career decisions and how effective what they already do is. Students were shown a list of resources that can be used to evaluate corporate sustainability and asked which ones they use. The question matrix gave students the option to say "N/A I don't evaluate corporate sustainability" in every row. Ten students indicated that they don't evaluate corporate sustainability in every row. Eight students said they don't evaluate in one row and marked something else in at least on another row. Of those eight students who said they don't evaluate one said they've used the company's website many times, six said they've used the website a few times, one said they've used asking employees questions many times and 4 said they've used it a few. Between one and three of the eight also indicated they'd never heard of the resource for all resources besides a company's website. Since these eight students marked that they don't evaluate in at least one row they aren't included below in Figure 6. One student filled out three of the resources and left the rest blank. This was interpreted as indicating that they'd never heard of the unmarked resources. Figure 6 shows the responses to the question for the 24 students who didn't say they don't evaluate in any row. Of the 24 students who evaluate corporate sustainability most have never heard of these resources. The most frequently used resource is a

company’s website with 50% of students who evaluate saying they’ve used it many times and 33.33% saying they’ve used it a few times. Students also ask current employees questions to evaluate corporate sustainability, but at a lower frequency only 29.17% said they have used current employees as a resource many times and 50% have used it a few times. For the other resources no one said they’ve used it many times. ESG ratings are the next most familiar resource having been used a few times by 8.33% and 33.33% having heard of them but never used them. One of the students that doesn’t evaluate said “I just assume that no corporation is going to do a good job with the responsibilities listed above because capitalism incentivizes them to do the opposite.” Another student mentioned that they use glassdoor to evaluate corporate sustainability. The results show that 41.86% of students don’t evaluate corporate sustainability despite 85.71% rating sustainability as at least slightly important to their career decisions. Additionally, most students are unfamiliar with any third-party resource for evaluating corporate sustainability. This indicates that students have a lack of knowledge when it comes to methods to evaluate corporate sustainability.

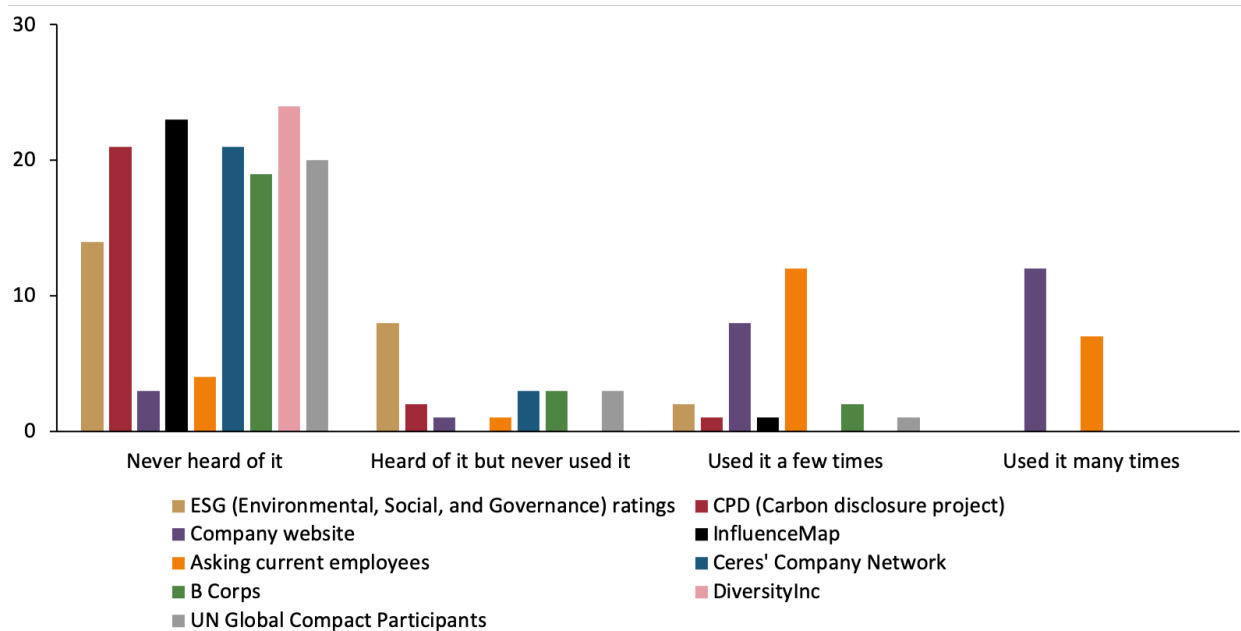


Figure 7: Responses to “When evaluating corporate sustainability what resources do you use?” for the 24 students who didn’t mark “N/A I don’t evaluate corporate sustainability”.

