

JYU DISSERTATIONS 728

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**Valtteri A. Aaltonen**

# Organising Responsible Management Education

Examining the Processuality and  
Possibilities Towards Planetary Well-being

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JYVÄSKYLÄ UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS

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Esitetään Jyväskylän yliopiston kauppakorkeakoulun suostumuksella  
julkisesti tarkastettavaksi yliopiston vanhassa juhlasalissa S212  
joulukuun 13. päivänä 2023 kello 12.

Academic dissertation to be publicly discussed, by permission of  
the Jyväskylä University School of Business and Economics,  
in building Seminarium, auditorium S212, on December 13, 2023 at 12 o'clock noon.



JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO  
UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

JYVÄSKYLÄ 2023

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Cover photo by Valtteri A. Aaltonen.

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ISBN 978-951-39-9853-0 (PDF)

URN:ISBN:978-951-39-9853-0

ISSN 2489-9003

Permanent link to this publication: <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-951-39-9853-0>

## ABSTRACT

Aaltonen, Valtteri A.

Organising Responsible Management Education: Examining the Processuality and Possibilities Towards Planetary Well-being

Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä, 2023, 81 p. (+ included articles)

(JYU Dissertations

ISSN 2489-9003; 728)

ISBN 978-951-39-9853-0 (PDF)

This qualitative article-based dissertation examines responsible management education in Finnish business schools. Two articles in the dissertation apply thematic analysis to data consisting of 46 qualitative interviews with administrative personnel, teachers, and researchers in the faculties of Finnish business schools, as well as study guides from Finnish business schools. The third article conceptualises education for planetary well-being. My thesis is built on the premise that responsible management education in academic institutions is a processual phenomenon, and I investigate this from three perspectives.

More specifically, in the research articles I show:

1. how authenticity and becoming authentic is an important process of embedding responsible management education placing emphasis on parallel style of process theory,
2. how recognition of rhythms of organising is an example of processuality that can be called recursive, and
3. how the ontological and pedagogical dialogue of education for planetary well-being is a way to develop conjunctive processuality both in the practice of management education, and in the theoretical pluralism towards interdisciplinary encounters.

In addition, I provide managerial suggestions aligned with the new theorem for humanity which is presented in article 3:

*Responsibility for planetary well-being is the new measure of humanity.*

Keywords: responsible management education, accreditations, authenticity, planetary well-being, organisation studies, rhythm, process theory.

## TIIVISTELMÄ

Aaltonen, Valtteri A.

Vastuullisuus kauppätieteiden koulutuksessa: prosessuaalisuuden tarkastelua ja reittejä kohti planetaarista hyvinvointia.

Jyväskylä: Jyväskylän yliopisto, 2023, 81 s. (+ artikkelit)

(JYU Dissertations

ISSN 2489-9003; 728)

ISBN 978-951-39-9853-0 (PDF)

Tässä laadullisessa artikkeliväitöskirjassa tarkastellaan vastuullista kauppätieteiden koulutusta suomalaisissa kauppakorkeakouluissa. Väitöskirjan kaksi artikkelia soveltavat temaattista analyysiä tutkimusaineistoon, joka koostuu 46 laadullisesta haastattelusta Suomen kauppakorkeakoulujen hallinnon edustajien, opettajien ja tutkijoiden kanssa sekä suomalaisten kauppakorkeakoulujen opinto-oppaista. Kolmas artikkeli on käsitteellinen tutkimus planetaarisen hyvinvoinnin koulutuksesta. Opinnäytetyöni rakentuu näkemykselle, että vastuullinen kauppätieteiden koulutus akateemisissa instituutioissa on prosessuaalinen ilmiö, ja tutkin tätä kolmesta näkökulmasta.

Tarkemmin tutkimusartikkeleissa osoitan:

1. että autenttisuus ja autenttiseksi tuleminen ovat tärkeitä prosesseja vastuullisen kauppätieteiden koulutuksen juurruttamisessa, korostaen rinnakkaista prosessiteorian tyyliä,
2. kuinka organisoinnin rytmien tunnistaminen on esimerkki prosessuaalisuudesta, jota voidaan kutsua rekursiiviseksi, ja
3. kuinka planetaarisen hyvinvoinnin koulutuksen ontologinen ja pedagoginen vuoropuhelu ovat tapoja kehittää konjunkttiivista prosessuaalisuutta sekä kauppätieteiden koulutuksen käytännössä että teoreettisessa monimuotoisuudessa kohti tieteidenvälisiä kohtaamisia.

Lisäksi tarjoan käytännön suosituksia, jotka soveltavat artikkelissa 3 esitettyä ihmiskunnan uutta teoremaa:

*Vastuunkanto planetaarisesta hyvinvoinnista on ihmisyyden uusi mitta.*

Asiasanat: vastuullisuus, kestävä kehitys, planetaarinen hyvinvointi, akkreditoinnit, autenttisuus, kauppakorkeakoulut, organisaatioteoria, liikkeenjohdollinen koulutus, prosessiteoria, rytmi.

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## ESIPUHE

Syksyllä 2023 on käynyt selväksi, että maapallon ilmaston lämpenemisen rajoittaminen Pariisiin ilmastopöytäkirjassa sovittuun 1,5 asteeseen näyttää mahdottomalta, ja kuusi yhdeksästä planetaarisesta rajasta on ylitetty. Vaikka tilanne vaikuttaa toivottomalta, ikuisena optimistina koen, että on vain sinnikkäästi etsittävä uusia mahdollisuuksia ja luotava toivoa planeetalle ja sen monimuotoiselle elämälle paremmasta tulevaisuudesta. Toivon, että tämä väitöskirjatyö nähdään osana tätä kontekstia.

