Article

How Higher Education Promotes the Integration of Sustainable Development Goals—An Experience in the Postgraduate Curricula

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Abstract: The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has created big challenges and opportunities in Higher Education (HE). In this situation, several universities worldwide have responded with digital methods and hybrid classes in a short period of time. The aim of this paper is to show how the universities have adapted teaching methods to digital platforms in the academic year 2020–2021. This case study is based on the experience of 37 postgraduate communication students in the course Business and Communication from a Communication Programme. The objective of this course was to promote the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) in business following the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) of the United Nations. To do this, the students provided different solutions related to the SDGs and developed a communication strategy to inform and engage the stakeholders in the companies analyzed in a hybrid class. The results show that using this methodology and working in digital platforms, students have learned the importance of SDGs through implementing specific solutions linked to the corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategy. Based on this analysis, they also developed a communication strategy showing how companies can improve society with specific actions through the lens of the SDG perspective.

Keywords: digital methods; student-centred learning; higher education; sustainable development goals; corporate social responsibility; CSR communication

1. Introduction

The recent literature explores the opportunities and challenges for Higher Education (HE) in teaching methodologies, using hybrid classes [1], as a consequence of the global health pandemic. Digital platforms have been implemented to engage students with teaching methods based on student-centred learning [2]. Although this new scenario had different impacts on the educational system and its methodologies [3,4], the adaptation of universities to online teaching highlighted several benefits for students [5]. One of the challenges for HE institutions was to create content and engage students in a digital system [5,6] using videos, social media content and online tutorials, among other tools [7]. All of this required greater involvement of students in their learning. As a consequence, students had a transformative learning opportunity to consume content and classes through digital platforms [5,8] and adapted to these new learning methods [8].

In addition, and related to global demands and sustainability [9], HE has committed students to develop capacities to apply knowledge with a social purpose in solving problems that affect people and the planet. This perspective connecting learning and social impact, which is defined in the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME) from the United Nations, serves to work with students in their roles as students and citizens as they learn about and understand the connection between business and society. The SDGs reflect how companies can integrate the 17 goals in different areas of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategy.

Therefore, companies can report their contribution to society based on global issues such as equality, climate change and responsible consumption, among others.

Furthermore, SDGs represent a challenge for HE [10] to engage students in the global issues reflected in the 17 goals. In this sense, the current pandemic is an opportunity to analyze, explore and experience teaching methods to impact the SDGs [11,12]. Moreover, students can better understand the CSR of companies, their connections with sustainable activities and the solutions that firms provide in this area. Therefore, students can better explore how companies implement their social, economic and environmental activities following their CSR strategies because they report their results connecting the SDGs and explaining their impacts on stakeholders [13]. Furthermore, students can learn and collaborate with communities and projects with a social purpose [14].

The main objective of this case study is to explore the teaching methods of HE in a hybrid system caused by COVID-19, where face-to-face teaching was reduced to 50% of students in the classroom. The experience was developed at ESIC University in the fall semester of the academic year 2020–2021 with 37 postgraduate communication students in the course Business and Communication and the subject of the Official Master of Communication. Their group projects were based on developing a CSR strategy providing different business solutions related to the 17 SDGs, and they also developed a communication strategy to explain the company CSR strategy for the next year explaining the future contribution of the company to the SDGs.

The results show that this teaching methodology was effective in the students' learning because they made some strategic decisions including the company environmental and social impacts and because they explained how they will contribute as responsible managers in the field of CSR/Sustainability. Moreover, they developed a communication strategy using different messages and channels to engage stakeholders of the companies with global issues implementing specific solutions to benefit the society.

This paper is a contribution in specific aspects. Firstly, it is a contribution to the literature on cases developed in HE using methodologies that involve students in making decisions with sustainable criteria. In addition, this paper also shows how hybrid classes can effectively help the development of useful competencies of students, both for academia and the community. Finally, this paper is based on a case study about the link between business and society through the CSR strategy and how companies can implement the SDGs by measuring and reporting their impacts through their communication tools.

