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A multilevel approach for assessing business strategies on climate change

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Abstract

The need for an interdisciplinary and integrative approach for doing research on business strategies and climate change is gaining increasing recognition. However, there is a consensus that such cross-fertilization is currently missing. Multilevel research methods by virtue of being interdisciplinary in nature may address this need. This paper proposes to advance the adoption of multilevel research approach in the context of business strategies and climate change. As a guide for conducting multilevel assessment, a flexible analytical framework is presented. The framework is developed through a process of structured literature review. The framework consists of thirteen contextual factors spread across five levels and identifies the key multilevel relationships that moderate organisational level climate change related strategy formulation. Level specificities of several theories across these five levels are also identified to facilitate application of the framework in building multilevel hypotheses for business strategies on climate change. In addition, a concise summary of the fundamental concepts of multilevel modelling techniques is provided to help researchers in selecting suitable multilevel models during the operationalization of the framework. The operationalization of the framework is demonstrated by building and testing a three level hypotheses on corporate lobbying activities on climate change issues. It is observed that irrespective of their locations, financially underperforming companies with a larger workforce and belonging to sectors with higher Green House Gas emission intensities particularly lobby intensely on climate change issues. In conclusion, the potential challenges and opportunities in applying the framework for building multilevel theories in the context of business strategies and climate change are discussed.

Keywords: climate change, multilevel analysis, business organizations, business strategy, research methods, corporate lobbying

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