In recent years, sustainability has become an increasingly important issue in the field of logistics and especially in the transport sector. In fact, within the field of logistics freight transport is considered the most environmentally harmful area in terms of greenhouse gas emissions. Shifting freight transport towards sustainable transport modes such as inland waterways can be named as an effective measure to counteract the negative effects. Logistics managers with expertise and practical experience regarding sustainable issues such as greenhouse gas emissions have been identified as crucial employees to realize a modal shift. However, given the negligible importance of eco-friendly issues in logistics education, industry claims that logistics graduates frequently lack the skills required by industry.

In addition, working in cross-cultural teams has become an important part in the professional and academic environment. Integrating international case studies, is considered an important measure in order to meet the needs of industry and to support students’ intercultural understanding. An experiment was conducted, integrating an international case study in lectures held at universities in the three participating countries (Netherlands, Austria, Romania). A questionnaire based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour was prepared to investigate students’ perception of eco-friendly freight transport. Primarily results suggest, that there is a difference concerning students’ perception of eco-friendly transport in the participating countries.

The aim of this paper is to investigate students’ perception of eco-friendly freight transport and cross-cultural differences between three participating European countries – the Netherlands, Austria and Romania with 64 graduate logistics students. This paper has shown that the elaborated case study has an effect on students’ attitude towards eco-friendly transport and mode of transport. In addition, the results suggest, that there are cross-cultural differences on country level concerning the perception of eco-friendly transport modes. The results emphasize the need for further research and understanding how different teaching methods in higher logistics education and cultural differences influence students’ attitude.

This study has several limitations which influence generalizability. The experiment was only conducted in three universities in the Netherlands, Austria and Romania with a relatively small number of participants. Thus, a higher sample size and a comparison including other universities on European level to investigate students’ attitude towards eco-friendly transport would be interesting. In addition, future research is required to understand the effect of cultural differences on students’ attitude towards eco-friendly transport modes such as inland waterway transport can be increased.

References

Acknowledgements

The results of this paper are based on the project PROMINENT and REWWay. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the cooperating partners. The PROMINENT project has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under Grant Agreement No 633929.

Table 1. Profile of students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>Mean age (years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>25.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>54</strong></td>
<td><strong>24.43</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Qualitative Feedback

- **Netherlands**
  - Eco-friendly transport mode
  - May be more important in the future
  - Can only be used for certain cargo
  - Different requirements need to be met (e.g. waterway)

- **Austria**
  - Eco-friendly transport mode
  - Good transport alternative in considering the future
  - Should be considered in countries with a feasible capacity on inland waterways

- **Romania**
  - Eco-friendly transport mode
  - May be more important in the future
  - Should be considered in many industry in general and in forestry
  - Investments are necessary