This article is structured as follows. Firstly, a review of the literature has been carried out in the areas of digital methods in HE, SDGs, CSR and CSR communication. Secondly, the methodology followed is described including the sample of companies analyzed by the students, and it is based on case studies. Thirdly, the results obtained are summarized according to the students' project objectives. Lastly, the conclusions and discussion are included in the last section of the paper.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Digital Teaching Methods in Higher Education

The pandemic caused by COVID-19 has created big challenges in HE with limitations in face-to-face teaching. As a consequence, innovation has been a key element in HE to adapt teaching methods during the global health crisis. Therefore, universities worldwide have developed digital methods creating an educational system to engage students using methods based on student-centred learning [2] in collaborative learning [15] in hybrid classes [1]. In this context, teachers have innovated using tools such as videos, social media content, and online tutorials, among others [7], to engage their students.

Although the analysis of the impact of COVID-19 in the educational system is scarce [3,4], in general, HE has adapted very quickly to a digital system, and thousands of teachers worldwide can teach effectively online via Zoom [16]. Based on this experience, online teaching represents an opportunity to scale up teachers' training in online teaching,

improving student learning in HE [17,18] with different methods adapted to the new digital platforms.

In this context, some scholars argue that e-learning has several benefits, such as accessibility, flexibility, learning pedagogy and life-long learning [5], engaging for students with innovative digital methods [5,6]. However, online teaching requires students to have a capacity for self-disciplined active learning in a digital environment. Moreover, the pandemic has shown that the objectives of learning in HE should achieve learning outcomes and also social and emotional aspects related to the learning experience [4].

2.2. Connecting Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility with Higher Education

One of the goals of HE teaching today is to engage the students with socio-ethical capacities to build students/citizens to use their knowledge for social impact. This means that education should work in community and classroom spaces to connect education with social problems [19]. In this sense, the PRME principles and the sustainable development goals promoted by the United Nations (UN) represent a challenge for universities to rethink concepts, such as social justice, gender equality and climate change, among other global issues linked to sustainable development. Therefore, it is vital that students acquire the knowledge and skills to solve social problems reflected in the 17 SDGs and connected with the PRME principles for HE institutions promoted by the UN to create responsible universities including principles such as (i) purpose, (ii) values, (iii) methods, (iv) research, (v) partnership and (vi) dialogue with stakeholders.

As a consequence, sustainable development becomes a challenge in the field of HE [10]. Therefore, the pandemic represents the opportunity to explore different teaching methods to make real contributions from HE to the SDGs [11,12] following institutional recommendations including from the European Union to include sustainability in the student curriculum [20]. Hence, the SDGs represent an excellent opportunity for building a community where students, from a responsible perspective, study and collaborate for a social purpose.

In this context, where inequalities represent a real threat in the world, HE should include new challenges through experiential learning to engage students with social phenomena, through a set of practices and including professional skills towards ethics and corporate governance to provide business solutions with a social and environmental perspective [21,22]. Furthermore, this has been intensified in the global pandemic, as there has been an impact in the implementation of the 17 SDGs [23]. In this way, the contribution of HE to SDG 4 can be developed with a rapid adaptation through different programs in universities in Spain, as occurs in other international higher education experiences [24].

In addition, universities have included the concept of CSR in business, considering the economic, social and environmental perspective of companies in relation to business and society [25]. This concept is defined by the European Union as the responsibility of enterprises for their impact on society [26], pointing out that companies can be socially responsible by integrating ethical, social and environmental issues into their business strategy, communicating their commitments and results through different channels.

CSR has been increasingly studied in the last twenty years [27]. It is connected with certain theories, such as the stakeholder theory [28], and it is linked to the business implications of implementing a CSR strategy in a company [29]. Furthermore, some authors have studied the connection between CSR strategies and the implementation of the 17 SDGs in a business strategy, providing solutions for the progress of society, as occurs with SDG1, poverty reduction [30].

In the pandemic situation, CSR becomes an area of more interest because the stakeholders' expectations are connected to the solutions that companies can provide to the global problems related to the SDGs [13]. Hence, this concept is based on how companies measure their impacts and how the firms create shared value [31]. From an HE perspective, those courses focusing on CSR, Business Ethics and Sustainability, among others, have the challenge of adapting knowledge and skills of students with a social purpose looking for a positive impact.