Helsingin yliopistossa vielä teologian maisterin opintoja suorittaessani minulla oli käsitys, että kauppakorkeakoulut edustavat ideoita, jotka ovat haitallisia planeetalle ja ihmisille. Näiden opintojen aikana suoritin Study module in Corporate Responsibility -sivuaineen Hankenilla, joka laajensi käsitystäni kauppakorkeakouluissa tehtävästä tutkimuksesta ja koulutuksesta. Kiitän tutkijatohtori Nikodemus Solitanderia ja professori Martin Fougèrea siitä, että minulle avautui näkymä johtamisen ja organisaatioiden alalle ja sain idean hakeutumisesta jatko-opintoihin. Löysin ohjaajat ja puitteet tutkimustyölleni Jyväskylän yliopistosta. Kauppakorkeakoulujen yhteiskunnallisesta vaikutuksesta erityisesti koulutuksen osalta tuli tutkimukseni aihe, jonka ongelman yksi haastattelemistani henkilöistä kuvasi seuraavalla tavalla:

”Jos minulta kysyttäisi, mikä olisi kauppakorkeakoulujen kontribuutio, niin kyllä ne minun mielestäni pitäisi suurimmaksi osaksi lakkauttaa. Jos halutaan kaupallisia korkeakoulu- ja ammattitutkintoja, niin tehdään niin, tuotetaan niitä, mutta se tutkimus pitäisi alkaa ihan toisella tavalla vastaamaan nykyajan haasteisiin. Siinä se kipukohta on.” (Haastateltava 19)

Tämä on symbolisesti se, mitä pyrin kertomaan kansikuvallani. Kuvassa on kääpä. Päällisin puolin kääpä näyttää siltä, että se tappaa puun, jonka rungossa se elää. Oikeastaan käävät kuitenkin tekevät kuolevasta tai jo kuolleesta puusta uutta elämää. Näin kauppakorkeakoulujenkin kuuluisi tehdä – osoittaa yhteiskunnallisen merkityksensä monimuotoista elämää mahdollistavina tutkimuksen ja koulutuksen tiloina. Väitöskirjassani ilmaisen, että kyseinen muutos on kuitenkin prosessi, joka edellyttää vuoropuhelua ja yhteistyötä. Teorioiden ja pedagogisten ajatusten lisäksi myös käytännön tasolla väitöskirjatyöni on perustunut monenlaiseen yhteistyöhön, vuorovaikutukseen ja apuun. Seuraavaksi esitän kiitokseni tutkimukseni kannalta tärkeille tahoille.

Ensinnäkin on todettava, että ilman Jyväskylän yliopiston kauppakorkeakoulun, Liikesivistysrahaston ja Jenny ja Antti Wihurin rahaston apurahoja, ja mahdollisuutta työskennellä väitöskirjatutkijana, tämän väitöskirjan kirjoittaminen ei olisi ollut mahdollista. Haluan kiittää Jyväskylän yliopistoa, Johtamisen oppiainetta ja säätiöitä, jotka ovat tarjonneet puitteet työskentelylleni. Kiitos myös Jyväskylän yliopiston kauppakorkeakoulun dekaanille professori Hanna-Leena Pesoselle vastuullisuusteemojen edistämisessä kauppatieteiden koulutuksessa ja laajemmin myös Suomen yliopistoissa. Jatko-opinnoissa Jyväskylän yliopistossa, KATAJAN tarjoamana eri yliopistoissa ja Principles for Responsible Management Education yhteistyön kautta pohjoismaisissa kauppakorkeakou-

luissa pääsin jalostamaan omaa ymmärrystäni vastuullisuudesta liiketoiminnassa ja sen koulutuksessa. Tutkimukseeni osallistuneet henkilöt, kiitän myös teitä tutkimukseni mahdollistamisesta ja siitä mitä olen keskustelujemme kautta oppinut.

Kiitän sydämeni pohjasta väitöskirjatyöni pääohjaajaa apulaisprofessori Marjo Siltaojaa, joka on luottanut minuun myös vaikeina hetkinä. Kokemuksesi ja tietosi akatemiasta ja siihen kuuluvista keinoista ja periaatteista ovat olleet mittaamattoman tärkeitä vipuvarsia tutkijuuteni muotoutumisessa. Kiitän myös kaikista yhteisistä keskusteluistamme, jotka on pitänyt toistuvasti palauttaa kunkin päivän agendaan. Mutta minkä sille voi, kun luontaisesti etsii vaihtoehtoisia näkökulmia ja tapoja organisoitua. Näistä keskusteluista ne mehukkaimmat teoreettiset vertauskuvatkin löytyvät!

Suuret kiitokset myös professori Tuomo Takalalle ja professori Miikka Pyykköselle, jotka ovat avustaneet väitöskirjatyöni monissa vaiheissa tärkeillä neuvoilla ja suosituksilla. Ohjausryhmän tapaamiset olivat poikkeuksetta antoisia tarjotessaan myös kiinnostavia häivähdyksiä vuosia jatkuneiden yhteistyötilanteiden jatkumoista, joihin ymmärrän nyt päässeeni osalliseksi. Erityiskiitokset esitän väitöskirjani esitarkastajille professori Pasi Heikkuriselle ja apulaisprofessori Simon Parkerille. Heidän antamallaan neuvoilla pystyin kirkastamaan väitöskirjani viestiä ja sitomaan sitä paremmin olemassa oleviin keskusteluihin.

