

Publisher: Sapienza Grupo Editorial R. Santa Cruz, 2187, Vila Mariana São Paulo, Brazil editor@sapienzaeditorial.com







Management of political representation and the three pillars of sustainable development in Peru

Gestão da representação política e os três pilares do desenvolvimento sustentável em Peru Gestión de la representación política y los tres ejes del desarrollo sostenible en Perú

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ARTICLE HISTORY

Received: 15-11-2024 Revised Version: 14-03-2025 **Accepted:** 30-04-2025 Published: 26-05-2025

Copyright: © 2025 by the authors License: CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 Manuscript type: Article

ARTICLE INFORMATION

Science-Metrix Classification (Domain):

Economic & Social Sciences

Main topic:

Governance and development

Main practical implications:

Strengthening political representation through transparency and citizen engagement significantly enhances public service quality and institutional trust for sustainable development.

Originality/value:

This article introduces a validated model using ordinal logistic regression to quantify how quality management dimensions affect financial competitiveness, offering original insights for strategic improvement in banking institution.

ABSTRACT

Political representation is a cornerstone of democratic governance and plays a crucial role in fostering sustainable development. However, in many regions, weak political representation has hindered governance effectiveness, limiting citizen participation and institutional trust. This study examines the relationship between political representation management and sustainable development. A correlational, nonexperimental research design was employed, using surveys to assess political representation and sustainable development. A sample of 138 citizens was selected based on statistical precision criteria. The study analyzed data using Spearman's correlation and descriptive statistics to identify significant relationships between key variables. Findings indicate that 48% of respondents perceive political representation at a medium level, while 28% rate it as low, revealing inefficiencies in parliamentary engagement. The study found a strong correlation between political representation and socially responsible hiring (r = 0.911), public service quality (r = 0.801), and institutional trust improvement (r = 0.817). These results suggest that effective representation is critical for governance quality and sustainable policies. Conclusions: Strengthening political representation through transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement is essential for sustainable development. Future research should explore the role of digital tools in enhancing political participation and the impact of leadership training on governance effectiveness.

Keywords: management; political representation; sustainable development; quality of public services; institutional trust.

RESUMO

A representação política é um pilar fundamental da governança democrática e desempenha um papel crucial no desenvolvimento sustentável. No entanto, em muitas regiões, a fraca representação política tem prejudicado a eficácia governamental, limitando a participação cidadã e a confiança institucional. Este estudo examina a relação entre a gestão da representação política e o desenvolvimento sustentável. Foi empregado um desenho de pesquisa correlacional e não experimental, utilizando questionários para avaliar a representação política e o desenvolvimento sustentável. Uma amostra de 138 cidadãos foi selecionada com base em critérios estatísticos de precisão. Os dados foram analisados por meio da correlação de Spearman e estatísticas descritivas para identificar relações significativas entre as variáveis-chave. Os achados indicam que 48% dos entrevistados percebem a representação política em nível médio, enquanto 28% a avaliam como baixa, revelando ineficiências no envolvimento parlamentar. O estudo encontrou uma forte correlação entre a representação política e a contratação socialmente responsável (r = 0,911), a qualidade dos serviços públicos (r = 0,801) e a melhoria da confiança institucional (r = 0,817). Esses resultados sugerem que uma representação eficaz é fundamental para a qualidade da governança e a formulação de políticas sustentáveis. Conclusões: O fortalecimento da representação política por meio da transparência, responsabilidade e engajamento cidadão é essencial para o desenvolvimento sustentável. Pesquisas futuras devem explorar o papel das ferramentas digitais na ampliação da participação política e o impacto da capacitação em liderança na eficácia da governança.

Palavras-chave: gestão; representação política; desenvolvimento sustentável; qualidade dos serviços públicos; confiança institucional.