In other words, the relationship between CSR and corporate performance, management and sustainable growth is part of the academic and business debate on CSR and its impacts [32–38]. Moreover, some scholars have studied the relationship between CSR benefits for companies and their stakeholders [39,40] and how firms can positively impact the environment [41]. Moreover, measurement of CSR implies exploring the effect on other variables, such as economic and social issues and corporate governance [42]. In sum, stakeholders are demanding more sustainable actions of companies and evidence from their impacts to better understand how companies contribute to society [43].

2.3. CSR Communication

In the global context, in which CSR has been implemented by companies, CSR communication has also been studied to understand how firms communicate their CSR activities, sustainable commitments and social impact. Additionally, communication serves to create an engagement with stakeholders [44] through different channels, such as corporate website, social media and traditional media, among others. Firms use messages and information to explain what they do and how they create value for their stakeholders [31,45]. In general, studies show that companies are not using communication channels to create a dialogue on social media [46]. In this way, companies can increase participation on social platforms [47] exploring issues of interests to their stakeholders, creating engagement [48] and interaction with the companies [49] on sustainability and CSR.

Furthermore, the impact of companies' CSR communication is important to determine how firms really contribute to society through their CSR strategies. In addition, companies report their results linked to the different SDGs, consequently increasing information and transparency in their business management [50], especially the SDG 4 in HE, "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all".

All this has an impact on the teaching in a digital world, with the aim of training students in the CSR/Sustainability of companies as a business model, its CSR communication and how firms increase a positive impact on society through measurable actions related to the SDGs [51,52].

3. Methods

The objective of this paper is to show how teaching methods in hybrid classes can provide business solutions to better know the contribution of companies from a sustainable perspective. The methodology is based on testing the student's learning methodology by evaluating the work delivered and presented in this course related to the objectives of the different skills. Thus, through the analysis of the projects, it is possible to evaluate the learning capacity of the students in terms of sustainability/CSR, which is reflected both in the feedback given to the students and also in the final grades of the subject. This study is based on the evaluation from 37 postgraduate communication students in the Business and Communication course in the academic year 2020–2021. Through a content analysis, the competences included in the program have been linked to the objectives of the course project. For this, an evaluation method was used that ensured the learning objectives connected to the repositioning of the CSR strategy of the companies in the sample. To do this, the students provided different business solutions related to the 17 SDGs and developed a communication strategy to inform and engage their stakeholders.

The aim of these activities was to reinforce the professional competencies of students in hybrid teaching with a social purpose and linking CSR with SDGs and CSR communication. Business and Communication is a subject from the DCNT programme (Master in Communication Management and New Technologies) where the main competences of the subject are as follows. (i) Basic and general skills: CG01—Demonstrate a systematic understanding of the communication management processes in organizations, mastering the skills and codes used in the communication of companies and institutions. CG02—Capacities and abilities necessary to obtain and manage those useful information sources to

continue their own training development in the field of communication management and direction. CG03—Ability to carry out a critical analysis and the evaluation and synthesis of new and complex messages in the fields of conventional (off-line) and digital (on-line) communication. CG05—Ability to generate critical thoughts from the knowledge acquired. The student will generate judgments that allow a reflection on the form, content and ways of managing communication. (ii) Transversal competencies: CT01—Promote and develop teamwork with responsibility and commitment. CT02—Promote and encourage interpersonal communication and the ability to speak in public. CT03—Foster flexibility and the ability to adapt to change. CT04—Enhance the ability to communicate and interact with colleagues, with the academic community as a whole and with society in general, promoting their social skills. (iii) Specific competencies: CE01—Mastering the codes and terms of communication, conventional and digital, of organizations with society. CE05—Know the responsibilities of the Communication Department regarding intangible assets, such as sustainability, internal communication or corporate social responsibility. CE13—Mastering the basic legal concepts and aspects that encompass the jurisprudence applied to the sector, paying special interest in those basic competencies for professional practice.

