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INTEGRATING SDGS INTO THE OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT COURSE



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Abstract:

Purpose:

In 2015, the United Nations approved the 2030 Agenda establishing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to address a series of key challenges in our world.

In the same year, universities began to plan their participation from their respective action areas. Throughout 2020, our university carried out a study to establish the integration into its societal responsibility. One result of this planning with regard to teaching activity was the creation of support and guidance materials for the integration of SDGs into their teaching. In this framework, we consider our contribution through the Operations Management course by addressing the following question: How can the link between SDGs and the OM course be presented to students?

Methodology:

The methodology used is based on Action learning and Action research (Coughlan and Coughlan, 2011). At the beginning of the course, an activity organizer introduced students to SDGs. All SDGs were divided up among the students working in teams, for monitoring in their future practical activities (PA) conduct these practical activities, in addition to OM requirements, teams are asked to reference all SDG actions, whether written or proposed, executed by the company. In the final PA, each team produces a report with all the references to SDGs developed in the activities undertaken. This report is presented in class to compare and to serve as a basis for improvement. Teams are also asked to suggest SDG related actions that they perform in their usual daily university life.

Teachers evaluate the level of understanding of the relationship between OM and SDGs throughout the PA monitoring process. During the year, students will return to their initial proposal. At the end of the academic year, teaching staff evaluate the results achieved and make proposals for improvement for the following year.

Findings:

Preliminary results show that students discover distinct examples of actions related to SDGs above all when the activities analysed by the teams take place in societal responsibility reports are made public or who have a dedicated Public Relations department announcing these type of actions (eg. Amazon). The relationship is more precise in the final practical activity when the students' OM knowledge is more grounded. In some cases, students do not make SDG proposals when they lack information, so this needs to be reinforced by teachers.

Contribution:

Teachers understand the importance of reviewing the proposed relationships between the SDGs and OM especially at the end of the course, given that it is general for students. Additionally, it would be interesting towards the end of the course to include tools to work on SDGs such as the Wedding cake or S-curve respect to their relationship with OM. We consider that it could facilitate the interconnection with OM contents.

References:

- [1] Coughlan, P. and Coughlan, D. (2011), Collaborative strategic improvement through network action learning: The path to sustainability. Cheltenham, UK: Edw
- [2] United Nations (2023), 17 Goals to Transform Our World. Available at: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>

Keywords:

Sustainable Development Goals, Action learning, Action research, Operations management.