ISSN 2055-0286
Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal; Vol. 13 No. 07 (2026) (52-64)
https://doi.org/10.14738/assrj.1307.12008

Strategic and Sustainable Internationalization in the Manufacturing Industry: The Case of Mega USA LLC and the Competitive Advantage of Paraguayan Nearshoring

Fernando Assaad Barrak Azar[1] & Murillo de Oliveira Dias[2]

1. MBA em Gestão Empresarial, Fundação Getúlio Vargas, Brazil
2. Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (UERJ); Escola Superior de Desenho Industrial (ESDI), Programa de Pós-Graduação da Escola Superior de Desenho Industrial (PPDESDI); Rio de Janeiro, Brasil

Abstract: We analyze the internationalization strategy of Mega Plásticos SA, a company that leads the Brazilian magazine Exame ranks as the leader in the hospital disposable packaging products market for the Mercosur countries, by analyzing its recent expansion into the North American market through the creation of Mega USA LLC. To tackle its competitors, the company is employing a disintermediation strategy through Direct-to-Consumer and Business-to-Business models, its marketplaces, and the outsourced infrastructure it has set up in the US. The article also analyzes the competitive advantage that Mega is gaining in production, which takes place in Paraguay under the Maquila Law and with 100% green, renewable energy, as opposed to the traditional Asian import model commonly associated with social and environmental dumping. The sustainable nearshoring, high-quality products (sold without intermediaries), and the socio-environmental responsibility that Mega USA LLC is bringing to the operation are driving superior margins and sustainable competitive advantages in the high-demand markets in which it operates.

Keywords: Nearshoring, ESG, Internationalization of Companies, Maquila Law, Disintermediation, Supply Chain.

INTRODUCTION

Most organizations that aim to embed sustainability in their business strategies must negotiate between their objectives and those of their various stakeholders, all within the framework of environmental governance structures that encourage sustainability. Organizations in Latin America, a region most vulnerable to environmental degradation, face particularly complex challenges when creating and implementing sustainability strategies. The need for sustainability within organizations in Latin America often conflicts with their economic objectives and the governance structures they must follow. Environmental sustainability is, therefore, a complex challenge for organizations in Latin America. The sustainability case study examined in this research provided a context for analyzing environmental sustainability within an organization and how that organization attempted to negotiate a range of practices within a complex environmental governance structure. Negotiation is a key component of organizational strategy when sustainability goals need to be developed and reconciled with economic objectives. To arrive at collaborative solutions for diverse interests, interest-based negotiation should be used instead of traditional positional bargaining (Biondo & Dias, 2025). Governance for sustainability, as proposed by Elkington (2006), demands transparency, accountability, and

stakeholder participation. All these elements are part of a negotiation process and, therefore, are not limited to decisions made by a single person.

The recent changes in Global Value Chains (GVCs) with a focus on the restructuring of production of disposable hospital products and industrial packaging for the regional and international market, with a focus on the recent changes in Global Value Chains (GVCs) with a focus on the restructuring of production of disposable hospital products and industrial packaging for the regional and international market, with a focus on the recent changes in Global Value Chains (GVCs) with a focus on the restructuring of production of disposable hospital products and industrial packaging for the regional and international market.

This article reviews the international expansion strategy of a 21-year-old industry in Mercosur, an operation that culminated in the launch of Mega USA LLC in 2024. The new US-based company is designed to supply premium-quality disposable hospital products and industrial packaging materials made in Paraguay to the American market, as an initial attempt to enter the traditional import market and bypass the intermediary importer. The value proposition of the operation is the production facilities in Paraguay, taking advantage of the Maquila Law (a set of rules for export incentives similar to those implemented in Mexico), with the differential of 100% clean and 100% renewable energy. Thus, the company can maintain a low production cost while complying with international ESG standards. In the meantime, the company is protected from the trade wars that have affected countries like China and others in Asia and Europe in recent years. The objective of this paper is to analyze, from an academic point of view, the advantages that the traditional model of predatory importation cannot match, taking advantage of sustainable nearshoring and the operational excellence of a Direct-to-Market e-commerce.

