Simulations in International Relations (Simulari): a pedagogical innovation project for a virtual simulation

Simulações em Relações Internacionais (SimulaRI): um projeto de inovação pedagógica para uma simulação virtual

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Abstract: Simulations and models are a powerful educational tool that allows the student a practical activity different from that traditionally experienced in the classroom. This paper presents a teaching innovation project that linked it to teaching activities and the training of scholarship and volunteer monitors to format a simulation model of International Organizations, in virtual format, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The objective of the article is to present the application of the project and evaluate the application of this teaching-learning tool, aiming to contribute to its use in other institutions. In the empirical evaluation of the results, a follow-up of those involved in the project, was made through monthly reports during the eight months of the project, the project products (such as the guides, manuals, and the events themselves), and debriefings (evaluation questionnaires) to evaluate the learning of International Relations concepts and theories. The evaluations indicated that the instrument was considered highly positive by the participants, assisting in the teaching-learning process, increasing engagement with course activities and decreasing the prospects of dropping out.

Keywords: Simulation; International Organizations; International relations; Active learning; Pedagogical Innovation Project.

Resumo As simulações e modelos são um poderoso instrumento educacional que permite ao estudante uma atividade prática diferente da tradicionalmente vivenciada na sala de aula. Este artigo apresenta um projeto de ensino de inovação pedagógica que as aplicou

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de forma vinculada às atividades de ensino e por meio do treinamento de monitores bolsistas e voluntários para a formatação de um modelo de simulação de Organizações Internacionais, em formato virtual, devido à pandemia do Covid-19. O objetivo do artigo é apresentar a aplicação do projeto e avaliar essa ferramenta de ensino-aprendizagem, buscando contribuir para sua utilização em outras instituições. Na avaliação empírica dos resultados, foi feito um acompanhamento dos envolvidos no projeto por meio dos relatórios mensais elaborados pelos bolsistas durante os oito meses de vigência do projeto, dos produtos do projeto (como os guias, manuais e os próprios eventos) e debriefings (questionários de avaliação) para acessar os resultados no aprimoramento da aprendizagem de conceitos e teorias de Relações Internacionais. As avaliações indicaram que o instrumento foi considerado altamente positivo pelos participantes, auxiliando no processo de ensino-aprendizagem, aumentando o engajamento com as atividades do curso e diminuindo as perspectivas de evasão.

Palavras-chave: Simulação; Organizações Internacionais; Relações Internacionais; Aprendizagem ativa; Projeto de Inovação Pedagógica.

1. Introduction

International organization simulations have grown increasingly popular in courses in International Relations, Law, Journalism, and other social sciences fields. Simulations and models are an extremely effective educational tool because they provide students with a richer experience and a more in-depth understanding of their study objects (Casarões and Gama 2005; Lemes 2013; Oliveira 2018). In the discipline of International Relations, such models facilitate contact with some of the field's most pressing issues and hypothetical situations, enhancing the learning process.

Students benefit from an enriching educational opportunity, as a simulation is not limited to rehearsing an eventuality but also to intense instruction within the context of international negotiations. That enables individuals to enhance their negotiation, public speaking, writing, research, dispute resolution, and cooperation strategies, among other skills (Giorno et al. 2019; Medina and Pavarina 2015; Oliveira 2018; Sousa 2017). We saw a simulation in the Bachelor´s Degree of International Relations (BDIR) at the Federal University of Tocantins (Universidade Federal do Tocantins - UFT) as an opportunity. It had already taken place in an experimental format in October 2018, when participants debated Venezuela's crisis within the Organization of American States (OAS) (Lopes 2018).

The activity, used in higher education, is an alternative to traditional teaching methods, transforming the classroom into a more dynamic environment in which students develop and improve essential skills for professional growth, such as the ability to

communicate in public (Casarões and Gama 2005; Giorno et al. 2019; Medina and Pavarina 2015; Oliveira 2018; Sousa 2017). Various simulation models in Brazil are being consolidated and dispersed across the country, including AMUN in Brasilia; TEMAS in Belo Horizonte; MONU in São Paulo; UFRGSMUN in Porto Alegre; SONU in Fortaleza; SOI in Natal; and MUNDI in João Pessoa.

Additionally, it exposes its participants to a world they would not typically encounter by acting as diplomats and the like, familiarizes them with the world of International Relations, international politics, and various issues of the international agenda. Thus, the Pedagogical Innovation Project (PIP) Simulations in International Relations (Simulações em Relações Internacionais - SimulaRI) strives to provide students with a novel format for studying in Tocantins and the Northern region of Brazil.

