EDITORIAL



Mine Üçok Hughes



Shilpa Balan

THE SPECIAL ISSUE ON SUSTAINABILITY

Welcome to the current issue of the ***Business Forum***. This special issue of ***Business Forum*** comes at a befitting time as the concept of sustainability captures the zeitgeist of the Millenium. In 2019, the Oxford "Word of the Year" was "climate emergency" that is defined as "a situation in which urgent action is required to reduce or halt climate change and avoid potentially irreversible environmental damage resulting from it" (Oxford Languages, n.d.). The Oxford English Dictionary describes the Oxford Word of the Year as "a word or expression shown through usage evidence to reflect the ethos, mood, or preoccupations of the passing year, and have lasting potential as a term of cultural significance" (Oxford Languages, n.d.). In the same year, Time Magazine announced, Greta Thunberg, a teenage climate activist as the Person of the Year (Alter, Haynes, and Worland, 2019).

Sustainability is now a mainstream concern that has become part of the global agenda. In 2015, the United Nations member states adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which included the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to stimulate action over the next fifteen years and declared their determination to "take the bold and transformative steps which are urgently needed to shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path" (United Nations, 2015).

There is undoubtedly an awakening at the societal, organizational, and international levels that sustainability and all issues that can be included under its wide umbrella are of utmost importance in present times and for the well-being of future generations. There is an overwhelming consensus among scientists worldwide that global warming is caused by human activity (IPCC, 2014). Around 71 percent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global warming are deemed to be caused by a collection of about 100 large companies (Climate Accountability Institute, 2017).

Back in 2010, in a Harvard Business Review article, Lubin and Esty called sustainability an emerging business megatrend bringing attention to the problems businesses were facing in efforts to respond to the challenge of sustainability, which would affect the competitiveness and survival of their organizations. Ten years later, sustainability has gained even higher importance in businesses across the globe.

This issue of Business Forum contains four academic articles and one book review all approaching sustainability from a different subject area. The first two articles are related to sustainability as a competitive advantage for businesses, the first one as part of corporate strategy, and the second one as part of attracting top talent.

In the lead article, Trusty, Fabian, and Montague-Mfuni bring attention to how much is still unknown about corporate commitments to sustainability, how they relate to overall corporate strategy, and how corporations measure shared value and their contributions to sustainable development. They provide a review of sustainability reporting and measurement practices by industry leaders and summarize corporate efforts and intentions in support of The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In the second article, Yefremian argues that corporate social responsibility might be an answer to attract millennials into today's business workforce. Referring to a 2018 PricewaterhouseCoopers (2018) report, she cites that "more

than 80 percent of the surveyed millennials saw CSR practices in the workplace as critical when selecting or remaining with an employer, and close to 60 percent agreed that it is important for an employer to have a policy on climate change."

This issue also includes two articles that are specifically relevant to the marketers and both from the consumer research field. Tofighi and Sharpe's study examines the effectiveness of adopting a sustainability labeling strategy to enhance brand evaluations. The results of their experiments indicate disproportionate outcomes for retailer versus manufacturer owned brands and suggest that this difference is largely influenced by consumer familiarity. In a study focusing on social media influencers, Yalcin, Pehlivan, and Nistor propose that marketers have an educational role in sharing information about products through content marketing. They claim that through consumer interactions, a culture of sustainable consumption community is emerging organically.

The special issue takes a full circle by ending with a review of a book titled "Can Business Save the Earth?: Innovating Our Way to Sustainability" by Michael Lenox and Aaron Chatterji. Baylock starts his review with a mention of the article that appeared in *BioScience* warning of an imminent climate emergency. Given that big business is considered to be the cause of much environmental damage, the authors Lenox and Chatterji claim that it could also be the one to save the Earth through innovations. Going back to Trusty et al.'s article, there is evidence that major global corporations are engaging in sustainability efforts beyond corporate social responsibility.

We hope you enjoy this special issue and would like to thank our reviewers for their valuable insights and Marianne James, the Editor-in-Chief, and Xiaohan Zhang, the Managing Editor of ***Business Forum***, for giving us the opportunity to be the guest editors.

Mine Üçok Hughes and Shilpa Balan
Issue Editors

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