The research problem addressed in this study is to examine how negotiation affects the implementation of sustainability practices within an organization's strategy. Specifically, the study will analyze how organizations negotiate the adoption and implementation of environmental management practices to develop sustainability practices within complex structures of environmental governance and diverse stakeholder groups. The choice of a descriptive case study is justified because it is the most appropriate method for analyzing processes within an organization and the interactions with various stakeholders in great detail. Case study research is the most suitable method for researching complex real-life phenomena. Given that, in most cases, the phenomenon under study and the context are clearly delimited, the chosen method is particularly suitable for in-depth analysis of a single case (Yin, 2004).

The study's objectives were threefold:

(1) To present a comprehensive description of the case under study, including the setting, the principal actors, the strategies that they implemented and the processes that took place;

(2) To analyze the principal aspects that played a role in the way in which sustainability practices were negotiated by organizations and, through this, how their sustainability frameworks were put into practice within their overall strategies;

(3) To derive conclusions and discuss suggestions for practice, for public and private organizations' policies and for future research, that can be used by organizations in situations analogous to that of the case studied.

BACKGROUND

The triple bottom line (TBL) framework (Elkington, 2001) has become the standard sustainability model. The implementation of the TBB can be facilitated through a sustainability framework or model (Bunker & Gare, 2016) and through environmental and quality management standards. The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) issues environmental and quality management standards, including ISO 14001 Environmental management – Specifications with guidance for use, for environmental management, and ISO 9001 Quality management systems – Fundamentals and vocabulary, for quality management. Organizations use these standards to structure their sustainability initiatives (Ferreira et al., 2019). Their implementation, however, is not without difficulties (Ferreira et al., 2019; Fonseca & Domingues, 2018). Empirical studies about the use of such environmental and quality management standards by organizations show that they can improve performance but also cause problems (Ferreira et al., 2019; Fonseca & Domingues, 2018). To detail the difficulties and benefits of a single organization's environmental management practices, this case study examines a company's implementation of sustainability frameworks.

Governance for sustainability poses several challenges that organizations, particularly in Latin America, must address. To operate effectively and achieve their goals, organizations in this region must adapt to a range of variables, including stakeholder involvement. Sustainability governance must also be designed to be effective at multiple levels and in diverse contexts. As da Rocha and Bastos (2026) explained regarding the Cadastro Ambiental Rural (CAR) in the Amazon and other regions, a number of approaches are being developed to incorporate traditional communities into existing models of sustainability governance. However, the majority of research on sustainability governance has focused on organizations that are governed in line with existing regulatory frameworks and engage with multiple stakeholders to build legitimacy for the sustainability practices they implement (Farag, 2026). Innovation within organizations and between them and their suppliers and customers also extends to other HR practices that foster employee engagement and support sustainability initiatives, collectively known as Green HRM (Zhou et al., 2026). As with environmental practices, negotiation within and between organizations and their stakeholders is key in this regard. Thus, this study seeks to explore how organizations in the case study above do this and the consequent implications for sustainability.

Sustainability Frameworks and Corporate Strategy

Sustainability frameworks within business organizations have undergone significant development over the last couple of decades. There are a number of models of sustainability; however, most models currently used within organizations aim to incorporate three values into business practices: economic, social, and environmental (Elkington, 2001). Recently, sustainability has been associated with how organizations are governed (Elkington, 2006) and with their capacity to implement new technologies (Elkington, 2002). Sustainability within organizations has also been described as a “full spectrum strategy,” enabling organizations to leverage all value dimensions (Elkington et al., 2006). There are numerous empirical studies that describe how sustainability can be managed within organizations and projects. Farag (2026) explains that sustainability must be managed as a

management strategy, integrating all three value dimensions (environmental, social, and governance) into business administration through ESG practices. Gomes et al. (2026) describe the current challenges in environmental management and explain that sustainability requires an adaptive organization that is able to respond to new environmental, social, and regulatory demands and challenges over time. In other words, organizations have to move from a compliance-oriented approach to proactive sustainability strategies.

