

Analysis of the United Nations Principles of Responsible Management Education Initiative in the Middle East and North Africa Region

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Abstract: The United Nations' Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME) initiative for business and management schools has recently gained popularity among academics and professionals. This study runs linear correlation regressions to investigate the association between the number of signatory universities within the Middle East and North Africa region and several potential explanatory indicators. The number of universities signing up for the PRME initiative within each country was found to be strongly associated with the country's standing in global innovation, business sophistication, human capital, and research and development. In contrast, gross domestic product per capita, the existing level of achievement in Sustainable Development Goals, and the number of universities offering degrees in business and management studies were found to be irrelevant. The study analyzes the two top performers in adopting the PRME in the region, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates, and discusses how the adoption of PRME reflects a country's overall orientation of the subject.

Keywords: Responsible management, UNSDGs, UNPRME, higher education, sustainability.

1 Introduction

Sustainability and ethics are becoming more widely recognized as requirements for successful business operations in emerging economies. Both local businesses and multinational corporations are crucial to the long-term progress of a society. To succeed and have a positive social impact, modern businesses consider social and environmental factors. This obligation is not considered a burden but a chance to balance social and economic success [1]. At present, there are multiple issues in business, such as materialism, monopoly, commercialism, and fraud, and refusing to address them in traditional ethical terms rather than transformative ones seems to be ineffective.

One of the most recent paradigms that reflects a company's accountability, obligations, and duties to society is responsible management (RM), which is a term primarily used by academics but also by some practitioners. It encompasses managing a company's social and public issues, including corporate social responsibility (CSR), business ethics, and sustainability. The term entails overseeing the organization's own objectives, procedures, and team members, as well as interactions and activities that cross boundaries between the organization and the environment that surrounds them. To achieve responsible managers and decision makers, responsible management education (RME) must be prioritized.

Higher education institutions (HEIs) are crucial in equipping the next generation of professionals with the knowledge and abilities they need to address the sustainability issues that are raised in increasingly intricate and global contexts. They have the potential to be the catalyst for change and therefore must take on a greater role in guiding students toward becoming responsible. Education for sustainable development (ESD) and education for sustainability (ES) empower individuals to go beyond acquiring knowledge and to reflect on the implications and complexity of their actions and choices as leaders and managers. This reflection requires them to be accountable to their international community and to the future generations. Building on that, the United Nations (UN) Global Compact introduced the Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME or UNPRME).

Countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region suffer from a low level of achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) compared to developed countries, and they also face challenges in education, especially higher education (HE). Recently, a number of countries in the region have begun to adopt the idea of teaching RM in universities, but the amount of research in this field is very small. This paper examines the link between

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the adoption of the UNPRME initiative by HEIs and its relationship to a number of macro indicators related to education and the economy. This paper is divided into six sections. After this introduction, the next section reviews concepts of RM, followed by sections for quantitative analysis, results, and discussion. The final section provides the study's conclusion.

2 Overview

The neoclassical paradigm has long been the dominant paradigm in management education. This paradigm is founded on an egocentric view of the human being, who seeks to advance his or her own advantage or self-interest [2]. The goal of the company is to maximize economic value for shareholders as they seek to maximize their profit [3]. Over the years, this paradigm has lived side by side with a number of detrimental externalities, including environmental degradation and growing income disparities, which are precisely some of the issues that the SDGs seek to address [4]. Because of this, opposition to these ideas has recently emerged.

Since the publication of Holman's framework [5], the field of RM education (RME) has grown, and multiple researchers have identified issues that relate to and resonate with particular elements of the framework. The virtuous circles of humanistic management are [6] described in this way: Undergraduate education can have a positive influence on an organization's way of being and doing, which can result in the creation of social benefit. The RME is a concept that embodies business ethics, CSR, and ES.

After the UN released the PRME in 2007, several actors were interested in this advocacy. Universities from all over the world signed the PRME and committed to incorporating the various principles into their daily operations. More academics started looking into the various components of their curriculum and courses. One of the very first comprehensive overviews of business ethics education can be found in [7]'s work.