The evaluation method consisted of delivering the project in a written document and making a 20-minute group presentation explaining the strategy to be developed, arguing a strategy with the specific objective of connecting SDGs with the CSR strategies and following this structure: (i) Introduction, project justification; (ii) Purpose, a repositioning of the CSR strategy including lines of action related to social and environmental issues and its contribution to the SDGs; (iii) Design, an integrated communication plan including aspects such as targets, messages, channels and KPIs of the communication plan; (iv) Conclusions. All this was carried out in the pandemic context where the students followed lecturers and tutoring in the hybrid system (one week at home, one week in class) showing a fast adaptation to the hybrid classes.

The evaluation criteria of the course have been similar to other courses of the programme where lecturers give feedback about the projects following these criteria: (i) theory and understanding (20%), (ii) analysis and model implementation (25%), (iii) solutions, conclusions and contributions (40%), (iv) style and structure (15%), and, finally, (v) observations about the group presentation (communication skills).

In addition, the consistency of the actions proposed by the students is also considered in the evaluation, as well as the viability of those actions and the identification with the company, considering previous actions as well as the communication strategy of each company in recent years.

Although the companies of the sample (El Corte Inglés, Google, Grupo Quirón Salud, Mercadona, Iberdrola, Santander, Telefónica and Mutua Madrileña) already contribute to the SDGs in different ways, a repositioning towards the activism of the firm was presented to make the highest contribution with concrete measures on their impacts. Thus, students had the challenge of accelerating the impact of these companies related to the 2030 Agenda.

Furthermore, the overall objective was to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of each company planning a new positioning, which was built with a long-term objective. In addition, each group had the objective of increasing social and environmental commitments, in accordance with the 17 SDGs. Finally, the students' proposals included a communication strategy to explain the commitments made by the company and to engage different stakeholders in the strategy.

4. Results

All the groups presented a report including the activities connected to the CSR strategy of the companies and focusing on one specific SDG (see Table 1). The SDGs selected for the analysis are SDG 3, SDG 4, SDG 7, SDG 8, SDG 10, SDG 11, SDG 12 and SDG 17.

Table 1. Companies and SDGs selected for the final project DCNT 2020–2021.

Company	SDG	Description
El Corte Inglés	11	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
Google	8	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
Grupo Quirón-Salud	17	Partnerships for the Goals
Mercadona	12	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
Iberdrola	7	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
Santander	3	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
Telefónica	4	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
Mutua Madrileña	10	Reduce inequality within and among countries

The evaluation shows the students' commitment to the projects because all the groups obtained a grade equal to or greater than 7. In addition, the quality of the proposals was consistent with the CSR strategy of the companies of the sample, and in general, the students made high-quality presentations, where 100% of students presented their projects in a face-to-face presentation.

In general, the objectives established in the project are met by gathering students' knowledge, skills and competences, while becoming aware of the needs of society. Therefore, the experience had an impact on the students at the professional and the individual level.

Regarding individual degrees distributed by gender, the following aspects are highlighted: first, considering the total of 37 students, 23 are women. This is a fact that is repeated even in previous years, that is, a greater number of women in the Master of Communication. In fact, the profile of this programme is a 23-year-old woman with two years of experience in the labour market. Second, all students in this project obtained a grade higher than 70 points; in fact, 65% of the students obtained a grade equal to or greater than 80. Moreover, it should also be noted that the best grades were also obtained by women, as can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Final Project Grades.