ISO Standards and Environmental Management Systems

The implementation of sustainability in organizations is greatly enhanced through the use of International Standards such as ISO 14001:2015 for the Environmental Management System and ISO 9001:2015 for the Quality Management System. ISO 14001 is designed to provide a structured approach to an organization's environmental management system, which is focused on continuous improvement of its environmental performance. The organization's environmental policy, objectives, and management system are all key to effective stakeholder engagement and management (International Organization for Standardization, 2015a). The ISO 9001 focuses on the development and implementation of a quality management system by an organization to ensure that its employees are well-trained, and that all processes are in place and under control to deliver a quality product or service, in order to increase customer satisfaction and ensure ongoing accountability (International Organization for Standardization, 2015b). Lutete (2025) examined the development of ISO management systems from their introduction to the present and highlighted the continuous changes required to address emerging sustainability demands. On the other hand, Da Fonseca (2015) focused on the improvements introduced by ISO 14001:2015 regarding its application to sustainability, while Ferreira et al. (2019) analyzed the integration of the two Standards to strengthen corporate sustainability. Fonseca and Domingues (2018) reported on the positive and negative aspects introduced by the new version of ISO 14001:2015 within Portuguese organizations. Organizations face several challenges when implementing management systems. In environmental management, there are demotivating factors that affect the implementation of ISO 14001, as mentioned by Sorooshian and Yee (2019). In Malaysia, for example, these include insufficient resources to implement the environmental management system and insufficient stakeholder buy-in. Moreover, organizations face obstacles that must be negotiated to implement the EMS effectively. For example, Poltronieri et al. (2021) noted that life cycle engineering is important for improving organizational sustainability by adopting a holistic approach to environmental management systems.

Governance and Environmental Regulation

Governance is key to sustainability and can influence organizations' environmental management practices in several ways. Many studies analyze how sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR) are managed across different organizations worldwide. These studies aim to identify the key factors that influence the organization's legitimacy regarding its environmental management practices (López et al. 2026). Various studies have been conducted at the regional level that analyze specific cases of environmental

governance. Mieles-Giler et al. (2026) assessed the effectiveness of environmental audits in improving organizations' performance in Ecuador and highlighted their limitations in terms of enforcement and follow-up. From the analyzed contributions, it follows that there is a need for governance models that are more inclusive, flexible, and address a variety of stakeholders' interests. The Case Study analyzes how organizations' sustainability strategies are shaped by their governance structures and stakeholder negotiation processes.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a single descriptive case study. A single case study, also known as a single-site study, is a methodological approach that seeks to provide in-depth analyses and insights into organizational processes and is particularly suited to scenarios in which the boundaries between the 'inside' and 'outside' of the organization under study are indistinct (Yin, 2004). The use of a single case study, in this instance, is expected to allow for the more in-depth analysis of sustainability strategies, processes, and practices that occur within organizations, the associated internal organizational negotiation processes, and the organizational sustainability governance structures, all of which are situated within real-world scenarios and environments (Yin, 2004).

Rationale for Case Study Design

This research focuses on the organizational processes of interest to the study of sustainability within an organization. It explores and examines the day-to-day functions of an organization's processes. The in-depth knowledge gathered through qualitative methods can fully describe the reality of the processes studied in this research. The researcher draws conclusions from the findings of the case studied in this research, which are relevant and applicable to the research context. A single case study was therefore deemed the most appropriate research design for developing a complete and thorough description of the organizational processes of interest (Yin, 2004). In addition, because the purpose of this research is to analyze a single case study in detail rather than to investigate other cases and generalize from them, the choice of a single case was more than sufficient. Indeed, the information gathered from this single case study is already more than sufficient for other organizations in Latin America to learn from the sustainability strategies currently being implemented across the region. This research, therefore, aims to analyze in depth how negotiation processes interact with sustainability governance systems within the framework of organizational sustainability in Latin America.

Data Sources and Collection Methods

The data from the case study were collected from several sources, including internal and external documentation from the organization regarding sustainability. In addition, the reports and internal communications regarding the organization's governance structures were reviewed. From an external perspective, academic papers on sustainability and related legislation and international standards, such as ISO 14001:2015 (International Organization for Standardization, 2015a) and ISO 9001:2015 (International Organization for Standardization, 2015b), were analyzed. The qualitative data from the single-case study were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the procedure described by Araujo and

Dias (2026). In this type of qualitative data analysis, the researcher analyzes data to identify patterns, which are then coded and categorized into themes. This form of analysis is particularly suited to a study analyzing the organizational processes, negotiations, and sustainability practices of a single case studied in detail.