Initiated in 2007, the PRME serves as a platform to increase awareness of sustainability in educational institutions all over the world and aims to give today's business students the knowledge and skills they need to change the future. Working with business and management schools, PRME promotes the SDGs and aligns academic institutions with the UN Global Compact's work while ensuring that future leaders are given the skills necessary to balance economic and sustainability goals. The guiding principles are as follows: (1) purpose; (2) values; (3) method; (4) research; (5) partnership; and (6) dialogue.

As a global voluntary initiative with more than 800 signatories, PRME has grown to be the United Nations' largest organized link with HEIs. The future is optimistic for the field of RM, which has a strong history. Several factors, according to [8], have contributed to the popularity of RM. Companies all over the world are embracing the ideas of CSR and RM. As a result, a growing number of organizational positions and job descriptions are emerging at the mid to upper management levels of most companies. There are now business-focused organizations that support RM. Academic endorsement of teaching and research in RM is at an all-time high, and there is an ever-growing number of publications on the subject that are both diverse and of the highest caliber.

2.2 Sustainable development, ethics, CSR, and business education

More companies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and policymakers are using the SDGs as a framework to direct and shape business strategies and policy. By doing this, organizations and institutions of all kinds acknowledge that issues like gender equality, health and well-being, poverty, and climate change are interconnected and must be considered in striving after their goals and in financial planning. Business schools have the potential to apply theory in novel ways to address the problems underlying the SDGs, casting a critical eye on both practice and policy for SDG implementation [9]. Business schools have become more focused on expanding their mission and relevance by conducting research and teaching about the SDGs as well as the organizational challenges and opportunities they present [10]. At the same time, research in business schools that is accumulating around one or more of the SDGs has the potential to become a hub for bringing together a variety of stakeholders to come up with fresh approaches to sustainability problems [11]. It takes new knowledge, mindsets, skills, practices, and, in some cases, fundamental organizational and business transformations to achieve the SDGs [12].

With ethical and sustainable business practices, education can influence students through the integration of new content, teaching strategies, and impactful approaches and seek out more applied research around the SDGs that can produce solutions to help businesses become more sustainable.

In business education, the topic of ethics has historically held a somewhat uneasy position. Early critics asserted that it was either unteachable or ought to have been learned earlier and from other sources. Since the 1980s, the topic has become more widely accepted, albeit occasionally with reluctance, but the reasons behind it have remained unclear. One expectation was that ethics courses would lessen the occurrence of business failure and ease public pressure for

stricter regulation and business enforcement.

Early critics blamed North American and European business schools for the fallout from the infamous corporate scandals, which revealed previously unheard-of levels of unethical business practices [13,14]. According to the Friedmanite ideology that sustained the immoral management standoff in late 20th-century business practices, business schools were accused of becoming "brainwashing institutions" [15]. University management programs were woefully out of step with the emerging values-driven society, which demands that corporate obligations go beyond those demands of stakeholders [16].

Before the new paradigm of the RME was adopted by several universities, business school curriculum was clearly based on a set of values, assumptions, and beliefs that together form a coherent worldview [17]. A worldview is a set of beliefs that determines "what things or experiences are good or bad, and what goals, behaviors, and relationships are desirable or undesirable" [17]. Business was taught from the perspective of the "organization-centered worldview," which makes corporations—artificial creations of the state—the core of our contemporary society. Students were taught to uphold business' significance and its centrality in society by fostering wealth and to believe that by promoting organizational interests, they are upholding their own interests as well as the interests of society at large. Modern curriculum is designed to teach students that almost all aspects of what they do are essentially economic [14,18]

It is impossible to overstate the value of CSR education in developing moral managers and leaders of the future [19,20]. An important role is played by HEIs in inspiring and preparing students to take on the role of informed, considerate, and responsible citizens who actively engage in addressing social issues. The inclusion of CSR topics in the curriculum promotes a more positive attitude toward social responsibility while also enhancing society's ability to make moral decisions [21] and exemplifying the relationship between business and society [22]. The purpose of teaching CSR is to educate students on the important responsibility that managers have when making decisions [22]. Additionally, the CSR standard ISO 26000 contains crucial knowledge that business schools must teach [23]. [24] suggests incorporating CSR into all economics courses.

