Sustainable Business Research

Editorial

Advancing Interdisciplinary Perspectives in Sustainable Business Research

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Abstract: The increasing complexity of global economic, environmental, and social challenges has intensified the need for research that transcends traditional disciplinary boundaries. This editorial introduces Sustainable Business Research (SBR) as an interdisciplinary scholarly platform dedicated to advancing rigorous and policy-relevant research on sustainable business practices. It argues that contemporary sustainability challenges—such as climate change, digital transformation, inequality, and governance failures—cannot be adequately addressed through isolated business perspectives. Emphasising the central role of businesses in achieving global sustainability agendas, the editorial highlights the importance of integrating insights from management, economics, finance, governance, technology, and public policy. By promoting methodological pluralism, cross-country perspectives, and open-access dissemination, SBR seeks to foster inclusive, ethical, and impactful scholarship that bridges theory and practice. The editorial concludes by inviting scholars from diverse disciplines to contribute to a collaborative academic forum aimed at advancing sustainable, responsible, and resilient business practices worldwide.

Keywords: Sustainable business; Interdisciplinary research; Sustainability and development; ESG; Corporate sustainability; Sustainable finance; Governance; Digital transformation; Policy relevance

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The growing complexity of global economic, environmental, and social challenges has fundamentally reshaped how businesses operate and how scholars study them. In an era marked by climate uncertainty, technological disruption, widening inequality, and evolving governance structures, traditional disciplinary boundaries are increasingly inadequate. Sustainability-related issues—ranging from climate risk and resource scarcity to digital transformation and institutional fragility—cannot be meaningfully understood or addressed through a single analytical lens. While a growing body of journals engages with aspects of sustainability, much of the existing literature remains fragmented across management, economics, finance, environmental studies, and public policy, often privileging theoretical silos or narrowly defined methodological traditions. Sustainable Business Research (SBR) is launched in response to this gap. The journal positions itself as a rigorous interdisciplinary platform that not only bridges disciplinary perspectives but also foregrounds integrative, policy-relevant, and practice-informed scholarship addressing real-world sustainability challenges faced by firms, industries, and institutions. By encouraging theoretically grounded yet empirically robust research that connects business strategy with governance, technology, and societal outcomes, SBR aims to complement existing sustainability journals while offering a distinctive space for work that advances actionable knowledge and informs decision-making across sectors. In doing so, SBR seeks to contribute to a more coherent and impactful body of sustainable business scholarship.

For decades, business research has largely prioritised efficiency, growth, and shareholder value, often treating environmental responsibility and social outcomes as peripheral concerns. While this body of work has generated valuable insights, it has also revealed important limitations. Contemporary business challenges are deeply embedded within complex socio-economic and ecological systems, where decisions taken by firms reverberate across communities, markets, and natural environments. As such, understanding sustainable business practices requires integrated perspectives that connect management and strategy with economics, finance, governance, technology, and public policy. Sustainable business research therefore represents not merely an extension of existing business scholarship, but a necessary reorientation towards systemic, long-term, and interdisciplinary inquiry.

Interdisciplinary research lies at the heart of sustainable business studies. Questions surrounding climate transition, responsible finance, digital innovation, and inclusive growth cut across disciplinary boundaries and demand collaboration among scholars with diverse methodological and theoretical backgrounds. Recent global developments underscore this urgency: high-profile corporate failures to manage climate risks, persistent ESG misreporting scandals, and disruptions in global supply chains during climate- and geopolitically induced shocks have revealed the limitations of siloed analytical approaches. For example, analysing corporate climate transition strategies now requires insights from environmental economics, organisational behaviour, financial markets, regulatory studies, and data science, particularly as firms struggle to align net-zero commitments with operational realities. Similarly, research on sustainable finance has gained prominence in the wake of volatile green investment flows and uneven regulatory enforcement, intersecting macroeconomics, corporate governance, risk management, and development studies. By fostering dialogue across disciplines, sustainable business research enables more comprehensive and context-sensitive explanations of how firms create value while responding to environmental constraints, social expectations, and evolving institutional pressures.

The urgency of sustainable business research has intensified in recent years as businesses have become central actors in addressing global sustainability agendas. Firms now play a critical role in achieving climate mitigation and adaptation goals, advancing responsible production and consumption, promoting decent work, and supporting inclusive economic growth. At the same time, business activities are increasingly scrutinised by regulators, investors, consumers, and civil society, all of whom demand greater accountability, transparency, and long-term responsibility. In this environment, evidence-based research is essential for informing corporate strategy, guiding regulatory frameworks, and shaping public debate. Sustainable business research provides the analytical foundation needed to evaluate trade-offs, identify best practices, and design effective interventions across both private and public sectors.

Another defining feature of contemporary sustainability challenges is their global and uneven nature. While sustainability is a universal concern, its manifestations and solutions differ significantly across countries and regions. Emerging and developing economies face distinct constraints related to institutional capacity, financial access, technological readiness, and social vulnerability. Yet these contexts remain underrepresented in mainstream business research. *Sustainable Business Research* seeks to address this gap by encouraging comparative, cross-country, and context-specific studies that reflect the diversity of global business environments. By amplifying voices and evidence from both developed and emerging economies, the journal aims to contribute to a more inclusive and balanced understanding of sustainable business dynamics.

