

# Pack Light. Travel Right?

EXPLORING THE CONSTRAINTS ON STUDENTS' SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY CHOICES TO AND FROM SIENA

## Research Question

How do sustainability considerations impact the travel decisions of international students studying in Siena compared to students from Italy?

## About the study

This study examines the travel patterns and sustainability preferences of Erasmus and international students in Siena, exploring how environmental awareness, convenience, and travel duration influence their choices. By comparing these insights with the travel behaviors of Italian students commuting between Siena and their home cities, it aims to identify the challenges and opportunities for sustainable travel. Through a focused survey, the research reveals the complex relationship between students' environmental consciousness and their actual travel behaviors, contributing to a deeper understanding of the environmental implications of student mobility.

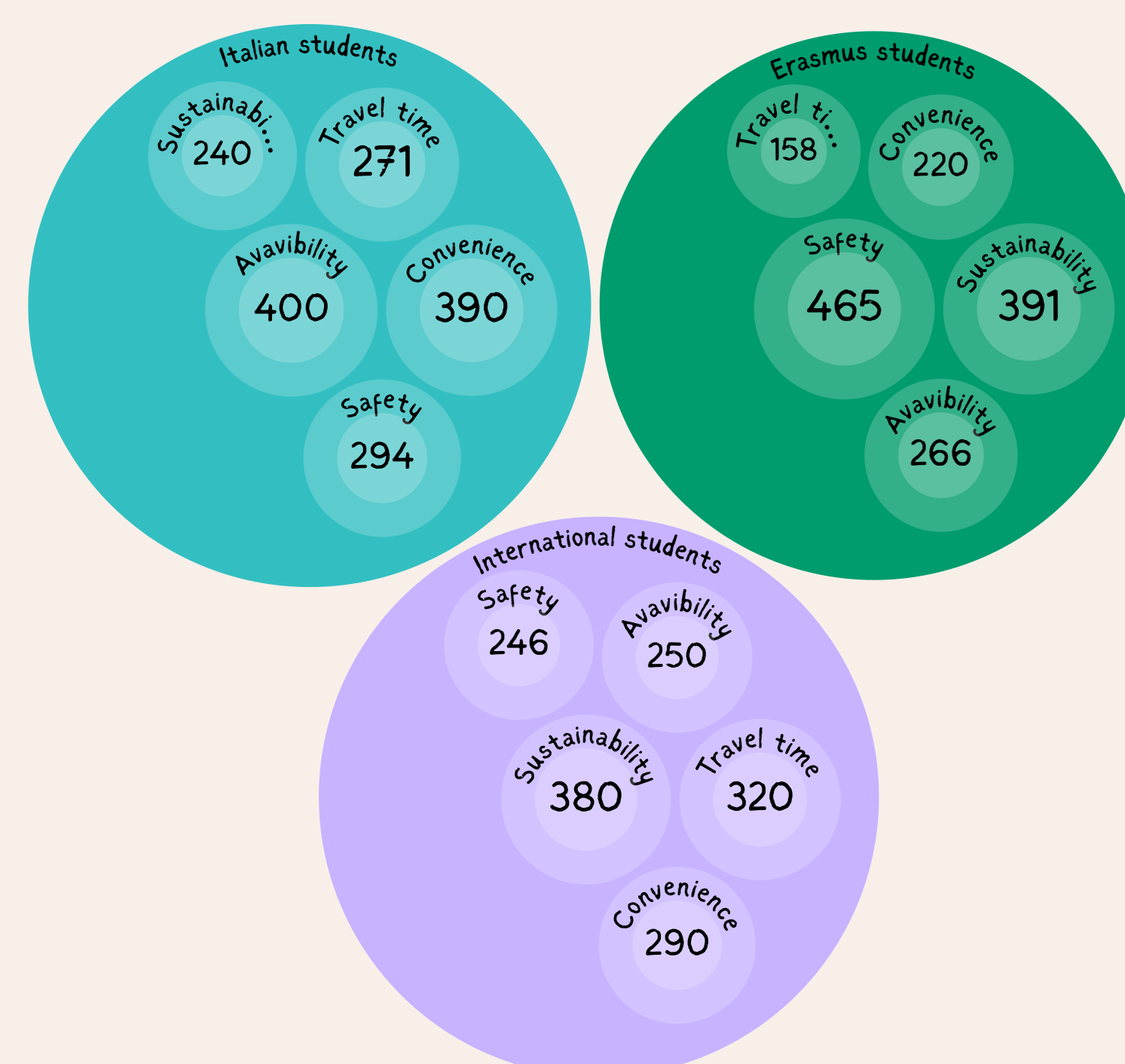
## About the Data

The study involved a population of 38 students, with 28 identifying as female and 10 as male. The data was collected between the 4th of March until the 29th 2024. All participants were students studying in Siena, Italy at the time of the survey. Apart from one Erasmus internship candidate, all students were attending lectures during the summer semester of 2024. Out of the total population, 10 students mentioned that they resided in Italy before relocating to Siena for their studies. Thirteen students were part of the Erasmus exchange program (including one Erasmus internship candidate), while 15 described themselves as international students at the University of Siena. The rest were Italian students. Overall 17 students from 17 different countries participated. The median age of the participants is 24, with the majority (14) studying subjects falling under Social Studies, followed by the second largest group (10) studying Economics/Business Administration.