2.3 RME in the MENA region

The number of studies conducted regarding RME in the MENA region is limited.

In [25], the top 40 business schools in the Arab region as well as institutions adhering to the United Nations' PRME were analyzed. The findings showed that ethics, CSR, and sustainability were covered in great detail in undergraduate and graduate program curricula in the form of required and elective courses, as well as in the mission statements of universities. However, students' extracurricular pursuits did not receive the same level of attention. Regarding research, more than half of the universities in the sample had centers specifically focused on environmental sustainability in addition to occasional publishing on various related subjects. Findings also revealed that integration in university outreach is still regarded as neglected.

According to the findings of one study on SMEs in the MENA region, ethical business practices have a positive impact on Corporate Governance (CG) and CG in turn has a positive impact on CSR. The findings also point to CG's mediating role in the connection between ethics and CSR [26]. Given its high volatility and developmental requirements, CSR has a significant role to play in the socioeconomic development of the MENA region. The vitality of the institutional environment and the needs of various stakeholders in the CSR ecosystem, however, differ in the Middle East, according to recent literature [27].

Studies on CSR education in the MENA region are still scarce despite the abundance of research demonstrating the potential impact of CSR in the region.

To address RME in the context of Egyptian business schools, two studies were conducted. The authors claim that RME has not been implemented in the sample business schools [28,29]. One major obstacle to managing RME institutions mentioned in these two articles was the lack of financial resources that Egyptian business schools need to actively embed responsible business education and promote sustainability.

3 Quantitative analysis

3.1 Business and management education in the MENA region

There are 945 business schools in the MENA region according to the World Higher Education Database (WHED). The WHED, in partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), is globally acknowledged as a trustworthy source that offers data on more than 20,000 HEIs in 196 countries and territories. The distribution of business HEIs among countries of the MENA region is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of HEIs offering degrees in business studies.

Country	Total number of HEIs offering degrees in business	Percentage
Algeria	58	6%
Bahrain	12	1%
Egypt	51	5%
Iran	118	12%
Iraq	66	7%
Jordan	28	3%
Kuwait	7	1%
Lebanon	32	3%
Libya	11	1%
Morocco	113	12%
Oman	33	3%
Palestine	22	2%
Qatar	4	0%
Saudi Arabia	47	5%
Sudan	70	7%
Syria	23	2%
Tunisia	39	4%
Turkey	157	17%
United Arab Emirates	41	4%
Yemen	13	1%
Total	945	100%

There is a high number of degrees offered by HEIs in the region. Table 1 shows that Turkey, Iran, and Morocco are the top countries offering degrees in business and management studies. There is also a high number of graduates from business and management schools in the MENA region. According to the most recent data from UNESCO (2020), the top three countries with the highest percentages of graduates from business, administration, and law programs are Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Saudi Arabia, with 46.4%, 40.6%, and 36.5% respectively, while Egypt, Syria, and Jordan have the lowest percentages of graduates in these fields, with 11.2%, 19.4%, and 20.8% respectively.

3.2 PRME signatory countries in the MENA region

Any institution taking part in the PRME initiative has made a central commitment to regularly update its stakeholders on the status of the six principles' implementation via a Sharing Information on Progress (SIP) report. The SIP's main goal is to provide the public with information on RME as a crucial integrity measure. The SIP can also be a useful tool for encouraging stakeholder interaction and creating a sense of community among signatories. Table 2 shows the number of signatory countries in the MENA region as well as the number of universities within each country that communicate their adherence to the PRME through detailed reports.

The table shows that Turkey (13 universities) and the UAE (13 universities), followed by Lebanon (7 universities), are the top three countries in the number of signatory universities compared to all other countries in the region.

Table 2: Distribution of UNPRME signatory universities across the MENA region.