This article describes the project. It focuses on establishing a collaborative network between teaching, research, and extension at UFT, and developing a simulation model of international organizations in the state of Tocantins and the northern region, as part of the BDIR. SimulaRI's operations are being conducted virtually amid the COVID-19 pandemic and is one of the first simulations in the country to do so.

This essay examines the question: how the usage of simulations or virtual modeling of international organizations can impact the teaching-learning process in the FUT International Relations course?

As such, in conjunction with the theoretical studies of the IR course, we intend to use the methodology of simulations from international organizations to address the most diverse issues and themes in international relations, including power, peace missions, war and peace, military intervention, migrations, and the environment. Thus, this essay will investigate the outcomes of using simulations or modelling in an IR course, particularly in a virtual format.

Finally, we intend to connect a research and extension project, which consisted, regarding the former, of continuous research on relevant topics in the International System, particularly the role of International Organizations in international politics, and the latter, in holding events in secondary schools of the State of Tocantins. The project intends to develop simulation activities within the International Relations course and its disciplines, train fellow monitors and volunteers to format a simulation model for Internship Organizations and culminate with a large simulation event attended by students

from UFT and other universities. As a result, the SimulaRI project integrates teaching, research, and extension activities within the UFT's BDIR mandate.

The following is the structure of the article. First, it discusses simulation as an active teaching tool in International Relations courses and its effect on students' acquisition of concepts, theories, and decision-making processes in international politics. Second, we present the PIP SimulaRI, debating the project's connection between teaching, research, and extension, and presenting how the Organizing Committee will organize the experimental and final simulations. Finally, we outline the project's implementation and discuss our initial findings, which indicated an increase in student learning through active teaching methodologies, simulation knowledge, and event organization.

2. International Relations and Simulation

Obendorf and Randerson (2013) assert that educational simulations of the activities of intergovernmental organizations date back to experiential learning methods utilized in the United States in the 1920s. The League of Nations Assembly, to increase students' knowledge of international policy concerns.

Model United Nations (MUN) simulations developed concurrently with the establishment of the world organization. The first simulation of the United Nations (UN) took place in March 1947, just 18 months after the organization was founded (Obendorf and Randerson 2013). Additionally, the authors state that simulations have become a worldwide phenomenon as a result of the spirit of the theoretical model of International Relations - liberal institutionalism – since:

> The liberal institutionalist spirit of the post-1945 years, the UN's growth in membership and global relevance following widespread decolonization in the 1960s, and the shifts in global power that occurred with the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union all served as motivation for educators and students to embrace MUN simulation as a method of teaching and learning about transnational issues, global governance, and diplomacy (Muldoon, 1995: 28). Based on this historical foundation, MUN simulation is now a global phenomenon that is taught and learned at practically every level of education, from primary and secondary schools and colleges to universities, undergraduate and graduate programs (Obendorf and Randerson 2013: 351)[4].

With the growth of International Relations courses in recent decades in Brazil, the use of pedagogical technologies to supplement traditional teaching techniques has

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[4] Translated by the authors.

increased. Among the numerous tool options, the decision-making process simulation activity is one of the most frequently employed and deemed effective kinds of active learning or methodology for teaching International Relations (Casarões and Gama 2005; Inoue and Valença 2017; Rebelo 2018).

The model is best understood as an operational simulation that combines case-based identification and representation-based investigation (investigation combined with play-based identification) and analysis of contemporary international concerns (Obendorf and Randerson 2013). In other terms, it is a role-playing exercise in which participants assume the roles of characters in a fictional scenario or case. It is worth noting that:

> The United Nations model is based on current body work and utilizes job descriptions and participant expectations provided by the organization. Additionally, it invites individuals to become active in current events, topics, and stories affecting the UN system. International relations (IR) programs and academics frequently play critical roles in facilitating or providing services in academic settings and supporting such conferences at the university level; however, these services are frequently not included in the formal curriculum (Obendorf and Randerson 2013: 351)[5].

In this context, the SimulaRI Project aims to incorporate simulation as a Pedagogical Innovation Project (PIP) within the International Relations course, as well as to institutionalize simulation more formally within the course curriculum through connections between classes, research, and extension projects.

According to Inoue and Valença (2017), active learning is defined as a departure from the conventional instructional approach in the following ways:

> As teachers and academics, teaching and learning are integral components of our daily life. However, these acts have become so normalized that thinking on best practices has been neglected, causing us professors to operate on autopilot. Teaching has become second nature to the teacher, who operates without considering the consequences for the establishment of a learning environment that is suitable not only for our pedagogical objectives, but also for students' expectations and retention of knowledge (Inoue and Valença 2017: 1–2)[6].