Haluan kiittää myös JYU.Wisdom – resurssiviisausyhteisöä, ja yhteisön johtajaa professori Janne Kotiahoa, jotka ovat mahdollistaneet planeetan hyvinvointia edistäviä avauksia linkittyen myös omaan tutkimukseeni. Erityisesti kiitän *Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Planetary Well-being* -kirjan toimituskuntaa, ja tutkijatohtori Merja Eloa ja professori Sanna Karkulehtoa kirjanlukumme toimitusyhteistyöstä. Kanssakirjoittajat, professori Hannu Heikkinen, yliopistonlehtori Heidi Layne, yliopisto-opettaja Mikko Hiljanen, tutkijatohtorit Anna Lehtonen ja Niina Mykrä, ja väitöskirjatutkijat Meri Löyttyniemi ja Anu Virtanen, yhteinen matkamme tämän kirjanluvun parissa oli ajoittain vaativaa koska jouduimme ja pääsimme ylittämään oppiaineiden ja tiedekuntien rajoja. Loppujen lopuksi olen kuitenkin äärimmäisen kiitollinen, että sain kirjoittaa tämän luvun yhdessä teidän kanssanne siltoja rakentaen. Kiitokset myös yliopistonlehtori Panu Halmeelle avusta väitöskirjani kannen kuvituksen kanssa.

Kiitokset professori Kimmo Alajoutsijärvi, apulaisprofessori Katariina Juusola, professori Jill Brown, professori Todd Bridgman, professori Cory Searcy, professori James Weber, professori Karen Paul, professori Hanna Lehtimäki, apulaisprofessori Pedro Monteiro, apulaisprofessori Jukka Rintamäki, lehtori Teppo Sintonen, tutkijatohtori Melina Aarnikoivu ja kaikki muut, jotka ovat antaneet palautetta teksteistäni ja esityksistäni tutkimuksen eri vaiheissa. Kiitokset yliopistonopettaja Simon Oldham kielenhuollosta artikkeleitteni ja väitöskirjan johdantoluvun osalta. Palautteista ja neuvoista huolimatta työhöni jääneet virheet ovat kuitenkin luonnollisesti vain minun.

Konferenssit ja ideoiden testailu erilaisissa yhteyksissä voi olla ratkaisevan tärkeää nuorelle tutkijalle. Esimerkiksi kesällä 2019 European Group for Organizational Studiesin konferenssissa Edinburghissa professori Gili Drori



johdatteli minut organisoitumisen käsitteen äärelle. Myös Academy of Managementin ja International Association for Business & Society vuosikonferenssit, Tampereen yliopiston vastuullisen liiketoiminnan tutkimuspäivät, Hankenin Responsible Organising - ja Unifin kestävyys- ja vastuullisuusseminaarit ovat olleet tärkeä osa viime vuosieni rytmiä.

Tutkijan työhön kuuluu paljon vapautta, mutta vapaus on totta vain ystävien ja yhdessä vietettyjen hetkien myötä. Ystävien ja kollegoiden kanssa tulee jaettava tunteet, joita tutkimuksen tekemisen epävarmuuksien, mahdollisuuksien, onnistumisten ja pettymysten äärellä riittää. Kiitokset vertaistuesta, kannustuksesta ja kollegiaalisesta yhteisöstä REDAS tutkimusryhmän jäsenet - Niilo, Ida, Minna, Dinesh, Yusuf ja muut, väitöskirjaretriitin porukka, HigherEd ECRs in Finland ja tutkimustyöni alussa Vasemmistofoorumin tutkijayhteisö, joka tarjosi minulle myös työtilan.

Kiitos Jälleenrakentajat - Kimmo, Disa ja Juho - yhteistyöstä ja kokouksiemme 'check-in'eistä, joissa olette monen monta kertaa kuulleet mitä tutkijan mielessä on liikkunut. Simon, kun tapasin sinut Bristolissa British Academy of Managementin konferenssissa syksyllä 2018 en osannut arvata, että tulisimme kokemaan yhdessä monta seminaaria ja konferenssia eri puolilla maailmaa - kiitos jaetusta matkasta! Martti kiitän sinua läpivalaisevasta ja puhdistavasta vuoropuhelustamme, johon kuuluvat loputtomat juonittelut, saunat ja purjeveneet.

Lopuksi - äiti ja isä, kiitän teitä kaikesta tuesta, jonka olen teiltä saanut vuosien varrella! Kiitokset myös appiukkonni Jyrki, ja liian varhain menehtynyt anoppini. Vanhempieni ja appivanhempieni antamalla esimerkeillä kumppanuudesta ja oman tien kulkemisesta on ollut tärkeä merkitys työssäni. Erityiskiitokset 'Gasthaus Häkkiselle' lämpimästä vieraanvaraisuudesta visiiteilläni Jyväskylässä. Olen kiitollinen myös siitä, että olen voinut jakaa tutkijan elämää veljeni, kälyjeni ja lankojeni ja heidän puolisoitensa kanssa. Lämmin kiitos myös lukuisille muille perheen ja ystävien joukkoon lukeutuville ihmisille.