Analytical Framework

The analysis followed an analytical framework built on three theoretical perspectives: sustainability, governance, and negotiation. Sustainability was analyzed from a Triple Bottom Line (TBL) perspective (Elkington, 2001), which assesses an organization's strategy based on its economic, social, and environmental impacts. Governance was analyzed from the perspective of governance (Elkington, 2006; López et al., 2026), with a focus on transparency, accountability, and stakeholder involvement. Finally, negotiation was analyzed in terms of the different ways stakeholders negotiate (Biondo & Dias, 2025), particularly the shift from a positional to an interest-based approach. The use of multiple theoretical perspectives in this study means the results can be situated within the current research. Many methodologists, such as Strauss and Corbin (1998), have commented on the use of qualitative data and noted that a range of theoretical perspectives can be used to analyze data and gain greater insight.

Limitations of the Methodology

However, as this study is based on a single case, its findings are limited. In general terms, the findings of this study will not be generalizable to other organizations. The organization that is the subject of this study has been selected because it is a best practice in sustainability, but there are many different ways an organization can function. In addition, there is potential bias in the use of qualitative data. Qualitative data is subject to the researcher's views, and as a result, some of it may have been interpreted differently. To overcome these potential biases, triangulation has been adopted. The use of primary data sources has been supported by secondary sources, and a number of theoretical frameworks have been adopted to gain a more in-depth understanding of sustainability issues in organizations. As sustainability and governance are ongoing processes in organizations that unfold over a long period, it is also possible that some of their outcomes have not been captured in this study.

Legal Disclosure

The owners of the respective companies granted us the formal permission to use their organizations' real names during the research. Methodological transparency and the resulting legitimacy of using the organizations' real names in the study allow for a direct reference to the real organizational environment in which the results were generated. The permission to use the organization's corporate identities in the research report further enhances the study's academic credibility by clearly disclosing the origin of the data. This also enables future research on this case to be more precise and even to be compared with that of other organizations.

MEGA USA LLC

The Production Base: Paraguay's Differential and the Focus on ESG

The foundation of Mega USA LLC's industrial know-how was laid two decades ago. Nowadays, this know-how is the company operating in Paraguay under the Maquila regime (100% tax exemption) and using 100% clean, renewable energy for its production. The industrial operations at Mega USA LLC comply with strict ESG practices for environmentally friendly production.

(a) **Environmental (E):** Operation Zero Waste. There is no generation of significant air pollutants, no disposal of contaminated water, and no sending of plastic waste to landfills. The product life cycle and factory practices are ISO 14001 certified.

(b) **Social(s):** 100% of Mega USA LLC's workforce is 100% registered and legalized, paid fairly for their work, and within the legally established parameters of working hours. Unlike many Asian competitors, the Company promotes the development of its human resources through well-being programs. Furthermore, the company supports the surrounding community through several awards and recognitions at the national and regional levels.

(c) **Governance (G):** All operations at Mega are carried out with a transparent and responsible management system that is certified by ISO 9001. Mega's internal management system, CMS, includes a variety of efficiency tools for maximum performance, including 5S, Kanban, and Kaizen.

The Contrast with the Asian Supply Chain

Although the U.S. market for hospital products and packaging is currently served by importers purchasing products from Asian factories (primarily China), there are significant strategic weaknesses in the Asian Supply Chain model that Mega is capitalizing on in structuring a strategy to serve the U.S. market.

(a) **Social and Environmental Dumping:** Chinese products are manufactured by underpaid labor who work long hours and in poor working conditions. No effort is made to address the negative environmental impacts of their production.

(b) **Artificial Incentives:** protectionism and export subsidies granted by the Chinese government (for example, by means of Tax Refund systems).

(c) **Quality:** Importers who act as intermediaries between the buyer and the producer of the goods under consideration are pressured by the buyer to get the lowest possible price for the goods in question. As a result of their pressure to offer the lowest possible price for the goods, the importer receives an item of very poor quality that does not even meet the highest technical specifications, let alone those of the American market and its consumers.