The dominant teaching paradigm assumes that an authority centralizes knowledge, unilaterally conveyed to the student via lectures and/or readings. However, as new issues and concerns arose in society, theorists and academics began debating the necessity of

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[5] Translated by the authors.
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revising the method of education. That includes shifting from the dominant paradigm of teaching to the Learning Paradigm, which is based on the understanding that knowledge is constructed through the collaboration between teacher and student, moving beyond the reproduction of what is taught to the pursuit of a learning environment in which the student begins to connect not only with the information but also with what is being taught. As a result, the student must abandon the passive receiver of knowledge to actively construct the connections and meanings required to comprehend what is taught (Inoue and Valença 2017).

According to McIntosh (2001: 270), students recall only 10% of what they read, 20% of what they hear, and 30% of what they see. When used in conjunction with presentation techniques, you can boost knowledge retention by up to 50%. When students participate actively in the learning process, they retain 70% of the information they provide to one another and 90% of what they say and do as a team. Thus, the use of simulations or organizational models is an active method of learning that is a teaching approach that can assist students in understanding International Relations concepts, theories, and decision-making processes. When Rebelo (2018:6) discusses the results produced in IR courses that use simulations, he emphasizes the following:

> According to the literature, the usage of simulations places students at the center of the teaching-learning process. Along with fostering students' autonomy to analyze and provide solutions to everyday situations, this active methodology exercise can boost speaking and writing, which are crucial for the debates required by the dynamics (NEWMANN; TWIGG, 2000). In this way, the student takes the initiative in their academic development, with the teacher ensuring that vital learning occurs. During simulations, the teacher takes on the role of a tutor, facilitating group conversations. As a result, it will be the students who supply the solutions.

According to McIntosh (2001: 270), Model United Nations shares many of the benefits of case-based education and problem-based learning (Problem-Based Learning – PBL) by moving beyond the traditional method of lecture and reading. In this regard, Inoue and Valença (2017) demonstrate that the literature documents a range of activities aimed at implementing the Learning Paradigm, including (i) case studies, (ii) alternative texts, (iii) simulations and games, and (iv) technology use.

Casarões and Gama (2006) identify scenarios to aid in the comprehension and fixation of International Relations Theories with simulations and models, highlighting the following: case I – simulations of international organizations; case II – simulations based

on the formulation of theoretical models; and case III – simulations based on a case study. Above all, as McIntosh's findings (2001: 270) indicate, there is a requirement for articulation between examples or sharing with other active learning approaches because:

> It is critical to underline that articulation across different simulation scenarios is conceivable – and perhaps desirable and pedagogically intriguing (such as the cases already exemplified). Thus, events involving international organizations can be simulated using case teaching cuts and bars in a particular theoretical model (Casarões and Gama 2006: 25).

Thus, based on the findings of Casarões and Gama (2006), Inoue and Valença (2017), and McIntosh (2001), our Pedagogical Innovation Project (PIP) seeks to articulate cases and practices of active methods learning with simulations of international organizations, the use of technologies for the virtual application of the simulation, and the case study to comprehend the simulated reality. In short, as McIntosh (2001: 270) states, "to encourage successful learning, question selection, role assignments, and rules of procedure must be connected to both the course material and the classroom's practical constraints."

3. SimulaRI - A Project for Pedagogical Innovation in International Relations

SimulaRI is linked to UFT's BDIR and is part of the Institutional Program for Pedagogical Innovation, organized by the Office of Dean of Undergraduate Studies.

In terms of the macrostructure within which the project is embedded, we assume that the university is an open system in constant interaction, composed of two fundamental functional assets. First, the legal framework that governs its organization and the dynamic and relational games that define it (personal relationships and power distribution). While decision-making is collegial, the individuals' logic of action complicates the development of global projects. As a result, institutional growth is also reliant on collaborative learning processes to build a shared identity and institutionalize procedures by acknowledging reality, exploring adjustment measures, and cementing new practices (Zabalza 2007).

Thus, the development of integrative projects such as SimulaRI, which involve collaboration between professors and students and dialogue between teaching (including different curricular units), research, and extension, contributes to institutional

development, the establishment of a shared identity, and the institutionalization of complementary procedures to aid in the teaching-learning process.

During the experience at BDIR, we confronted recurring issues regarding the interactions with the student community, such as evasion and a lack of preparation for newcomers,a result of the socioeconomic context in which we are inserted.. Inadequate basic education, along with the growth and democratization of public higher education, brought students who were less prepared for higher education. Along with the growing importance of the public university as a tool for social transformation, the training process began to necessitate both financial and pedagogical support. Consequently, the university needs institutional policies to retain students and new modes of teaching-learning to address students' persistent complaints about the excessive theoretical workload and expository format.