RESUMEN

La representación política es una piedra angular de la gobernabilidad democrática y desempeña un papel crucial en el fomento del desarrollo sostenible. Sin embargo, en muchas regiones, la débil representación política ha obstaculizado la eficacia de la gobernabilidad, limitando la participación ciudadana y la confianza institucional. Este estudio examina la relación entre la gestión de la representación política y el desarrollo sostenible. Se empleó un diseño de investigación correlacional, no experimental, mediante encuestas para evaluar la representación política y el desarrollo sostenible. Se seleccionó una muestra de 138 ciudadanos con base en criterios de precisión estadística. El estudio analizó los datos utilizando la correlación de Spearman y estadísticas descriptivas para identificar relaciones significativas entre variables clave. Resultados: Los hallazgos indican que el 48% de los encuestados percibe la representación política en un nivel medio, mientras que el 28% la califica como baja, lo que revela ineficiencias en la participación parlamentaria. El estudio encontró una fuerte correlación entre la representación política y la contratación socialmente responsable (r = 0,911), la calidad del servicio público (r = 0,801) y la mejora de la confianza institucional (r = 0,817). Estos resultados sugieren que la representación efectiva es fundamental para la calidad de la gobernanza y las políticas sostenibles. Conclusiones: El fortalecimiento de la representación política a través de la transparencia, la rendición de cuentas y la participación ciudadana es esencial para el desarrollo sostenible. Las investigaciones futuras deberían explorar el papel de las herramientas digitales para mejorar la participación política y el impacto de la capacitación de líderes en la eficacia de la gobernanza.

Palabras clave: gestión; representación política; desarrollo sostenible; calidad de servicios públicos; confianza institucional.

INTRODUCTION

Political representation stands as one of the fundamental pillars of democratic institutions, ensuring that the voices and perspectives of all citizens are considered in the decision-making processes that drive sustainable policies (Bursztyn & Díaz, 2021; Chávez & Niewiadomski, 2022; Galindo-Silva, 2021; Yan & Zhou, 2021). In an increasingly interconnected and complex world, the Ibero-American Charter reinforces this principle by granting citizens the right to actively participate in political activities aimed at collective well-being (Labonne et al., 2021). Thus, the promotion of responsible and inclusive political institutions is not only essential for achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 but also for laying the foundations of equitable and sustainable community development (Arhuis-Inca et al., 2022; Labonne et al., 2021).

The evolution of political representation has been a historical process marked by transformative milestones. From the assemblies of Ancient Greece, where male citizens debated and voted on public matters, to the formation of the English Parliament in the 13th century and the revolutions inspired by thinkers like Locke and Rousseau during the Enlightenment, the idea that political power must emanate from the people has been a driving force for social change (Steinhäuser, 2021). However, today, political representation faces unprecedented challenges that threaten its ability to foster sustainable development.

From a theoretical perspective, political representation is grounded in agency theory, which posits that representatives act as agents of the electorate, and in deliberative representation theory, which emphasizes the importance of continuous dialogue between representatives and citizens for informed and consensual decision-making (Alonso & Brussino, 2019; Martínez-Rojas et al., 2021). Despite these foundations, the global reality presents a concerning picture. In Europe, for instance, 87% of political parties are dominated by citizens with greater economic resources, and parliamentarians often prioritize partisan or personal interests over the needs of their constituents (Jakimow, 2022; Schürmann, 2023). Furthermore, the lack of active participation in public hearings, workshops, and community visits reflects a growing disconnect between representatives and citizens (Galindo-Silva, 2021).

Nevertheless, there are hopeful advancements. The report by Liu (2023) highlights that the political representation of women has significantly increased, driving the implementation of social programs related to health and well-being. Women in political office also exhibit lower levels of corruption and greater effectiveness in public policy implementation (Jakimow, 2022; Dahlum et al., 2022; Rustagi & Akter, 2022). These findings underscore the importance of promoting more diverse and inclusive representation.

In Latin America, changes in social structure have led to political and territorial fragmentation, resulting in a single-issue and disenchanted citizenry (Maldonado et al., 2020). In countries like Mexico and Colombia, over 60% of citizens avoid publicly expressing their political opinions, reflecting deep mistrust in institutions (Torres, 2021). Regionally, only 46% of sustainable development goals have been met, highlighting the urgent need for reforms (Naciones Unidas, 2023)

In Peru, the situation is equally critical. Insecurity, corruption, and unemployment are the primary concerns of citizens, and only a minority of congressmembers focus on legislative activities that directly benefit their communities (Reid, 2023; Beesley & Hawkins, 2022). In the San Martín region, for example, 24.7% of citizens prefer an autocratic government due to the lack of representativeness and ongoing corruption scandals (Pizzan-Tomanguillo, 2023). These challenges underscore the need to strengthen governance and transparency in political management.

