

Call for Papers
for a special issue of the
International Journal of Management Reviews (IJMR)

Tear down this wall!
Engaging intra-, inter-, and transdisciplinary
perspectives to move beyond silo thinking for
sustainability in business

Submission Window: 1 – 31 January 2025

Extended abstract submission deadline: 31 August 2024 (optional)

Special Issue Guest Editors

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Why is the special issue relevant?

A recent special issue in *IJMR* illustrated how business, management, and organizational studies might contribute to solving grand societal challenges (Kunisch *et al.*, 2023). Addressing such challenges arguably requires holistic approaches (e.g., Brown *et al.*, 2022). While calls that acknowledge the need for such forms of research linking business and society actors and issues

are abundant, research on sustainability in business still displays widespread silo-thinking in various areas of management. The same applies to theoretical approaches, which are often specific to certain areas of research (Gruner & Minunno, 2023) and thus fall short of covering the necessary spectrum to truly advance knowledge on sustainability in business from a boundary-spanning perspective, which can come in form of intra-, inter-, and transdisciplinary research.

Within the broader realm of management, business, and society, many sub-disciplines addressing sustainability issues fail to thoroughly connect to one another on an *intradisciplinary* level. A vivid evidence of this deficiency is very limited cross-referencing in research on sustainability in business between various sub-disciplines which should generally have a common ground in their sustainability topics (see, e.g., Garcia-Torea *et al.*, 2023, for sustainability reporting as addressed in the fields of organizational studies and accounting, or Schätzlein *et al.*, 2023, for aspects of financing social enterprises as addressed in the fields of entrepreneurship and finance). Accordingly, the current editors of *IJMR* criticized that “management research has sometimes suffered from conceptual overlaps and contradictions, resulting in conceptual confusion within the academic community and beyond.” (Alegre *et al.*, 2023, p. 237). Consequentially, already intradisciplinary research within the broader management domain has the potential to tear down walls between two or more sub-disciplines and “a sound review can ... offer conceptual developments that resolve or explain [such overlaps and contradictions] in a manner that could serve as a widely accepted reference for future studies (Alegre *et al.*, 2023, p. 237).

From a higher-order perspective, similar implications apply to *interdisciplinary* links between business research and other main research disciplines. Insights, theories, and methods from other disciplines, such as psychology, natural sciences, social and cultural sciences, or economics, law and political sciences, could help advance sustainability management research, because sustainability is per se an interdisciplinary topic. For example, to understand what drives or impedes supply chains to become more sustainable, we need to understand not only organizational but also individual behavior in such systems and thus we need insights from psychology (e.g., Tang *et al.*, 2023). Likewise, tools in carbon accounting and management will hardly be able to support combatting climate change without knowledge from natural sciences about underlying causes and effects (Wohlgezogen *et al.*, 2022). Overall, advancing knowledge on sustainability in business requires knowledge on the interplay of various complex systems (market system, natural system, e.g., Schlütter *et al.*, 2023) and, thus, almost inevitably interdisciplinary research approaches. Yet, truly interdisciplinary models of sustainability are either scarce or incomplete (Brink *et al.*, 2020; Schoolman *et al.*, 2012).

Finally, to contribute to sustainable development, research also needs to tear down walls between academic and non-academic stakeholders through *transdisciplinary* research (Beckmann & Schaltegger, 2020). Understanding real world challenges requires “partnering up” (Sharma & Bansal, 2020) with non-academic actors instead of purely considering them a source of data (Brammer *et al.*, 2022). However, truly transdisciplinary research often comes with tensions

among the academic and non-academic actors, so that research and practice often remain “two solitudes” (Bansal & Sharma, 2022). Accordingly, while the aspiration for transdisciplinarity in research on sustainability in business is high, the realized level is low (Laasch *et al.*, 2020).

Overall, a lack of synthesis of relevant knowledge on an intra-, inter-, and transdisciplinary-level makes it difficult to determine the true state of scholarly knowledge in sustainability management research. Silo-like knowledge with islands of wisdom in different disciplines and actors might be detrimental to the advancement of future knowledge, for example, in case of an overuse of limited or inconclusive findings or an underuse of research evidence or relevant theoretical perspectives from related areas (Gruner & Minunno, 2023; Rousseau *et al.*, 2008). We thus urge scholars to tear down these walls. Literature reviews are especially well suited to tear down walls between different disciplines (Gruner & Minunno, 2023; Rousseau *et al.*, 2008), and the *IJMR* has been instrumental in leveraging the potential of excellent literature reviews.