Country	Signatory	Number of universities*	Communicating universities
Algeria	NO	N/A	N/A
Bahrain	YES	1	1
Egypt	YES	4	3
Iran	YES	1	1
Iraq	NO	N/A	N/A
Jordan	NO	N/A	N/A
Kuwait	YES	3	2
Lebanon	YES	7	2
Libya	NO	N/A	N/A
Morocco	YES	4	2
Oman	YES	2	0
Palestine	NO	N/A	N/A
Qatar	NO	N/A	N/A
Saudi Arabia	YES	3	3

Sudan	NO	N/A	N/A
Syria	NO	N/A	N/A
Tunisia	YES	4	2
Turkey	YES	13	6
United Arab Emirates	YES	13	10
Yemen	NO	N/A	N/A
Total		48	

*UNPRME website accessed on September 8, 2022.

3.3 Aggregate indicators in the MENA region

The World Bank website was used to gather the information on the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita for the year 2019. The SDG Index scores for the year 2021 were collected from the UN Sustainable Development Report dashboard. The Global Innovation Index (GII) score, the knowledge workers, absorption and innovation linkages rank, the human capital and research and the research and development (R&D) ranks for the year 2021 were collected from the United Nations World Intellectual Property Organization website.

Table 3: Distribution of selected indicators across the MENA region countries.

Country*	GDP per capita (USD)	SDG Index score	GII score	Ranks**		
				Knowledge workers, absorption & innovation linkages rank**	Human capital & research	R&D rank
Algeria	4,700	71.54	19.9	124	74	76
Bahrain	52,129	64.27	28.8	90	83	82
Egypt	14,226	68.66	25.1	106	93	55
Iran	18,332	68.59	32.9	115	49	48
Jordan	10,007	69.41	28.3	85	84	60
Kuwait	67,891	64.53	29.9	100	69	89
Lebanon	11,561	66.3	25.1	64	87	49
Morocco	3,350	68.98	29.3	105	82	71
Oman	35,286	69.19	29.4	94	45	81
Qatar	112,789	66.78	31.5	96	75	67
Saudi Arabia	51,600	66.56	31.8	89	32	26
Tunisia	4,350	70.69	30.7	114	35	65
Turkey	37,488	70.41	38.3	46	26	38
United Arab Emirates	78,255	68.84	43	22	22	28

*Countries at war or experiencing extreme political instability are excluded from the analysis. These countries are Syria, Iraq, Libya, Yemen, Palestine, and Sudan.

**1 is the highest rank and indicates the best performance.

The GDP per capita considers a country’s population size and reflects how wealthy a nation is. The data in Table 3 shows huge discrepancies across the MENA region. The GDP per capita is as high as \$112,789 in Qatar and as low as \$3,350 in Morocco. The SDG Index shows the total progress in achieving all the SDGs, and hence higher scores indicate better performance. The table shows that Algeria is the best performer in the MENA region, and Bahrain is the weakest performer.

The GII is calculated based on several indicators: political, business, and regulatory environments; education, tertiary education, and R&D; information and communication technologies, general infrastructure, and ecological sustainability; credit, investment, and trade; diversification and market scale; knowledge workers, innovation linkages, and knowledge absorption; knowledge creation, impact, and diffusion; intangible assets, creative goods and services, and online creativity. Each of these components has multiple subcomponents. The two best performers in this indicator are the UAE and Turkey respectively, and the worst performer is Algeria.

Knowledge workers, absorption, and innovation linkages (named as business sophistication) is one of the most relevant

subcomponents of the GII. Like the main index, the UAE and Turkey are the highest performers respectively in this indicator, and Algeria is the worst performer.

Human capital and research indicator is also one of the most relevant subcomponents of the GII.

One indicator of the human capital and research subcomponent is the "R&D rank", which is calculated using sub-indicators, which are: researchers, gross expenditure on R&D, GDP percentage, global corporate R&D investors, and QS University Ranking. The best performers in this indicator are again the UAE and Turkey, while the worst performer is Kuwait.

3.4 Assumptions

The study made several assumptions about the relationships between the adoption of the PRME by countries and several indicators. The study assumes that an increase in GDP per capita, an increase in universities offering degrees in business and management, a better performance in achieving the SDGs, a higher score in innovation, business sophistication, and R&D will be associated with an increased number of signatory universities in countries of the region. Therefore, the study makes the following assumptions:

H0: There is no association between the indicator and the number of signatory universities.

