Does being green matter for university branding; an exploration ?

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Key concepts

- ‘The sustainable university’ (Lukman & Glavic, 2007)
- Incorporating sustainability into brands can differentiate ? (Nguyen et al, 2019)
- Sustainability can tie in with City brands (Castro Gomez et al, 2024)
- Need to understand internal attitude and effect on sustainability practice
- Rankings/ tables often used as a shorthand (McCowan, 2020)
- How are these rankings utilised and valued?

This is a joint project between BU and Pannonia, Hungary; a *3 year programme of research is focusing on 4 broad questions*:

- RQ1: How can 'green' universities be clustered?
- RQ2: Are there any differences between the community attitude and activity of 'green and non-green universities' in terms of sustainably ?
- RQ3: How do 'green and non-green' universities apply 'green' in their marketing ?
- RQ4: How does the *community* 'sustainably attitude' of green universities' differ from non-green universities in terms of the links to branding ?
- 'Green universities' are judged to be those, such as Nottingham Trent (or UCC) that score well on UI green metric

UI GreenMetric: Framework

The UI GreenMetric World University Ranking is a ranking on green campus and environmental sustainability initiated by Universitas Indonesia in 2010.

Through 39 indicators in 6 criteria, UI GreenMetric World University Rankings determined the rankings by universities' environmental commitment and initiatives.

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UI GreenMetric: Framework

World University Rankings brings sustainable impacts

A university's GreenMetric ranking can inform **strategic planning**, **green policy-making**, and even **funding decisions** for sustainability initiatives. Many institutions use their ranking as a communication tool to engage stakeholders and **promote environmental responsibility**.

- Facilitating international partnership on sustainability.

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- https://greenmetric.ui.ac.id/

- 1477 Universities in 95 countries participating

But in Europe alternatives are widely adopted:

- People & Planet (UK)
- Times Higher Impact Rankings

BU are in the **11th** in the People and Planet University League.

BU rank **59th in the world** out of 2526 other universities, for our contribution to the SDGs.

Link to sustainable cities?

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City or place brand

- ‘Universities are often anchor institutions’ (McCowan, 2020)

- ‘Cities and regions often work with universities to co-brand their locations…using the universities sustainability agenda to boost the city’s image on a global stage’ (Castro-Gomez et al, 2024)

Methodology

- 1. Clustering
- 2. Structural interviews • University decision-makers, marketing professionals, strategic planners, academics, researchers
- 3. Public Participatory GIS questionnaires • Free platform (www.map-me.org) • Selected universities' students and employees • Selected universities' city residents. *Preparation of two questionnaires: local residents, students and employees.*

Which methodologies and criteria are applicable in the classification and clustering of green universities ?

Cluster analysis aims to produce homogeneous groups of universities

Based on literature studies, there are examples of clustering in the Green Metric ranking

We have tried **3 clustering procedures** for the time being on **TEST data for 2023**: 1182 universities have been clustered according to six dimensions (Infrastructure, Energy&Climate, Waste, Water, Transportation, Education&Research):