Fit of the Special Issue fit with the aims and ethos of *IJMR*

Against the background of the general and thus multi- and cross-disciplinary reach of *IJMR* (Breslin *et al.*, 2021), the intended scope of the special issue spans across the entire field of research on sustainability in business. Submissions can thus specialize on numerous sub-fields of organization and management studies and their links to sustainability in business (e.g., sustainability accounting, sustainable finance, sustainable entrepreneurship, sustainability marketing, sustainable human resource management, etc.) and related sub-topics (biodiversity, modern slavery, diversity, climate change etc.). Catering to the agnostic approach of *IJMR* with respect to the review approach (Breslin *et al.*, 2021), we encourage submission of different types of literature reviews in the context of intra-, inter-, and transdisciplinary research on sustainability in business, such as systematic literature reviews (Siddaway *et al.*, 2019), bibliometric analyses (Zupic & Čater, 2015; Linnenluecke *et al.*, 2020), computational literature reviews (Antons *et al.*, 2023), or meta-analyses (Schmidt, 2008; Combs *et al.*, 2019). The same applies to theoretical lenses and contributions, which can multifaceted but should be in focus of the papers in the special issue (e.g., Breslin & Gatrell, 2023; Post *et al.*, 2020).

Exemplary research questions within the intended scope of this special issue include, but are not limited to, the following examples which illustrate the quest to strengthen *IJMR*'s mission “to strive for more innovative and truly conceptual contributions that genuinely change the readers’ perspective” (Alegre *et al.*, 2023, p. 233) while moving “away from papers which seek only to ... ‘synthesize’ an accumulated body of research to papers which explore and develop the ‘theoretical foundations’ of a domain” (Breslin *et al.*, 2020, p. 3):

- What is the intra-, inter-, and transdisciplinary knowledge structure and intellectual foundations of research on sustainability in business?
- Where and how does silo-thinking and discipline-constrained respective research limit our understanding of relevant knowledge?

- What are the most frequently used theoretical foundations in research on sustainability in business and how can theories from other disciplines or sub-disciplines be used to develop boundary-spanning frameworks?
- In how far are theoretical assumptions on sustainability in business across (sub-) disciplines different from each other and to what extent do such different assumptions fertilize or hinder each other?
- What methodological approaches from other disciplines can be applied to advance research on different aspects of sustainability in business?
- How do the activities across different scopes of practice (private, public, nonprofit) inform our broader understanding of sustainability in business?
- How might multiple types of literature reviews – typically used across disciplines – be combined to provide novel insights about sustainability in business?
- What are the main debates, challenges, and paradoxes in research on sustainability in business and how do the findings help to develop a strategy for impactful future research?
- How can future intra-, inter-, and transdisciplinary studies leverage existing knowledge to study sustainability in business?
- How can varying priorities regarding theoretical contribution as well as managerial or societal implication in different (sub-)disciplines be reconciled to inform current knowledge and future research?

These exemplary questions illustrate how our special issue caters to *IJMR*'s mission to publish papers that “make significant conceptual contributions, offering a strategic platform for new directions in research, and making a difference to how scholars might conceptualise research in their respective fields” (Gatrell & Breslin, 2017, p. 3) while having “the potential to significantly impact a field of study” (Breslin *et al.*, 2021, p. 437).

Editorial team

Our team of scholars from different management disciplines lives up to the idea of intra- and inter- and transdisciplinarity with rich publishing and editing experience in top journals.

Rüdiger Hahn is the Henkel-Endowed Chair of Sustainability Management at the Heinrich-Heine University of Düsseldorf. He serves on the editorial board of *Business & Society*, *Organization & Environment*, and *Business Strategy and the Environment*. He has editorial experience as guest editor (*Organization & Environment*), as associate program chair of the ONE division at the *AoM Annual Meeting*, and as chair of various conferences. He received best reviewer awards from *Business & Society* (2020), the ONE division at the *AoM* (2015), and of the *South Asian Journal of Global Business Research* (2016). He has ample of experience in publishing literature reviews (e.g., in *International Journal of Management Reviews*, *Journal of Management Studies*, *Organization & Environment*, *Journal of Industrial Ecology*).