If you are interested feel free to access the complete DataSet here:



The ranking of factors sorted by groups, with 100 denoting the most significant factor. (The smaller the more important)

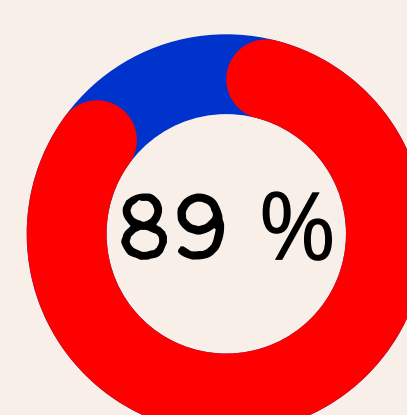


\*values multiplied by 100 for better visibility.

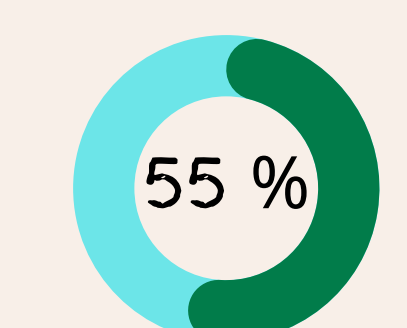
## Findings

- The survey shows no correlation (-0.16) between self-assessed daily sustainable practices and sustainability priorities in travel choices.
- Students new to Siena from other parts of Italy show stronger sustainability inclinations, with average ratings of 2.6 and 3.4, indicating differing attitudes among Siena's student population
- No correlation (0.0071) was found between travel duration and sustainability ranking.
- A weak correlation (0.20) exists between travel time and preference for air travel.
- Air travel choice is moderately correlated with lower sustainability rankings (0.45) and convenience (-0.42), showing convenience as a key factor.
- R-squared values of 0.2 and 0.18 suggest that convenience or sustainability alone don't fully explain the choice of air travel. The survey's limited scope may exaggerate these values.

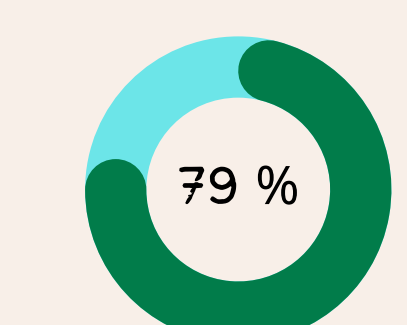
## Observations



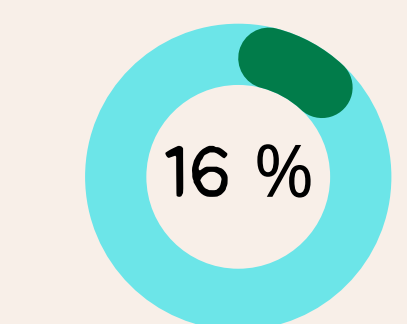
89% of students surveyed showed concerns about climate change, with a majority being "concerned" or "very concerned," aligning with a University of Bath study in 2023 where 91% of students expressed worry over climate change.



