

RECONFIGURING MANAGERIAL STRATEGIES THROUGH THE LENS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN ROMANIAN COMPANIES

-ABSTRACT-

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- A. Introduction** This doctoral thesis explores the integration of sustainable development principles into managerial strategies within Romanian companies. Given the increasing global emphasis on sustainability, the research aims to comprehensively understand how awareness of sustainable development influences various management practices and organizational outcomes. The study employs both qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate the sustainability-related constructs and their impact on organizational performance and reputation.
- B. Research Context and Objectives** The thesis is rooted in the context of the growing importance of sustainability in business practices, driven by both regulatory requirements and market pressures. The primary objectives are to identify the constructs that influence the adoption of sustainable management strategies and to understand the relationships between these constructs and organizational performance and reputation. The study also seeks to develop a conceptual model that encapsulates these relationships, providing a framework for future research and practical application.
- C. Methodology** The research employs a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques. The qualitative research involves in-depth interviews with business managers to identify critical constructs and understand their impact on management

strategies. Grounded theory principles guide the qualitative analysis, identifying constructs such as *Awareness Degree of Sustainable Development (ADSD)*, *Regulatory Requirements (RR)*, and *Propensity towards* various managerial strategies.

The quantitative research uses structural equation modelling to test the relationships between these constructs and their impact on organizational outcomes. Data collection includes surveys using Likert scales to gather numerical data on managers' perspectives.

Software Utilized

Throughout the research, several software tools were employed to facilitate data collection, analysis, and presentation:

1. **R Studio (Bibliometrix)**: used for bibliometric analysis to identify trends, core metrics, and thematic clusters in sustainability research.
2. **Atlas.ti**: employed for qualitative data analysis, enabling the coding and categorizing of interview transcripts to identify key themes and constructs.
3. **SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences)**: utilized for preliminary quantitative data analysis, including descriptive statistics and reliability testing.
4. **SmartPLS (Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling)**: applied to structural equation modelling to test the proposed hypotheses and analyze the relationships between constructs.

D. Literature Review

The literature review provides a comprehensive overview of the theoretical foundations of sustainable development, focusing on the triple bottom line (people, planet, profit) and the emerging consideration of culture as a fourth pillar. It examines existing research on the impact of sustainability awareness on economic, social, environmental, and cultural management strategies. The

review also highlights the importance of leadership and regulatory frameworks in driving sustainable practices within organizations.

E. Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative analysis reveals that awareness of sustainable development significantly influences managerial strategies across economic, social, environmental, and cultural domains. Managers who are aware of sustainability principles tend to integrate these into their strategies, enhancing financial stability, operational efficiency, employee well-being, and community engagement.

The analysis identifies new constructs, such as *Willingness to Adopt Sustainability* (WAS) and *Adoption of Sustainable Strategies* (ASS), which differentiate between the *intent* to embrace sustainability and the *actual implementation* of sustainable practices.

F. Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative analysis supports the qualitative findings, demonstrating significant relationships between the identified constructs and organizational outcomes.

The structural equation model shows that leadership orientation towards sustainability is a critical driver of the adoption of sustainable strategies, which in turn positively impacts organizational performance and reputation.

The analysis also underscores the importance of moving beyond awareness and regulatory compliance to the actual implementation of sustainable practices.

G. Conclusions, Contributions and Future Research Avenues

The study concludes that sustainable development awareness is a pivotal factor in shaping managerial strategies and enhancing organizational performance and reputation. The findings emphasize the need for businesses to invest in sustainability-oriented leadership and to develop frameworks that facilitate the integration of sustainable practices into core business strategies. The research provides a robust conceptual model that can guide future studies and practical applications in the field of sustainable management.

I. Theoretical Implications

The research contributes to the theoretical understanding of how sustainability awareness influences managerial strategies and organizational outcomes. It expands the literature on sustainable development by identifying new constructs and relationships that highlight the complexity and interrelatedness of sustainable business practices.

II. Practical Implications

Practically, the study offers valuable insights for business managers and policymakers. It underscores the importance of leadership in driving sustainability and provides a framework for integrating sustainable practices into management strategies. The findings suggest that businesses should focus on developing and promoting sustainability-oriented leadership, moving beyond regulatory compliance to embrace proactive and innovative approaches to sustainability.

III. Managerial Implications

For managers, the research highlights the critical role of leadership commitment in achieving sustainability goals. It provides evidence that adopting sustainable strategies can lead to improved organizational performance and reputation. Managers are encouraged to foster a culture of sustainability within their organizations, aligning economic, social, environmental, and cultural management practices with sustainable development principles.

IV. Future Research Agenda

The study identifies several areas for future research, including integrating sustainable practices into management strategies, longitudinal studies on sustainability impacts, cross-cultural comparative analyses, and the role of regulatory frameworks in promoting sustainability. These topics offer opportunities to further explore and understand the dynamics of sustainable business practices and their implications for organizational success.

V. Limitations

The study acknowledges certain limitations, such as the focus on Romanian companies, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other contexts. Future research could address these limitations by conducting comparative studies across different cultural and national settings, and by exploring the long-term impacts of sustainable strategy adoption on organizational performance and reputation.

By providing a detailed exploration of the dynamic between sustainability awareness and managerial strategies, this thesis intends to contribute to advancing knowledge in sustainable management and offers practical guidance for fostering sustainable business practices.