Interviewees were also asked about the resources they use. One interviewee doesn’t evaluate corporate sustainability at all. Two don’t evaluate corporate sustainability, but are

selective about the industries they apply to jobs in. This could help explain the at least 27.57% of students that say they don't evaluate corporate sustainability, but indicated that they factor sustainability into their career decisions. These students could be factoring sustainability in at the industry level rather than at the company level. Of the interviewees that said they used resources one of them uses clean energy news sources and journalism. She finds these resources effective, but acknowledged that they are very niche. Another interviewee uses company websites, talking to current and past employees, reviews of the company, the CDP and the Wikipedia page of the company which often has a controversy section for larger corporations. He acknowledged that he's aware that information from a company could be greenwashing, but said that the resources he uses are effective for getting a broad vibe of the company. However, this vibe can sometimes be wrong. In general, he feels more comfortable working for a company that has a clean public image. The third interviewee that evaluates companies said she used the MIT career fair sustainability information released this fall as well as company websites. When looking at company websites she says it's telling when you can't find anything on sustainability. The sustainability information shared at the career fair was generally helpful, but she would have liked more detail such as including links to the company's sustainability plan.

When it comes to questioning recruiters five out of the six interviewees have asked questions relating to some aspect of sustainability. Four focus on diversity and culture questions. Questions they've found effective include: Are there any DEI initiatives? How does the gender ratio of who applies compare to who's selected? What's the turnover rate? What's it like being female? One interviewee described the goal of her questioning is to figure out "do you feel good working for this company?" and finds the response speed telling. Another interviewee says she prefers seeing numbers than just trusting what recruiters say. The fifth questioner asked some culture questions as well questions that are only relevant to the consulting industry such as "Do I have to work for an oil and gas company?". He said asking questions was very helpful for him in deciding to accept the return offer at the consulting firm he interned at. He was skeptical about going into consulting at the start of his internship, but he was able to get answers to questions that convinced him that the company was cognizant of sustainability issues and there is a culture of caring about corporate sustainability issues. This shows that most students know how to ask corporate sustainability questions in the areas of diversity and culture. Having experience asking these kinds of questions may make it easier for students to expand to questioning about other

areas of sustainability. One interviewee mentioned that she feels like she could add in sustainability-related questions in areas to the gender equality questions she’s already asking.

4.3 Barriers and Recommendations

Figure 7 shows that 69.05% of students want to know more about corporate sustainability. This suggests that a potential barrier to students factoring sustainability into their career decisions and asking recruiters questions about corporate sustainability is a lack of knowledge. Figure 8 shows how comfortable students are with asking recruiters questions pertaining to their values during the recruiting process. Only 28.57% of students strongly agreed that they feel comfortable asking questions and 19.05% of students disagreed. The students that indicated somewhat agree or neither agree nor disagree could be more comfortable in certain situations, asking certain types of questions, or may not be interested in asking questions. The results indicate another potential barrier to students factoring sustainability into their career decisions and asking recruiters questions about corporate sustainability could be discomfort with asking questions.