This study is justified by its contribution to strengthening governance and sustainable development, promoting citizen participation in the oversight of their representatives, and fostering transparency and accountability. Its social relevance lies in empowering citizens, improving their quality of life, and increasing their influence in political processes. Theoretically, it integrates conceptual contributions that enrich the understanding of political representation and sustainability, while in practice, it identifies key challenges in political systems and provides inputs for their improvement.

Finally, the objective of the present research was to determine the relationship between political representation management and the promotion of sustainable development.

METHODS

Design

This study is characterized as basic research, as it diagnoses real-world problem and proposes actionable improvements grounded in theoretical analysis and evaluation of key variables (Ipanaqué-Zapata et al., 2023). It employs a non-experimental design, which is well-suited for examining phenomena in their natural context without manipulating variables (Meseguer et al., 2022; Moore et al., 2022). Following the framework outlined by Du et al. (2022), it adopts a correlational approach, aiming to identify relationships between variables and lay the groundwork for future research.

Population and Sample

The study focuses on the citizens of the San Martín region, which, according to the 2023 census conducted by the National Institute of Statistics and Informatics (INEI), has a population of 813,381 inhabitants. Participants included public officials, business leaders, representatives of non-profit organizations, and adult citizens with prior knowledge of public policies. To determine the sample size, the finite population formula was applied, ensuring statistical precision (Kotronoulas et al., 2023). The calculation was based on a 95% confidence level, a margin of error of 0.05%, and probability values of 0.10 and 0.90. As a result, the study involved 138 participants from the San Martín region in 2023.

Instruments

Data collection was carried out using the survey technique, with questionnaires developed by the researcher. These instruments were designed based on methodological criteria and theoretical frameworks to ensure their effectiveness. The questionnaire assessing political representation management consisted of 21 items, distributed across three dimensions: Activities on Behalf of Citizens (10 items), Alignment with Public Policy (4 items), and Relationship Management (7 items). Similarly, the questionnaire measuring sustainable development included 21 items, categorized into three components: Socially Responsible Procurement (7 items), Quality of Public Services (7 items), and Improvement of Institutional Trust (7 items). Both instruments used Likert scales for responses, with ordinal scale classifications as follows: Low (scores of 21 to 49), Medium (scores of 50 to 78), and High (scores of 79 to 105).

The validation process involved expert review, and Aiken's V coefficient was calculated to assess agreement among judges. Both instruments achieved a perfect agreement score of 1, confirming their validity (González & Bermeo, 2024). For reliability, a pilot test was conducted with 30 participants, and the data were analyzed using SPSS27 to calculate Cronbach's alpha. The results demonstrated excellent internal consistency, with alpha values of 0.934 for political representation management and 0.944 for sustainable development (Arrindell et al., 2022).

Data Analysis

Given the quantitative nature of the study, both descriptive and inferential analyses were performed. Descriptive analysis characterized the variables using Microsoft Excel to calculate frequencies and percentages, which were then presented in clear and precise tables (Macías & Vélez, 2022). For inferential analysis, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was applied to assess data normality, given the sample size exceeding 50 participants. Subsequently, Spearman's Rho was used to determine the significance level, correlation coefficients, and data dispersion, enabling the testing of hypotheses and the formulation of conclusions and recommendations (Betancourt & De Las Cuevas, 2021).

Ethical aspects

The study adhered to ethical principles to ensure the protection of participants' rights and the integrity of the research process. The APA 7th edition guidelines were followed for proper citation and referencing, safeguarding the intellectual contributions of authors and participants (Mariani et al., 2023). The ethical principles upheld in this study include: Beneficence, the study aimed to benefit participants by generating actionable insights to improve political representation and sustainable development in the San Martín region (Madrid & Gregory, 2023). Non-Maleficence, participants' identities were kept confidential, and measures were taken to protect their integrity and dignity, avoiding any potential risks. Autonomy, informed consent was obtained from all participants, who were fully informed about the study's objectives and their voluntary participation. They were also assured of their right to withdraw at any time (Gao et al., 2022). Justice, participants were treated equitably, with no favoritism, and their physical and mental well-being was prioritized throughout the research process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows that 48% of respondents perceive political management at a medium level, while a considerable percentage (28%) rate it as low, suggesting challenges in the effectiveness and scope of political actions. When analyzing specific dimensions, citizen participation in political management Activities on behalf of the citizen is mostly at a medium level (43%), indicating a certain level of engagement but lacking consolidation in decision-making (29% at a high level). On the other hand, public policy content reflects a distribution across levels, with 33% at a low level and 37% at a medium level, which may indicate limited citizen ownership of policies or deficiencies in their communication and implementation. Notably, Relationship management is critically highlighted, where 38% of respondents consider it deficient, suggesting a potential disconnect between representatives and citizens, which could negatively impact the legitimacy and effectiveness of sustainable development policies.