Suurimman kiitoksen osoitan kuitenkin parhaalle ystävälleni ja elämäni rakkaudelle Iirikselle. Vaikka yliopisto ja tutkimus on opettanut paljon - sinä olet opettanut minua uskomaan itseeni. Kiitos, että olet jakanut tämän kaiken, ilot ja surut ja kaiken siltä väliltä tutkimuksessa, työssä ja vanhemmuudessa - elämässä. Rakkaudentäyteisimmät kiitokset esitän viimeiseksi lapsilleni Oivalle, Intolle ja Alvalle. Olette opettaneet ja tulette jatkossakin opettamaan mitä elämän prosessuaalinen luonne tarkoittaa. Koskaan ei voi täysin tietää mitä seuraavaksi tapahtuu - se on parasta ja kamalinta maailmassa, mutta siksi myös pitkälti elämän suola.

Espoossa 17.11.2023  
Valtteri Aaltonen

## LIST OF ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS

- I. Aaltonen VA and Siltaoja M (2022) How they walk the talk: Responsible management education in Finnish business schools. *Business Ethics, the Environment and Responsibility*, 31, 1117- 1135. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/beer.12456>
- II. Aaltonen VA and Siltaoja M (unpublished manuscript) The rhythms of organising responsible management education.
- III. Aaltonen VA, Hiljanen M, Layne H, et al. (2023) Education for planetary well-being. In Elo M, Hytönen J, Karkulehto S, et al. (eds) *Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Planetary Well-Being* London: Routledge, pp.246-258. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003334002-24>

In dialogue with the instructions given and comments made by his co-authors, the author of this thesis made research design choices, applied independently collected data, conducted the analyses, engaged with scholarly community with these studies, and wrote this dissertation report on the three publications.

## FIGURE

Figure 1	Relationship of theory and data according to Abend (2008: 190 and Alexander, 1982) .....	66
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## TABLE

Table 1	The Categories of theories according to Abend (2008) and Harris et al. (2013) .....	19
Table 2	The Summary of the dissertation.....	22
Table 3	Information on the Interviews .....	42
Table 4	The Process of data analysis .....	45
Table 5	Summary of the article 1 .....	50
Table 6	Summary of the article 2 .....	52
Table 7	Summary of the article 3 .....	54

# CONTENTS

ABSTRACT  
TIIVISTELMÄ (ABSTRACT IN FINNISH)  
ESIPUHE  
FIGURES AND TABLES  
CONTENTS

PART I: INTRODUCTORY ESSAY .....	13
1 INTRODUCTION .....	15
1.1 The past and the future paths for organising and theorising RME... 15	
1.2 The research objectives .....	24
2 KEY CONCEPTS OF THE STUDY .....	27
2.1 The positioning of the study .....	27
2.2 The previous research on RME and the conceptual need for planetary well-being.....	28
2.2.1 The assessment of sustainability in management education....	28
2.2.2 The solutions for organising RME.....	30
2.2.3 The faculty level struggles and responsible management education .....	32
2.2.4 RME and the concept of planetary well-being.....	32
2.3 Authenticity- and prestige-driven change .....	34
2.4 The rhythms of organising .....	35
2.5 Planetary well-being.....	36
3 RESEARCH DESIGN.....	38
3.1 Philosophical positioning of the study .....	38
3.2 The context: Finnish business schools .....	40
3.3 Qualitative interview data.....	41
3.4 Qualitative secondary data.....	44
3.4.1 Sustainability assessment in higher education .....	44
3.5 Analysis of the data .....	45
3.5.1 The thematic analysis in the article 1 .....	46
3.5.2 The thematic analysis of the article 2 .....	47
3.6 Methodological limitations .....	47
4 SUMMARY AND THE KEY FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH.....	50
4.1 Article 1: How they walk the talk: Responsible management education in Finnish business schools.....	50
4.2 Article 2: The rhythms of organising responsible management education.....	52
4.3 Article 3: Education for planetary well-being .....	54

5	CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION.....	57
5.1	Authenticity occurs through process.....	57
5.1.1	Authenticity .....	58
5.1.2	The embedding of RME and the process of becoming authentic .....	60
5.2	Processuality in the rhythms of organising .....	61
5.3	Process towards management education for planetary well-being ....	63
5.3.1	Conjunctive processes from planetary well-being.....	64
5.4	Practical contributions and managerial implications of the study....	66
5.5	Suggestions for further research.....	68
	REFERENCES.....	70
	PART II: THE ARTICLES .....	81

## **PART I: INTRODUCTORY ESSAY**

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 The past and the future paths for organising and theorising RME

The subject of this dissertation is responsible management education (RME<sup>1</sup>). This dissertation consists of an introductory essay and three individual studies. Two of the studies have a qualitative and empirical focus on the topic of RME—i.e., degree-level education provided by business schools - connected to the themes of responsibility, sustainability, ethics etc. The third study is an introduction to the concept of *education for planetary well-being* which is argued to be relevant also for the field of RME.

The primary purpose of this dissertation is to examine the processuality of organising RME by investigating how the concepts of authenticity and rhythms of organising could contribute to management education for planetary well-being. By processuality, I refer to a process-based research approach where the empirical focus of the study is "on evolving phenomena, and it draws on theorising that explicitly incorporates temporal progressions of activities as elements of explanation and understanding" (Langley et al., 2013: 1). Organisations are "systems of coordinated action" (March and Simon 1993: 2), and according to the Cambridge Dictionary, 'to organise' refers to making arrangements for something to happen. This thesis employs a 'model-theoretic' (Harris et al., 2013) approach to theorising, leaning on a comprehensive understanding of what theory (Abend, 2008) and its contributions can be in organisation studies (Locke and Golden-Biddle, 1997).

