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The Convergence of Digitalization and Sustainability for the Greater Good

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The convergence of digitalization and sustainability has emerged as a critical area of focus in business and management research, with these two megatrends revolutionizing institutions across various sectors, including government, business, and civil society (Bakhsh et al., 2024; Usman et al., 2024). This intersection is increasingly crucial as organizations address global challenges, such as climate change, inequality, and poverty. Digitalization, characterized by the integration of digital technologies into business processes, has been shown to have significant potential in advancing sustainable practices (Zhang et al., 2024). For instance, Böttcher et al. (2024) noted that digital technologies can help reduce resource consumption, increase efficiency, and minimize waste within institutions. Additionally, the Internet of Things (IoT) and big data analytics have been found to enable more precise monitoring and control of energy consumption, leading to reduced environmental impacts in manufacturing processes (Salam, 2024).

The synergy between digitalization and sustainability extends beyond environmental considerations to encompass social and economic dimensions as well. Research by Wei et al. (2023) indicates that digital technologies can foster more inclusive business models, enhance transparency in supply chains, and promote sustainable consumption patterns. Moreover, digitalization can provide real-time data and analysis to institutions, allowing

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for informed and sustainable decision-making (Pan and Nishant, 2023), such as identifying areas for improvement and prioritizing sustainability initiatives. The adoption of digital platforms has been shown to facilitate the sharing economy, which can lead to more efficient resource utilization and reduced waste (Faraji et al., 2024). Importantly, equal and inclusive access to digital technologies is essential for sustainable development, as institutions in education, healthcare, and manufacturing can utilize these technologies to reduce poverty and inequality (Sharma et al., 2024; Palmisano & Sacchi, 2024). However, it is crucial to note that the relationship between digitalization and sustainability is complex and not always straightforward, as highlighted by Ye et al. (2024). They emphasized the need to consider potential rebound effects and the environmental footprint of digital infrastructure.

Despite the significant opportunities for integrating digitalization and sustainability, many institutions, particularly in developing countries, have not yet effectively addressed the interdependencies between these two megatrends (Acciarin et al., 2022; Del Río Castro et al., 2021). As the field evolves, there is a pressing need for further research to fully understand the long-term implications of this convergence and to develop frameworks for its effective management in diverse business contexts. This is especially crucial for addressing the unique challenges faced by institutions in developing countries. In response, this special issue features five papers that identify key factors enhancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through various digital innovations prevalent in the market.

The first paper draws attention to gamifying the crowdfunding platform to influence donation intention. It is noted that gamification features, such as progress bars, badges, and leaderboards, are expected to exert a significant positive influence on the affective user experience and trust in the platform. The robust mediating effects of user experience and trust underscore the imperative of integrating sophisticated user experience design and trust-building mechanisms into the architecture and functionality of these digital ecosystems. As such, platform developers are advised to strategically implement advanced gamification elements to catalyze user engagement and engender trust, thereby amplifying donor participation. Moreover, there is a pressing need to prioritize transparency in due diligence protocols to augment the platform's perceived credibility and reliability. In the realm of policy, regulators and legislators should focus on establishing

and enforcing a robust regulatory framework that promotes ethical conduct and transparency in crowdfunding operations. This approach will serve to safeguard stakeholder interests and foster a more sustainable crowdfunding ecosystem, aligning with SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, which enhances the ability to innovate across various sectors.

The second paper discusses the sustainability of halal practices in Muslim-minority countries. From the findings of a systematic literature review (SLR), the existing literature on this topic can be divided into five main themes. The first theme involves understanding how consumers approach halal consumption. The second theme examines halal assurance practices, focusing on mechanisms to ensure halal compliance. The third theme addresses the management of business operations, discussing effective measures for managing a halal business environment. The fourth theme centers on industry governance, highlighting the role of central governance and policymaking in managing halal practices. The fifth theme discusses the challenges encountered by businesses when practicing halal regulation in Muslim-minority countries. The review reveals that existing studies exploring the synergy between halal, sustainability, and digitalization remain limited, indicating a gap to be explored in future research. Upholding these three elements in today's business practices is essential, regardless of whether the country has a Muslim-majority or minority population. This synergy aligns with the SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, driving businesses towards sustainable economic growth and environmental protection. It is predicted that businesses that harmonize halal, sustainability, and digitalization are better positioned to meet evolving consumer expectations, achieve long-term growth, and contribute positively to society and the environment.

The third paper highlights the key factors influencing the adoption of geospatial technology in sustainable practices across agriculture, logistics, and transport industries. Using the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Technology Organization Environment (TOE) frameworks, the study proposes a model with four strategic quadrants to explain the interplay of factors driving geospatial technology adoption. The first quadrant emphasizes managing leadership expectations and employee involvement to enhance work processes. The second addresses non-adoption challenges among employees and stakeholders. The third focuses on integrating geospatial technology with other technologies to facilitate immersion. The

fourth highlights the coordination of stakeholder interactions to ensure full technology utilization. Adopting geospatial technology is crucial for informed decision-making and strategic planning, essential for achieving various SDGs. In agriculture, it enhances crop monitoring and sustainable farming, contributing to SDG 2: Zero Hunger. In logistics, it optimizes supply chains, aligning with SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production. In transport, it supports sustainable urban planning, contributing to SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities.

The fourth paper explores the key antecedents driving electronic-wallet (e-wallet) adoption among Gen Z in Malaysia, contributing to the country's sustainable financial future. Aligning with the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) framework, the findings reveal that performance expectancy, effort expectancy, and social influence are crucial factors affecting e-wallet adoption. Enhanced performance expectancy, such as improved efficiency and benefits, is vital in mitigating financial risks and psychological barriers. Gen Z users show higher adoption intention when e-wallet systems are user-friendly and require minimal learning effort. Social influence, manifested as peer pressure and the desire for social approval, emerges as a significant driver of adoption among younger users. These insights offer valuable guidance for practitioners aiming to promote e-wallet usage and advance towards a cashless economy. This strategy aligns with SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth as well as SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure by fostering more sustainable, efficient, and transparent financial transactions while reducing costs.

The fifth paper compares the impact of social media engagement metrics on consumer purchase intention between Facebook and Instagram. It reveals that engagement metrics, i.e., likes and shares, significantly influence purchase intentions on both platforms, serving as powerful indicators of content popularity and user endorsement, while comments, though reflective of engagement, do not significantly impact purchase intention. Despite the different system features of Facebook and Instagram, no significant difference was found in the effect of their engagement metrics on purchase intentions, suggesting that similar strategies can be effectively applied across both platforms for sustainable social media business practices. This study provides practitioners with a better understanding of how to use existing social media infrastructure to sustain their business goals. For example, businesses should emphasize content that generates likes and shares rather

than aiming for high comment volumes. By doing so, they can potentially reduce digital waste and unnecessary resource consumption in their marketing efforts, thereby developing a sustainable digital ecosystem aligned with SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production.

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