The university administration's initiative to promote and finance novel kinds of teaching and learning aligns with a new student profile – interested in the classroom application of technological tools – and the pandemic setting we are currently experiencing – with virtual interaction. According to D'Ávila (2011), information and communication technologies are vital. Teachers must organize their pedagogical interventions around a "digital or interactive style of learning."

The Institutional Program for Pedagogical Innovation is a component of this effort to adapt the teaching-learning techniques at UFT to such issues. As discussed, the simulation model is extremely beneficial for the academic and professional development of students involved with extension projects and event participants. Additionally, the secondary level event for high school students will be critical for spreading the word and increasing public knowledge about UFT's BDIR.

Additionally, we must acknowledge that students learning is related not just to their cognitive development but also to methods of teaching-learning evaluation. As such, institutional expectations must be aligned with the evaluation technique (Sternberg 1997). The initiative advances mediation in two ways. Cognitively, by allowing students to "objectify their knowledge when they conceptualize it", and didactically, by leveraging learning to "make the object valuable to the subject."

The objectives of the project's consider the teaching conditions at UFT's BDIR. The project's overall goal is to imitate international forums so that students can have a better understanding of diplomacy and put theories into practice. As a result, the students

who comprise the organizing committee of tutors, monitors, and volunteers will gain experience arranging events, working in teams, and teaching delegates in the norms and rules of international institutions. Students from the BDIR who participate in the simulations will consolidate and apply knowledge gained throughout their academic careers. Subsequently, we will invite high school students from the state of Tocantins to participate in the experience, aiming to publicize the course for the local community, potentially attracting students and increasing competition for admission, and stimulating public debate on international relations issues.

To this end, the project's implementation is linked to the development of teaching, research, and extension activities for the academic community, particularly BDIR, including the following: 1) Organizing a simulation of an international organization at the higher education level and another at the secondary education level; 2) Preparing two lectures, one educational and explaining the rules of the simulated committee to students, and an introductory lecture, delivered by a specialist in the simulated subjects (to offer students a better understanding of the subject); 3) Hosting debates to choose potential SimulaRI committees and themes; 4) Organizing the environment that will serve as a simulation of an international forum in the most trustworthy manner feasible. 5) Creating a Participant Manual and Study Guide to offer practical and theoretical assistance to event participants; 6) Researching to assess and improve BRI's teaching-learning processes (activity in which the first product is this article).

The project represents a significant step forward in increasing interdisciplinarity and establishing the prerequisites for transdisciplinarity. While hyperspecialization drove disciplines to establish new boundaries that compelled them to engage in new dialogues not only among themselves, interdisciplinarity enables the interaction of disciplines, integrating concepts and methodologies. Transdisciplinarity, on the other hand, refers to the highest degree of relationship between disciplines, intending to construct a total system, without solid boundaries between disciplines. This is still difficult to achieve given the traditional structure of undergraduate courses in Brazil (Sommerman 2008). Through simulation exercises, we attempt to disrupt this pattern of individualized action and logic of thinking that dates to the dawn of modern empirical-rationalist science.

Six BDIR disciplines are incorporated directly into this: International Institutions (3rd semester), Foreign Policy Analysis (4th semester), Contemporary International Relations I and II (6th and 7th semesters), International Security (7th semester), and

Public International Law (7th semester) (8th semester). Additionally, the project's execution team and simulation participants will apply theoretical knowledge from diverse fields. Along with incorporating the project and encouraging student engagement in simulations, one of the assessment techniques for these disciplines is creating supplemental material for the project. This discussion with the courses enables the development of evaluation methods that require students to engage in a dialogue between theoretical knowledge and the professional practices of International Relations.

The technical team of the project is assisting students enrolled in those courses to develop assessments, including guides and manuals for the simulations, case studies for analysing States' foreign policies, and others. That will allow the tutor and monitors to hone their teaching skills and interpersonal relationships while organizing and implementing the project. Thus, the usage of the simulation tool will be a novel approach to teaching and learning at UFT.

The primary output of the Simulation in International Relations pedagogical innovation project is a simulation model involving professors, tutors, monitors, volunteers, and students enrolled in UFT courses. Together, the model will generate simulation expertise for the course's students. It will also enable its applications to high schools throughout the state of Tocantins through an extension project focused on conducting simulations for high school students. Additionally, research on International Organizations in international politics and the main issues debated on the international stage contribute to the development of research within the BDIR's scope as it serves as the foundation for scientific articles on theoretical topics and organizations addressed in the simulations.