Grades	Male	Female	Total
60–69	0	0	0
70–79	6	7	13
80–89	6	13	19
90–99	2	3	5

Third, the DCNT Master was in its eighth edition and is the first of its kind according to the El Mundo Ranking for five consecutive academic years. According to the latest study carried out by ESIC, it has 100% employability among its students, one year after finishing the programme. Besides, these students have professional experience, and their main objective is working in the communication area of a large multinational company. In general, between 35 and 40 students take the DCNT Programme every year (Figure 1).
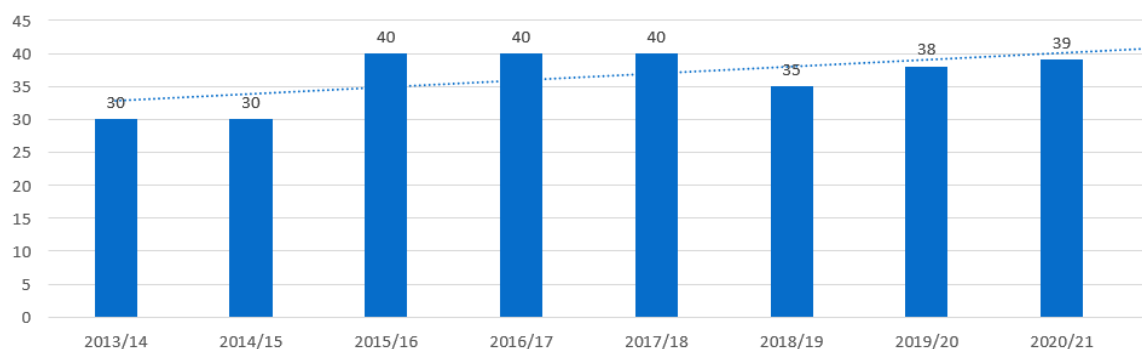
Figure 1. Number of students in DCNT Programme ESIC University.

In addition, the reputation of the programme is based on the word-of-mouth (WOM); 70% of the students who study each year follow the recommendations from former students of the master's degree and/or professors from ESIC and from other Spanish universities. The faculty is made up of professors from ESIC University with extensive experience in the business world.

The programme is aimed at those people who want to work in organizations from the perspective of corporate communication, advertising and marketing, knowing how to handle all the tools that make possible the new technologies used in the professional field. The objective is to acquire the managerial skills necessary to manage daily situations in a communication company, both to regulate communication internally and to external agents and interest groups and, above all, to know how to anticipate changes and more adverse scenarios, through the study of crisis cases and communication situations. A further objective is to understand the complete operation of the field of advertising, its approach, evaluation and analytical methods for its development and impact on the company.

In relation to the evaluation of the projects, the teacher's feedback to the students is detailed below:

- El Corte Inglés

The work is well planned based on the comments of the CSR Director in an interview, which gives it a realistic vision of the company. The students present actions that promote the public perception of a sustainable brand. In a concrete way, sustainable tourism is the activist part involving a responsible consumer who wants to express their behaviour linked to sustainability.

- Google. Excellent proposal

This work fulfils the proposed objective, which is repositioning a brand from CSR towards activism in a social context where brands can add great value. The students in this group properly connect all the sections and show knowledge on the subject and how to implement ideas in the company. The internal and external communication proposal is consistent with Google's activity, and therefore, its development is feasible. The communication proposal is clear, easy to remember and linked to the company's purpose.

- QuironSalud

The theoretical framework is adequately justified, as well as giving a brief explanation of the SDGs. The CSR strategy, analysis and outstanding actions are explained, as well as all the external and internal communication channels of the company, content supported by the information provided in the interview with the Director of Communication and Marketing of QuirónSalud, as well as the interview with the Head of the Pediatrics and Neonatology Service and an interview with a nurse.

The actions carried out by the company during the pandemic are also explained, and then the activist repositioning is proposed considering the disorders caused by the pandemic in the population. It also explains SDG 17, in terms of the idea of public–private collaboration, which is an important challenge in Spain, taking into account the

organization of health in two clearly differentiated areas, although the proposal is necessary as a consequence of the social needs in the population caused by the pandemic.

- Mercadona

The arguments are solid, both the theoretical framework and business strategy and linking Mercadona repositioning with different stakeholders. All the actions that are proposed for SDG 12 and its different objectives are clearly justified to bring the brand closer to a real activism away from a goal such as improving the image of the company. In addition, survey data, knowledge of the young public, linkage of food with different aspects closely linked to sustainability are added, providing a strong analysis.

The linking proposal and the graphics are directly linked to the activism that is to be promoted in the different stakeholders, the proposals being clear, providing ideas and visibility about the brand's activism on different platforms, very well illustrated in communication channels. The expected impacts are also clearly explained and well argued by students.

- Iberdrola

The work is well argued, and students developed an activist strategy that allows the company to evolve towards the CSR repositioning. It is well analyzed, the proposals are timely, and the communication plan is well developed with visual proposals that can capture the attention of the public to fulfill the activist objective of the company. Therefore, it is a consistent proposition. However, the budget should be realistic and closer to the proposal.