Disintermediation and U.S. Market Entry Strategy

Mega USA is offering disintermediation to customers in the USA; that is, complete vertical control over all phases of the product's life cycle, from the production of the machines in Paraguay to the customer in the USA.

Mega USA operates a lean, scalable business through a central strategy focused on direct sales (B2B and B2C) on global marketplaces and its own domain.

(a) **Direct Access (B2B and B2C):** The company is running a Direct-to-Market operation in the USA by offering its products through online marketplaces and through the company's own domain.

(b) **U.S. Infrastructure Outsourcing:** Smart Utilization of the U.S. Service Ecosystem. Warehousing, last-mile logistics (fulfillment), digital marketing, and platform administration are outsourced to high-efficiency local partners.

(c) **Margin Reversal:** Once the intermediary is removed, most of the margin that was being collected by the importer and the distributor is redirected to Mega. A part of it is invested in a product of the highest quality and in the best environmental and social practices. The rest translates into huge returns for the company.

THE BARRIERS TO ENTRY AND THE LEARNING CURVE: THE COST OF BEING A FOREIGNER (LIABILITY OF FOREIGNNESS)

When operating in foreign markets, multinational companies often face several serious disadvantages. These additional costs and market frictions, as they are collectively called in the literature on international business, are known as the Liability of Foreignness. A well-known theoretical approach to the complex processes of foreign market penetration has been provided by the Uppsala-based school of thought on networked internationalization. The problems encountered by Mega USA LLC in the U.S. markets for healthcare equipment used in physical therapy and for reusable, sterilizable medical packing are typical of the severe challenges a foreign company may face. In the beginning, these problems caused considerable losses for this company. However, after a long period of learning and doing, the problems decreased, and the number of very successful years for this foreign company increased.

Regulatory Barriers and Information Asymmetry in Basic Support

The first shock to Mega USA LLC's growth was the surprise of the extreme complexity of laws, taxes, and industry regulations for health care and packaging in the USA, resulting in high operating costs to comply with multiple regulatory bodies, including annual fees to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). It is equally difficult to determine where to set up an administrative base for commercial activities and to develop contacts with local professionals, such as other managers and accountants, who can provide much-needed information to support the business. In summary, setting up an operation in the U.S. is difficult to begin with, due to bureaucratic, operational, and information-related problems. The project team encountered contradictions between apparently comparable information on specific subjects and between the advice of different accountants and tax consultants, each recommended by a different intermediary. In the end, as a result of efforts to find the most efficient service providers, the funds for the operation were wasted, and the team of managers had to search for administration advisors of higher quality who could provide the necessary level of legal certainty.

Logistical Bottlenecks and Friction in Multichannel Marketplace Management

A major component of this direct-to-market strategy is the Mega USA physical and digital Direct-to-Market Infrastructure, and the Smart Utilization of the US Service Ecosystem for warehousing, last-mile logistics (fulfillment), digital marketing, and platform administration. For warehouse and last-mile logistics, the company identified a small group of highly efficient service providers and has established smart arrangements with them. The Mega warehouse is situated in a strategic location in the US, enabling it to reach most of the American market. To manage the social media ecosystem and set up and administer online storefronts for sales on multi-channel marketplaces such as Amazon, eBay, and Shopify, Mega Plásticos established an excellent team of agencies. Mega USA's e-commerce operations are currently managed across these multi-channel online marketplaces. The Direct-to-Market (D2M) strategy for the operation of Mega USA LLC is supported by a physical and digital infrastructure that aligns with a disintermediation strategy. As such, Smart Utilization of the U.S. Service Ecosystem is enabled for warehousing and last-mile logistics (D2C fulfillment), as well as for digital marketing and administration of digital storefronts in various online platforms (multichannel marketplaces). To this end, three e-commerce channels are currently operated: Amazon, eBay, and Shopify, for which corporate accounts have been opened and are currently managed by the company. However, as is the case with all huge American online platforms, the compliance policies for the corporate accounts are very strict and opaque. This has resulted in numerous problems for the operation, including blocked accounts that require immediate intervention by the company’s management. Thus, the latter has found it difficult to manage the online operation and ensure timely cash flow.

