

Sustainability has been reported as a crucial issue for business. Ultimately, the corporate social responsibility of large companies is helping to raise the visibility of this issue, which is gaining legitimacy (Bansal and Clelland, 2004; Suddaby *et al.*, 2017) and helping to link social goals to many stakeholder goals (Bansal and Roth, 2000; Schrempf-Stirling *et al.*, 2016). Moreover, in addition to sustainability, firms usually pursue growth, which, when combined with the aim of sustainability, constitutes the goal of sustainable growth (Pili *et al.*, 2017). It is also important to pursue this goal both inside and outside ventures. Inside ventures, the management is in charge of assuring that firms act in a sustainable way, while outside, firms should consider the views of the people affected by their actions (Dana *et al.*, 2009). Along these lines, the literature has also highlighted the importance of the dichotomy of value appropriation and value creation (Santos, 2012) and the creation of social value (Austin *et al.*, 2006). Accordingly, there is a significant body of literature addressing the topic of social ventures as well as entrepreneurs' motivation to build such ventures (Miller *et al.*, 2012).

This perspective of company growth and sustainability is analyzed in this special issue. The selection of papers appearing in this special issue was made at the 2019 conference "Knowledge, Business, and Innovation: economies and sustainability of future growth," which was held in Verona (Italy). A description of the contributions appears below.

## Contributors

The study by Medina-Serrano *et al.* proposes a model considering collaboration and sustainability in the supply chain of a firm. The methodology used in the paper consists of a case study that demonstrates the importance of dynamic capabilities and planning when different firms try to collaborate to complete the process of product creation.

The contribution by Semerikova examines different payment instruments using qualitative analysis in the context of Russia. The paper shows how the Russian society is moving away from old payment methods (i.e. cash) to new ones (e.g. credit cards). The paper also discusses the implications of this shift.

The paper by Rybaczewska and Sparks explores so-called place marketing. Using a complex methodology that combines a focus group with quantitative and qualitative techniques, the authors show how the interests of different stakeholders can be managed through this type of marketing.

Morales-Alonso *et al.* explore one of the most important factors of entrepreneurship, namely the acquisition of funding. The study addresses this topic by focusing on the profile of business angels. The main findings are that educational background is a key component of the profile of business angels.

Berde and Tokes examine how elderly people deal with and manage new technologies, especially with the platform economy. The model that the authors propose reveals interesting insights such as hiding the age of some people as a marketing strategy.

The context of the study by Pipoli de Azambuja *et al.* is Peru. Taking Peruvian maca as an example; the study examines how country and product image influence purchase intention. The study develops a methodology based on a questionnaire to conclude with a descriptive study.

The study by Moccia *et al.* explores how the VUCA context affects leadership and human resources. The proposed model has major applications to management fields such as recruitment techniques or the selection of members of top management teams.



The paper by Estrada-Cruz *et al.* covers three key stakeholders of every venture: investors, customers, and employees. Using the PLS methodology, the paper shows how the communitarian and Darwinian views relate to sales results. Nevertheless, these identities do not seem to be linked to employee satisfaction.

The last contribution, by Diaz-Delgado *et al.*, presents the challenges and difficulties that small and medium-sized enterprises face when innovating. The paper is centered on human factors since the “detonating factors of innovation” usually combine with employee profile, training, and incentive models.

**Virginia Simón-Moya**  
*University of Valencia, Godella, Spain*

### References

- Bansal, P. and Clelland, I. (2004), “Talking trash: legitimacy, impression management, and unsystematic risk in the context of the natural environment”, *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 47 No. 1, pp. 93-103.
- Bansal, P. and Roth, K. (2000), “Why companies go green: a model of ecological responsiveness”, *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 43 No. 4, pp. 717-736.
- Dana, L.P., Anderson, R.B. and Meis-Mason, A. (2009), “A study of the impact of oil and gas development on the dene first nations of the Sahtu (great bear lake) region of the Canadian Northwest Territories (NWT)”, *Journal of Enterprising Communities*, Vol. 3 No. 1, pp. 94-117.
- Miller, T.L., Grimes, M.G., McMullen, J.S. and Vogus, T.J. (2012), “Venturing for others with heart and head: how compassion encourages social entrepreneurship”, *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 37 No. 4, pp. 616-640.
- Pili, S., Grigoriadis, E., Carlucci, M. and Clemente, M. (2017), “Towards sustainable growth? A multi-criteria assessment of (changing) urban forms”, *Ecological Indicators*, Vol. 76 No. 1, pp. 71-80.
- Santos, F. (2012), “A positive theory of social entrepreneurship”, *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 111 No. 3, pp. 335-351.
- Schrempf-Stirling, J., Palazzo, G. and Phillips, R.A. (2016), “Historic corporate social responsibility”, *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 41 No. 4, pp. 700-719.
- Suddaby, R., Bitektine, A. and Haack, P. (2017), “Legitimacy”, *Academy of Management Annals*, Vol. 11 No. 1, pp. 451-478.