A small majority (55%) is also agreeing with the statement: "I consider my daily actions to be aligned with sustainable living principles."

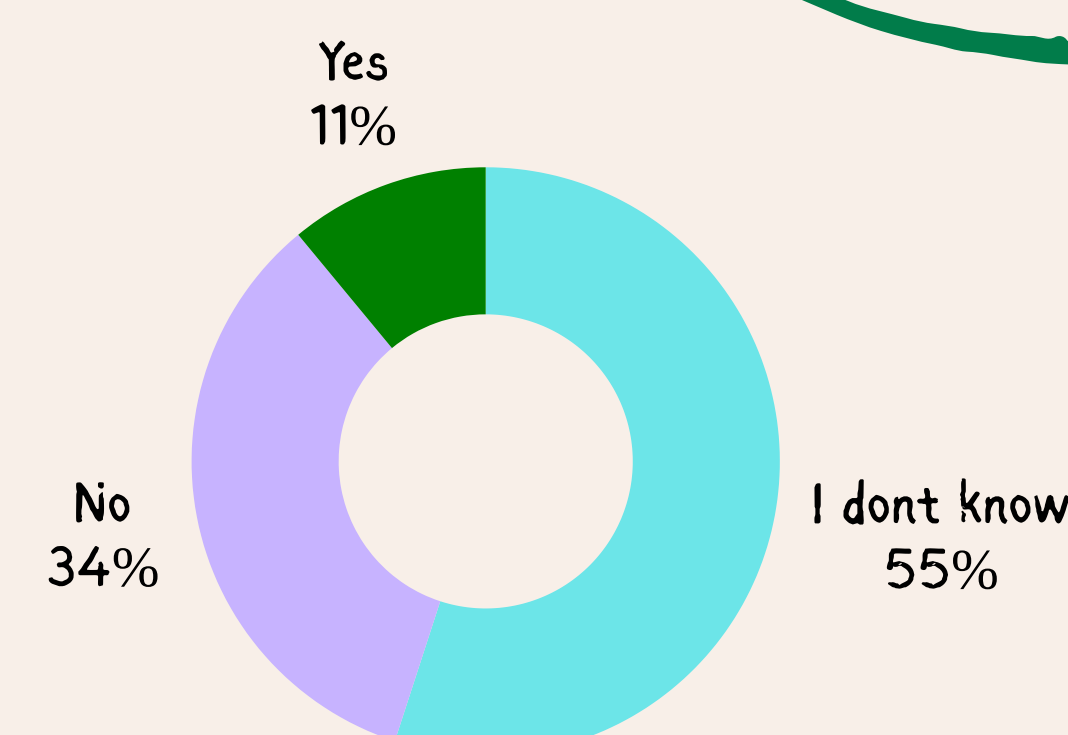


Most non-Italian students choose to travel to Siena by plane, with 79% of participants. Including those based in Italy 60.5% opt for air travel. This aligns with a 2019 ESN study showing 75% of Erasmus students travel by plane.



Among the surveyed students, a mere 16% highlighted that sustainability considerations greatly impact their travel decisions, with 34% considering it the least influential factor.

Does your university have an incentive program for environmentally friendly travel?



Participants surveyed on universities' green travel initiatives: only four aware, none influenced by it. Three students from Germany and one from France knew about the program.

Average Travel Time and most common mode of transportation:



## Conclusion

Despite the widespread acknowledgment of climate change, a considerable portion of students do not give precedence to sustainability when choosing their mode of travel. Moreover, their reported actions seem to have minimal impact on their travel choices.

In many areas, incentive programs that promote sustainable travel options are either insufficient or face challenges related to ineffective communication. The perceived inefficacy of these initiatives may stem from their limited reach.

Overall, these findings align closely with those outlined in the Green Erasmus Report, reflecting comparable outcomes across nearly all categories.

## References

- Mentioned studies:  
University of Bath:  
<https://shorturl.at/mwADS>  
Green Erasmus Project:  
<https://project.greenerasmus.org/>  
ESN sustainability study:  
<https://esn.org/news/sustainable-travel-priority-new-erasmus-programme>

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