Organizational Resilience and the Consolidation of Strategic Partnerships

The initial internationalization of Mega USA LLC was a very stressful and time-consuming experience for the Company's senior management. Thousands of hours were spent trying to solve the enormous problems associated with the process of learning by trial and error, of how to penetrate the U.S. market, and reassigning funds that were being wasted on suboptimal services. The learning curve has required an enormous investment of time and money for the management of Mega USA, but it has been a wonderful filter to go through in order to put together an adequate structure, to map out a Human Resources Plan of great quality and to select a group of high-quality local professionals and partners that will supply the Company with services in the areas of logistics, financial affairs, accounting and the digital market. With this consolidation in the U.S. market, the Company is ready to face the challenges in the competitive North American market.

DISCUSSION

Mega USA LLC is sustainably profitable. In other words, sustainability and profitability are not mutually exclusive for the company. To sell very sensitive products (disposable hospital gowns, packaging with high mechanical requirements, etc.) that require traceability, Mega needs to build customers’ trust. Production is managed using Operational Excellence tools, such as Kaizen and Kanban, to ensure that production in Paraguay is conducted with World Class Manufacturing (WCM) practices. The distribution of this product in the United States is conducted via digital channels such as Amazon/Shopify. The final customer (B2B, medical

clinics, or B2C, end consumers) receives a product of higher quality at the same price as the Chinese competitor, with an excellent ESG stance. With Mega USA's fast adaptation to demand variations, unlike the typical intermediary chain that delays information from the U.S. market to the production lines in Paraguay, information, whether good or negative, regarding the products sold in the U.S. through Mega's multichannel retailing channels is immediately conveyed to the appropriate workstations in the plant, and changes and corresponding innovations are developed and carried out in record time on the production lines.

The governance of sustainability practices within an organization involves several practices, such as transparency, accountability, and stakeholder engagement (Elkington, 2006). These sustainability practices must be negotiated and implemented within an organization's governance structure, and this is very challenging. This is because practices such as transparency, accountability, and stakeholder engagement in an organization's sustainability governance require alignment with local practices and global sustainability standards (da Rocha & Bastos, 2026). Hence, in the case under analysis, the transparency, accountability, and stakeholder engagement practices required for effective sustainability governance had to be negotiated within the organization's governance structure to align with global sustainability standards.

Studies have highlighted the potential of these sustainability frameworks to improve organizational performance and incorporate sustainability into internal practices and operations (Ferreira et al. 2019; Fonseca and Domingues 2018). However, several problems and challenges can arise during the implementation of these sustainability frameworks within organizations (Sorooshian and Yee 2019). In this case study, it was observed that negotiating responsibilities and resources to implement a standard and comply with its requirements is critical to the successful embedding of sustainability within organizations that adopt sustainability frameworks, such as ISO environmental management and quality standards. Innovation. The third category of results, referring to sustainability, consists of new innovations integrated into an organization's processes. The focus of these process innovations in terms of sustainability is the subject of negotiations, since sustainability is also a topic of discussion within an organization. Hence, not only technological innovations but also organizational and other kinds of innovations can emerge in interactions between stakeholders and employees of a company. For example, process innovations and other types of innovations with a view to sustainability in a human resources department could be the subject of green HRM research (Zhou et al. 2026, p. 4). The findings from the above case study, however, clearly go beyond the view of an organization from the perspective of sustainability and can be analyzed by research, because it was also proven that organizational innovations within a company can result from negotiations, where sustainability aspects are raised with employees and organizational economic aspects are also taken into consideration to find solutions that fulfill both sustainability and organizational requirements.

Comparison with other studies can help identify both commonalities and differences in the practices organizations implement to deliver sustainability in environmental contexts. One area of similarity with other sustainability practices within cooperatives, in particular, relates to environmental management and governance. For example, agricultural cooperatives in Honduras have had difficulty implementing environmental practices, in part due to their governance structures (Zolano et al., 2026). However, unlike the other

sustainability practices studied in this research, the main focus of this research has been to identify how negotiation can be used to address challenges in governance structures for the implementation of sustainability. A practice used by organizations to increase their environmental performance is environmental auditing. These have been used by rural properties in Ecuador, for example (Mieles-Giler et al., 2026). However, a major issue with environmental audits in organizations is enforcement. This research has also identified a role for negotiation in increasing the effectiveness of practices subject to weak enforcement. The study of the case analyzed in this paper has relevant implications for theories of negotiation, sustainability governance, and sustainability in organizations. The case findings indeed confirm the theories on these themes, but they also significantly extend them. The most relevant extension to the theories stems from the study's main finding: that, in reality, negotiation becomes a strategic mechanism that supports sustainability in organizations and, in doing so, is linked to sustainability governance and innovation within organizations. In summary, the interdependencies among negotiation, sustainability governance, and innovation within organizations are at the core of the study and its theoretical implications.