WARD method

K-MEANS method

Bicluster method

UI GreenMetric 2024

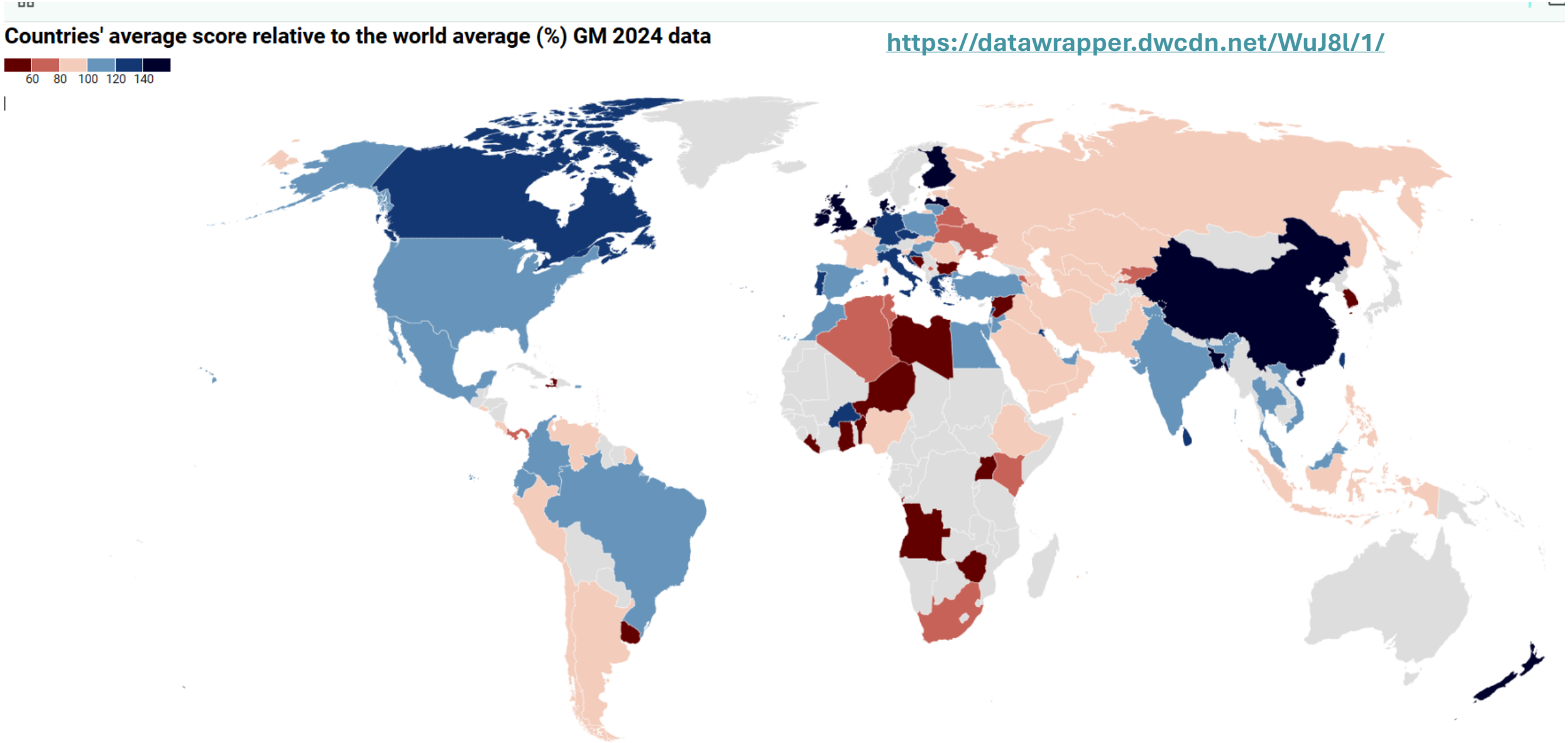
- 4 clusters were created, based on the GM dimensions, with cluster means as follows:

	Infrastr	Energy	Waste	Water	Transp	Edu
1	528.8826	587.8409	321.5909	173.9773	499.8864	513.9773
2	916.6882	1271.1398	1104.6774	593.5699	1208.0323	1290.7634
3	1168.1933	1600.4342	1477.3109	821.1765	1465.1961	1616.6106
4	737.8590	963.7179	664.6154	354.1026	885.6667	975.2308

The name of the 4 clusters:

3= High Level of Sustainability (357 uni)
2= Medium-High Level of Sustainability (465 uni)
4=Medium-Low Level of Sustainability (390 uni)
1= Low Level of Sustainability (264 uni)