I consider the investigation of processuality meaningful due to the temporality of this phenomenon. RME is no longer a niche of some pioneer schools; it began as a promotion of business ethics education in the late 20th

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<sup>1</sup> In articles 1 and 2 we followed Moosmayer et al. (2020: xxvii) definition that "RME is an umbrella term that captures a systemic approach of sustainability, the behavioural aspects of ethics, and an interdependent stakeholder approach of responsibility applied in the curricular activities of business schools."

century (see Ghoshal, 2005; Murillo and Vallentin, 2016). Today, RME is a mainstream phenomenon supported by the United Nations (UN) initiative Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) and international accreditation agencies (Moosmayer et al., 2020; Morsing, 2021). Business schools are now focused not on whether or not to implement RME, but on how and what the results of RME in action are. With the passion of scholars in this field combined with the support from key institutions, this agenda for responsible management education has resulted in a thriving literature (see Moosmayer et al., 2020; Fougère and Solitander, 2023).

Another rationale for the significance of processuality lies in the perspectives stemming from the incremental change approach, a general assumption for organising RME, and from the standpoint that business schools should not exist at all due to their legacy of a detrimental impact on life on Earth (Parker, 2018). This detrimental legacy has been traced to the core assumptions in management education including an organisation-centred worldview in which the economic benefits of businesses are given as the main societal concern (Giacalone and Thompson, 2006). When RME has often emerged as an add-on to these kinds of assumptions, the result has been deemed questionable (Rasche, Gilbert, and Schedel, 2013; Fougère and Solitander, 2023).

The temporal dynamics and the struggles surrounding the core assumptions in the organising of RME legitimise my processual investigation of the past and current situations of this topic reaching also towards possibilities of management education for planetary well-being. Next, I will outline the theoretical context of this study.

The most popular topics in responsible management learning and education (RMLE) have focused on the current curricular situations (Wu et al., 2010; Painter-Morland et al., 2016), the ways for embedding / integrating RME to business schools (Rusinko, 2010; Solitander et al., 2012; Beddewela, Anchor and Warin, 2020), and studies examining issues in the embedding of RME (Murillo and Vallentin, 2016; Rasche et al., 2015; Painter-Morland, 2015). Further a significant emphasis have been placed upon pedagogic solutions focused on how RME can be realised in the classroom (Shrivastava, 2010; Fougère, Solitander and Young, 2014; Allen, Cunliffe and Easterby-Smith, 2019; Keshtiban, Gatto and Callahan, 2023; Mavin et al., 2023) and how faculty or students have viewed the phenomenon (Beddewela et al., 2017).

In terms of theoretical orientations in this field, one that has been used is neo-institutional theory (Rasche and Gilbert, 2015; Snelson-Powell, Grosvold and Millington, 2016; Preuss et al., 2023). In these studies, for example, the condition of decoupling – i.e., the communicated importance of RME agenda and how the talk is walked in the implementation phase – or how the different institutional pressures result engagement with RME – have been examined. Other significant theories focus on the pedagogy, for example, the debate about importance of reflexivity as a skill for the individual (Hibbert and Cunliffe, 2015; Allen, Cunliffe and Easterby-Smith, 2019) and as an organisational perspective (Roscoe, 2020). Another more theoretical approach has been the pragmatic / critical approach,



which has its emphasis on pluralism and reflexivity, and how these are viewed as the basis for the learning in business schools (Fougère and Solitander, 2023; Kurucz et al., 2014; Murillo and Vallentin, 2016; Perriton and Reynolds, 2018). This pragmatic approach can be aligned with the call for critical management education (Grey, 2004; Perriton and Reynolds, 2004, 2018) which has problematised the normativity – the unannounced but prevalent values – in the management education as the source of detrimental impacts of business school, primarily through calling for reflexivity and pluralism. Some studies have presented principles for overcoming barriers and integrating RME in the curriculum and wider business school organisation with less emphasis on theory (Rusinko, 2010; Solitander et al., 2012; Painter-Morland et al., 2016).

While above studies and perspectives can be viewed as complementary for RME as a phenomenon, simultaneously some scholars have suggested that this field is fragmented “in terms of the diversity of issues, methodologies, theoretical frameworks or approaches, research issues promoted, and in the sheer diversity of the implications proposed” (Figueiró and Raufflet, 2015: 31; see Stephens and Graham, 2010). Figueiró and Raufflet (2015: 31) further argued that:

this “research area” is rather a social and cognitive space in which management faculty reflect on and share their individual and specific praxis relating to the enhancement of sustainability in management education; at present, it is not a research field in which a dominant or cohesive understanding of sustainability in management education could emerge.

The above systematic literature review was published in 2015 and after that several important studies have been published. Nevertheless, this view that ‘a dominant or cohesive understanding of’ RMLE is impossible is worth highlighting because there have not been claims to believe that reasons for this statement would have changed. In this thesis, however, I am willing to challenge this relatively pessimistic statement because it is often ambiguous what the word theory (‘dominant or cohesive understanding’) implies.

According to Abend (2008) the meaning of the word ‘theory’ (including theorise and theoretical) is often vague in the social sciences although clear theoretical contributions are a requirement in scientific publications. The word theory can be interpreted with number of meanings from very ordinary statements in daily life (‘it works in theory, but not in practice’) to abstract scientific models and variables (Abend, 2008; Harris et al., 2013 see Table 1 for summary).