In the short run, until the end of 2021, in addition to the immediate results associated with the direct products that the team would develop, the project worked as an additional activity tool by establishing a bond between students and the course, thereby decreasing their likelihood of evasion. For participants, simulating an experience in an international organization, which is so removed from local reality, acts as a practical activity, and helps connect theoretical concepts to their implementation. In the medium term, this link should be strengthened, as scholarships discourage students' evasion. The experience gained via the activities enables students to receive a broader education and acquire abilities that will aid them in a variety of professional pursuits.

The project's long-term goal is to institutionalize the practice of international organizations conducting simulations at BDIR. Apart from the positive effects on the teaching-learning process, as detailed in the article, the project serves to publicize the course's activities in the region and establish an institutional memory for the course by maintaining a digital collection of its activities. The replication of the project in subsequent years will ensure the sustainability of a group of fellows with a medium-term institutional connection. It will also encourage other interested students to enhance their extracurricular activities and grades (and thus, their overall academic performance) to increase their chances of participating in the project, either as a scholarship recipient or as a volunteer. This inaugural edition of the project attracted a considerable portion of our academic community, with 30 candidates (out of a total of 131 students enrolled) for the team, of which only six earned a scholarship and three volunteered. It's important to note that the Tutor is a Ph.D. student in Environmental Sciences at UFT, as the position is only open to graduate students.

Thus, the SimulaRI pedagogical innovation project is establishing a network between teaching, research, and extension at UFT, as well as funding the development of a simulation model for International Organizations in the state of Tocantins and the northern region.

4. Implementation of the project and anticipated outcomes

BDIR's PIP project has an enormous potential in the Tocantins and the Northern of Brazil, as it is the only simulation in the North run by International Relations students, allowing them to apply their knowledge of various theories and practices, assisting them in acting more diplomatically according to each country's foreign policy.

Most of the outcomes are attributable to the work of the project's human resources and technical team. The coordinating professor and collaborating professors are accountable for academic contacts and interactions with the university, as well as for overseeing SimulaRI's documentation and an academic component. Additionally, they are responsible for monitoring, following up, and evaluating the simulations. Notably, planning entails monitoring/follow-up/evaluation of students participating in the extension project and university events. Due to its connection to a UFT institutional program, it is important to adhere to stringent requirements for the workload of complementary activities (required for diploma obtainment) and the generation of manuals, guides, and other outputs. Coordinating instructors, tutor, and monitors also

need to complete monthly reports, attendance forms for students aided by monitors, and courses on teaching methods.

Students enrolled in the project are responsible for creating a schedule (which must be approved by the entire team), preparing the infrastructure for the events, planning academic and structural documents, moderating debates, and coordinating personnel during the simulation day, among other responsibilities. Additionally, they developed all didactic material (study guides and manuals) used during the events' stages, which's construction required significant research. Finally, they are accountable for all event dissemination (elaboration of flyers, banners, blogs, websites).

The preparation of the events requires a heavy burden on the organization committee, as their members need to create documents such as a Study Guide and Rules, a Guide for Participation. They also need to publicize a call for participants with the rules for delegation registration/selection and the schedule of activities. Additionally, they created promotional material for social media platforms, including educational content about simulations of international organizations and United Nations Security Council members, as well as schedules for the event. In this regard, the project's students conducted research on topics, chose a theme related to the simulation, and prepared probable discussion topics for the delegates.

The project was constructed in two stages: the first stage included an experimental simulation that was confined to BDIR and UFT Law students, and the second stage included plans to expand to other courses in relevant subjects offered by other universities and states. Concerning the first stage, the organizing committee delivered educational talks to familiarize event attendees with the simulation model's rules. They included explanations of the supporting materials and digital platforms used in the simulation. Although meetings were initially arranged with a pre-determined schedule, the model did not produce the desired results, with a low enrolment of students seeking support. The executive committee expressed a lack of confidence in raising queries. To address it, we formed WhatsApp groups to bring together members of the executive committee and the two delegation representatives for direct support. The modification to an on-demand structure and focus on specific questions from each couple proved to be effective as it ensured a private area for dialogue between the organizing committee and participants.

The simulation took place for two days, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. It was arranged similarly to an actual meeting of the designated International Organization – the United

Nations Security Council – and occurred virtually due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The topic chosen was the renewal of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) - MONUSCO. Its primary objectives are to protect civilians, assist in stabilizing and strengthening public institutions, and implement governance and security reforms.

Professor Augusto W.T. Junior, Ph.D., was invited to the opening lecture based on this theme and delivered a presentation titled "International Security, Peace Missions, and MONUSCO." Along with a comprehensive explanation of the formal foundations of the UN system's institutional framework responsible for sustaining peace, the speaker analysed the types of missions and the DRC's crisis to address its primary issues.

