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UNDERSTANDING THE MATERIALITY CONCEPT: A LITERATURE REVIEW WITHIN THE STAKEHOLDER THEORY

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Introdução

The materiality concept presents different understanding and use in the management literature. The precise understanding is relevant for theories and multi disciplinarys discussions that occurs for example into the stakeholder theory and sustainability literature. This work, through a literature review, clarify the use and the understanding of the concept of materiality and its impact into stakeholder definition, value creation logic, corporate investment, and management as well the impact on non-financial reports what is also discussed.

Problema de Pesquisa e Objetivo

The materiality concept presents different understanding and use in the management literature. The objective of the present study is to clarify the different definitions and use of the materiality concept within the stakeholder theory literature, and to unfond potential consequences related to stakeholder definition, value creation, and the impact toward sustainability for firms.

Fundamentação Teórica

The understanding of the stakeholder concept and its prioritization or salience is an issue still in discussion in the academic literature The absence of a unique and clear understanding of the concept impacts from the definition and legitimation of stakeholders to the prioritization of those actors, and the understanding about the value creation logic of the firms. The discussion has relevance for non-financial goals, initiatives, and reports, where the concept is mostly used. The definition drives the understanding about sustainability, initiatives, investments, and CSR programs.

Discussão

The literature review identifies three groups of understanding of the materiality concept. An economic, a stakeholder, and a socio-materiality value creation logic. The different understanding impacts from the definition of who/ what is a stakeholder, to the value creation logic, and the definition of what is an adequate investment, an adequate sustainable strategy, and the reflection on non-financial report.

Conclusão

The three concepts of materiality found in this work impact the definition of what is a stakeholder and how the value creation process works for each logic. That discussion is already raised and discussed in the literature and has gained relevance in the discussion about sustainability particularly withing stakeholder theory and stakeholders' goals and role. An initiative that is considered as irresponsible in the economic logic can be understood as essential and intrinsic for the stakeholder and socio-materiality logic respectively.

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