

Overture de ‘Global Competition and Sustainability Management’*

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Abstract

The attitude of large companies towards the issue of sustainability has evolved considerably over time. In a first phase sustainability was seen as a necessary evil. Today, in global markets, the financial world seeks and rewards sustainable companies.

In global competition, the companies’ results cannot be evaluated just in terms of value generated for the shareholders profit: the shared value generated has become the key factor for success.

Globalization is not a policy managed by human forces, but it’s a condition of life for humans on this planet.

In line with this assumption the aim of this series of articles, dedicated to sustainable management, is to analyse the recent global findings related to the sustainability issues, in topics like communication, human capital, intangible factors, small and large enterprises, retail and fashion, as well as in well-being orientation.

Keywords: Competitiveness; Sustainable Development Goals; Multidimensional Perspective; Global Competition; Competitive Policies; Global Markets

1. Overture

The attitude of large companies towards the issue of sustainability has evolved considerably over time. In a first phase sustainability was seen as a necessary evil. In a second phase, large companies understood that the issue was of vital importance to stay in business. Only recently has the issue become one of competitiveness on the

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market. Finally, in global markets, the financial world seeks and rewards sustainable companies, as demonstrated today by the multiples (Costaguta, 2022).

In global competition, the companies' results cannot be evaluated just in terms of value generated for the shareholders profit: the shared value generated has become the key factor for success.

To sustain long-term competitiveness, firms have to reshape their businesses with the models of sustainability and corporate social responsibility. For this task, managers must be able to integrate sustainability into a strategy as a priority competitive skill.

Generally defined in profit terms, competitiveness has an extensive set of connections with the socio and environmental dimensions. Intensified international competition focuses a growing attention on the compatibility of environmental policies and economic growth objectives.

In global markets, sustainability is now at the core of the definition of goals and targets for a long-term competitive landscape.

In this sense, global corporations must focus management policies on:

Multidimensionality and integration: The sustainable development goals are oriented to pursue sustainability by considering environmental, social and economic elements in an integrated way (Andreoni & Miola, 2016);

Participative approach: The sustainable development goals have been formulated with the participation of a wide range of stakeholders (Sachs, 2012). An on-going process oriented to involve business activities and civil society should be carried on at both national and international levels (Andreoni & Miola, 2016);

Dynamic approach: In general, the sustainability aim that was 'global in nature and universally applicable to all countries'. However, different national realities, capacities and levels of development should be considered both in the design and in the implementation of the policies. For this reason, clear and differentiated responsibilities at local, national and global levels are needed;

Inclusivity and equity: The sustainable development goals should ensure inclusivity and equity in economic growth and development. Productivity should increase and policies related to the labour market and quality of social care should be implemented to ensure quality of growth and to promote poverty reduction (Freeman, 2009).

The sustainability view enables the establishment of a circular relation in which economic interests are linked to non-economic ones and vice versa according to conditions of mutual dependency in terms of benefits and consequent costs (Salvioni & Almicci, 2022).

Today, in global competition, in order to sustain a long lasting and successful business, sustainability is not a separate process or an add-on to the corporate company strategy; it is integrated into the long-term strategies, business policies and objectives, and incorporated into operational processes and procedures. In this way, companies can shape their strategy and operations to address change, meeting

expectations and needs that arise from all stakeholders while at the same time increasing competitiveness and sustaining profitability (Cici & D’Isanto, 2017).

2. Other Rules to Format the Manuscript

Nowadays everything that concerns life on our planet has the attribute of “global”, since everybody perceives to be connected to everybody else.

In reality, it has always been like that: according to ecological science a butterfly’s movement is influencing everyone everywhere, but for centuries and centuries mankind has considered its own problems and opportunities as local issues, and everything that could come from the outside as a hexogen variable to embrace or to reject according to its own interest.

The change in the use of the language appeared after the end of the communism society, when the free market took over the cold war: in other words, business has put into practice the concept of globalization more than ecology, or better, business interest has addressed the idea of global interactions more than natural science and the universal law.

If this synthesis is right, we have the demonstration of the anthropogenic power and the need to switch from this mindset and to take the challenge to define a new paradigm useful to reallocate nature and the universal law to a superior level of mankind hierarchy.

Globalization is not a policy managed by human forces, but it’s a condition of life for humans on this planet; therefore, speaking about competition, “global” is not a requirement to over perform the other in every field, but a reference to act in every field under the sustainability constraints in environment-social-economic terms.

In line with this assumption the aim of this series of articles, dedicated to sustainable management, is to analyse the recent global findings related to the sustainability issues, in topics like communication, human capital, intangible factors, small and large enterprises, retail and fashion, as well as in well-being orientation.

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