Daniel Reimsbach is Professor of Reporting, Governance and Sustainability at the University of Paderborn. His work has been published in a diverse set of internationally renowned journals not only from the sustainability realm (e.g., *Business & Society*, *Organization & Environment*), but also in accounting (e.g., *Accounting and Finance*, *European Accounting Review*) and management (e.g., *Strategic Organization*). He has editorial experience as guest editor (*Organization & Environment*), as program chair of the Social and Environmental Accounting track at the *European Accounting Association Annual Meeting*, and as chair of various conferences.

Nicole Darnall is Foundation Professor of Management and Public Policy in Arizona State University's School of Sustainability and Director of ASU's Sustainable Purchasing Research Initiative. She has served as associate editor of *Business & Society* and *Organization & Environment*, and senior editor of *Production and Operations Management* and. She is on the Editorial Review Board of *Business & Society*, *Public Administration Review*, *Organization & Environment*, and *Business Strategy and the Environment*. Her work is published in highly regarded journals across multiple fields (e.g., *Strategic Management Journal*, *Journal of Management Studies*, *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, *Public Administration Review*, or *Journal of Environmental Management*).

Effie Kesidou has a Chair in Economics of Innovation and Sustainability at the Department of Economics, Leeds University Business School, University of Leeds, UK. She has published her work in top-ranked journals such as *Research Policy*, *Journal of Management Studies*, *Organization Studies*, *Ecological Economics*, *International Journal of Production Economics*, *Journal of Business Ethics*, *World Development*, *International Journal of Operations and Production Management*, *Energy Economics*, and *Journal of Environmental Management*. She is on the Editorial Board of *Business Strategy and the Environment*, *Journal of Management Studies*, and *Journal of Industrial and Business Economics*.

Constantinos N. Leonidou is Professor of Marketing and Business Administration at the Faculty of Economics and Management of Open University of Cyprus and Adjunct Professor of Marketing (PT) at Leeds University Business School, University of Leeds. He has published widely in journals of international repute, such as *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *Journal of International Business Studies*, *Industrial Marketing Management*, *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Journal of Business Research*, *Journal of International Marketing*, and *Journal of World Business*, among others. He currently serves as associate editor of *Journal of Business Research* (CSR and Business Ethics) and served as guest editor for *Industrial Marketing Management*, is a member of the Editorial Review Board of *Journal of International Marketing*.

Marianna Marra is a Reader (Associate Professor) in International Business and Innovation. Her research focuses on innovation processes in technological networks. She has published in journals such as the *Journal of Corporate Finance*, *Work Employment, and Society*, *International Business Review*, *International Journal of Production Economics*, *Annals of Operations Research*, and *International Journal of Production Research*. She is an Associate Editor at the

International Management Review Journal and at *Socio-Economic Planning Science*. She is on the editorial boards of the *Journal of Management Studies*, *British Journal of Management* and *International Business Review*. She is the Executive Guest Editor of the Special Issue for *Research Policy* “Towards Disruptive Sustainability”.

Timeline for the Special Issue

- Initial of Call for Papers: March 2024
- Pre-submission workshop: September 2024 (virtual)*
- Submission window: January 1 to 31, 2025
- Desk reject decisions: March 2025
- First round of reviews due: May 2025
- Second round of reviews due: November 2025
- Expected publication: Fall 2026

*Participation in a pre-submission paper development workshop is encouraged but not mandatory for submission to this Special Issue. The workshop will be held virtually at the end of September 2024. In case you would like to be considered for the workshop, please submit your extended abstracts (illustrating the proposed articles topic, fit with the special issue, overview of the applied review method and, if applicable, preliminary results) by August 31, 2024 to sustainability@hhu.de (subject: IJMR Special Issue).

Submission Guidelines

- Manuscripts should follow the Author Guidelines set out by the *International Journal of Management Reviews* available at: [http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/\(ISSN\)1468-2370/homepage/ForAuthors.html](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1468-2370/homepage/ForAuthors.html)
- Additionally, see the Editorials at the site below: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/page/journal/14682370/homepage/editorials>
- Manuscripts should be submitted online via <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ijmr> highlighting that you wish to be considered for the Special Issue ‘Tear down this wall! Engaging intra-, inter-, and transdisciplinary perspectives to move beyond silo thinking for sustainability in business’

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