Organizational Adaptation for Sustainability: Capabilities, Processes and Performance

Thematic Area: Business, Society and Sustainability

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Summary:

This track examines how firms adapt their strategies, structures and practices to improve their environmental and social performance. It focuses on the organizational processes through which sustainability goals become part of strategic decisions, daily operations and relationships with stakeholders, an integration that firms still find difficult to achieve (Engert et al., 2016).

In particular, we emphasize the role of dynamic capabilities, the firm's ability to sense, seize and reconfigure its resources and routines as the environment changes (Teece, 2007). This perspective has helped explain how firms respond to environmental challenges, for instance by renewing their business models (Inigo et al., 2017), and recent work calls for extending it to the social dimension of sustainability (Correggi et al., 2024).

We invite contributions that examine how organizations develop and deploy capabilities for sustainability (Ortiz-Avram et al., 2024), how they manage the tensions between sustainability goals and economic viability (Hahn et al., 2015), and how these processes affect environmental, social and economic outcomes (Eccles et al., 2014). We welcome studies on established firms and new ventures (Hockerts & Wüstenhagen, 2010), SMEs (Johnson & Schaltegger, 2016), and social enterprises and hybrid organizations (Battilana & Lee, 2014), as well as work on measuring sustainability-related capabilities (Buzzao & Rizzi, 2021). Both environmental and social perspectives are welcome, as are studies that integrate them.

We encourage submissions that draw on the resource-based view (Barney, 1991) and its natural-resource extension (Hart, 1995), dynamic capabilities (Teece et al., 1997), stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984), institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) or organizational learning (Huber, 1991). Both conceptual and empirical papers are suitable, whether qualitative or quantitative, and we especially value longitudinal, multilevel and cross-national designs. Our aim is to connect strategy and business and society research, and to better understand how firms turn sustainability goals into organizational change and results.

Keywords:

organizational adaptation; corporate sustainability; dynamic capabilities; environmental and social performance; sustainable business models; stakeholder integration.

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