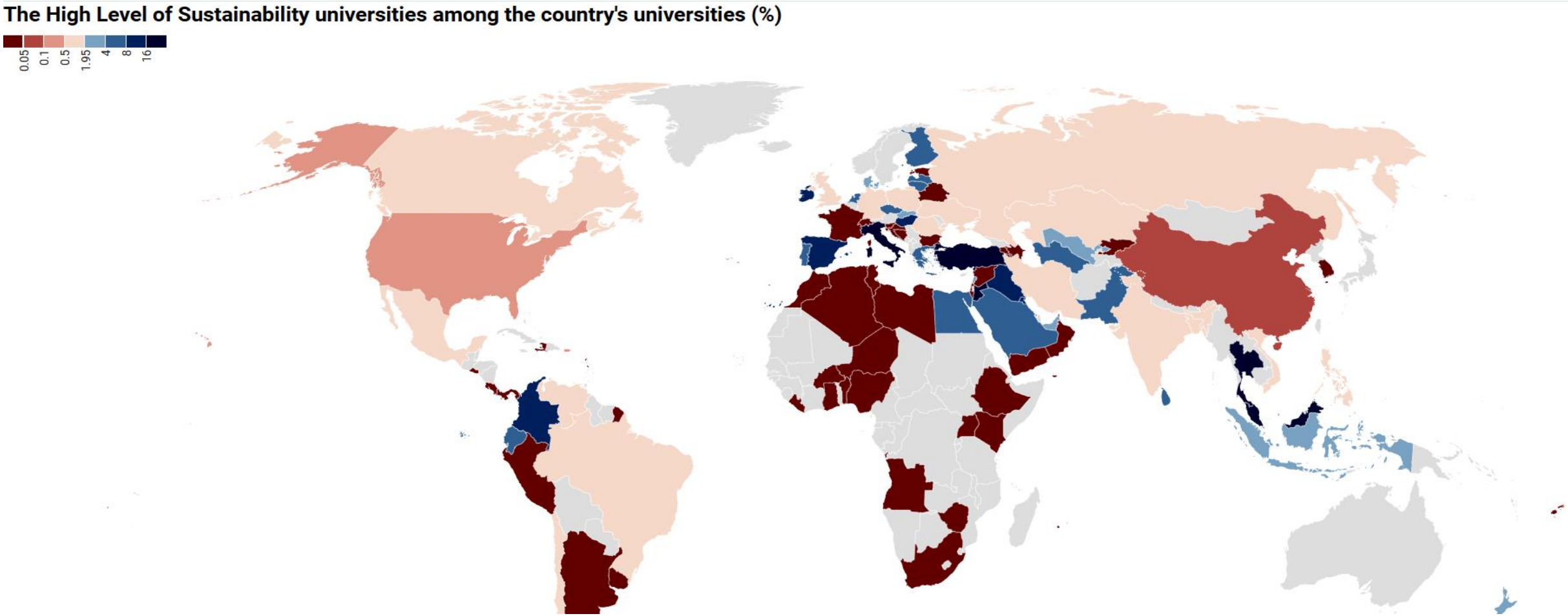
Average score of universities in each country.



https://datawrapper.dwcdn.net/WuJ8l/1/

The High Level of Sustainability universities among the country's universities (%):

https://datawrapper.dwcdn.net/RKzGs/1/



Shades of red represent values below the full list average of 1.95%, while blue indicates values above it.

Dark red represents a value of 0.

Progress

- Essentially looking for the internal factors (attitudes and behaviours within the ‘communities’) that underpin and link to green universities
- Also to understand the real value in this and how this is used
- Clustering work undertaken
- Focus Groups – attitudes and communities' part underway
- Develop questionnaire by end October
- Quantitative – details evolving (e.g. Sample 300 students at each of x1 green Hungary & x1 UK and at x 1 ‘non-Green’ Hungary & UK)

Anticipated Outputs

- Academic papers
- Conferences
- Influence policy and practice through appropriate outputs (eg Hungarian ‘White paper’)
- Opportunity for ‘Impact’ (REF 2029 Impact Case)

Thank you!

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Any questions (and constructive criticism?)

References

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