

# CTL Newsletter

Monthly Newsletter of the Centre for Teaching and Learning at IIM Udaipur



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## Sustainability in Management education

Sustainability in Management education (SiME) over the last decade has become an important idea that is shaping management education. What began as a way to sensitize management students is now an important aspect that educators are paying more attention to – deliberately crafting curricula that go beyond just sensitization and awareness. The main article gives an overview of the discussion about SiME in the last 15 years or so and talks about the various stakeholders involved.

In our brief summaries we share an article that discusses the role that faculty play in walking the talk with respect to sustainability. Another article that compares cases and simulations to determine which is a better pedagogy when it comes to learning sustainability. The third talks about dealing with eco-anxiety and emotional conversations that could possibly happen in management classrooms.

Happy Reading! Please do share your comments and suggestions!

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NAVIGATING HOPE AND DESPAIR IN SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION: A REFLEXIVE ROADMAP FOR BEING WITH ECO-ANXIETY IN THE CLASSROOM

# Sustainability in Management education, Brief history, and overview

The Landscape of Sustainability in management education (SiME) has evolved significantly in the last 15 years. One of the landmarks in this field of management education research was the Academy of Management Learning & Education (AMLE) special issue on "In Search of Sustainability in Management Education" (SiME) that was published in September 2010. Essays in this special edition were crucial in articulating the need for incorporating sustainability into the way business and management is conducted and how it requires teaching management students – the future decision makers – in a way that it ignites a passion for the topic.

Some key questions that this issue raised are still worth considering by teachers in management (Starik, Rands, Marcus, and Clark, 2010):

- What knowledge, values, attitudes, and skills do practitioners need to contribute to the creation of environmentally sustainable organizations?
- How well do various delivery mechanisms (residential, distance and hybrid models, and, degree, certificate, and major field programs) accomplish program goals?
- What is the relative effectiveness of interdisciplinary sustainability programs versus ones in which all courses are taught by business faculty with expertise in sustainability?
- What teaching materials and methods are most effective, and how can sustainability research best be incorporated into these tools?
- How do the various dimensions noted above interact, and are there more and less effective program configurations that emerge from these interactions?

The Academy of Management was a major catalyst for the growth of the dialogue surrounding SiME over the next decade through the multi-year professional development workshops (PDW) conducted at AoM conferences from 2009-2018. The PDWs fostered a positive environment that promoted the development of a community and facilitated the exchange of new knowledge. Participants at varying career stages within the PDWs had the opportunity to interact and learn from each other, as junior and senior faculty came together. Additionally, symposia held in 2019 and 2020 focused on SiME research topics, showcasing the work of up-and-coming scholars. These PDWs and symposia were supported by various divisions within the Academy of Management, such as the Organizations and the Natural Environment division, the Management Education and Development division, the Social Issues in Management division, and the Management Spirituality and Religion working group, which illustrates the wide-ranging support for SiME.

The SiME field has seen significant growth, with previous work on the topic published in various journals and books. Arevalo, Mitchell, Rands, & Starik (2020) in the introduction to another special edition by the Journal of Management education, provide a historical overview of the development of SiME, highlighting the emergence of organizations and initiatives that promote sustainability in business education. They cover the historical development of the concept of Sustainability in Management Education (SiME) through past special issues and edited books. The latest exploration of SiME was in "The Handbook of Sustainability In Management Education: In Search of a Multidisciplinary, Innovative and Integrated Approach," published in 2017. This collection of articles covered topics like service learning, critical thinking, entrepreneurship, and more, offering insights into the future direction and application of SiME.

Initially, SiME faced skepticism and resistance in business schools, but early themes emerged

advocating the need for attention to sustainability in business education. The literature focused on course elements, including course design frameworks, readings, exercises, and assignments. Over time, additional themes surfaced, such as the historical development of the field, contextual factors affecting SiME design, and concepts/topics to be included in SiME, which expanded to encompass social sustainability alongside environmental sustainability. However, the impact and outcomes of SiME initiatives, is an under-researched area in SiME, which hinders the comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of these courses and programs.



There are other stakeholders as well who play a role in building the narrative for SiME. AACSB has been at the forefront in incorporating various aspects of sustainability in management education

since the late 2000s. In the latest set of standards that will be applicable this month onwards (July 2023), a special standard looks exclusively at how management schools align themselves with respect to incorporating sustainability in all their operations and recommends following the UNSDGs as a framework though it is open to other frameworks as well. Global ranking agencies like FT and QS started by introducing sustainability related questions in their annual data collection exercise. Initially these sections were not mandatory, but once the concept had been introduced, they moved swiftly to ranking. QS has already published rankings of universities on the basis of their sustainability initiatives and very soon, Management schools will also be similarly ranked.

