

EDITORIAL

Innovating for Sustainability: Digital Strategies for a Diversified and Sustainable Economy

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EDITORIAL NOTE

This editorial introduces the special issue titled *Innovating for Sustainability: Digital Strategies for a Diversified and Sustainable Economy*. It brings together interdisciplinary research on entrepreneurship, digital innovation, and sustainability, featuring carefully selected contributions from open calls and international conferences that address contemporary challenges across business, finance, technology, e-commerce, and healthcare.

The special issue includes five sections consisting of 8 papers. The first section provides an overview of entrepreneurship and sustainable business practices; the second section highlights the importance of sustainability in financial services; the third section focuses on the application of artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies for achieving sustainability goals and examines how the transition towards sustainability is taking place; the fourth section brings forward aspects of sustainability in e-commerce and impulsive buying; and the fifth and final section is aligned with sustainable healthcare practices.

In this special issue, a total of eight articles has been shortlisted based on an open call for papers. A few articles were also shortlisted from two conferences organised by Confab 360 Degree (www.confab360degree.com). The following paper titles were shortlisted through the open call for papers; therefore, they are not part of the conference paper publications.

- Exploring the Impact of Adoption of a New Global Paradigm of Business Financial Reporting on enhancing Financial Market: An Empirical Study
- Sustainable E-Commerce in MENA: An SOR Analysis of Gen Z Purchase Intentions through Open-Source LLM (DeepSeek) Interactions, Trust, Familiarity, and Privacy Concerns
- Artificial Intelligence for Business Model Innovation in Digital Sustainability Companies: Multiple Cases from the Netherlands

The first conference was jointly organised by Confab 360 Degree, Vijay Patil School of Management, DY Patil University, Navi Mumbai, India, and Mahsa University, Malaysia, on 28 and 29 June 2024 at the Vijay Patil School of Management, Navi Mumbai, India. The title of the conference was *Digital Intelligence for Sustainable Business Innovation and Economic Diversification*. The conveners of the conference were Purvi Pujari, Nishu Ayedee, and Stuti Sahni. Anuj Kumar was the editorial head of the conference. During the conference, more than 130 papers were presented by over 400 authors and co-authors from around the world. Three extended papers were shortlisted from this conference for inclusion in this special issue.

- Transition towards sustainability through micro producers and rooftop solar projects in Kerala

The second conference was jointly organised by Confab 360 Degree; Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Dubai Campus; Rushford Business School, Switzerland; and the European



Global Institute of Innovation and Technology, Malta, on 19 and 20 February 2025 at the Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Dubai Campus. The title of the conference was *Innovating for Impact: Digital Technologies for Public Administration, Engineering Applications, Environmental Protection, Sustainable Business Operations, and Healthcare*.

The chief patrons of the conference were S. Sudhindra, MAHE, Dubai; Tufail Syed; Padmakali Banerjee; and Nishu Ayedee. The patrons of the conference were Anuj Kumar, S. K. Pandey, Sunitha Prabhuram, Alok Satsangi, and Kanika Gupta. Anuj Kumar also headed the editorial board of the conference.

For this conference, more than 400 papers were received, and 160 papers were shortlisted for presentation. More than 400 authors participated in the conference as authors and co-authors. Four extended papers were shortlisted from this conference for inclusion in this special issue.

- Sustainable Entrepreneurship in Textile-Based SMEs: Linking Entrepreneurial Traits to Firm Performance
- Digital Entrepreneurship for Sustainability: Opportunities in Emerging Green Market
- Harnessing AI for Aligning Human Resource Management with Sustainability Goals to Enhance Workforce Productivity
- A Systematic Review of Pharmaceutical Marketing Strategies and Outcomes: The 7Ps–6D Framework with Sustainability as a Key Emerging Theme

SECTIONS AND PAPERS DETAILS

SECTION 1: ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SUSTAINABILITY

This section explores how sustainable entrepreneurship, and innovation contributes to the development and performance of small businesses and informal sectors, particularly in textile-based and street food economies. It highlights entrepreneurial traits, business models, and the role of digitalisation in achieving sustainability goals.

Paper 1: Sustainable Entrepreneurship in Textile-Based SMEs: Linking Entrepreneurial Traits to Firm Performance

Dr Arya Kumar, Dr Asokan Vasudevan, Dr Srilalitha Sagi and Dr K.R. Sowmya

This paper investigates how traits like proactiveness, innovativeness, and risk-taking in entrepreneurs affect sustainability and performance in textile SMEs in Odisha, India. The findings highlight the mediating role of sustainable practices and recommend policy incentives for eco-friendly initiatives.

Paper 2: Digital Entrepreneurship for Sustainability: Opportunities in Emerging Green Market

Dr Sweta Leena Hota, Dr Nirupama Mohanty, Dr Smruti Rekha Sahoo and Alaka Panda

The study examines how digital tools boost sustainability and efficiency in green businesses. While they expand market reach, challenges include high costs and regulations. It offers policy guidance for digital-driven sustainable growth.

SECTION 2: FINANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

This section addresses how digital finance, regulatory interventions, and global reporting standards influence sustainability and financial inclusion. It also investigates the transformative role of digital tools in financial markets.

Paper 3: Exploring the Impact of Adoption of a New Global Paradigm of Business Financial Reporting on enhancing Financial Market: An Empirical Study

Dr Khalid M. Alharbi, Dr Ibtissem Missaoui and Dr Arshi Naim

This empirical study across 18 countries shows that XBRL improves financial market efficiency by enhancing reporting quality and reducing information gaps. It highlights how standardised digital reporting supports sustainable market development.

