RESEARCH ARTICLE

EDUCATION FOR A CHANGING WORLD: PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR SDG IMPLEMENTATION

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ABSTRACT

In September 2015, the need for a sustainable world was acknowledged, and 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were established by United Nations members, emphasizing education's central role in promoting sustainable development. The importance of adopting an interdisciplinary approach to education for sustainable development is highlighted, along with strategies for its advancement, considering diverse perspectives on sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR).The SDGs' broad agenda, requiring multidisciplinary collaboration, is analyzed. Literature on interdisciplinarity in education for sustainable development, including practices and barriers, is reviewed with reference to the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME).A case study is presented to demonstrate interdisciplinary education among diverse postgraduate MBA students through a course integrating sustainable development concepts. The application of PRME's Six Principles is shown, with an explanation of how a sustainability and CSR module enables students to synthesize knowledge across disciplines to address sustainability challenges.

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development has become a central focus for business leaders, governments, universities, NGOs, and the media. The UN, through initiatives like the Global Compact and PRME, emphasizes education as crucial for promoting sustainability. The UN Decade for Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) aimed to embed sustainability across curricula, guided by the Six Principles of PRME. This paper explores interdisciplinary education for sustainable development, highlighting its importance through case studies and addressing practices and barriers.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE(S)

In this above-mentioned paper, the following objectives are undertaken:

- To illustrate the advancement of interdisciplinary education for sustainable development among diverse postgraduate MBA students through a case study.
- To demonstrate the application of the Six Principles of PRME.
- To explain how a sustainability and CSR module fosters the integration of knowledge across disciplines.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study includes a literature review to explore the concept of interdisciplinary education for sustainable development and identify research gaps. A case study-based discussion illustrates its application among diverse postgraduate MBA students in a course integrating sustainable development concepts across disciplines. The application of the Six Principles of PRME is demonstrated, highlighting how a sustainability and CSR module promotes cross-disciplinary knowledge integration to enhance understanding and action on sustainability issues.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Education and the Sustainable Development Goals: The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted in 2015, aim to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure global prosperity by 2030. Quality education is central to achieving these goals, as highlighted by SDG 4, which emphasizes equipping

learners with knowledge and skills for sustainable development. Disciplines like geology demonstrate how education can raise awareness and drive contributions toward SDGs, showcasing their interconnectedness and the role of professionals in addressing global challenges. Globalization demands that future leaders understand complex sustainable development issues. It has become apparent that business professionals must employ concepts from various areas (including ethical theory, human rights, climate change, biodiversity, and stakeholder management) to develop responsible corporate strategies and practices. Sustainable development education must promote the ability to work with stakeholders having distinct interests and value systems to find common goals (Dale and Newman, 2005).
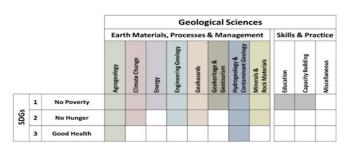

Figure 1. Interconnectedness between geosciences and the SDGs, adapted from Gill

Concept of Interdisciplinarity: Globalization requires future leaders to address complex sustainable development challenges by integrating concepts like ethics, human rights, and climate change into responsible strategies. Interdisciplinary education fosters collaboration across disciplines, enhancing problem-solving and understanding of global issues. Four curriculum models—traditional, connected, interdisciplinary, and integrated—highlight varying levels of integration, promoting solutions that combine diverse knowledge and expertise. Knowledge has been classified into disciplinary, multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary categories by Clark and Wallace (2015), with a discipline defined as "a self-contained and isolated domain of human experience with its own community of experts" (Nissani, 1997, p. 203).Four curriculum integration models have been identified by Kysilka (1998) on a continuum based on inter-disciplinary integration levels:

- **Traditional model:** Content is taught separately, with integration prompted by learners.
- **Connected model:** Disciplines remain primary, with teachers connecting learning to real-life and other disciplines.
- **Interdisciplinary model:** Rigid content boundaries are broken, blending skills and concepts.
- **Integrated curriculum:** Student-centered, teacher-facilitated learning.