While SiME is still evolving, there are a number of topics including climate research, energy technology and policy, and socioeconomic issues such as race, diversity, equity, gender, inclusion, age, population, consumption, materials, peace, violence, human habitat, autonomy, expression, health, pandemics, the human treatment of other animals, and artificial intelligence, that need more attention and consideration in SiME in the years to come. The majority of the sustainability research and education reflects perspectives espoused by the global north and this is one space where researchers and educators from the global south and east have a role to play. SiME and underlying concerns are global phenomena where voices from these areas need representation to ensure the narrative is not overly skewed.

- Joel Xavier

#### References:

- Arevalo, J. A., Mitchell, S. F., Rands, G., & Starik, M. (2020). Guest editors' introduction to the special issue: Sustainability in management education. *Journal of Management Education*, 44(6), 683-698.
- Starik, M., Rands, G., Marcus, A. A., & Clark, T. S. (2010). From the guest editors: In search of sustainability in management education. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 9(3), 377-383.

# Brief notes from the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

## Walking the Sustainability Talk: If Not Us, Who? If Not Now, When?

KANASHIRO, P., RANDS, G., & STARIK, M. (2020). JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT EDUCATION, 44(6), 822-851.

Over time, sustainability challenges within management education have grown in quantity, intensity, and complexity. Reflecting on the roles we play, there is a need to lead by example and to adopt more sustainable lifestyles. Beyond research and teaching, personal sustainability actions are crucial for positive impact. As instructors influencing ethical business leaders by raising awareness of sustainability issues, fostering better decision-making for both short and long-term horizons can be a good start. Technological advancements and policy changes are vital but a cultural shift is equally essential to drive immediate, large-scale transformation. This essay encourages faculty to embrace personal sustainability behavior as related to research, teaching and service and explore ways to integrate them into classrooms and beyond. It also offers several recommendations as to how the faculty can leverage these experiences.

The commitment to sustainability through research and teaching can enable students to overcome the challenge of believing that sustainability can be practiced at a personal level and individual efforts can make a difference. However, there is a risk of students and faculty perceiving it as inconvenient and expensive in terms of time and money. At some point the question of such changes not being the immediate priority might also arise. By exposing students to environmental issues and potential business responses, their understanding, concern, and skills in this area can be sharpened. This heightened

awareness and internalized practices could lead to individuals implementing sustainable practices within their organizations, leading to improvements in environmental quality and social justice.

The authors support this idea, emphasizing that teaching sustainability in business schools can foster significant positive changes. Exposure to sustainability in management education has the potential to transform some students into sustainability change agents. By engaging with sustainability concepts during their studies, students are better equipped to promote positive environmental and social impacts within their respective organizations. While the faculty is being encouraged to engage in personal sustainability actions, measuring personal sustainability can be daunting and tools like the footprint calculator can help in changing the individual and social behavior of the students in and outside the classroom.

The paper also talks about major challenges that have been identified by the authors as faculty; First, inertia amongst faculty members with respect to sustainability quotient in their teaching and research; Second, syncing personal sustainability outlook with value free education; Third, the performance pressure and limitations of publications faced by Junior Faculty; Fourth, staying updated with the appropriate course of actions; Fifth, the acceptance of sustainability behavior; Sixth, the convenient adoption and acceptance of Sustainable actions. These have been discussed in some detail in the paper itself.

In summary, teaching environmental sustainability in business schools is likely to have a cascading effect. It enhances students' understanding and concern for environmental issues and equips them with relevant skills. Teachers have a major role to play as role models and sustainability champions. Ultimately, by nurturing sustainability change agents, this approach contributes to the promotion of a more sustainable and socially responsible business environment.

- Vaidehi Sharma

## **Simulations Versus Case Studies: Effectively Teaching the Premises of Sustainable Development in the Classroom**

ANDREA M. PRADO · RONALD ARCE · LUIS E. LOPEZ · JAIME GARCÍA · ANDY A. PEARSON.  
JOURNAL OF BUSINESS ETHICS (2020)

This paper compares cases study vs. Simulation as two pedagogical tools to understand which is more suited for providing experiential learning of sustainability.

