THE CONTRIBUTION OF BUSINESSE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Hammoudeh, Majd

Summary

The contribution of businesses in the implementation of SDGs study aimed to interview, gather information, and learn about the mentality of the new business owners considering them the "future business leader", whom will be responsible for the 2030 agenda of the UN.

Businesses, from the researcher's point of view, are critical partner in implementing the goals; they are the real actors in today's world. Many researches have been conducted to study the Sustainable development from all its attributes, SDGs, who are the main concept of the research where fully explained connecting them with the Corporate Social responsibility (CSR) along with what might mainly concern the businesses which is now known to be SDG Compass.

Few business owners where interviewed from different backgrounds and sectors, to analyse their responses as the focal data for the study. Answers received were interesting and diverse, helped the researcher to understand more and more about the outlook of the new generation of business people.

Some of the hypotheses in this research were met and valid, others had some objections and could be improved and further tested.

As a summary, whether business owners, individuals, students or people in need, the SDGs as a concept is surely advantageous and would bring the world to another level, on practical side, they won't be easy and need the world hand in hand to contribute in them. Governments as well as businesses need to emphasize on this agenda and develop models for reporting and communication to perfectly ensure the implementation of the goals, SDG Compass requires to be more spread and explained, along with the encouragement for businesses to start implementing CSR since day one in their companies, because those goals are '17 goals to transform our world', they have been studied, reviewed and adopted by all member states in the United Nations for highly honourable reasons concerning people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership.

Introduction

Research Problem

As the SDGs are already set, reports and studies have by now been conducted on the usefulness of adopting the goals, and business guide (SDG compass) was published to all companies and corporations to direct the application of the goals in business objectives and strategies. It is now when businesses need to be well informed and encouraged to align their core activities with the goals, or any of them, in their daily operations.

Studying the mindset of promising business owners is a main issue for this study, whether it is believed that only large multinational enterprises are capable of applying such goals, or also small and medium enterprises could take part in them; as a path of sustaining their businesses or even one way of accomplishing Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

Value of Research

Countries have agreed to implement the SDGs after fully understanding the necessity to begin eliminating poverty and put the world on a sustainable path.

Since the goals were set to not leave anyone behind, a guide has been designed for businesses to engage them in creating the life of dignity and opportunities on this planet through their creativity and innovations. Through this study we will not only gain information from the perspective of businesses on the SDGs, but we will be able to take part in spreading the goals and raising awareness about their prominence and benefits on private sectors and promising businesses, once they use them as a framework to outline their strategies and activities.

Aim of Research

Understand further how the new generation of business people reflect to the essentiality for Corporate Social Responsibility(CSR), and whether it could be related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or not.

Furthermore, after introducing the goals for our sample, an estimation will be done on how many of them would want to contribute in achieving the seventeen SDGs or anyone of the goals, and whether they think they help in sustaining their businesses or not.

Material and method

Method of research

This research focuses on certain number of new business owners (up to five year-old businesses); to further understand their mind-set. It is a qualitative research which helps us in learning the opinions and awareness of the start-up owners around the Sustainable Development, its goals and their relation with the CSR.

Structured set of questions were asked for our sample, to collect several point of views from different backgrounds, and business owners operating in different parts of the world, which, we think, could help us understand the global mind-set of start-up owners and their willingness to contribute in implementing the SDGs.

Aims, Questions and Hypothesis

Four questions were set based on our hypothesis; we have started each interview with defining the main concepts of our research for the interviewee, SDGs, CSR, and finally SDG compass, to familiarize the interviewee with our topic and research terminologies. (Table 1) displays research's aims connecting them with the hypothesis and interview questions.

Research aims	Research hypothesis
A1: Are the start-up owners aware of the SDGs and the need for implementing the goals in their businesses as the world agenda of 2030?	H1: New Business owners are not well informed about the SDGs and their application
	H2: Owners don't believe that small businesses are able to contribute in the implementation of the goals or consider larger size companies could make a bigger difference.
A2: How does the new generation of business people reflect to the essentiality of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as part of sustainable development?	H3: New businesses don't focus from the beginning on applying CSR, until they are well established and operated.
	H4: Lack of consideration for sustainable development, thinking that it only affects the society and not the company.
A3: How many would want to contribute in achieving the SDGs and shape their strategies according to the SDG Compass?	H5: Lack of knowledge for companies in general about the SDG compass or the procedure for adopting it.
	H6: Start-ups would want to be involved in the goals and need a guide such as the SDG compass to help them shape their framework.

A4: Is implementing the SDGs feasible for start-ups?	H7: New companies consider implementing the SDGs require great resources and efforts to be established.
	H8: They have no problem engaging in CSR and sustainable development but not at this developing stage of the company.