CONCLUSION

The case of Mega USA LLC demonstrates how companies from Latin America can compete in high-value-added markets in the United States. In addition to the successful internationalization of a Latin American company that competes with other suppliers of commodities within the Mercosur region, Mega USA LLC is a direct competitor to suppliers from around the world. To implement this strategy and effectively compete with Chinese import products, the company will need to rely on a tripod of three pillars: Logistics and Tax Intelligence, Operational and Digital Excellence, and Authentic ESG Commitment. 1. Logistics and Tax Intelligence: taking advantage of nearshoring (landbridge) through tools for tax intelligence. 2. Operational and Digital Excellence (by eliminating intermediaries by means of multichannel sales in marketplaces and by contracting the distribution centers). 3. Authentic commitment to ESG (manufacturing powered by green energy, community social responsibility, and zero waste). Contrary to Asian models, based on low labor costs and unsatisfactory environmental standards, Latin America can develop and compete globally by following a different path, filling niche markets of high added value and setting a new gold standard for successful multinational manufacturing companies. Mega USA LLC exemplifies this model and surpasses competitors in Corporate Governance, Technical Quality, and Socio-Environmental Responsibility.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Research on this single case study can be useful for future comparative research among organizations from different sectors. The findings presented in this paper are particularly relevant to organizations in Latin America, as this region presents a wide array of governance and sustainability-related challenges across countries. A longitudinal research design would be particularly relevant, as it could allow for monitoring changes in negotiation dynamics and in an organization’s sustainability framework over time. Research that combines qualitative findings with quantitative measures of a given organization’s environmental and social performance (Okay et al., 2026) can yield a more comprehensive

assessment of outcomes than research that relies solely on qualitative findings. Finally, research examining interdependencies among an organization's governance system, sustainability framework, and its negotiation processes, as well as recent developments in digital governance and green human resource management (de Oliveira et al., 2026; Zhou et al., 2026), can be useful for extending current theoretical frameworks.

Competing Interests

We declare that we have no competing interests.

Funding

This research has received no funding.

Declaration of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the manuscript preparation process

During the preparation of this work the authors used Grammarly, in order to in order to improve grammar accuracy, ensure clarity of expression, and refine sentence flow and enhance readability. Microsoft Copilot was used to support idea organization, provide suggestions for strengthening academic style, and to compose the cover letter. After using these tools, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the published article.

REFERENCES

Araujo, M. V., Dias, M. (2026). Thematic Analysis of Project Management Practices: Exploring Sustainability, Governance, And Innovation in Construction and Beyond. Journal of Law and Sustainable Development, 14(6), e04684. https://doi.org/10.55908/sdgs.v14i6.4684

Biondo, D. & Dias, M. (2025) From Positions to Interests: Strategic Negotiation in a Soy Processing Plant Project. IPHO-Journal of Advance Research in Agriculture and Environmental Science, 3(11), 17-30. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18045923

Da Fonseca, L. M. C. M. (2015). ISO 14001: 2015: An improved tool for sustainability. Journal of Industrial Engineering and Management, 8(1), 37-50.

da Rocha, L. P. F., & Bastos, R. Z. (2026). Regulariza Pará e a efetividade do Cadastro Ambiental Rural de Povos e Comunidades Tradicionais (CAR/PCT): Desafios e oportunidades para a governança ambiental na Amazônia. Research, Society and Development, 15(4), e10015450873-e10015450873.

de Oliveira, G. N., Correa, H. V., & Leão, R. M. R. (2026). Sustentabilidade tecnológica na gestão universitária: a emissão de diploma digital como inovação. Revista Brasileira de Educação Ambiental (RevBEA), 21(1), 42-61.