Table 1. Characterization of political responsibility management and its dimensions

Variable/dimensions		f	%
Management of molitical	Low	39	28%
Management of political	Medium	66	48%
representation	High	33	24%
	Low	39	28%
D1. Activities on behalf of the citizen	Medium	59	43%
	High	40	29%
	Low	46	33%
D2. Public policy content	Medium	51	37%
	High	41	30%
	Low	53	38%
D3. Relationship management	Medium	54	39%
-	High	31	23%

Source: Author's development based on the research data

Table 2 shows that 38% of respondents consider sustainable development to be at a medium level, while 35% place it at a high level, indicating a relatively balanced perception but with room for improvement. Regarding specific dimensions, socially responsible hiring presents a concerning distribution, with 36% at a low level and only 26% at a high level, suggesting that responsible labor practices still need to be strengthened. The quality of public services stands out with 39% at a high level, although 28% still perceive it as low, indicating progress but also the persistence of structural deficiencies. Finally, the improvement of institutional trust reaches the highest proportion at a medium level (41%), but with 27% at a low level, suggesting a perception of fragility in institutional legitimacy.

Table 2. Characterization of sustainable development and its dimensions

Variable/dimensions		f	%
	Low	37	27%
Sustainable development	Medium	53	38%
	High	48	35%
D1 Casially responsible	Low	50	36%
D1. Socially responsible hiring	Medium	52	38%
nining	High	36	26%
D2 Quality of mublic	Low	39	28%
D2. Quality of public services	Medium	45	33%
services	High	54	39%
D2 1	Low	38	27%
D3. Improvement of institutional trust	Medium	56	41%
IIISULUUOIIAI UUSL	High	44	32%

Source: Author's development based on the research data

As shown in Table 3, the highest proportion of individuals with political representation across all three levels corresponds to the male sex, with 74.4% at the low level, 77.3% at the medium level, and 60.6% at the high level. In contrast, female representation is lower at all levels, accounting for 25.6% at the low level, 22.7% at the medium level, and increasing to 39.4% at the high level. Furthermore, the statistical analysis indicates no significant differences in political representation between men and women, as the p-value exceeds 0.05. This suggests that sex does not exert a significant influence on political representation levels.

Table 3. Comparison of political representation management by sex

Sociodemogra	aphic variable	Low	Medium	High	р	Cramer's V
Sex	М	29 (74.4%)	51 (77.3%)	20 (60.6%)	m > 0.0F	0.200
	F	10 (25.6%)	15 (22.7%)	13 (39.4%)	p > 0.05	0.206

Source: Author's development based on the research data

Similarly, as shown in Table 4, the male sex exhibits a higher proportion across all three levels of sustainable development, with 83.8% at the low level, 67.9% at the medium level, and 68.8% at the high level. In contrast, female representation is considerably lower at the low level (16.2%), although their participation increases at the medium (32.1%) and high (31.3%) levels. Likewise, the p-value is greater than 0.05, indicating that differences in sustainable development between sexes are not statistically significant.

Table 4. Comparison of sustainable development by sex

Sociodemographi	c variable	Low	Medium	High	р	Cramer's V
Sex	М	31 (83.8%)	36 (67.9%)	33 (68.8%)	0.05	0.196
	F	6 (16.2%)	17 (32.1%)	15 (31.3%)	p > 0.05	0.196

Source: Author's development based on the research data

Table 5 show the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, indicating that most variables exhibit significance values (p < 0.05), which confirms a non-normal distribution. Specifically, management of political representation (p = 0.043), sustainable development (p = 0.015), public policy content (p = 0.000), relationship management (p = 0.009), socially responsible hiring (p = 0.000), and improvement of institutional trust (p = 0.000) do not meet the normality assumption, suggesting the need for non-parametric tests. In contrast, activities on behalf of the citizen (p = 0.200) and quality of public services (p = 0.200) satisfy this assumption, allowing for the use of parametric analyses.