Communication is easily associated with the company; "illuminates empty Spain" is a well-planned objective in relation to SDG 7. Furthermore, future lines of research are proposed and well-argued by the students.

- Santander

The document is clearly explained, but some aspects could have been reflected better. The fact of putting the interviews and the survey in annexes with hardly any mention in the document is a mistake because this work helps us to better understand why video games have a positive impact on health. In the interviews, it is necessary to know Santander's vision of video games and their link with SDG 3. Only three stakeholders with whom you are going to work are mentioned, but other stakeholders of the bank should be also included. This strategy with the employees can have a positive impact; however, using these activities with young audiences will not necessarily work to generate commitment. The budget is detailed but it is high, and such a high investment is not justified; how it will impact the bank in a concrete way is relevant information. Besides, we do not know which is the return of investment. On the other hand, the actions are well planned in relation to SDG 3, but they are simply actions to gain the trust of the audiences. It is important to distinguish the impact of the actions and the long-term goal. Overall, it is well planned, but the strategy should be more comprehensive given the budget to be allocated for it.

- Telefónica

The theoretical framework is adequately raised with contributions from the academic literature to understand why activism is present in companies. Telefónica's current strategy is adequately explained, and clear actions are proposed for activist repositioning. However, it is not well understood that the objective of reaching depopulated Spain is only limited to several geographical areas (Castilla-La Mancha, etc.) when depopulation affects the whole of Spain and the company operates throughout the national territory. Therefore, although the lines of action are clear and well planned; however, it would be desirable to extend the geographical limitation to include the rest of the unpopulated areas of Spain. With all this, the budget is very high, and it is not clear in what specific way the return on investment will be evaluated to know to what extent investment has had an impact on the organization. The communication proposal is in line with Telefónica's communication.

- Mutua Madrileña

The theoretical framework and the company's CSR strategy are explained in detail, linking the different departments of the organization, as well as their commitment to the SDGs. Many activities are detailed on the actions carried out by the company and the repositioning is based on information from previous research conducted on more than 400 respondents from the general public and customers. However, what is proposed is to continue with everything that the company already does. It is a CSR strategy that follows what was done the previous year, and it is proposed in the communication plan. Thus, the students arrive at a proposal for activist repositioning in the reduction of inequalities. The company's CSR campaigns will follow the #Equality hashtag, ensured in various actions aimed at different interest groups. The communication proposal is clear, with a set of actions explained correctly. However, the budget is very low for the number of actions that are proposed (it must be adjusted, in this case, because it involves a higher budget to carry out this number of actions).

Finally, as a result of the evaluation of these projects, we can highlight the following results: (i) The groups explained correctly their strategies to impact the SDG assigned and linked to the CSR strategy of the company; (ii) The students explained different activities, and some of them detailed how they will measure its impacts through specific KPIs; (iii) The groups developed a communication strategy to communicate their initiatives and engage their stakeholders with persuasive messages; (iv) The students explained clearly the strategies showing good communication skills.

5. Discussion

The challenges and opportunities for HE are increasing in the post-pandemic situation in a hybrid system where students follow their classes online and offline. In this context, teachers can engage the students using different tools and methods that invite students to provide business solutions considering social and environmental impacts; all this is considering a society demanding responsible behaviours from firms.

Thus, universities have the responsibility of engaging students using some methods based on student-centred learning [2] in collaborative learning [15] in hybrid classes [1] adapting competencies, learning outcomes and social aspects [4] and including the benefits of e-learning lecturers [5]. Hence, the SDGs represent an opportunity for building a community where students can collaborate for a social purpose [21] based on CSR strategies analysed by the students and providing activities to benefit society. As a result, students will reinforce their professional skills towards ethics and corporate governance [22] to face the global challenges achieved in the SDGs in business decisions linked to the CSR strategy [23]. Thus, the contribution of HE to SDG 4 can be evaluated by connecting different international experiences and measuring their impact on the learning experience [24] in different countries.