Abend (2008) identified seven ways theory can be understood in social sciences, and with this he argued towards affirmative pluralism. Harris et al. (2013) highlighted that most often theory implies knowledge accumulation with law-statement theorising, where grand theories, such as, stakeholder theory or neo-institutional theory are considered as the benchmark for verification and comparison for new research and its contributions explain the rigid challenges in this endeavour. According to them a ‘model-theoretic’ perspective of knowledge accumulation is more dynamic and tilts towards something new rather than a law-statement model, because in this perspective “studies develop

representations that more closely match empirical settings” whereas law-statement perspective aims to “verify the axioms of the general model in empirical settings” (Harris et al., 2013: 446). When something new, such as the literature of RMLE, is being built, it is arduous to study and verify the empirical context with general models of inquiry (law-statement perspective). In model-theoretic perspective the emphasis is on empirical settings, that offer the development for the theoretical representations of the phenomenon.

In terms of Abend’s (2008) presentation of seven understandings of theory (theory<sub>1</sub>–theory<sub>7</sub>, see Table 1) the literature on RMLE shows theoretical pluralism in this field, which is an alternative approach that by-passes the concern about lack of cohesive understanding in this field (Figueiró and Raufflet, 2015).

While there are obvious theoretical possibilities in categorising the existing RMLE literature to Abend’s (2008) and Harris et al. (2013) framings, in this thesis this framework acts primarily as a tool for methodological reflection. This framework is applied especially in the argumentation of theoretical contributions in this thesis. Therefore, the following suggestions of how existing RMLE research could be fitted to this framework are only tentative and remain open for debate.

For example, Lozano and Young (2013) study implies theory<sub>1</sub> by examining the variables of student enrolment and study credits of RME studies. Snelson-Powell et al. (2016) implies theory<sub>2</sub> as they test how different conditions of business schools result decoupling and tight coupling of RME. Further, there are examples of theory<sub>4</sub> such as Fougère and Solitander (2023) and Perriton and Reynolds, (2018) which provide ‘critique’ of individual level moral burdening effect and a normative and narrow form of mainstream RME lacking the collective and potential for system level change. There are also models and matrices aligning with theory<sub>5</sub>, such as, Rusinko (2010) and those that fall to theory<sub>6</sub> and theory<sub>7</sub> (Rasche and Gilbert, 2015; Murillo and Vallentin, 2016; Parker, Racz and Palmer, 2020; Smith et al., 2023) by presenting the phenomenon of business schools and RME from alternative perspectives towards constructive new avenues.

In the end, while there is an absence of solid ground in terms of agreement of what RMLE is about, in a different light the diversity of this field can be also viewed as a richness with possibilities for processual understanding. In this essay I present three perspectives via the three articles which, I argue, offers a processual view to organising RME which embraces the theoretical pluralism (see Abend, 2008) of RMLE literature. But before closer examination of the RMLE and individual studies of this thesis some background for the process theory.

Table 1 The Categories of theories according to Abend (2008) and Harris et al. (2013)

Harris et al. (2013) categories	Abend's (2008) categories:	Description of Abend's (2008) categories
Law-statement perspective	Theory <sub>1</sub>	"(A) general proposition, or logically-connected system of general propositions, which establishes a relationship between two or more variables" (p. 177).
	Theory <sub>2</sub>	"This explanation should identify a number of 'factors' or 'conditions,' which individually should pass some sort of counterfactual test for causal relevance, and whose interaction effects should be somehow taken into account" (p. 178).
Model-theoretic perspective	Theory <sub>3</sub>	"--what theories <sub>3</sub> offer is an original 'interpretation,' 'reading,' or 'way of making sense' of a certain slice of the empirical world. They may shed new light on an empirical problem, help one understand some social process, or reveal what 'really' went on in a certain conjuncture" (p. 178).
	Theory <sub>4</sub>	"These 'studies' are variously described as 'interpretations,' 'analyses,' 'critiques,' 'hermeneutical reconstructions,' or 'exegeses.' They often involve the study of 'meaning,' in either of the two following meanings of 'meaning.' First, they may ask what the author of a text 'really' meant, that is, what she wanted to say when she wrote a particular passage (or essay, book, oeuvre)" (p. 179).
	Theory <sub>5</sub>	"--theories <sub>5</sub> focus on our conceptual and linguistic equipment – for example, the nature of the location from which we look at the social world, the lexicon and syntax by means of which we talk about it, the nature of our conceptual scheme, the categories into which we group things, and the logical relations that there can be between concepts.-- Theory <sub>5</sub> can be seen as providing one with an <i>a priori</i> framework (scheme, grid, map, net, plan), a framework that is independent from experience, logically prior to any contact with the social world. Thus, it would provide the conditions for the very possibility of experience (or, more conservatively, the conditions for the intelligibility of experience)." (p. 179)
	Theory <sub>6</sub> (also law-statement perspective possible)	"Lexicographers trace the etymology of the word 'theory' to the late Latin noun ' <i>theoria</i> ,' and the Greek noun ' <i>theōria</i> ' and verb ' <i>theōrein</i> ' (usually translated as "to look at," "to observe," "to see," or "to contemplate"). The connotations of these words include detachment, spectatorship, contemplation, and vision. This etymology notwithstanding, some people use the word 'theory' to refer to accounts that have a fundamental normative component. This usage I identify as theory <sub>6</sub> . For example, the contemporary projects of 'critical theory,' 'feminist theory,' and 'post-colonial theory' are explicitly normative ones, which

		usually reject the fact/ value dichotomy, and hence the supposedly value-neutral sociological theory” (p. 180).
	Theory <sub>7</sub>	Theory <sub>7</sub> 's focus “--may be described as ‘philosophical’ problems, insofar as they call for reflection upon the nature of knowledge, language, and reality, and some sort of conceptual analysis. In fact, most of these problems have been taken up in philosophy as well, usually under different rubrics, in a different voice, and in isolation from the sociological literature. To conclude with a reflexive note, the present paper might be said to be a ‘theory’ paper mostly in the sense of theory <sub>7</sub> ” (p. 181).