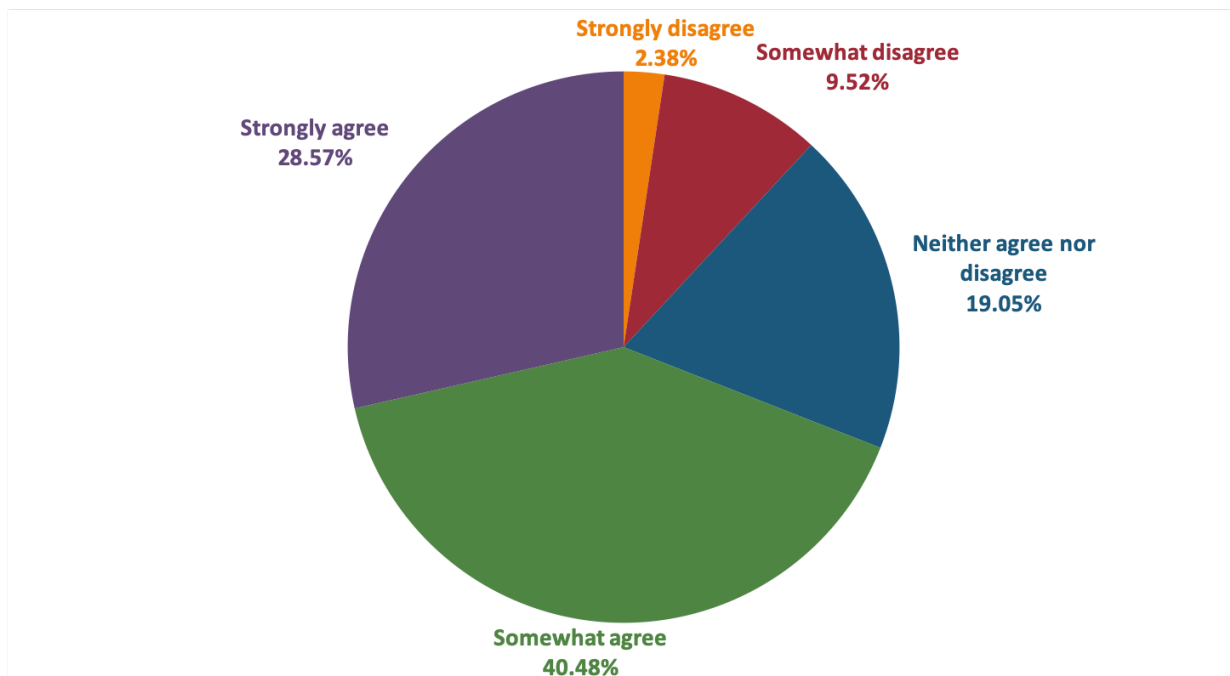


Figure 8: Responses to rate how much you agree with “I want to learn more about corporate sustainability.”

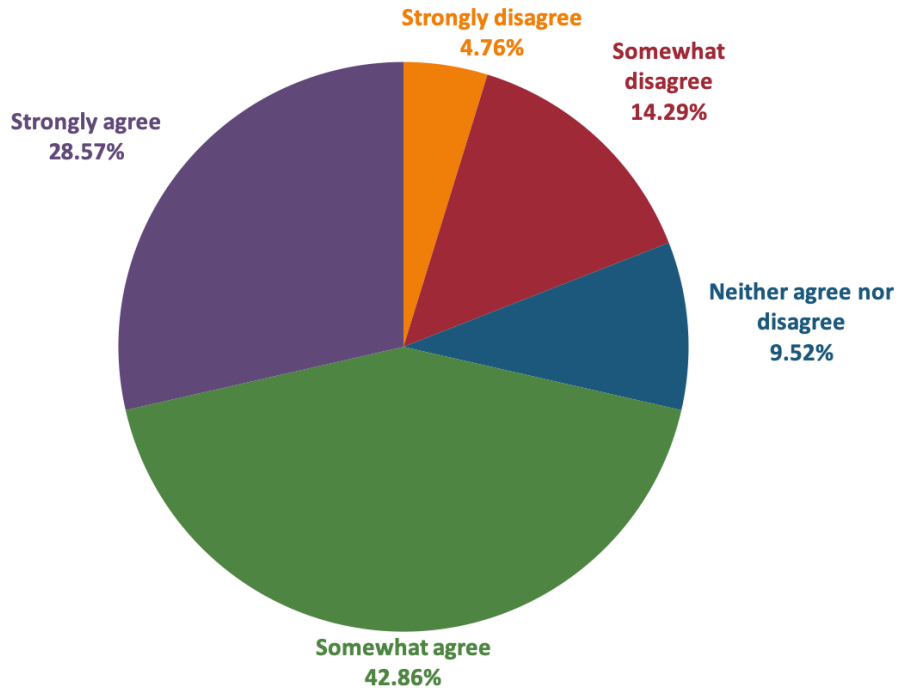


Figure 9: Rate how much you agree with “I feel comfortable asking recruiters questions to figure out if a company matches my values.”