Interdisciplinarity builds on disciplinary foundations to address complex sustainable development challenges by integrating diverse fields and fostering collaboration. It aligns with SDG 16's goals and highlights the need for holistic approaches as discipline-based models fall short. Barriers include limited time, assessment models, and governance challenges, necessitating restructured teacher training and interdisciplinary language. Sustainable development education integrates societal, environmental, and economic dimensions.
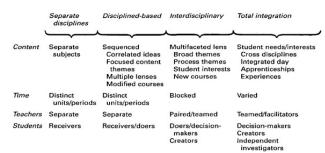

Figure 2. Integrated curriculum continuum (Kysilka, 1998, p. 204)

PRME Principles guide embedding sustainability into curricula, fostering leadership and critical thinking. Case studies, like interdisciplinary seminars in the USA and Canada, demonstrate effective collaboration and problem-solving to advance sustainability goals. These initiatives emphasize teamwork, cultural perspectives, and practical approaches to education for sustainable development. In the Master's degree in Environmental Management, students from natural and social sciences engaged in interdisciplinary residencies and online courses, applying PRME Principles 3, 4, and 6: Method, Research, and Dialogue. Luppi (2011) introduced a constructivist e-learning project for sustainable development education at Bologna and Rimini campuses in Italy, with modules focusing on theoretical, ethical, and operational objectives. Jain et al. (2013) at TERI University in India integrated sustainable development through face-to-face interactions, case studies, and real-life applications. While TERI's practices aligned with PRME's Six Principles, some education for sustainable development efforts reflects Kysilka's (1998) interdisciplinary approach, emphasizing coherence and coordination across disciplines.

Barriers To Implementing Interdisciplinary Education- for Sustainable Development-Summers, Childs, and Corney (2005) highlight those interdisciplinary initiatives face challenges in achieving success, recommending initial integration of two or three disciplines. Eagan, Cook, and Joeres (2002) emphasize that developing interdisciplinary communication, teamwork, and tolerance for diverse perspectives is crucial to overcoming barriers in interdisciplinary education for sustainable development.

Case study

Teaching sustainability to postgraduate MBA students-The need for integrating sustainability principles into management education: Integrating sustainability into postgraduate MBA education is essential as businesses play a crucial role in advancing SDGs. By fostering interdisciplinary approaches and stakeholder collaboration, MBA programs prepare leaders to manage sustainable development challenges effectively. Sustainable development principles must be embedded across curricula to equip professionals with the necessary skills for responsible decision-making and risk management.

Integrating sustainability and the PRME Principles into a MBA course-This study examines an MBA course delivered in London and Moscow, attracting around 200 annual enrolments. The curriculum includes core modules, electives, and a management research project. Sustainability, business ethics, and CSR are integrated into all MBA modules, supported by the Responsible Management subject.

Through interdisciplinary collaboration and the implementation of PRME Principles, the course fosters a comprehensive approach to sustainable development, preparing students to address real-world challenges effectively.

Teaching CSR and sustainability in the context of diversity-Variations in students' learning approaches require tailored strategies for sustainable development, especially in diverse, cross-border contexts. Differences in CSR interpretations between the UK and Russia, shaped by historical and cultural factors, necessitate adaptable educational methods. The Responsible Management module integrates role-play scenarios to facilitate interdisciplinary learning, promoting sustainability and aligning with PRME Principles. By incorporating sustainable development across the curriculum, the MBA program supports a comprehensive understanding of sustainability challenges, fostering critical reflection and real-world application.

CONCLUSION

This paper highlights the importance of interdisciplinary education for sustainable development, essential for addressing complex issues like climate change, poverty, and human rights. It emphasizes that achieving the SDGs requires collaboration across disciplines, as isolated approaches are insufficient. A case study of a postgraduate MBA course demonstrates embedding sustainable development concepts across disciplines, aligning with PRME principles. The study underscores adapting learning to students' backgrounds and shows how a sustainability and CSR module fosters integrated knowledge and action. Contributions include advancing literature on interdisciplinary education and overcoming barriers to support SDG delivery.

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