In addition to the primary crisis issue that served as the backdrop for the debate, the Guide for the Simulation included subsidiary themes and references to news articles, international organization websites, and bibliographical information to aid in the debate and preparation of the delegates. We list such subjects following. 1) Food insecurity: according to data from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Food Program, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is the country with the largest need for food assistance. Given that insecurity regarding access to enough food can exacerbate the escalation of violence, the debate on the relationship between food security and the promotion and consolidation of peace was promoted; 2) Refugees: based on the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) data indicating that turmoil in the DRC caused a surge of refugees and that forced displacement worsens the vulnerability of local civilians and exposes them to ill survival conditions, the refugee argument is another main subject in this crisis; 3) Threat to child development: In light of Sustainable Development Goal 16.2 of the 2030 Agenda, which calls for the elimination of abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and all forms of violence against children, it is critical to discuss the issue of child soldiers in the DRC conflict and to consider alternatives that promote these children's reintegration into a fair, safe society that advance their full development; 4) Violation of Women's Human Rights: Between December 2020 and July 2021, the UNHCR registered 243 occurrences of rape in the DRC. Sexual violence is reportedly used as a weapon of war to seize control of mineral-rich regions. Thus, it was proposed to discuss the critical nature of preserving women's rights in the process of establishing peace and a more just and egalitarian society; 5) Population growth: several African countries are experiencing a population explosion. Given the projected doubling

of the DRC's population (estimated at 87 million inhabitants in 2017), proposals to support demographic control were encouraged; and 6) Ethnic conflicts between armed groups: Given the country's continued conflict is a result of numerous paramilitary groups squabbling over Congolese territory, financed in part by foreign capital drained by local mining companies, such grudges were encouraged. Thus, considering alternatives to this clash, which affects a sizable portion of the population, is a necessary step in pursuing resolutions (Matheus et al. 2021).

The experimental simulation generated a resolution with 19 articles, jointly proposed by 11 delegations and voted individually. It was adopted without negative votes, with a few individual abstentions on specific articles. Along with extending MONUSCO's mandate in the DRC until December 2021, delegates and delegates proposed policies to assist in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic, including the sending of vaccines, tests, and human resources with the assistance of the peace operation, the World Health Organization, and Doctors Without Borders. Additionally, they proposed awareness efforts regarding the necessity of vaccination around this topic. Additionally, Estonia pledged to supply equipment and assistance in establishing field hospitals to combat the disease. The People's Republic of China would supply 40 million doses of the Corona Vac vaccine in two batches until May 2022, as well as Personal Protective Equipment. The Russian Federation, for its part, has pledged to provide ten million doses of the Sputnik V vaccination beginning October 10, 2021. As of November 2021, the United Kingdom has committed to sending a further 12 million doses of vaccinations against Covid-19 and the Republic of India, as well as 17 million of the English AstraZeneca.

The Russian Federation has committed to sending experts to support the development of family farming in the DRC, intending to alleviate food insecurity. Also, made available expert professionals on sexual education to help to prevent sexual abuse and violence, offering investments of US\$ 1 million in campaigns to support the cause. The US, France, and the United Kingdom delegations, for their part, will guarantee a combined financial aid of US\$14 million to address violations of women's rights. The latter two have committed to accepting Congolese refugees.

Additionally, the resolution emphasizes the importance of peacekeepers paying special attention to violations of children's rights. They proposed, in collaboration with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and philanthropic foundations, to create a fund to raise resources for Non-Governmental Organizations to work on the

reintegration of children and youth descendants of militias. The resolution's final item reaffirmed the need to toughen up the reaction to blue helmet wrongdoing in safeguarding civilians and holding those responsible accountable. Among them are the repatriation and preservation of funds paid to soldiers who participated in these crimes.

