EDITORIAL: Strategic corporate governance: Board composition, organizational resilience, and ESG integration

Dear readers!

The evolving nature of corporate governance reflects a growing imperative to integrate financial management with broader organizational responsibilities, including environmental and social sustainability, strategic agility in rapidly changing markets, and heightened accountability to a diverse set of stakeholders. Therefore, corporate boards are expected to adapt their strategic approach in response to major disruptions and evolving stakeholder sensitivities (Bezemer et al., 2023).

These impactful environmental shifts signal a departure towards a holistic governance model, not only safeguarding shareholder interests but also fostering long-term value creation, ethical conduct, and resilience in the face of systemic challenges (Aguilera & Ruiz Castillo, 2025).

A key theme emerging across this issue is the centrality of board composition, diversity, and leadership structures in shaping organizational outcomes (De Masi et al., 2025). The boardroom is no longer regarded solely for its oversight role but as a strategic resource, capable of driving innovation, enabling international expansion, and influencing environmental, social, and governance (ESG) performance. Issues such as board gender diversity, director connections through interlocks, and the inclusion of independent or culturally diverse members are reframing how we understand board effectiveness, especially in complex or emerging market environments. Yet, directors act as strategic bridges, facilitating access to non-public information and external resources such as human and relational capital.

The interplay between governance, performance, and risk is also foregrounded in recent discussions. As firms are increasingly required to manage uncertainty on multiple fronts, from financial crises and industry consolidation to fraud risks and shifting stakeholder expectations, effective governance increasingly requires them to build resilience through agile decision-making, robust risk management systems, and responsible capital allocation. These dynamics reveal governance as a balancing act between control and adaptability, structure and responsiveness (Esposito De Falco, 2024).

Particularly, the resilience dimension of corporate governance has gained increased attention in the post-COVID era, which unveiled significant gaps in the coordination of national and supranational efforts (Zattoni & Pugliese, 2021).

In this sense, the broader governance ecosystem, including ownership structures, institutional norms, and cultural contexts, emerges as a powerful force shaping corporate behavior and the pressures for resilience. Indeed, navigating global value chains, digital transformation, and post-crisis recovery requires an understanding of the potential interdependencies between formal mechanisms and informal practices.

Also, across industries and regions, firms are increasingly expected to embed ESG considerations into their core strategies, requiring not only new performance frameworks but also more transparent and purpose-driven disclosure practices. However, this remains a significant challenge for many firms, particularly in contexts characterized by weak regulatory pressures, limited access to resources, widespread poverty, and low levels of equity.

Governance, in this broader sense, has become a vehicle for aligning corporate actions with long-term societal and environmental goals. Therefore, adopting a contextual perspective is essential to advance the study of corporate governance, as its design and effectiveness are shaped by the broader socio-economic, regulatory, and organizational environments in which firms operate. All these factors carry a substantial influence on how governance mechanisms are implemented and aligned with both strategic and societal goals.

This issue points toward a vision of governance that is both systemic and relational, capturing the inherent dynamism of strategic corporate governance.

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