

CALL FOR PAPERS

Special Issue



Business Model, Sustainability, and Intangible Resources: Challenges and Opportunities for SMEs

The Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are a heterogeneous group in terms of sector and business models diversity. Klewitz & Hansen (2014) defined SMEs as “reactive entities with disadvantageous characteristics such as resources scarcity which is taken so often”. Previous studies pointed out that SMEs are increasingly conscious of the role of sustainable business models, especially on the improvement of resource efficiency to support an overall sustainable development. Therefore, the capability to innovate and to develop new and sustainable business models is crucial for the SMEs. Business model innovation can allow SMEs to change radically processes, products, and organizational forms in order to assimilate sustainability into their core business more successfully. Klewitz & Hansen (2014) argued that SMEs may be in a better position than large companies to innovate radically and compete successfully in niche markets.

In this context, there is little empirical research on the participation of SMEs in developing the circular economy (CE). In order to connect, create, and conserve value, manager can consider the CE as a tool to grow sustainably. The CE allows considering – in a world with finite resources – the waste from factories as a valuable input to another process. In this way, SMEs can cooperate each other and compensate for resource shortages through scaling effects. Companies and collectives are increasingly willing to move towards more circular and sustainable economic and business model as a way of commercial differentiation, competitive advantage and potential growth with economic spinoffs. With the CE involving several parties such as practitioners, rule-makers,

policy-makers, and firms, it is necessary to discuss and explore several issues. First, studies may explore the various barriers that SMEs face in their transition to a CE, such as the lack of financial and intangible resources. Furthermore, it is necessary that scholars provide tools, methods and indicators aiming at evaluating product circularity performance. Finally, research could try a more differentiated look at SMEs, for example, into micro, small, and medium businesses.

Another context that scholars have to assess is the green economy (GE), in order to explore the issues related to the adoption of sustainable practices and business models by SMEs. In recent years, many citizens (and cities) have begun to accept the “living green”, following several reports that pointed out that global warming can lead to intense consequences on Earth. The GE has rapidly evolved from the global and theoretical, to the national and practical. Following the spreading out the GE, scholars started to develop long-term innovation strategies and new business models to underpin the GE.

Certainly, sustainable business models require new design capabilities to foster SMEs to incorporate CE and GE principles into their business models. Therefore, the intellectual capital and – more generally – the intangible resources play a fundamental role to implement these strategies. In this line, emerging digital and smart data technologies such as Internet of Things (IoT), Blockchain, along with artificial intelligence can overcome the challenges and barriers, helping SMEs to implement sustainable business models.

Furthermore, this Special Issue welcomes case studies as well conceptual papers using both quantitative and qualitative methods.

The follow list indicates the anticipated themes:

- The role of collaboration, interaction and networking between SMEs in developing Sustainable Business Models
- Develop new Business Model in the CE
- Develop new Business Model in the GE
- The role of SMEs in the CE
- The role of SMEs in the GE
- Develop new indexes and parameters to measure the efficiency of CE
- Develop new indexes and parameters to measure the efficiency of GE
- Intangibles Resources in the CE
- Blockchain in the CE
- The Role of the Intellectual Capital in the CE
- The role of the Knowledge in the sustainable business model for SMEs
- The role of the Intellectual Capital in the sustainable business model for SMEs
- The role of emerging technologies in developing sustainable business model
- Strategic sustainability behavior of SMEs
- Sustainable entrepreneurship
- IoT in the GE
- IoT in the CE
- Intellectual Capital in the GE
- Greening the Future: Green Internet of Things (G-IoT)
- The sustainability of the IoT
- The sustainability of the new technologies (i.e. Blockchain) for SMEs
- The impact of the Intellectual Capital in the business strategies of the SMEs

Deadlines

- Submission of full paper: 31 July 2020;
- Notification of acceptance/rejection/revision: 30 September 2020;
- Deadline to submit revised version: 31 January 2021;
- Notification of final acceptance: 31 March 2021.

All the submitted papers must be original, unpublished, and not under review in other journals. All submitted papers will be subject to a double-blind review process.

Full papers must be submitted through the online platform <http://rivistapiccolaimpresa.uniurb.it/>. The platform can be browsed also in English by using the button “selection language” on top right side of the home page. Authors will be first requested to fill in the section “Registrazione/registration”; then, they will need to click on “Nuova Proposta/New proposal” in the section “Cruscotto/Dashboard” to upload the files related to their submission.

All the papers must strictly adhere to the specific guidelines of the journal that can be found at: <http://rivistapiccolaimpresa.uniurb.it/index.php/piccola/about/submissions#authorGuidelines>. The guidelines can be also browsed in English by using the button “selection language” in top right side of the webpage.

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