Apart from the fact that the organization evaluated the final event record favorably, the students who participated in the simulations were monitored via a survey (debriefing) with questions regarding the simulation. Thus, the purpose of this study was to ascertain how participants in simulation activities assimilate concepts, theories, and decision-making processes.
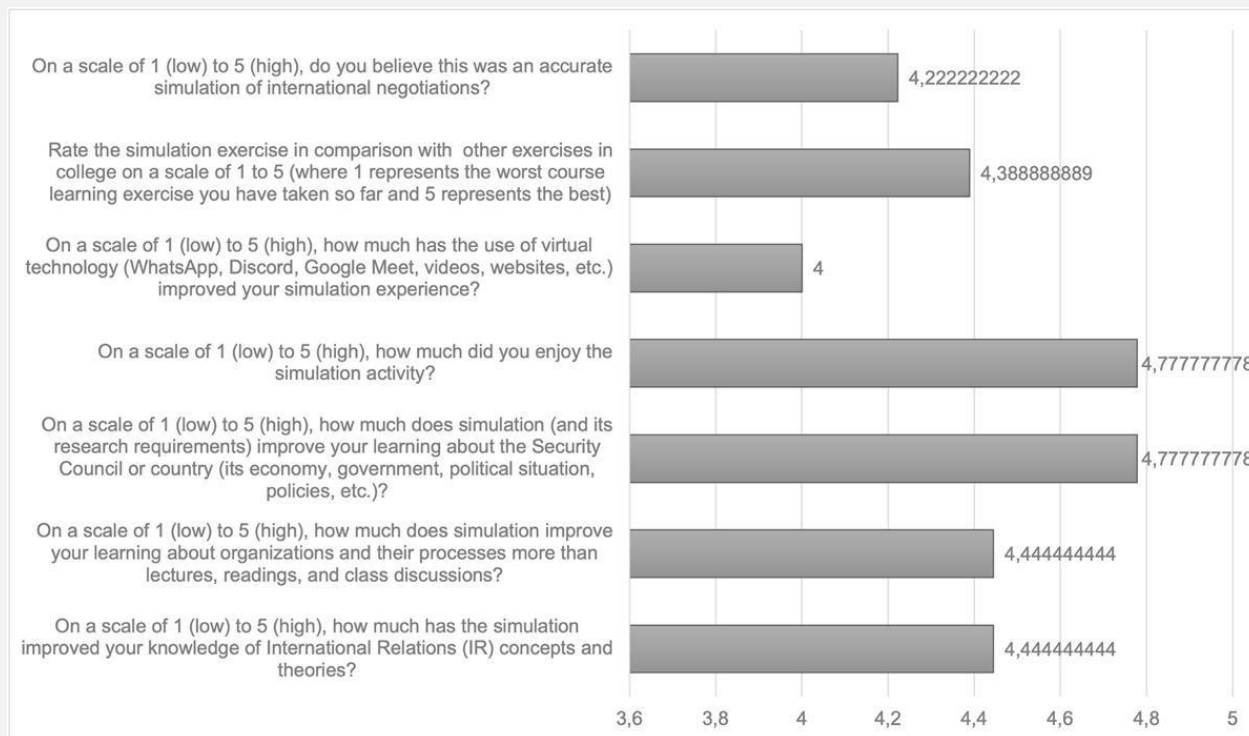
Despite the inherent limitations of self-perception questionnaires, it is the most frequently used method for assessing experiential learning. It is, above all, an essential formality for conducting an in-depth study of the outcomes of active learning activities. That enables evaluation, the identification of problems, and the development of remedies to improve results.

The findings, as determined by the participants' self-perception, were quite favourable. The questionnaires used an ordinal scale adapted from a template proposed by Shellman and Turan (2006) for evaluating simulations. It employs an ordinal scale, which is well-suited for quantifying qualitative phenomena through categorization. It presupposes an order relationship between categories (levels, classes), in addition to an equality or difference relationship. As a result, the scale's categories are hierarchical, and each answer must represent just one of the scale's values (Pereira 2004). The participants were asked to rate the activity on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high)[7]. They were questioned regarding the correspondence of the event with the institutions simulated, whether the activities helped their learning regarding theories, concepts, and respect the learning results of the simulation when compared to other activities. Eighteen persons (69 percent) responded out of a total of 26 delegates. The results, as shown in Graph 1, indicate an extremely positive average rating, with all evaluations between categories 4 and 5; no item received an individual rating inferior to 3.

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[7] The scale follows a logic like the Likert that seeks to capture the respondents' opinion regarding their level of agreement concerning a statement. Generally, this scale tries to identify whether an individual evaluates something positively or negatively, with the average value (3) representing a neutral assessment, the values at the extremes (1 and 5) a high agreement/disagreement, and the intermediate values a low agreement/disagreement (Mutz 2011). In our case, the values do not represent agreement or disagreement but degrees of support, ranging from low to high.

Graph 01: Evaluation of delegates participating in the first simulation

Additionally, participants were asked if they would advocate the use of simulations as a learning tool in the future as a complementary method for capturing participant assessment and probing for new adhesion during other project activities. As illustrated in Graph 2, none of the respondents did discourage its usage, with 81% strongly recommending using it in the future and 19% supporting it.