Table 5. Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test for the study variables

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			
	Statistic	gl	Sig.	
Management of political representation	0.077	138	0.043	
Sustainable development	0.086	138	0.015	
Activities on behalf of the citizen	0.066	138	.200*	
Public policy content	0.114	138	0.000	
Relationship management	0.089	138	0.009	
Socially responsible hiring	0.455	138	0.000	
Quality of public services	0.066	138	.200*	
Improvement of institutional trust	0.114	138	0.000	

Source: Author's development based on the research data

Table 6 presents the correlation matrix between the study variables and dimensions, showing significant relationships at the 0.01 (two-tailed) level. A strong correlation is observed between management of political representation (MPR) and activities on behalf of the citizen (ABC) (r = 0.946), as well as between MPR and socially responsible hiring (SRH) (r = 0.911), suggesting that the effectiveness of political representation is closely linked to citizen participation and responsible hiring practices. Likewise, sustainable development (SD) exhibits a strong correlation with quality of public services (QPS) (r = 0.975) and improvement of institutional trust (IIT) (r = 0.975), indicating that strengthening public services and institutional trust are key factors in sustainability. Additionally, quality of public services shows a considerable correlation with improvement of institutional trust (r = 0.945), supporting the idea that the perception of efficient services reinforces institutional legitimacy. Overall, the high correlation coefficients reflect significant interdependencies between political management, sustainability, and institutional trust, highlighting the need for integrated approaches to enhance governance and sustainable development.

Table 6. Correlation matrix between the variables and dimensions of the study

	MPR	SD	ABC	PPC	RM	SRH	QPS	IIT
MPR	1							
SD	.863**	1						
ABC	.946**	.832**	1					
PPC	.901**	.774**	.799**	1				
RM	.925**	.796**	.789**	.798**	1			
SRH	.911**	.957**	.857**	.810**	.858**	1		
QPS	.801**	.975**	.785**	.699**	.739**	.896**	1	
IIT	.817**	.975**	.800**	.746**	.733**	.897**	.945**	1

^{**.} The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

Note: MPR= Management of political representation; SD=Sustainable development; ABC= Activities on behalf of the citizen; PPC=Public policy content; RM=Relationship management; SRH= Socially responsible hiring; QPS= Quality of public services; IIT= Improvement of institutional trust.

Source: Author's development based on the research data

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal significant challenges in political representation management and its impact on sustainable development in the San Martín region. It was identified that 48% of citizens perceive political representation at a medium level, indicating dissatisfaction with parliamentary performance and a weak connection between representatives and constituents. This perception aligns with Reid (2023), who concluded that parliamentarians exhibit deficiencies in political representation, reinforcing the hypothesis of political incapacity to effectively fulfill their representative role. Similarly, Galindo-Silva (2021) found that 52% of legislators do not actively participate in hearings, workshops, or visits to civil

organizations, contributing to inadequate representation.

Regarding the performance evaluation of council members in San Martín, the data reveal concerning patterns. 47% of citizens believe that council members only occasionally participate in protests, 39% think they almost always attempt to resolve regional issues, and 45% report that they sometimes manage high-impact projects and services. This lack of active commitment aligns with Jakimow (2022), who found that most legislators act based on party interests (56%), while only 13% prioritize citizens' concerns. Furthermore, 54% of citizens believe that parliamentarians only occasionally contribute to overseeing corruption at different levels of government. This is particularly relevant given Jakimow's (2022) finding that 52% of Americans perceive women in politics as less prone to corruption than men, a trend that aligns with San Martín, where corruption cases are more frequent among male representatives.

The study also found that 42% of citizens believe council members only sometimes act as mediators between the population and the government, while 40% stated that they only occasionally organize meetings with social sectors or submit transparency requests to authorities. These results align with Galindo-Silva (2021), who reported that 25% of legislators fail to manage citizen relations effectively and limit their interactions to media appearances.

From a sustainable development perspective, the findings highlight structural challenges. 38% of citizens rated sustainable development at a medium level, suggesting persistent issues in economic growth, equality, and the provision of basic services. Beesley & Hawkins (2022) found similar results in Mexico, where 52% of respondents stated that economic growth and social security fail to meet institutional expectations. Additionally, 42% of citizens only occasionally perceive efforts to eliminate gender discrimination in hiring processes, while 52% reported that laws promoting gender equality are only sometimes approved. These findings differ from Liu (2023), who observed a progressive increase in the implementation of health and well-being programs over the past three years (23%, 48%, and 61%, respectively).