H1: There is an association between the indicator and the number of signatory universities.

4 Results

The study finds a robust linear correlation between the countries' aggregate indicators and the number of signatory universities in each country. Due to the small sample size, a simple linear correlation was tested and repeated per variable. Ranks were reversed for an easier interpretation of the results. Assumptions of simple linear regressions were considered before conducting the linear regressions, multivariate normality, and homoscedasticity. Table 4 presents the correlations found, along with variable coefficients and their associated P values, R^2 , and F-test values.

Table 4: Linear correlation between the number of signatory universities and selected variables.

Number of signatory universities	Coefficient	P value	R^2	F-test
GDP per capita	.000014	0.745	0.0116	0.11
Number of universities offering degrees in business/management	.039718	0.170	0.1734	2.13
SDG Index score	0.0297	0.500	0.5002	0.48
GII score	.5238882	0.009***	0.4591	9.64
Knowledge workers, absorption, and innovation linkages rank	.1287196	0.000***	0.6987	43.89
Human capital and research rank	.0927581	0.086*	0.2920	3.50
R&D rank	.1312302	0.055	0.3664	4.53

*Countries at war or experiencing extreme political instability are excluded from the analysis. These countries are Syria, Iraq, Libya, Yemen, Palestine, and Sudan.

The assumption that richer countries are going to be the ones with the highest numbers of signatory universities was rejected. There is no linear correlation between the number of signatory universities and the GDP per capita of the MENA countries. In addition, the assumption that countries with a higher number of universities offering business or management degrees will have a higher number of signatory universities was also rejected, as no correlation was found. Furthermore, the level of attainment of the UN SDGs represented by the SDG Index was not found to be correlated with the number of signatory universities within a country.

However, there is a strong association between a country's rank in the GII and the number of signatory universities. A significant positive linear association was found. In addition, an association was found positive and significant in two subcomponents of the GII, which are knowledge workers and absorption and innovation linkages (named as business sophistication) and human capital and research. One indicator of the human capital and research subcomponent is R&D. The number of signatory universities and a country's R&D ranking were found to have a positive and significant correlation.

5 Discussion

The overall adoption level of the PRME in the MENA region is still very low. Dramatic changes in the level of adoption of RME are not expected to happen immediately. There will undoubtedly be new issues, but they are more likely to be extensions of the current situation than a break with the past [30]. Giving students the chance to engage in active learning while addressing issues in their communities may appear to be a simple task, but real-world issues are

more challenging, complex, interdisciplinary, interdependent, and have a multi-cultural context [31]. Schools are expected to transform their curriculum to change the core beliefs of their students [32].

With their limited ability for change, schools may not be able to keep up with the growing institutional pressures to publicly commit to responsible management education. Schools are more likely to back out of a commitment if they experience (a) resource constraints, (b) direct or indirect resistance to change processes, (c) competitive institutional pressures, or (d) unclear perceptions of institutional requirements [33].

Organizational resistance to change has been identified by a large body of research as the main barrier to the adoption of sustainable development (SD) in HEIs [34,35]. The introduction of SD practices in HEIs is complicated by this resistance to change, which is frequently linked to an oppressive and outdated organizational culture [36,37]. As a result, implementing SD policies in HEIs is a multifaceted and complex process that involves various cognitive processes and stages that result in motivated decisions.

According to the Blueprint for SDG Integration in Business Schools, support for PRME and the SDGs is based on three things: organizational interests being in line with one or more SDG; individual academic interests being in line with one or more SDG; and academics' conviction that including the SDGs will make their work even more relevant for their students and corporate clients.