Methodological pluralism is equally important in advancing sustainable business research. Complex sustainability issues cannot be adequately captured through a single methodological approach. Quantitative analyses provide valuable insights into patterns, relationships, and causal mechanisms, while qualitative and mixed-methods research offers depth, context, and interpretive understanding. Case studies, experimental designs, policy evaluations, and interdisciplinary modelling all have a role to play in building robust and actionable knowledge. *SBR* welcomes this diversity of approaches and encourages methodological innovation that enhances transparency, replicability, and real-world relevance.

As an open-access, peer-reviewed journal, *Sustainable Business Research* is committed to ethical, transparent, and inclusive knowledge dissemination. Open access ensures that research findings are freely available to scholars, practitioners, policymakers, and the wider public, thereby maximising their societal impact. The journal adheres to rigorous double-blind peer review and international publication ethics, recognising that credibility and trust are essential foundations of scholarly communication. By upholding high editorial standards, *SBR* seeks to create a reliable forum for interdisciplinary dialogue and critical debate in sustainable business research.

The launch of this inaugural issue marks the beginning of a collective scholarly endeavour. Establishing a new journal is not merely an institutional exercise but a collaborative process that relies on the commitment and integrity of authors, reviewers, and editorial board members. I extend my sincere appreciation to all who have contributed to the development of *Sustainable Business Research* at this formative stage. Their dedication reflects a shared belief in the importance of interdisciplinary scholarship and the transformative potential of sustainable business research.

Looking ahead, *Sustainable Business Research* aims to serve as a vibrant academic forum that bridges theory and practice, connects disciplines, and engages with pressing global challenges. I warmly invite researchers from across fields—management, economics, finance, governance, technology, environmental studies, and beyond—to contribute to this journal as authors, reviewers, and collaborators. Through collective effort and intellectual openness, we can advance knowledge that supports sustainable, responsible, and resilient business practices worldwide.

To clarify the intellectual foundations of sustainable business research and to illustrate its inherently interdisciplinary nature, Table 1 presents a structured mapping of core concepts, key variables, theoretical lenses, and expected outcomes commonly examined in this field. Rather than treating sustainability as a single-dimensional construct, the table demonstrates how environmental, economic, social, technological, and institutional dimensions interact within and across firms, markets, and policy environments.

Table 1. Core Concept–Variable Linkages in Interdisciplinary Sustainable Business Research

Core Concept	Primary Discipline(s)	Key Indicators	Theoretical Lens	Expected Outcomes
Sustainability Challenges	Environmental science, Economics	Climate risk, resource scarcity, social inequality	Systems theory, Externality theory	Strategic sustainability orientation
Governance & Institutions	Economics, Political science	Regulatory quality, rule of law, governance effectiveness	Institutional theory	Improved corporate sustainability practices
Sustainable Finance	Finance, Development studies	Green finance, ESG investment, cost of capital	Financial intermediation theory	Increased green innovation and investment
Digital Transformation	Information systems, Management	Digital maturity, AI, FinTech adoption	Resource-based view (RBV)	Enhanced environmental and social performance
Corporate Strategy	Strategic management	ESG integration, long-term planning	Stakeholder theory	Sustainable competitive advantage
Human Capital & Culture	Organizational behavior, Psychology	Green HRM, leadership commitment, skills	Ability–Motivation–Opportunity (AMO) theory	Pro-sustainability behavior
Innovation & Technology	Innovation studies, Engineering	Eco-innovation, R&D intensity, patents	Schumpeterian innovation theory	Cleaner production and processes
Sustainability Disclosure	Accounting, Finance	ESG reporting quality, transparency	Signaling theory	Stakeholder trust and legitimacy
Policy & Regulation	Public policy, Law	Environmental policy stringency, incentives	Public interest theory	Business adaptation and compliance
Stakeholder Engagement	Sociology, Ethics	Participation, dialogue, inclusiveness	Stakeholder theory	Social legitimacy and resilience
Value Creation	Economics, Strategy	Triple bottom line performance	Shared value framework	Long-term firm value
Interdisciplinary Research	Methodology, Policy studies	Mixed methods, cross-sector analysis	Transdisciplinary approach	Policy-relevant and actionable insights
Firm Sustainability Practices	Business, Management	CSR, environmental initiatives	Practice-based view	Contribution to SDGs

The table serves three important purposes. First, it highlights the diversity of disciplinary contributions—ranging from economics and finance to management, governance, and information systems—that collectively shape sustainable business scholarship. Second, it identifies representative variables and indicators frequently used in empirical research, thereby offering practical guidance for researchers designing models, selecting proxies, or developing conceptual frameworks. Third, by linking these variables to established theoretical perspectives, the table reinforces the importance of theory-driven yet policy-relevant research in advancing sustainable business outcomes.

By bringing these elements together, the table underscores the value of interdisciplinary integration in addressing complex sustainability challenges. It also reflects the editorial vision of Sustainable Business Research to encourage studies that move beyond siloed analyses and instead offer holistic, analytically robust, and context-sensitive insights. As such, the table provides a useful reference point for authors, reviewers, and policymakers seeking to understand the conceptual linkages that underpin contemporary sustainable business research.

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