

Editorial

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Increasing demands from the stakeholders, coupled with issues like global warming and climate change, accessibility to clean water and energy, depletion of natural resources, food security and poverty have led to the surge in corporate sustainability practices. Essentially, sustainability has been widely acknowledged as development that meets the needs of both current and future generations. Thus, despite the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, embracing sustainability remains relevant and should be the strategic imperative for the new normal, instead of an option. Large businesses across a wide spectrum of industries in developed countries have joined in the bandwagon of adopting sustainability practices. In comparison, given the considerably less resources, capabilities and awareness levels, it may appear that small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are less engaged in sustainability practices. Apart from that, many SMEs are not aware of the competitive advantages of being sustainable oriented, which further leads to the relatively low adoption of sustainability practices and performance.

While SMEs are regarded as the backbone of most developing countries, research on sustainability practices among SMEs in these emerging economies remains scarce. It is crucial for SMEs to assess their sustainability practices and impact in their pursuance of long-term value. A mere business-as-usual strategy will not suffice in meeting the global sustainable development agenda, thus, sustainability practices and performance of SMEs in emerging economies is an area that warrants greater attention. There is a clear need for future research on sustainability practices from the SMEs domain. As such, this special issue attempts to offer new perspectives and insights on sustainability practices and performance of SMEs in the developing country context.

More specifically, this special issue aims to extend both theoretical and methodological contributions through quantitative and qualitative approaches to understand sustainability practices and performance of the SMEs. A total of five papers spanning a diverse range of sustainability practices among the SMEs have been selected. These include green innovation and entrepreneurship image; lean energy and

environmental sustainability behaviour; green marketing to achieve sustainability; eco-innovation practices as climate change mitigation strategy; and the push factors of automation technologies in manufacturing SMEs.

While there are many analytical tools at the convenience of the researchers, three papers applied the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) statistical tool, SmartPLS in examining the relationships between constructs. As such, this special issue also seeks to extend the methodological approaches used in SME research, offering new insights and highlighting the application and advantages of this new analytical tool, which has been accentuated by recent developments, in SME research.

Having green innovation in mind as the differentiation strategy to promote sustainable development, Guan, Ahmad, Rahman, and Halim kick start this special issue by examining the role of green organisational identity, green core competences and green innovation performance to predict green entrepreneurship image. Based on their PLS-SEM findings, they suggested that green organisational identity and green core competences significantly enhance a firm's green image. Additionally, their findings also confirmed the more significant role that green process innovation has in obtaining and enhancing green image compared to green product innovation. As such, findings of this empirical research extend our understanding in enhancing green corporate image, and it is believed that the findings can be a practical guide for entrepreneurs.

While energy efficiency and energy savings are always top in the scientific discussion to reduce carbon and greenhouse gas emissions, Hazzouri and Thoumy take a different view by assessing the relationships between energy and environmental sustainability knowledge, attitude and behaviour. Using a quantitative approach, their survey findings in the context of Lebanon indicated a significant relationship between energy and environmental sustainability attitude and behaviour. As the influence of a positive or negative appraisal (attitude) towards behaviour (decision making) is crucial, it is worthwhile to consider shaping attitude towards sustainability practices. Their paper highlights that having good sustainability knowledge does not translate into sustainable behaviour; instead, the focus should be on building favourable attitude towards sustainability practices. Hence, creating awareness about sustainability issues remains important in enhancing sustainability behaviour and practices.

Generally, marketing may not come across as a primary concern for many small businesses, but the third paper by Ara, Yeap, and Hassan offers an eye-opening discussion on whether going green does pay off for small businesses. Drawing on the Natural Resource Based View, they critically argued that businesses nowadays are being pressured to embrace green related approaches, such as green marketing to meet the stakeholders' expectations, and this subsequently leads to sustainable competitive advantage. Based on their empirical findings from SMEs in Bangladesh, green marketing helps SMEs in improving their environmental and social performance. The lesson learned is that green marketing, as a viable strategy, enhances firm's sustainability performance, which changes the competitive landscape of the SMEs.

As the possible climate change mitigation strategy, eco-innovation practices among SMEs have been examined by Ooi, Ooi, and Memon. Their paper, entitled "The role of CSR oriented organisational culture in eco-innovation practices", presents survey findings of Malaysian manufacturing SMEs. They conceptualised eco-innovation practices as a higher order construct, which comprises eco-product, eco-process and eco-organisational innovation. The paper delves into how stakeholder pressures, and CSR

oriented organisational culture influence eco-innovation practices of the SMEs. The findings indicated that SMEs engaged in eco-innovation practices due to stakeholder pressures, and CSR oriented organisational culture is imperative, as it mediates the relationship between stakeholder pressure and eco-innovation practice. Notably, it is important to cultivate and internalise long-term CSR values in the organisation towards sustainable development.

Automation reduces human dependence; so how does technology affect sustainability? The final paper by Siti-Nabiha, Norfarah, and Afifi explores the push factors of automation technologies in Malaysian manufacturing SMEs. Based on the findings of 10 interviews, the paper evinces that automation provides flexibility to manufacturing, minimizes waste and errors in order to optimise manufacturing process. The authors focus on technology, organisational and environmental perspectives, suggesting that the need for better technology, top management support and staff awareness, and customised customer demands and quality are among the push factors for change from semi-automation to full automation adoption in the SMEs.

Through these empirical contributions, this special issue is extremely relevant in demonstrating commitments of the SMEs to sustainable development. As such, this special issue has help us better understand the latest development on sustainability practices of the SMEs. In any case, sustainability practices help SMEs to build and reinforce their image. These sustainability practices are legitimised to meet stakeholders' expectations. Besides, green marketing and CSR oriented organisational culture have become important triggers for sustainability performance. It is also crucial for SMEs to shape their employees' attitude towards sustainable development. Not forgetting, the current stage of technology used in firms and top management support in determining SMEs responsiveness and competitiveness in sustainable development. To conclude, sustainable development is now everyone's priority and responsibility, and SMEs in emerging markets are moving in the right direction towards continuous business practices improvement. Hence, this special issue should be of interest to a broad readership that includes scholars, business leaders, entrepreneurs, policy makers and those who are interested in sustainable development related topics.

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