Regarding resource management and urban planning, 47% of citizens believe that state strategies have facilitated efficient resource use, while 42% think institutions only occasionally guarantee access to water. Moreover, 46% perceive corruption and bribery as ongoing issues. Reid (2023) underscores the persistence of these challenges in Latin America, where 49% of citizens identify insecurity as the most pressing issue, followed by corruption (17.5%) and unemployment (13.3%). Jakimow (2022) reinforces this finding, noting that political corruption remains a critical factor in shaping public perceptions of governance.

From a statistical perspective, the results indicate a strong positive correlation between political representation management and socially responsible hiring (r = 0.911), suggesting that inadequate political representation significantly reduces the likelihood of implementing fair and ethical hiring practices. This finding aligns with Schürmann (2023), who demonstrated that legislators often rely on past events to maintain electoral presence rather than implementing concrete actions. Similarly, a significant positive relationship was identified between political representation management and public service quality (r = 0.801), implying that weak political representation contributes to a decline in essential service quality. Reid (2023) asserts that insufficient political representation limits transparency in sustainable development progress, reinforcing the need for more effective governance. Additionally, the correlation between political representation management and institutional trust improvement (r = 0.817) indicates that poor political representation deteriorates public trust in government institutions, a finding consistent with Beesley & Hawkins (2022), who determined that citizen participation is crucial for strengthening institutional legitimacy.

Finally, the study confirmed a strong correlation between political representation management and sustainable development (r = 0.863), validating the study's central hypothesis. Liu (2023) found a similar relationship, highlighting that political representation contributes to 81% of health and well-being objectives. Likewise, Rustagi & Akter (2022) concluded that political representation directly influences citizen participation, with a 95% determination coefficient. These findings emphasize the need to strengthen the connection between representatives and citizens to ensure effective sustainable development.

Practical implications and future Research

Given the study's findings, future research should explore the impact of political leadership training programs on the quality of representation and governance, assessing whether increased education in public administration enhances political engagement and accountability. Another promising avenue for investigation is the role of digital tools and artificial intelligence in bridging the communication gap between representatives and citizens, enabling more transparent and participatory decision-making. Comparative studies between regions with different governance models could also provide valuable insights into best practices for improving political representation. Finally, research should focus on the influence of citizen-led initiatives in enhancing government accountability, identifying mechanisms that strengthen grassroots participation in governance. Addressing these areas will contribute to a more robust understanding of political representation and its role in achieving sustainable and inclusive development.

CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed to analyze the relationship between political representation management and sustainable development in the San Martín region. The findings confirm that political representation plays a crucial role in shaping governance and directly influences public policies and institutional trust. The study successfully identified key gaps in political representation, with 48% of respondents rating political management at a medium level and a significant proportion (28%) perceiving it as low, highlighting inefficiencies in parliamentary engagement with citizens. Similarly, the research established a strong correlation between political representation management and key sustainable development factors, including socially responsible hiring (r = 0.911), public service quality (r = 0.801), and institutional trust improvement (r = 0.817). These results reinforce the idea that the effectiveness of political representation directly impacts governance quality and the advancement of sustainable development policies.

However, despite these insights, the study presents certain theoretical and methodological limitations. From a theoretical perspective, while the research builds upon agency and deliberative representation theories, it does not incorporate a longitudinal analysis of political representation trends over time, which could provide deeper insights into evolving governance challenges. Methodologically, the study is based on survey data, which, while providing valuable perceptions, could benefit from triangulation with qualitative approaches, such as in-depth interviews with policymakers and stakeholders, to enhance the robustness of findings. Additionally, the study focuses on a single region, limiting the generalizability of its conclusions to broader national or international contexts.

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Contribution of each author to the manuscript:

	% of contribution of each author				
Task	A1	A2	A3	A4	
A. theoretical and conceptual foundations and problematization:	25%	25%	25%	25%	
B. data research and statistical analysis:	25%	25%	25%	25%	
C. elaboration of figures and tables:	25%	25%	25%	25%	
D. drafting, reviewing and writing of the text:	25%	25%	25%	25%	
E. selection of bibliographical references	25%	25%	25%	25%	
F. Other (please indicate)	=	-	-	-	

Indication of conflict of interest:

There is no conflict of interest

Source of funding

There is no source of funding

Acknowledgments

There is no acknowledgement