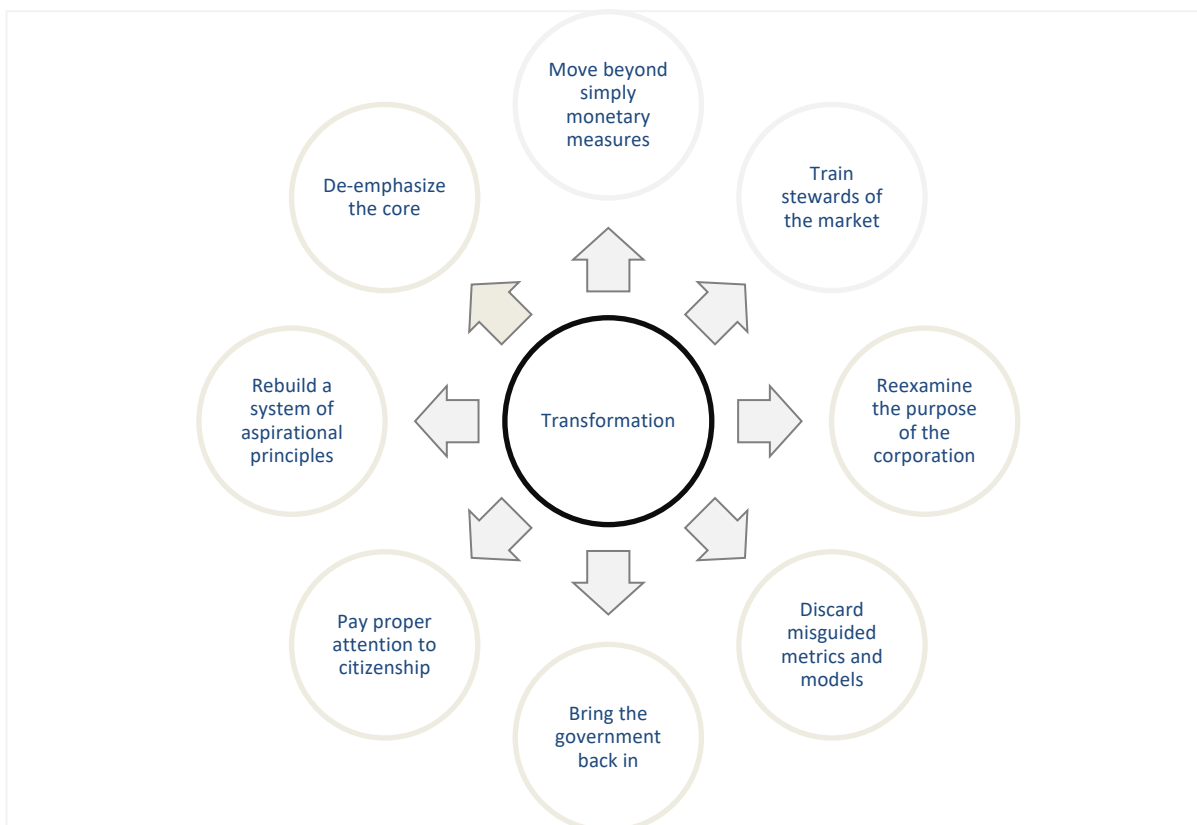


Fig. 1: Business and management schools’ transformation themes

In [38], Hoffman proposes nine major themes to transform business and management schools, (see Figure 1). The themes focus on a combination of renovation, demolition, and rebuilding of the curricula. The *renovation* of the definitions of organizations and of the real values added, moving beyond the monetary values; the *demolition* of the misguided models and the core classic views; and the *rebuilding* of new aspirational principles, citizenship concepts, views of the government, and training. These themes can guide business and management schools in transforming their curricula, research focus, and frameworks to be aligned with RM and its components of sustainability, ethics, and social responsibility.

Overall, the findings of this study imply that a country’s tendency to adopt new initiatives in HE is linked to its overall state in innovation and R&D. The performance of Turkey and the UAE in adopting the UNPRME initiative is outstanding. While this propensity to adopt the PRME is correlated with several factors, there are some unique country-specific factors that explain their performance.

5.1 Turkey

5.1.1 The HE system

Turkey's overall educational spending has grown significantly in recent years to keep up with the demands of a developing system. Compared to Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average of 5.0 percent, Turkey spent 5.4 percent of its GDP in 2016 on primary through tertiary education. The largest portion of educational spending is focused on HE, as tertiary education accounts for 1.9 percent of GDP, and universal primary education receives just 1.0 percent.

