



## Sustainability and Creativity Management in Agribusiness

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Agribusinesses are closely linked to natural resources, and sustainability is relatively important to companies indulged in agribusiness. This is especially true in developing countries, whose agricultural activities have largely focused on increasing efficiency rather than protecting the natural environment. Agribusinesses in these countries are currently facing the challenge of adopting corporate social responsibility practices. In this context, individual and collective creativity can be decisive. Our objective is to assess the role of creativity in improving knowledge management and innovation, environmental sustainability and performance in the agribusiness sector in the Dominican Republic. We develop a model linking green creativity with corporate social responsibility, knowledge-based innovation and sustainability performance, and formulate and validate numerous hypotheses that could help to better understand the different relationships and impacts between these elements. Testing these hypotheses could have implications for agribusiness management and policy in the Dominican Republic and possibly in other countries with a similar nature of their productive structure.

**Keywords:** Corporate social responsibility (CSR), Ecological behavior (EB), Environmental, Knowledge and innovation management (KIM), Performance

### Introduction

There is a growing academic interest in the implementation of activities that facilitate creativity, knowledge, innovation and sustainability in organizations. The capabilities that harness creative potential in companies may differ according to their cultural context. New models emerging from Creative Management (CM) in companies, intangible management and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) are interesting areas of academic research.<sup>1</sup> This article will address creativity and knowledge models and agribusiness sustainability strategies in Latin America, specifically in the Dominican Republic, a middle-income country, with an economy in the process of diversification and in frank agro-industrial growth. Our objective is to investigate the following topics: Creative Management (CM), Knowledge and Innovation Management (KIM), Sustainability and Performance.

### Conceptual Framework

Latin American agro-industries have quite varied structures with different development policies that

promote creative reforms.<sup>2</sup> In this sense, support is provided in all the phases of innovative processes, from the exploration of problems to the design and evaluation of creative solutions, including the successful introduction of products into the market through the identification, acquisition, development, distribution, use, and preservation of knowledge.<sup>3</sup> Networks stimulate creative and innovative behavior by providing access to additional knowledge.<sup>4</sup> Organizational creativity is significantly influenced by group design and organizational context. KIM increases the capacity of companies to respond to the turbulence of their environment, contributing to the creation of processes that guide better decision-making and provide better business results.<sup>5</sup> This is also a social phenomenon since without knowledge transfer to the productive sector, the possibilities of economic development would be reduced and long-term transformational spill-over would be degraded.<sup>6</sup>

A supportive, free environment promotes the creative processes of employees.<sup>7</sup> Employees' positive perceptions of CSR trigger more permanent and anchored environmental behavior.<sup>8</sup> Creativity is linked to environmental sustainability, and this is reflected in the scientific literature.<sup>9</sup> KIM in this area

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are at predicting the endogenous variable (H1:0.588, H2: 0.626 and H8: 0.357 are the hypotheses that have a higher R<sup>2</sup>). Durbin-Watson (DW) has informed us of the degree of independence that exists between the residuals, taking the value close to 2 in all cases because they are independent and range from (1.9–2.3). The ANOVA (F) reports whether there is a significant relationship between the independent and the dependent variables, and the F-statistic allows us to test whether the regression model fits the data, and when the significance level is less than 0.05, then the independent predictor variables can be said to be linearly related to the dependent variable. All hypotheses have been confirmed and the results and implications presented, and F-Statistic becomes significant.

### Results and Discussion

The context of a developing country poses enormous challenges. Companies are under great stress due to the dynamics of internal and external changes and impacts. CSR is an attractive strategic option in the business environment because it has become a real source of value creation for organizations, which are experiencing rapid and increasingly complex growth. It should be noted that CSR guidelines and commitments vary considerably depending on the context of each country. However, it generally promotes creative management in the positive exploitation of mechanisms centered on social, human, and economic issues.

It should be emphasized that based on the results, the only hypothesis that has not been confirmed is the relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Sustainability, which is a product of the fact that in Dominican agribusinesses there is a transition of adaptation to more complete processes of refinement that allow a deepening of environmental guidelines. This is also because instrumentalized actions have been prioritized that generate deficiencies and do not strengthen the human value, even more so in a rural environment (Fig. 2 & Table 2). This is a valuable contribution for further research.

In various business ecosystems, there is a novel articulation that allows a degree of implementation of CSR in various factors that promote sustainability. The integration of knowledge management, the exploitation of creativity in its differentiated components with the environment produces positive linkages that impact performance. There are a number

Fig. 2 — Confirmation of the hypothesis

of researches that promote these relationships.<sup>15–17</sup> even more evident in medium and large agricultural companies.

Managing Creativity is explained by the CSR measures with a significant and positive dependence. Managing Creativity strongly influences Knowledge Innovation Management previously to improve performance. On the other hand, Managing Creativity has a significant impact on Environmental Sustainability, the latter being a dependent measure of CSR. Hence, we observe that Environmental Sustainability mediates the activities of CSR and Managing Creativity so that agribusiness performance support decisions related to green production, innovation, and other positive economic and environmental services for society.

Environmental challenges can be new manifestations of innovation in organizations, allowing them to gain competitive advantages through creative activities that enhance environmental sustainability. This could involve the integration of ecosystem services that promote resource reuse, optimal pollutant management and waste absorption.

The development of environmental sustainability is carried out through activities that allow companies to reduce the negative impact of their operations on the environment while improving their performance. The results suggest that the total effect of CSR and KIM may be mediated by other variables of Creativity Management related to employees, organizational resources, and motivation. Therefore, further research is necessary to study what these mediating variables might be.

## Conclusions

The study suggests that creativity and knowledge management are key factors in the positive impact of CSR on the sustainability of agribusinesses. They foster the integration of attitudes that promote CSR actions. Direct contact with the environment encourages a culture of conservation, creativity management, and the creation of technological networks of knowledge and innovation. We believe that the agri-food sector needs to invest in activities that produce corporate social responsibility benefits, and to do this, knowledge, innovation, and collaboration among companies are key.

Environmental sustainability in agricultural markets is responsive to creative processes. Through resources, management, and environmental knowledge, employees must anticipate the construction of rural development in developing countries. Managers, through creative processes, empowerment, and employee motivation, should generate knowledge for better EB and retrain through KIM. CSR and environmental sustainability measures enhance other strategies. For future lines of work, the involvement of other economic sectors and the evaluation of CEOs as a determining factor of sustainable development will be considered. CEO creativity promotes the development of green capabilities, along with knowledge of land management and environmental resources.

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