Elkington, J. (2001). The triple bottom line for 21st century business. The Earthscan reader in business and sustainable development, 136, 20-43.

Elkington, J. (2002). Corporate strategy in the chrysalis economy. Corporate Environmental Strategy, 9(1), 5-12.

Elkington, J. (2006). Governance for sustainability. Corporate governance: an international review, 14(6), 522-529.

Elkington, J., Emerson, J., & Beloe, S. (2006). The value palette: A tool for full spectrum strategy. California Management Review, 48(2), 6-28.

Farag, M. I. H. (2026). Sustainability as a Management Strategy: Integrating Environmental, Social, and Governance Practices into Business Administration. Management Science Advances, 3(1), 20-44.

Ferreira, C. D. S., Poltronieri, C. F., & Gerolamo, M. C. (2019). ISO 14001: 2015 and ISO 9001: 2015: analyse the relationship between these management systems standards and corporate sustainability. Gestão & Produção, 26(4), e3906.

Fonseca, L. M., & Domingues, J. P. (2018). Exploratory research of ISO 14001: 2015 transition among Portuguese organizations. Sustainability, 10(3), 781.

Gomes, F. B., Campos, M. V., de Oliveira, I. M., dos Santos Santos, D., Nascimento, D. A., & Júnior, W. D. S. P. (2026). Gestão ambiental: desafios contemporâneos e perspectivas para a sustentabilidade. Revista ft, 30(158), 01-07.

International Organization for Standardization. (2015). Environmental management systems - Requirements with guidance for use (ISO Standard No. 14001:2015).

International Organization for Standardization. (2015). Quality management systems — Requirements (ISO 9001:2015).

López, G. A. C., Masacón, N. Ú. H., Valero, M. F. F., & Barzola, C. C. P. (2026). Responsabilidad social empresarial y gestión ambiental. Sinergia Académica, 9(6), 750-760.

Lutete, A. K. (2025). Evolution of ISO Management Systems: A Critical Analysis. IUP Journal of Operations Management, 24(2).

Mieles-Giler, J. W., Zapata-Velasco, M. L., Guerrero-Calero, J. M., & Cruz-Macias, B. A. (2026). Evaluación de la eficacia de las auditorías ambientales como herramienta de mejora del desempeño ambiental en organizaciones productivas del Ecuador. Innova Science Journal, 4(1), 255-265.

Okay, N. C., Sencer, A., & Taskin, N. (2026). Quantitative indicators for environmental and social sustainability performance assessment of the supply chain. Environment, Development and Sustainability, 28(3), 6049-6069.

Poltronieri, C. F., Leite, L. R., & Sousa, S. R. (2021). Environmental Management Systems. Life Cycle Engineering and Management of Products: Theory and Practice, 255.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2009). Research methods for business students (5th ed.). Pearson Education.

Sinuraya, C., & Sudibyo, Y. A. (2026). Implementation of environmental management accounting and strategy for competitive advantage with the role of green innovation as an intervening variable. Asian Journal of Management, Entrepreneurship and Social Science, 6(01), 327-348.

Sorooshian, S., & Yee, L. S. (2019). Demotivating factors affecting the implementation of ISO 14001: 2015 in Malaysia. Environmental Quality Management, 29(2), 85-95.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory (2nd ed.). Sage.

United Nations Global Compact. (2026) Principles of responsible production and consumption (SDG 12). Retrieved on 30.06.2026 from https://www.unglobalcompact.org

Yin, R. K. (2004). The Case Study anthology. Sage Publications.

Zhou, X., Wang, J., Guo, Y., & Niu, M. (2026). The impact of green human resource management on employee green innovative behavior: role of environmental enthusiasm and organizational innovation support perception. Employee Relations: The International Journal, 48(1), 106-134.

Zolano, E. J. H., Zolano, C. Y. H., dos Santos, V. V., Messias, H. C., & Basso, D. (2026). Prácticas De Gestión Ambiental en Cooperativas De Honduras, De Acuerdo Con El Censo Nacional De 2025. Revista Ibero-Americana de Humanidades, Ciências e Educação, 12(2), 1-15.