SECTION 3: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

This section focuses on the integration of AI in sustainability-related business strategies, human resource management, and industrial development. It offers insights into how AI reshapes business models and enhances productivity.

Paper 4: Artificial Intelligence for Business Model Innovation in Digital Sustainability Companies: Multiple Cases from the Netherlands

Dr Mostafa Mohamad, Dr Ali Eren Balikel, Dr Dababrata Chowdhury, Dr Christopher Russell and Dr Sayed M. Eldebeky

This research is based on case studies' analysis from the Netherlands. This paper shows how AI supports sustainable business innovation, improves operational efficiency, and aligns leadership with sustainability values.



Paper 5: Harnessing AI for Aligning Human Resource Management with Sustainability Goals to Enhance Workforce Productivity

Dr K. Prakash, Dr M Franklin, Dr D. Anto Pravin Singh, Dr V. Rohini and Dr S. Loganatha Prasanna

This study demonstrates how AI-powered HR practices enhance employee engagement and performance when integrated with sustainability goals. It also identifies the role of conscientiousness in moderating outcomes.

Paper 6: Transition towards sustainability through micro producers and rooftop solar projects in Kerala

Ajith Naramthatta Keepat and Dr Vellaiyan Perumal Velmurugan

This paper identifies drivers and barriers to rooftop solar adoption among micro-scale producers in one of the states in India named Kerala. It emphasises the importance of awareness, cost-effectiveness, and policy support for widespread adoption.

SECTION 4: SUSTAINABLE E-COMMERCE AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

This section examines how consumer trust, privacy concerns, and influencer behaviour shape sustainable online purchasing decisions, especially among Gen Z, in digital and AI-driven platforms.

Paper 7: Sustainable E-Commerce in MENA: An SOR Analysis of Gen Z Purchase Intentions through Open-Source LLM (DeepSeek) Interactions, Trust, Familiarity, and Privacy Concerns

Dr Ahmad Shaheen, Dr Fandi Omeish, Dr Dina S. AlGhamdi, Dr Abdullah Khataan and Dr Abdelrehim Awad

This is a cross-national study in MENA. This research reveals how interaction with open-source AI recommender systems influences trust and privacy concerns, affecting Gen Z's purchase intentions in e-commerce.

SECTION 5: SUSTAINABLE HEALTHCARE

The final section deals with strategic marketing in pharmaceuticals and predictive healthcare analytics, emphasising sustainability, patient outcomes, and ethical business practices.

Paper 8: A Systematic Review of Pharmaceutical Marketing Strategies and Outcomes: The 7Ps–6D Framework with Sustainability as a Key Emerging Theme

Thamburaj Anthuvan, Dr Anuj Kumar, Dr Kajal Maheshwari and Dr B. Naresh

This is a systematic review that develops a sector-specific marketing framework combining traditional and sustainability-oriented strategies, aligning marketing efforts with compliance and stakeholder engagement.

GUEST EDITORS



Dr Anuj Kumar is the Head of Research at Rushford Business School, Switzerland, and a Research Fellow at INTI International University, Malaysia. He holds a Ph.D., post-doctoral, and multiple advanced degrees in management, economics, and technology from institutions such as University College Dublin and Aligarh Muslim University. He is a Visiting Professor at Vietnam National University, Griffith University, and Manipal Academy of Higher Education (Dubai). He is a prolific researcher sits on the editorial boards of Scopus, Web of Science, and ABDC-indexed journals, and has published extensively with Emerald, Springer, and Taylor and Francis.



Professor Arshi Naim is a Top 2% Scientist (Stanford and Elsevier, 2024 and 2025), is a distinguished academic with over 22 years' experience in business management, digital marketing and higher education. She has published more than 100 Scopus-indexed articles and has authored books with leading international publishers. She holds a PhD in Business Management and has extensive global teaching and leadership experience. For 14 years, she led accreditation and quality assurance initiatives at King Khalid University, Saudi Arabia. She currently serves as Professor of Business Management and Sustainability at the London Institute of Sustainable Development, UK, Professor of Business and Economics, Al-Quds University, Jerusalem, Palestine and as a Research Supervisor at INTI University, Malaysia. A certified QM Master Reviewer, Dr Arshi also holds professional and executive education credentials from Oxford, Harvard and Accenture. She actively collaborates with institutions worldwide to promote academic excellence, research impact and innovation.





Dr Aruna Dev Rroy is an Associate Professor and Associate Dean (Research and Development) at The Assam Royal Global University, Guwahati, India. She has completed a PhD in Management from Assam Science and Technology University. She is an experienced academician with over fifteen years of academic experience.

Her research interests include sustainability, green marketing, consumer behaviour, and general management. She has published a good number of articles in national and international journals. She was adjudged as one of the 50 top-performing and most popular mentors for students in Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL) Tinkerpreneurs 2022 under the Atal Innovation Mission and NITI Aayog, Government of India.



Dr Arya Kumar is a Senior Assistant Professor at KIIT Deemed to be University and a Research Fellow at INTI International University, Malaysia. He has a strong publication record in reputed Scopus, WoS, ABDC, and UGC Care-indexed journals. His adeptness in government-funded project management and exemplary

research acumen have earned multiple best paper awards. A patent holder, he also serves as an editor, reviewer, and author of textbooks in Commerce and Management. His areas of specialisation include Financial Derivatives, Investment and Risk Management, and the Stock Market.

