

## **Call for Papers (Special Issue)**

*Journal of Business, Ethics and Society (JBES)*

### **Special Issue: “Reframing Organizational Purpose: Stakeholder Cognition, Executive Sensemaking, and the Future of Business”**

In collaboration with the InnoVision 2025 Conference “*Shaping the Future of Business: Innovation, Sustainability, and Inclusive Growth*”

#### **Special Issue Editors**

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#### **Special Issue Rationale**

The contemporary resurgence of interest in organizational purpose reflects a paradigmatic shift in both the theorization and practice of the firm’s role within society (McGahan, 2023). An expanding body of scholarship acknowledges that the legitimacy, effectiveness, and broader societal value of organizations increasingly depend not solely on financial performance, but on their capacity to engage meaningfully with diverse stakeholders and to articulate a coherent and authentic sense of purpose (Jasinenko & Steuber, 2023). In a context marked by digital transformation, climate-related risks, institutional volatility, and widening socio-economic inequalities, organizational purpose is increasingly positioned as a foundational compass for guiding business innovation, sustainability, ethical leadership, and inclusive prosperity. This renewed interest also highlights the need for definitional clarity and integrating various corporate purpose research streams that improve our comprehension of how purpose influences stakeholder experience and organizational decision-making (Durand & Huynh, 2024).

Nevertheless, as organizations endeavor to navigate and respond to these complex societal expectations, critical questions persist regarding how purpose is constructed, communicated, and enacted, particularly within the domain of executive leadership (Henisz, 2023). This Special Issue aims to advance rigorous, multidisciplinary inquiry into the evolving meanings and practices of corporate purpose. Specifically, it invites contributions that explore how purpose is defined, embodied, and contested within contemporary organizational settings, with particular attention to the multifaceted themes highlighted in the *InnoVision 2025 Conference*: business innovation, ESG and responsible leadership, entrepreneurship, global business, operations, and crisis management. Recent scholarship highlights the interaction between purpose statements, the experienced purpose of organizational members, and the influence of purpose on executive decision-making processes, emphasizing the necessity of examining these dimensions collectively to fully understand corporate purpose (Durand & Huynh, 2024).

### **Thematic Coverage and Research Topics**

We invite submissions that critically interrogate corporate purpose as a dynamic and contested phenomenon, co-constructed through ongoing dialogues between executive leaders and stakeholders across strategic, ethical, and cultural domains. Contributions may address but are not limited to the following thematic areas:

- **Executive Sensemaking and the Construction of Purpose**

How do senior executives cognitively frame and narrate organizational purpose in response to innovation challenges, sustainability imperatives, and stakeholder pluralism? What role does executive sensemaking play amid institutional volatility, digital disruption, and environmental uncertainty (McGahan, 2023; Morrison & Mota, 2023)? How do executives harmonize varying perceptions and implementations of purpose within their organizations, illustrating the complex nature of purpose as both a declaration and an experiential phenomenon (Durand & Huynh, 2024)?

- **Stakeholder Logic, Relational Governance, and Value Creation**

How are competing stakeholder interests identified, negotiated, and integrated or marginalized in the articulation of purpose? Can organizational purpose function as a

form of relational governance that promotes stakeholder alignment, enhances trust, and reduces transaction costs? (Henisz, 2023; Mahoney, 2023)

- **Tensions and Ambiguities in Purpose Communication**

How is purpose communicated across internal and external constituencies including employees, customers, communities, and shareholders? What are the implications of misalignments between rhetorical (espoused) and structural (enacted) dimensions of purpose for legitimacy, trust, and organizational performance? What factors mediate the dissonance between executive purpose discourse and employee-lived experience? (Jasinenko & Steuber, 2023; Pataconi, Shamshur, & Ulianiuk, 2025; Kilson & Tavares, 2024)

- **Purpose in Innovation, Strategy, and Organizational Transformation**

In what ways does a credible, context-sensitive, and ‘‘conversable’’ corporate purpose (Morrison & Mota, 2023) catalyze strategic renewal, digital transformation, and innovation across organizational ecosystems?

- **Purpose, Sustainability, ESG, and Inclusive Growth**

How is purpose operationalized in advancing ESG commitments, ethical leadership, and inclusive economic development? What novel frameworks for value creation and impact measurement emerge when purpose is positioned as central to the firm-society interface? (McGahan, 2023; Mahoney, 2023)

- **Multipolar Crisis, Stakeholder Conflict, and Organizational Resilience**

How does the inherent ‘‘moral pluralism’’ of purpose (McGahan, 2023) equip organizations to navigate stakeholder tensions, crises of legitimacy, and contested value claims in volatile environments?

- **Global, Cross-Border, and Indo-European Perspectives**

How do conceptions and enactments of organizational purpose vary across cultural, institutional, and regulatory settings? What insights emerge from comparative or collaborative studies, particularly those examining Indo-European organizational practices?

We encourage submissions that are theoretically rigorous, methodologically pluralistic, and reflexively engaged with practice. Contributions may employ conceptual, empirical, qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods approaches. This Special Issue seeks to advance interdisciplinary understanding of organizational purpose as a critical construct for addressing contemporary challenges in innovation, sustainability, and inclusive global development.

### **Submission Guidelines**

- Manuscripts must represent original, unpublished work and should not be under review at any other journal or publication outlet.
- All submissions will be subject to a double-blind peer review process, conducted in accordance with the editorial policies and ethical standards of *JBES*.
- Submissions are expected to engage substantively with one or more of the thematic areas outlined in this Call for Papers.
- *Authors are strongly encouraged to submit an abstract of no more than 400 words in advance, to facilitate an initial assessment of the manuscript's alignment with the scope and scholarly intent of this CFP.*
- Abstract Submission Deadline (Max 400 words): **August 31, 2025**
- Full Paper Submission Deadline: **October 31, 2025**
- **The anticipated publication date of the Special Issue is April 2026.**
- For comprehensive author guidelines, please refer to the *JBES* website: <https://journal.bmu.edu.in/>

### **Submission Process**

Manuscripts should be submitted to the Special Issue Editors at: [sbhatt@mesos-bs.com](mailto:sbhatt@mesos-bs.com). Please ensure that the subject line of your email clearly states: “*InnoVision 2025 Special Issue Submission – [First Author's Last Name]*.” For inquiries or further information, authors may also write to the above email address.

### **References**

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