

Bachelor Thesis

“Scaling Social Impact in Sustainable Enterprises: A Literature Review“

Background

Sustainable and impact-driven ventures aim not only to create positive change but also to scale their impact to reach more people and maximize their contribution to social and environmental challenges. While traditional businesses scale through financial growth, social enterprises must navigate complex ecosystems of stakeholders, funding structures, and contextual constraints. Understanding how social impact is scaled—whether through organizational growth, partnerships, replication, or policy influence—remains a key topic in social entrepreneurship and sustainable business research. This thesis will provide a systematic literature review on social impact scaling and may include a case study illustrating real-world approaches.

Introductory Readings

- Coviello, N., Autio, E., Nambisan, S., Patzelt, H., & Thomas, L. D. (2024). Organizational scaling, scalability, and scale-up: Definitional harmonization and a research agenda. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 39(5), 106419. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2024.106419>
- Shepherd, D. A., & Patzelt, H. (2022). A call for research on the scaling of organizations and the scaling of social impact. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 46(2), 255-268
- Van Lunenburg, M., Geuijen, K. & Meijer, A. (2020). How and Why Do Social and Sustainable Initiatives Scale? A Systematic Review of the Literature on Social Entrepreneurship and Grassroots Innovation. *Voluntas* 31, 1013–1024.

Tasks and Goals

- Conduct a systematic literature review on the concept of social impact scaling, analyzing different strategies, key challenges, and success factors.
- Identify theoretical frameworks used to explain impact scaling.
- (Optional) Develop a case study on a social enterprise that has successfully scaled its impact, analyzing its approach and key learnings.

Requirements

- Strong analytical and critical thinking skills.
- Interest in sustainable entrepreneurship, and social impact.
- Excellent English skills.
- Independent and structured working style.
- Successful completion of the course Corporate Sustainability with a minimum grade of 2.0 is required

Details

- Supervisors: Dr. Alessia Argiolas
- Start: Flexible / As of now.
- Working time: 6 months, with the option of 4 weeks of fully-funded research stay abroad

Contact

If you are interested in writing your thesis at our Chair or have questions about this topic, please contact Alessia Argiolas (alessia.argiolas@tum.de). To apply, send an email including your CV, and the current transcript of records (as one PDF file). We are looking forward to working together with you!