Turkey's educational system is comparatively vast and highly centralized. The system has public and non-profit universities as well as non-profit postsecondary vocational schools. Strategic planning procedures are in place at the central and local levels of the Ministry of National Education under the guidance of a five-year vision. Due to efforts to guarantee one university per province, the tertiary sector has expanded significantly, and it appears that this has positively impacted regional development. There are emerging efforts to enhance the standard of tertiary provision through more robust quality assurance. Due in part to tuition-free programs offered by public institutions, Turkey devotes a higher-than-average portion of its national income to education, especially at the tertiary level. Additionally, to lower the cost of education for low-income families, some funding initiatives have been put in place [39].

5.1.2 Progress in the UNPRME initiative

The number of signatory universities in Turkey, as well as the number of reports submitted by these universities, is high. The reports demonstrate a dedication to PRME and numerous impactful initiatives that have been successful in strategically integrating social responsibility and sustainability into academic and organizational practices. According to the reports, the majority of Turkish communicating signatory universities already offer undergraduate- or graduate-level courses or degrees in business ethics, sustainability, social responsibility, or other related areas. The communicating signatory universities are listed in Table 5 along with how many reports they have submitted.

Table 5: Progress reports of the UNPRME among HEIs in Turkey.

Name of University	Member since	Number of reports*
Sabancı University	Sept. 16, 2008	6 reports
Koc University, Business School	Dec. 02, 2008	4 reports
Istanbul Bilgi University	July 03, 2009	5 reports
Yeditepe University	Sept. 26, 2014	2 reports
Faculty of Management - Sakarya University	August 02, 2016	2 reports
Gebze Technical University	April 25, 2017	1 report
Faculty of Business and Economics, Eastern Mediterranean University	November 22, 2018	1 report
Ozyegin University	March 06, 2019	1 report

*Accessed on September 16, 2022.

An example of the impact of the adoption of the PRME initiative is the progress that has happened in the Business School of Koc University. A new undergraduate course titled "New Venture Development and Entrepreneurship" was announced by the school in their 2012 report. The course aims at assessing students based on their ability to develop innovative venture ideas while taking into account the social outcomes. The students are evaluated based on the plans that make profits for the organization and emphasize social entrepreneurship. In its 2017 report, the school announced the adoption of an Ethical Reasoning path that should be followed through significant changes to the core curriculum. One of the path's main goals is to communicate to all students, regardless of their major, why learning natural, quantitative, and social sciences, along with ethical reasoning, is crucial.

The *cultural influence and awareness* of responsibility in Turkey explains, in part, their current state in adopting the PRME. More than 64% (63 out of 179 institutions) of Turkey's business and/or management HEIs offer courses on CSR, business ethics, or related subjects. Most of these courses are required and have a real-world social responsibility project that students must complete during the course [40]. In Turkish business education, CSR is based in part on the ethics agenda. It is obvious that the ethical dimension continues to be the most prevalent theme in CSR education in Turkey and that CSR has typically been treated as a sub-context in the course material of business ethics. Several Turkish studies on ethical education and responsibility in business studies have been conducted in Turkey [41–44]. According to [45], a study conducted in Turkey found business students' ethical sensitivity scores were correlated with the business discipline in which they wished to specialize, their intention to pursue graduate education, and the potential industries in which they wished to find employment after graduation. Students who wanted to work in the public sector had a higher mean ethical sensitivity value than students who wanted to work in the private sector. This is explained by the importance the Turkish people place on the idea of a state. Working for the government is seen as more moral than