Cloutier and Langley (2020) have suggested that there are so called weak and strong approaches and four paths for process-based theoretical contributions. According to them linear and parallel theorising styles offer a weak approach to process theory implying focus on processes of ‘things’ (such as living entities, organisations etc.) and how they interact temporally, whereas recursive and conjunctive styles have a strong focus on process ontology that tears the whole existence of ‘things’ apart to interdependent processes of temporal interaction (Cloutier and Langley, 2020). Identification of these process-based theoretical lenses is, I argue, important for dynamic organising of future management education with the capacity for creating alternatives that the future of this planet and its life needs. The implicit processual character is the recurring theme of the three studies in this dissertation, and in this summative chapter I offer further developed theorising of this.

The article 1 (Aaltonen and Siltaoja, 2022) sets the scene by examining how the (non-)engagement with RME in the past has resulted in its current form through authenticity-driven (local and original context sensitive activities) and prestige-driven (accreditations), and a hybrid of these changes. This article aligns with a model-theoretic approach and theory<sub>5</sub> as the purpose is to interpret and understand the empirical conditions and offer contributions especially through context and conceptual application.

Article 2 (Aaltonen and Siltaoja, unpublished) examines the rhythms of organising RME by identifying linear rhythms with repetition and predetermined outcomes, and sequences of cyclical rhythms where the focus is more on the process than in the result. This study aligns with a model-theoretic perspective by presenting a new framework for assessing the implementation of RME. The theoretical category of this article is theory<sub>5</sub>, because there we interpret the situation of implementation by utilising Lefebvre’s (1992) linear and cyclical rhythms to organising RME as our main theoretical contribution.

Both the first and second article draw on qualitative content analysis of semi-structured interview and secondary data, such as curricular information. I arranged in total 46 interviews with faculty that had ‘organised’ RME either as teachers, researchers, curricular developers or in the school’s administration (with responsibilities to, for example, accreditations and PRME reporting) in the business schools of Finland.

The article 3 (Aaltonen et al., 2023) presents the conceptualisation of *education for planetary well-being* which is argued to be a new beginning towards planetary, not only human but also nonhuman well-being as the aim of (all not only business school) education. As a book chapter in an edited and peer-reviewed book *Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Planetary Well-Being* (Elo et al., 2023) by Jyväskylä University School of Resource Wisdom written by scholars from different fields, it also acts as a practical example of interdisciplinarity and dialogue that is viewed as necessary in establishing RME and the conditions for planetary well-being. In terms of theoretical category this study is aligned with theory7 as it presents metatheoretical perspectives of ontological and pedagogical dialogue.

Each of these three articles act as independent contributions to their theoretical context, but also as subparts of this thesis that distils the contributions to an argument with intrinsic theoretical value aligned with theory7 providing a process-based theoretical perspective to the future of RME and more impactful organising of RME.

The claim of this thesis is that a processual understanding of organising RME can act as the foundation for dynamic openness and the ability to establish alternatives both in research and practice. Reasoning for this necessity of processual consciousness derives from the complexity of interdependent planetary conditions and social systems which increasingly limits possibilities to predict the future. Therefore, the focus on process, what is happening here and what are the outcomes of these events, becomes a constructive approach forward. This conclusion is derived from the following independent studies.

In article 1 the focus was on the context of organising RME (dimensions of local, original, international, uniform). Here we examined the historical data of organising RME in Finland showing that local authenticity and global credibility, especially with accreditations, created a current heterogenous condition of RME in Finnish business school curricula (see article 1). In terms of Cloutier and Langley's (2020) division of processual approaches, the implicit process theoretical focus in this paper is on the parallel developments of identified authenticity- and prestige-driven changes visible in the curricula and testimonies of business school faculty. The conclusion of this study is that combination of genuine interest of authenticity and adaptability and utilisation of international standards can create alternatives for organising RME. Ultimately, however, the authenticity and global credibility of accreditations are the continuously flowing conditions of the processual character in organising RME.

In the article 2 we focused on the implementation, i.e., the active level of organising where the presence of external and internal conditions appears as identifiable rhythms: linear - repetition and continuity, and cyclical - processes and organisational readjustment. These rhythms of organising have an intrinsic character of processual movement of time, and energy, but in linear rhythms the outcome of action is predetermined, also dominating the preceding actions. In cyclical rhythms the focus is on the process and readjustment of organising, which can result also in alternative outcomes. Our findings suggest, for example,

that a linear rhythm of getting (re)accreditation for the business school is a source of cyclical rhythms where faculty can reflect and readjust their work and the school's curriculum with initiatives of RME being often essential in the accreditation process and in the policies implemented after accreditation. Here the implicit move with a process theoretical stance is towards Cloutier and Langley (2020) recursive approach as the linear and cyclical rhythms of organising can be translated to process in an ontological sense (not as process of tangible 'things'), and as the rhythms of organising can be identified as a pendulum having a constantly moving emphasis in between linear and cyclical. With this I refer to a condition that discretion and reflexivity, which are characteristic of cyclical rhythm (present, for example, in accreditation process), change to linear rhythm once the decision and action is performed.