Table 1: Research Aims, Hypothesis

Source: Own Construction, 2017

A Start-up in this Research

Start-up in this research is as it was defined in the business dictionary "Early stage in the life cycle of an enterprise where the entrepreneur moves from the idea stage to securing financing, laying down the basis structure of the business, and initiating operations or trading."

Research Population and Sample

Seven new business owners have been interviewed to understand their opinion regarding the research and their awareness about the SDGs and SDG compass.

Interviewees were mainly from Jordan, three have their business based in Jordan, in fashion industry, creative, and agricultural and innovation, two of them based in UAE, working in logistic and technological industry. Luckily, we could also interview a start-up from Mongolia and Mexico, operating in energy and education, and leather and fashion industry respectively.

Five of our interviewees have been operating for almost one year by now, one for two years, and the last one was for five years in the logistics industry.

We were interested to know how big have the companies grew since they were established regarding the employees number, to further understand the possibility of contribution of companies in SDGs. Mainly as newly established companies, five of them have employees between 3 people to 9 people working together, meanwhile the companies that were established for more than one year, are operating with 30 and 50 employees.

Data Analysis Methods

Analysing the data in this study will be through narrative analysis along with semantic analysis, each interviewee from different sector showed different interest in the SDGs, dissimilar interests between the interviewees gave the research a better scope to analyse the data each according to his/her sector, experiences also varied between interviewees and this enhanced the results that we received from the start-ups owners.

Results and Conclusions

Research aims	Research hypothesis	Results
A1: Are the start-up owners aware of the SDGs and the need for implementing the goals in their businesses as the world agenda of 2030?	H1: New Business owners are not well informed about the SDGs and their application	They haven't heard about the SDGs as a whole concept, but aware of the idea and need for SD
	H2: Owners don't believe that small businesses are able to contribute in the implementation of the goals or consider larger size companies could make a bigger difference.	Verified, many have considered the larger size companies could contribute more efficiently in the implementation of the SDGs
A2: How does the new generation of business people reflect to the essentiality of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as part of sustainable development?	H3: New businesses don't focus from the beginning on applying CSR, until they are well established and operated.	Verified, most of the interviewees assured they are not ready enough to take on a CSR strategy in their business now.
	H4: Lack of consideration for sustainable development, thinking that it only affects the society and not the company.	Some have considered SD benefits the society only, but they were all ready to consider SD and CSR in their business.
A3: How many would want to contribute in achieving the SDGs and shape their strategies according to the SDG Compass?	H5: Lack of knowledge for companies in general about the SDG compass or the procedure for adopting it.	As none of the interviewees knew what SDG Compass was, this hypothesis was highly verified
	H6: Start-ups would want to be involved in the goals, and need a guide such as the SDG compass to help them shape their framework.	They have favored the idea of existence of such guide and some would want to consider it as their framework.

| A4: Is implementing the SDGs feasible for start-ups? | H7: New companies consider implementing the SDGs require great resources and efforts to be established. | Resources are needed in implementing the SDGs, but some considered their start-up could make bigger difference than Larger enterprises. |
| | H8: They have no problem engaging in CSR and sustainable development but not at this developing stage of the company. | They would want to focus further about their operations and main objectives to be able to give back to society. |

Table 2: Summary of the Primer Research
Source: Own Construction, 2017

Mainly the start-up owners weren't aware of the SDGs in general, they were enthusiastic when they heard about them, but after analysing their answers, we really need to increase the awareness of SDGs to business people, they are essential element and real actors in our world to implement the SDGs, as the former UN secretary general Mr. Ban Ki Moon has emphasized on.

New business owners, who are young, ambitious and would want to make a change in the world, are ready to help in the implementation of the goals, but many of them need aid or guidance to start with the change. Yes, some of them weren't focused at this early stage of their business on CSR or thinking of sustainable development, but they realize their importance in the society.

Some of them has already started giving back to the society, mainly in social work, but haven't set their business strategy on SD or haven't thought of the CSR yet. Many of them are focusing on how to grow their company, maintain suppliers, understand their industry, and believe when they are capable enough they would want to start contributing in the goals and CSR.

But SDGs were set for everyone, and meant to not leave anyone behind, meaning that if awareness of the SDGs increases, and business people could understand further that even by unplugging the electrical devices from the sockets when they are not used they are contributing in the implementation of the goals, they would understand how simple the goals are and would want to make more changes and contributions.

Acknowledgements

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Author(s)

Majd Hammoudeh

MA Business Development, Eszterházy Károly Egyetem Gyöngyösi
Károly Róbert Campus, 36 Mátrai st. Gyöngyös, H-3200
Jamalmajd24@gmail.com