5.2 The UAE

5.2.1 The HE system

The UAE's total government spending on education (as a percentage of GDP) was estimated at 3.8% in 2020 by the World Bank's development indicators. The three categories that make up the educational system in the UAE are public schools, private schools, and HEIs. Public schools use the Arabic curriculum, whereas private schools use one of 15 different curricula. Schools that use national curricula from the United Kingdom, the United States, India, and the Ministry of Education serve 90% of the private school student population, according to the Ministry of Education. There are 60 campuses of foreign universities in the nation. The UAE's HEIs are relatively new, just like the nation. The Ministry of Education unveiled the National Strategy for Higher Education 2030 in September 2017. For the benefit of the UAE's future generations, the strategy aims to develop and attain the highest standards for professional and scientific education. To implement this strategy, the UAE government set four main pillars: quality, efficiency, innovation, and harmonization. The educational system in the UAE has developed into a distinctive system that draws students and faculty from all over the world thanks to a combination of required free education for locals and a lucrative educational investment market from various other nations. The lavish environments of the region's two largest cities, Dubai and Abu Dhabi, produce a truly global educational environment ready to guide the area into the future. In the UAE, there are only 1,228 accredited programs offered by 74 HEIs serving 131,314 students, and only five of them are federal, according to the Commission of Academic Accreditation Fact Book on Higher Education in the Emirates (2020). (Only 35.4 percent of students in the UAE attend public universities). The remaining HEIs are all international organizations or institutions that have collaborated or entered joint ventures with the national or local governments to open campuses in the UAE. Most foreign institutions are located in Dubai (38 percent of universities) and Abu Dhabi (40 percent of universities) due to the population concentration in these two cities.

5.2.2 Progress in the UNPRME initiative

The six UNPRME principles have been excellently embodied, according to reports from the signatory Emirati universities, especially in the engagement and research pillars (see Table 6). One successful example of the change the PRME caused in HEIs is the University of Dubai. The University of Dubai stated in its report for 2010 that it has revised the Business and Society course's required syllabus to include the six pillars. In the 2012 report, the university reported that the course was already launched, and students had to complete a CSR and sustainability project that counted for 40% of their overall grade. Additionally, all courses in the College of Business Administration are required to teach case studies on sustainability, CSR, and social and environmental issues. A new course titled "Sustainability" for the Bachelor of Business Administration program was approved by the institution in the 2014 report, and in the report of 2016, it was scheduled to begin. The textbook for this course was translated into Arabic and became available for free access and download by universities for academic use.

Table 6: Progress reports of the UNPRME among HEIs in the UAE.

Name of University	Member since	Number of reports*
University of Dubai	April 01, 2008	5 reports
American University of Sharjah	Sept. 21, 2011	4 reports
British University in Dubai	Nov. 24, 2013	4 reports
IMT Dubai	May 25, 2017	1 report
Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government	May 16, 2019	1 report

*Accessed on September 16, 2022.

The impacts of *globalization and religion* might explain the UAE's active role in adopting the PRME. Organizations from various cultures coexist with local organizations in the UAE, which makes it a melting pot of cultures. This has significantly contributed to raising the bar and improving the quality of education across the UAE. It also facilitated the diffusion of technological and educational advancements into the UAE's HE system [46]. In addition to the impact of globalization, Islam is significant in influencing people's adoption of ethical attitudes and behaviors. According to one study [47], religion is a significant predictor of the ethical behavior of UAE university students.

6 Conclusion and recommendations

An initiative of the UN Global Compact with the goal of transforming business and management education, PRME, has grown in popularity among universities all over the world. This study examined data on countries in the MENA region and found that several indicators are linked to universities' adoption of the PRME in their business and management schools. The study also discussed the two successful cases of Turkey and the UAE. While the adoption of the PRME is

considerably low in the MENA region, there are several forward steps that can be taken to enhance the situation. Business and management schools must ensure that the educational programs are created with the knowledge, perceptions, skills, and motivation to embody the principles of RM. This can happen through applying the PRME on a smaller scale (one class/one project) and building awareness over years of practicing. This will require international organizations to support individual advocates of the PRME in the MENA region. In addition, encouraging young researchers, master's degree students, and PhD scholars to start addressing topics related to RM and RME is also vital in raising awareness. Once universities reach a sufficient level of knowledge about RME, university conferences, with students engaged, can accelerate the spread of this knowledge. Partnering with business corporations and changing environmental and educational frameworks will then be easier to implement. Future research is recommended to survey the MENA region's business and management schools in order to recognize and provide assistance to advocates of RME.

Conflicts of Interest Statement

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Ethics Statement

This research did not require ethical approval.

Data Availability Statement

Data associated with the manuscript is public and has been referenced appropriately.

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