Sustainability and related concepts have three main characteristics that increase the difficulty of teaching it in the classroom: its multidimensionality (i.e., economic, social, and environmental); its inter-temporality (i.e., short vs. long term); and its dynamic complexity (i.e., changes in one dimension will affect other dimensions). These characteristics call for exploring innovative approaches to teaching as well as assessing teaching effectiveness.

The educational methods investigated in this study aimed to guide individuals in evaluating and formulating ethical principles for sustainability. This process involves students critically examining their preconceptions about sustainable development and reconsidering various social, environmental, and economic choices that can shape different outcomes in the future. By creating a system that prompts students to make choices and explore their long-term consequences, it enables a deep reassessment of the student's values and beliefs concerning sustainability and development.

The findings suggest that simulations are slightly more effective than case studies for teaching sustainable development and are especially useful for illustrating the inter-temporal aspects of sustainability.

## **Navigating hope and despair in sustainability education: A reflexive roadmap for being with eco-anxiety in the classroom**

Peter Skilling, Fiona Hurd , Marjolein Lips-Wiersma and Peter McGhee

*Management Learning (2022)*

Achieving sustainability involves transforming not only the organization of societies and economies but also mindsets, behaviors, and institutions. For meaningful sustainability learning, it is essential to go beyond simply understanding problems and solutions; it also requires developing the skills to take sustainable actions and fostering the motivation and intention to act in sustainable ways. This typology, known as head–hands–heart, emphasizes the integration of cognitive appraisals (head), emotions and values (heart), and actions (hands) to achieve transformational learning. The goal in sustainability in management education (SiME) is to activate and unite these three domains, facilitating the targeting and transformation of higher-order behavioral aspects.

To effectively combine the emotional aspect (heart) of sustainability in management education (SiME) with the cognitive (head) and practical (hands) dimensions, it is crucial to acknowledge and address the emotional journey both for educators and students. When teaching sustainability, we need to recognize that it involves confronting issues of unsustainability and eco-anxiety, which can evoke emotions like despair and hope.

The authors outline a framework that comprises of five spheres of practice - 1.Despair, apathy and escapism, 2.Playing things safe: individual and firm-level responses within the existing system, 3. Critical awareness, 4. Systems analysis and solutions and 5. Co-constructing realistic solutions. These spheres and how faculty can move between these to co-create a realistic sense of hope have been discussed in detail.

By acknowledging and embracing this emotional journey, faculty can better equip students to deal with the emotional aspects of sustainability work, in addition to providing them with practical knowledge and skills. Ignoring the emotional dimension may result in producing sustainability practitioners who lack the ability to handle the emotional challenges associated with sustainability work.



### Feedback

Please click on the link below to share your feedback and comments and to let us know what kind of content you would like to read about in future newsletters.

<https://forms.gle/oT73PwW9tafiTmXb7>

For queries or for making a guest contribution, please contact the Centre for Teaching and Learning at [ctl@iimu.ac.in](mailto:ctl@iimu.ac.in)

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## Updates from CTL

IIM Udaipur has ecological consciousness and sustainability as one of its core values. Consistent with this essential aspect of its mission, IIMU has taken the initiative to ensure that the campus is at the forefront of adopting best practices in sustainability. Very few educational institutes in India have conducted and published a sustainability report. The CTL at IIMU took up this task last year and has published IIMU's first sustainability report in June 2023.

This report aims to provide a comprehensive overview of IIM Udaipur's sustainability efforts, covering its environmental, social, and economic performance. The report presents data on energy consumption, water usage, waste generation, greenhouse gas emissions, employee health and safety, diversity and inclusion, financial stability, and more. Key highlights of the report include:

- Audit of greenhouse gas emissions (Scope 1 and 2) for AY21-22
- Impact Investment Fund
- Planning to install renewable energy sources such as solar power
- Expansion of community outreach programs to promote sustainable practices among stakeholders
- Development of a sustainability policy to guide future efforts

The sustainability policy of IIM Udaipur outlines the institute's commitment to sustainability, its guiding principles and values, and strategies and objectives for achieving sustainability targets. The policy aims to create a culture of sustainability within the institute, promote stakeholder engagement, and encourage continuous improvement. The policy will be reviewed and updated periodically to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. The CTL wishes to acknowledge the significant contribution of Mr. Upendra (MBA DEM Class of 23 at IIMU) who is a GARP certified sustainability professional in the making of this first sustainability report.