With the aim of experience learning about sustainable development, a final project was designed where students had to carry out an activist repositioning strategy to reinforce their commitment to the SDGs. The design included a communication plan to give visibility to the actions to be carried out. In this case, learning occurs because, following the parameters of the European and Spanish education system linked to the sustainable development goals, students experience the opportunity to offer solutions combining theory and practice. All this is in accordance with the PRME principles of the United Nations to create educational frameworks, materials, processes and environments that enable effective learning experiences for responsible leadership (Principle 3) and linked to the SDG 4 to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education.

Thus, the learning linked to solutions with social impact, the quality of the projects and the involvement of the students, together with the good presentation of projects, have yielded excellent results. With all this, learning related to the oral and written discussion, the ability to make decisions and the ability to defend their approaches in the presentation are competences reinforced by the students after doing this course. As a consequence,

this learning methodology links knowledge with social needs, and in this way, students reinforce the skills for their professional performance with a social impact.

Future research offers opportunities to explore other methodologies with students based on transformative learning, such as making projects for sustainable and innovative marketing plans, promoting responsible consumption behavior and providing solutions to reduce inequalities, among others. The impact of the actions they will provide can also be explored with a methodology measured in the long term, in order to know what the companies made one year after applying the proposed actions. Finally, students can also identify best practices to propose successful actions to other companies to fight against climate change, among other issues. All this is considering the social purpose in business decisions to contribute to sustainable development in various areas, both individually and in groups, as professionals and citizens.

In addition, the measurement of this experience in student learning can go further. For example, evaluation sheets can be used with surveys to students at the beginning and at the end of the course, measuring the level of engagement with the SDGs in the process. They can also use self-assessment tests, useful for students and teachers, on this subject. In turn, students can report which activities carried out in each subject have served to reinforce their competences and skills. All this will result in dynamic teaching that is committed to activating and engaging the students, especially as a consequence of the appearance of a hybrid teaching system, which requires greater responsibility from students.

6. Conclusions

The teaching methodology on the DCNT Master to explain CSR, SDGs and CSR communication in business management is as follows. First, the professor begins the class by discussing different cases [53] generating a discussion from the beginning that is complemented with the explanation of concepts, theories and virtual tutorials to carry out the work of the subject. In this sense, the hybrid methodology represents a challenge for teachers as well as using different materials for the classes. To achieve adequate adaptation, training and generating collaborative spaces between teachers allows rapid and efficient learning to evaluate with the students in the classroom.

As a consequence, students increase their knowledge about how companies face global problems, represented in the SDGs; they know how firms report on SDGs and how firms involve their stakeholders to accelerate their contributions by being activists for social and environmental improvement. Finally, this case study is an example of how a CSR strategy together with a communication strategy are competitive for companies to explain what and how they create their commitments to be more sustainable.

This study has some limitations. First, the sample is limited to a single group, with the participation of 37 students. Second, only group contributions are considered, so more attention has been paid to collective rather than individual aspects of learning. Finally, the course begins with a little knowledge about the SDGs that is expected to increase at the end of the course, but the level of progress is only measured with the evaluation of the project not using other assessments, such as individual essays.

Although the initial knowledge is limited, in general, it can be noted that at the end of the course, students know better what companies do and how they implement their CSR strategy. They also explore different CSR communication tools. In addition, they analyze how companies can increase their commitments to society and how they can connect CSR activities with the SDGs and social challenges. In turn, students develop a communication strategy to engage their stakeholders. Finally, they promote the contributions that companies can make through the 17 SDGs considering social needs. As a consequence of all this, students reinforce their skills with a social purpose.

Based on this experience, future students can improve their learning and skills by collaborating with companies in the application of their proposals, both in their analysis and in the suitability of their implementation following the criteria established by the companies in accordance with the PRME principles of the UN.

In turn, the evaluation provided by the teacher can be complemented with professional feedback from companies and the evaluation of the students' abilities to provide solutions to real problems identified through the analysis of the improvement of the 17 SDGs.

Finally, it would be desirable to carry out a pre-test of the communication campaigns proposed by the students to assess whether their objectives are clear for potential stakeholders in order to check their possible impact to engage them. All this can be developed both in a hybrid system and in a face-to-face system because technologies allow active communication between students and professors. In this sense, the hybrid system has not been a barrier in the development of student projects, which have shown flexibility with this teaching system.

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