Interviewees were asked if there was anything they wanted to learn more about in terms of resources to evaluate companies, and they brought up some barriers to evaluating companies. The two interviewees that are most familiar with resources said they wished everything could be consolidated and in one place. They pointed out that it takes time and effort to find information on the corporate sustainability of companies. One of them mentioned that while he was willing to put in the effort to find data and understand it he knows many of his friends would consider it a waste of time. Another interviewee mentioned how overwhelming she found all the criteria and would like someone to rank companies for her. Three of the interviewees were unaware of the resources available to evaluate companies and wanted to know more about what is out there and how to compare different companies. One interviewee brought up concerns about how evaluating companies on their sustainability could put her at a disadvantage compared to people who aren't factoring sustainability because they would have more job options to choose from.

When asked about their comfort level with asking recruiters questions all of the interviewees brought up at least one situation in which they would feel uncomfortable asking questions about corporate sustainability. Three interviewees brought up confidence as an important factor in whether they'd be comfortable. One of them said she has only asked

sustainability-related questions once she has more than one offer. Another concern two of the interviewees mentioned was the recruiter may not know the answer. This makes them hesitant to ask questions due to fear of second-hand embarrassment and thinking it would be more productive to just check the website. Another interviewee felt most uncomfortable asking probing questions on ethics and values. Four interviewees wanted to know more about how to ask questions, specifically how to ask big picture questions, awkward questions and what specific questions can be asked for different sectors.

When asked what they wanted to learn about corporate sustainability interviewees brought up more knowledge gaps they had. Two interviewees felt like they needed a better understanding of what corporate sustainability is. Two also brought up concerns about how to see through performative sustainability. Three wanted to know more about what corporate sustainability includes for companies who aren't in a sector directly related to corporate sustainability. Interviewees also had suggestions for how to improve these knowledge gaps including guides on what to think about and how to question companies about corporate sustainability, newsletters, and reshareable content for social media.

For career fairs interviewees have some more specific recommendations to make it easier for students to factor sustainability into their career decisions and question companies. To make students feel more comfortable asking companies questions about sustainability companies that are willing to answer corporate sustainability questions could have some kind of badge like how companies indicate if they are first year friendly at the MIT career fair. There could also be the option for students to submit questions before the career fair and companies could be required to provide answers. This could help with asking more awkward questions or questions that require a more in-depth answer that a recruiter may not know the answer to on the spot. To help students prep for the career fair there could be workshops on how to recruit with ethics in mind or how to ask companies about sustainability. One interviewee requested having a strategy for what to do when a recruiter doesn't know the answer to a question or what to do when you realize a company doesn't align with your values and you want to end the conversation. Three of the interviewees were unaware of the sustainability efforts at the MIT career this fall. To make more students aware one interviewee recommended partnering with student groups to help disseminate information. Another interviewee highlighted the importance of automatic information. Not every student is going to be willing to seek out information on corporate sustainability, but if

there's some kind of ranking or other corporate sustainability information next to the size and location of the company more students will pay attention to it.

By the end of the interview all interviewees seemed willing to ask questions about corporate sustainability during future recruiting. The interviewees were told that asking recruiters questions about sustainability can help put pressure on them to change. All the interviewees thought this could be an effective way to encourage companies to change. Two interviewees explicitly said knowing asking questions about sustainability could pressure companies is motivating and would help them get over feeling uncomfortable asking those kinds of questions.

