

From Theory to Practice: Curriculum Innovation for Social Marketing and the SDGs in Egypt

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Abstract

As sustainability becomes a global imperative, higher education institutions in emerging economies face increasing pressure to prepare students for ethical leadership and ecological challenges (Sterling, 2010; UNESCO, 2020). Social marketing—focused on voluntary behavior change for societal benefit—offers a powerful framework for promoting sustainability-related values and actions (Kotler & Lee, 2008; French & Gordon, 2015). This study proposes a curriculum-based framework for integrating sustainability education into social marketing programs, using Egypt as a case study. Drawing on Social Practice Theory (Shove, Pantzar, & Watson, 2012), the framework combines transformative learning (Mezirow, 2000), systems thinking (Senge, 2006), and culturally grounded pedagogy (Gay, 2010) to foster ethical engagement and professional relevance. Through qualitative interviews with faculty, students, and curriculum developers, the research identifies key barriers and opportunities for embedding sustainability principles into marketing education. Findings reveal that a practice-oriented, context-sensitive approach enhances student engagement and aligns educational outcomes with public interest goals (Tilbury, 2011). The proposed model supports curriculum innovation that bridges theory and practice, contributing to the advancement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015). This paper offers actionable insights for educators, institutions, and policymakers seeking to reform marketing education in ways that promote sustainability and social impact.

Keywords

Social Marketing, Sustainability Education, Curriculum Innovation, Emerging Economies, Social Practice Theory, UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).