Graph 02: Recommendations for future simulation events
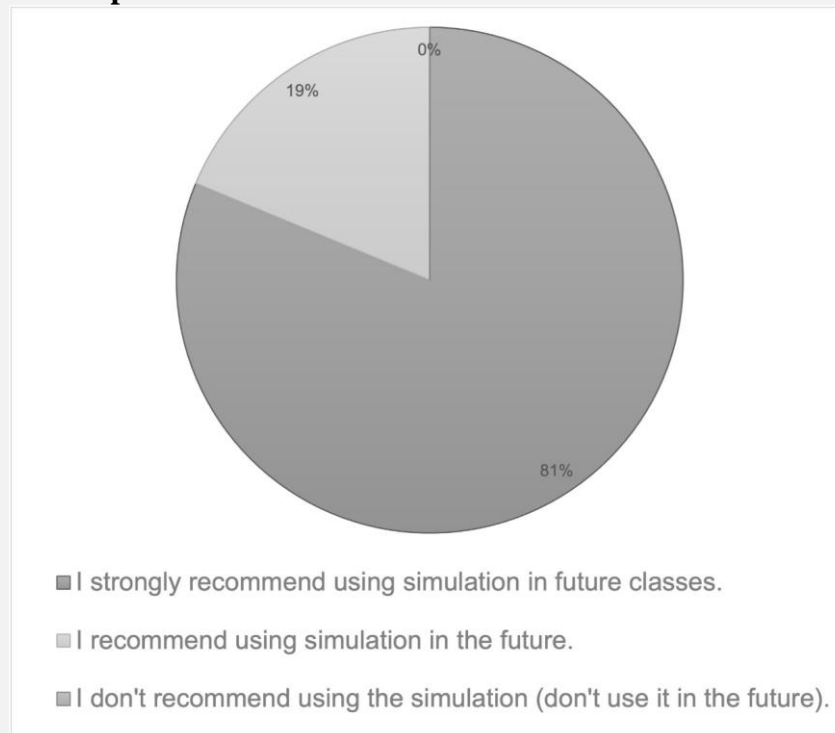
Source: data collected and compiled by the authors

Finally, as an optional item on the questionnaire, we inquired about how the simulation's performance altered their perspective on leaving the BRI. Only one responder to this item believed that the activity had a negligible effect on the likelihood of dropping out, while the others fell into assessment 4 or 5. Given our institutional worry about dropout, which is particularly prevalent in Brazil's Northern Region, this outcome is highly significant for the program.

5. Final Considerations

The article suggests that simulating international organizations is a tool for active learning and active teaching methodologies, serving as a complement to the Traditional Teaching Paradigm. It goes beyond classroom expositive lectures and readings and focuses on knowledge construction through collaboration between teachers and students. Thus, the learner transitions from a passive recipient of knowledge to an active creator of connections and meanings of topics under study.

This tool facilitates experiential learning and, more importantly, integrates different instructional methods, including simulations with case studies, problem-based learning (PBL), investigation based on representation (with play-based identification), and technology use. This is the case for our pedagogical innovation project Simulations in International Relations - SimulaRI -, in which we combined these tools with the creation of a virtual simulation in response to the current COVID-19 pandemic and the implementation of remote learning in Brazilian universities.

The purpose of this article was to introduce the PIP SimulaRI and demonstrate how its incorporation into the UFT's BDIR can help students retain key concepts, theories, and decision-making processes in international politics. Additionally, it assists undergraduate monitors and the graduate tutor to act as organizers of the simulation event, thereby contributing significantly to their education as IR students and talents and abilities relevant to the internationalist profession. Finally, institutionalize simulations as an active teaching approach in the UFT IR course and SimulaRI as a teaching tool for this course.

When both experimental and university simulations are used, the perception of the influence of virtual simulation on the teaching-learning process of PIP SimulaRI will be improved, allowing for a comparison of the outcomes. The experiment's statistics already demonstrate a significant gain in knowledge of international relations concepts and procedures, with all questions scoring between 4 and 5 on a 1 to 5 scale.

The question with the lowest average score was about the simulation's use of virtual media, with a score of 4. However, this occurred probably because the simulation was programmed to take place in the Discord virtual tool, which did not support the number of people in the room, effectively turning it into an audio room with no cameras opening for the participants. The issue was quickly remedied with the migration to Google Meet and increased usage of WhatsApp for official discussions with participants and, more importantly, informal interactions between delegates to negotiate within the simulation. Notably, every student who responded to the debriefing recommended the usage of simulations.

Through questionnaires (debriefing) with the participating students, undergraduate monitors, and a graduate tutor, we analysed the overall state of the PIP's teaching-learning process. Above all, identifying failures and their causes will permit seeking alternative strategies for avoiding difficulties and improving results in the learning of concepts, theories, and decision-making processes in international politics.

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