5. Conclusion

Students, in general, care about sustainability issues but deal with many barriers when trying to incorporate sustainability into their career decisions. Most students lack of knowledge when it comes to evaluating corporate sustainability, especially using third-party resources. Even students who are familiar with resources to evaluate sustainability find them hard to use and wish the information was more consolidated. However, some students may be factoring in sustainability at the industry level rather than at the company level, which is something the survey did not consider. Some students want a better understanding of what counts as corporate sustainability, especially for companies that are not directly in a sustainability sector. When it comes to asking recruiters questions about corporate sustainability many students feel unprepared or uncomfortable. A lot of students are already asking effective questions about culture and diversity, which may help get students to expand the areas of sustainability they ask about. Additionally, letting students know that asking companies sustainability-related questions can pressure companies to change may encourage students to ask these kinds of questions.

This research does have some limitations. Only mechanical engineering seniors were surveyed and interviewed, and although mechanical engineers go into a wide range of industries the results may not accurately represent a more diverse student population. Future research should be conducted with students of other majors. Additionally, the analysis of the survey results suggests a few areas of improvement for the survey. First, as suggested by one of the respondents, the question "Rate each factor's importance when deciding where to work for either a job or internship" should be split into two questions since students may have different reasons for choosing full-time jobs and internships. Also, the survey did not collect any information on if

students factor in sustainability to their career decisions at the industry level, which could provide more insight on how students consider sustainability in their career choices.

5.1 Next Steps

The results of this paper can be used as a starting point for getting more students to factor sustainability into their career decisions and asking corporate sustainability-related questions during the recruitment process. To start with, some students need resources to develop a better understanding of what corporate sustainability is. The creation of a consolidated resource for evaluating corporate sustainability or a guide for navigating existing resources would make evaluating companies more accessible. Additionally, providing students with a guide on how to ask questions pertaining to corporate sustainability that includes specific questions for different sectors and strategies to deal with difficult answers could help students feel more prepared. Newsletters, student group events and reshareable social media content were suggested as methods of getting information to students.

Career fairs offer a great opportunity to educate students and encourage them to factor sustainability into their career decisions. Pre-career fair workshops on how to recruit with your values in mind and how to ask sustainability-related questions can help prepare students. Including sustainability ratings alongside other company information like size and location could encourage more students to think about corporate sustainability. Some students are already considering sustainability and willing to look for information, but sustainability is not the most important job factor for most students. Therefore, putting information on company sustainability in all career fair materials so students receive it automatically could help increase the number of students thinking about corporate sustainability. Additionally, to make students feel more comfortable asking questions about corporate sustainability companies can have badges that indicate they are willing and ready to answer sustainability-related questions. Companies can also be required to answer anonymously submitted student questions on sustainability issues before coming to the career fair. This could help with asking more awkward questions or questions that require a more in-depth answer that a recruiter may not know the answer to on the spot.

6. Appendices

Appendix A: Survey

Senior Thesis Survey: Student Career Decisions

Start of Block: Default Question Block

For my senior thesis I'm hoping to get a better understanding of how students make career decisions. I'd really appreciate you taking the time to fill out this survey! It should only take 5-10 minutes. You may fill it out anonymously if you'd like, and I will detach any names before sharing the data with anyone.

If you have any questions feel free to contact me (Sheila Kennedy-Moore) at sheilakm@mit.edu.

Gender

- Female
 - Male
 - Non-binary
 - I identify as: _____
-

Race/Ethnicity - check all that apply

- White
 - Black or African American
 - American Indian or Alaska Native
 - Asian
 - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
 - Hispanic or Latino
 - I identify as: _____
-

What are your plans after graduating?

- Graduate School
 - Still figuring it out
 - Employment
 - Other: _____
-

Display This Question:

If What are your plans after graduating? = Employment

What best describes the industry you will work in?

- Information/ Computer Technology
 - Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (including Consulting)
 - Finance and Insurance
 - Health Care, Pharmaceuticals, Medical Devices
 - Government
 - Transportation
 - Energy and Utilities
 - Academic Institution
 - Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation
 - Non-profit and membership organizations
 - Other Manufacturing
 - Retail Trade
 - Chemicals or Materials
 - Other
-

Rate each factor's importance when deciding where to work for either a job or internship.

	Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important
Salary and benefits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Location	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cultural fit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Company reputation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parental expectations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interest in subject	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sustainability efforts of the company	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Company values	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Rate how much you agree with the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Sustainability is really important to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel comfortable asking recruiters questions to figure out if a company matches my values.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
During my time at MIT, sustainability has become less important in my career decisions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I want to learn more about corporate sustainability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



What areas of sustainability do you think it's important for companies to be responsible for?

	Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
Gender equality in the workplace	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ethical treatment of workers throughout the supply chain	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Climate and human rights policy advocacy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Minimizing greenhouse gas emissions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Diverse and inclusive workplace	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Consistent reporting tracking progress toward sustainability goals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mitigation of harm caused to local communities and ecosystems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community engagement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

When evaluating corporate sustainability what resources do you use?
(Descriptions and links to these resources will be provided at the end of the survey)

	N/A I don't evaluate corporate sustainability	Never heard of it	Heard of it but never used it	Used it a few times	Used it many times
ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) ratings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
CPD (Carbon disclosure project)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Company website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
InfluenceMap	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Asking current employees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ceres' Company Network	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B Corps	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
DiversityInc	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
UN Global Compact Participants	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you use a resource not listed above what is it?

End of Block: Default Question Block

Start of Block: Block 1

Thank you for taking the survey! Descriptions and links to the resources mentioned in this survey can be found [here](#).

Would you be interested in being interviewed on how sustainability impacts your career decision process?

Yes

No

Name (Only required if you are interested in being interviewed)

Email (Only required if you are interested in being interviewed)

End of Block: Block 1

Appendix B: Interview Guide

Name:

Who are you? What are you planning on doing after graduation?

What does sustainability mean to you?

To what degree do you feel that sustainability is an issue or concern for you?

Has sustainability played a role in your career decisions, and if so, how?

How do you define “corporate sustainability”?

What do you care about in terms of corporate sustainability?

What kinds of resources do you turn to evaluate companies? Information from the company or 3rd party resources? Other?

In what ways do you think the resources you use are and are not effective?

Do you want to learn more about resources to evaluate companies?

Are you comfortable asking recruiters questions about a company's sustainability?

If yes:

What questions do you ask?

Do you get useful responses?

How effective is asking questions for your own decision-making process? Which questions are most effective?

What do you want to know about companies that you haven't been able to learn through asking questions?

If no:

What about asking questions makes you uncomfortable?

What would help make you more comfortable?

Do you want to learn more about effectively asking companies questions about sustainability?

What else do you want learn about corporate sustainability?

The impact of companies? How employees can change companies from the inside?

How would you want to receive information on corporate sustainability?

What would be most helpful for you to factor sustainability into your career choices?

7. References

- [1] "ClimateVoice" [Online]. Available: <https://climatevoice.org/>. [Accessed: 05-May-2021].
- [2] UN Global Compact, GRI, and wbcscd, "019104_SDG_Compass_Guide_2015.Pdf" [Online]. Available: https://sdgcompass.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/019104_SDG_Compass_Guide_2015.pdf. [Accessed: 04-Mar-2021].

- [3] Kiron, D., Unruh, G., Reeves, M., Kruschwitz, N., Rubel, H., and ZumFelde, A. M., 2017, "Corporate Sustainability at a Crossroads," MIT Sloan Management Review, **58**(4), p. n/a-0.
- [4] "Guide to Corporate Sustainability | UN Global Compact" [Online]. Available: <https://unglobalcompact.org/library/1151>. [Accessed: 20-Apr-2021].
- [5] Eavis, P., and Krauss, C., 2021, "What's Really Behind Corporate Promises on Climate Change?," The New York Times.
- [6] "Emissions by Sector," Our World in Data [Online]. Available: <https://ourworldindata.org/emissions-by-sector>. [Accessed: 23-Apr-2021].
- [7] "SBTiProgressReport2020.Pdf."
- [8] Griffin, D. P., "CDP Carbon Majors Report 2017," p. 16.
- [9] Taylor, M., and Watts, J., 2019, "Revealed: The 20 Firms behind a Third of All Carbon Emissions," The Guardian.
- [10] "2021 Sustainability Trends Report," ERM [Online]. Available: <https://www.sustainability.com/thinking/2021-sustainability-trends-report/>. [Accessed: 22-Apr-2021].
- [11] Kwon, S., 2018, "State of Sustainability and Integrated Reporting 2018," Integrated Reporting, p. 44.
- [12] "What We Do - CDP" [Online]. Available: <https://www.cdp.net/en/info/about-us/what-we-do>. [Accessed: 24-Apr-2021].
- [13] InfluenceMap, "CA100+ Company Profiles" [Online]. Available: <https://influencemap.org/filter/List-of-Companies-and-Influencers>. [Accessed: 24-Apr-2021].
- [14] "DIVERSITYINC TOP 50 LISTS SINCE 2001," DiversityInc.
- [15] "Directory | Certified B Corporation" [Online]. Available: <https://bcorporation.net/directory/find-a-b-corp>. [Accessed: 24-Apr-2021].
- [16] "Ceres Company Network," Ceres [Online]. Available: <https://www.ceres.org/networks/ceres-company-network>. [Accessed: 24-Apr-2021].
- [17] Berg, F., Kölbl, J. F., and Rigobon, R., 2020, *Aggregate Confusion: The Divergence of ESG Ratings*, ID 3438533, Social Science Research Network, Rochester, NY.
- [18] 2020, "Progress Towards a Comprehensive Corporate Reporting System," SASB.
- [19] Ellison, R. L., 2018, "Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Prospective Employment Decisions: Exploring Social Change Through College Students," Journal of College and Character, **19**(4), pp. 275–291.
- [20] Klimkiewicz, K., and Oltra, V., 2017, "Does CSR Enhance Employer Attractiveness? The Role of Millennial Job Seekers' Attitudes," Corporate Social Responsibility & Environmental Management, **24**(5), pp. 449–463.
- [21] Jones, D. A., Willness, C. R., and Madey, S., 2014, "Why Are Job Seekers Attracted by Corporate Social Performance? Experimental and Field Tests of Three Signal-Based Mechanisms," Academy of Management Journal, **57**(2), pp. 383–404.
- [22] Magbool, M., Amran, A., Nejati, M., and Krishnaswamy, J., 2016, "Corporate Sustainable Business Practices and Talent Attraction," Sustainability Accounting, Management and Policy Journal, **7**(4), pp. 539–559.

- [23] Briscoe, F., and Gupta, A., 2021, "Business Disruption from the Inside Out," *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, **19**(1), pp. 48–54.
- [24] Reitz, M., Higgins, J., and Day-Duro, E., 2021, "The Wrong Way to Respond to Employee Activism," *Harvard Business Review Digital Articles*, pp. 1–7.
- [25] Maks-Solomon, C., and Drewry, J. M., 2021, "Why Do Corporations Engage in LGBT Rights Activism? LGBT Employee Groups as Internal Pressure Groups," *Business and Politics*, **23**(1), pp. 124–152.
- [26] "Graduating Student Survey," MIT Institutional Research [Online]. Available: <https://ir.mit.edu/graduating-student-survey>. [Accessed: 14-May-2021].
- [27] Jin, Y. H., Mjelde, J. W., and Litzenberg, K. K., 2014, "Economic Analysis of Job-Related Attributes in Undergraduate Students' Initial Job Selection," *Education Economics*, **22**(3), pp. 305–327.
- [28] "Factors Influencing Students' Career Choices: Empirical Evidence from Business Students," IBIMA Publishing.
- [29] "'Meaningful Work' Most Important Factor in Choosing a Job," dfg [Online]. Available: <http://www.core-asset.co.uk/news-article/meaningful-work-survey>. [Accessed: 25-Apr-2021].
- [30] "Learn More About the SDGs – SDG Compass."
- [31] "The Ten Principles | UN Global Compact" [Online]. Available: <https://unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc/mission/principles>. [Accessed: 26-Apr-2021].
- [32] "Statistics & Reports | MIT Registrar" [Online]. Available: <https://registrar.mit.edu/statistics-reports/enrollment-statistics-year>. [Accessed: 26-Apr-2021].