In the third article we present perspectives to interaction and thought processes in the field of education. Our suggestion is that dialogue is a path for enabling transformative learning, i.e., adaptability with alternatives. In general dialogue refers to interaction and exchange of ideas and opinions. We present ontological and pedagogical dialogue as the principles of the education for planetary well-being drawing on, for example, Martin Buber's reciprocal and equal notion of 'I - Thou' (2004) as the foundation for our more-than-human conceptualisation of dialogue. Dialogue in the context of planetary well-being implies the process of being present and listening human or nonhuman entity that cohabits this planet with the underlying focus on the well-being of these entities, ecosystems, and the planet. In terms of Cloutier and Langley (2020) our conceptualisation implies a strong process ontological and conjunctive style as our emphasis on dialogue assumes the process of learning and transformation towards unknown, but more just and wise condition of consciousness.

The summary of this dissertation and its articles including research objectives for individual studies and this dissertation and from organisational perspective with main arguments from Table 2.

Table 2 The Summary of the dissertation

Study	Research objective (individual studies)	Research objective (in terms of the dissertation)	Organisational perspective	Argument
Article 1	How do Finnish business schools currently embed RME in their educational programmes? How does (non-)engagement with RME in the past	How does the concept of authenticity present processual understanding for organising RME?	Focus on the context of organising RME (dimensions of local, original, international, uniform)	Authenticity (local bottom-up initiatives) and accreditations (global top-down initiatives) create conditions

	explain the present situation?			for alternatives of embedding RME
<b>Article 2</b>	How the rhythms organise (the absence of) alternative outcomes?	How does the conceptualisations of rhythms of organising present processual understanding for organising RME?	Focus on active level of organising where the presence of external and internal conditions appears as identifiable rhythms (linear - repetition and continuity; cyclical - processes and organisational readjustment).	Rhythms of organising are decisive in creating spaces for continuity with dynamic alternatives also in terms of RME
<b>Article 3</b>	The key question is how to put into practice a form of education that promotes the necessary transformative learning and renewal of practices and that maintains a planetary state in which "organisms (including humans) can realize their typical characteristics and capacities" (Kortetmäki et al., 2021, p. 4).	How does the conceptualisation of 'education for planetary well-being' present processual understanding for organising RME?	Focus on presenting perspectives to interaction and thought processes in the field of education	Dialogue as an ontological and pedagogical principle can establish transformative learning which is a requirement in creating alternatives towards planetary well-being.

<b>Disser- tation as a whole:</b>	To examine the processuality of organising RME by investigating how the concepts of authenticity and rhythms of organising could contribute towards management education for planetary well-being		Processual understanding of organising RME with focus on context, active level of organising, and in the level of interaction and thought processes.	Processual understanding of organising RME can act as a foundation for dynamic openness and ability to establish alternatives both in research and practice.
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Next, I present the previous literature on RME and reasons for conceptualising education for planetary well-being, followed with more detailed research tasks of the articles.

## 1.2 The research objectives

The general research objective of this thesis is to examine the processuality of organising RME by investigating how the concepts of authenticity and rhythms of organising could contribute towards management education for planetary well-being. In terms of RMLE literature it is therefore complementary and constructive towards connections of past and future ideas and builds a hopeful vision of future both for the field of RMLE and in the practices of organising RME.

This research objective is divided into three articles. Each of the articles act as independent research articles providing contributions in their contexts with theory<sub>5</sub> approach in articles 1 and 2, and theory<sub>7</sub> in article 3, but simultaneously offer building blocks for understanding the processual dynamics of organising RME on three levels of inquiry offering theory<sub>7</sub> discussion in this thesis.

The research objective of article 1 was dual: First, the themes and terms of sustainability, ethics, and responsibility were mapped alongside the division of economic, environmental, social, and cross-cutting themes by posing the following question: *How do Finnish business schools currently embed RME in their educational programmes?* Second, the interview materials were analysed to answer the following question: *How does (non-)engagement with RME in the past explain the present situation?* This article aimed to offer theory<sub>5</sub> contribution in the literature on assessing the embedding of RME.

The processual understanding of RME is emphasized with a focus on the context of organising RME. A guiding question in terms of processual understanding in this article is 'how the organising of RME appears to the external audience'. In this study the concept of authenticity translates the themes



of local and originality of scholars (bottom-up) in the ways RME has been established. The concept of prestige then highlights the role of accreditations in the (top-down) organising of RME.

The research objective of article 2 is to identify and examine rhythms in the organising of RME with the research question *how do rhythms organise (the absence of) alternative outcomes?* With alternative outcomes we highlighted a distinction between the linear and cyclical rhythms of organising, enabling a more dynamic view of how changes occur (or not). In terms of a processual understanding of organising RME this study has its focus on an active level of organising where the external and internal dynamics appear as identifiable rhythms. Our conceptualisation of rhythms of organising aim to offer theory<sup>5</sup> theorising in the literature on organising RME.

The processual dynamics are explicitly present here as the linear and cyclical rhythms are conceptualisations of organisational processes that are moving in a certain direction. A guiding question in terms of processual understanding in this article is ‘how does the organising of RME appear as a processual rhythm?’ In this study it is illustrated how linear rhythms of repetition and predefined outcomes can create continuity, but cyclical rhythms of reflexivity, dialogue, and open-endedness with outcomes can create alternatives that change the earlier direction of organising. In the organising of RME we identified a clear majority of rhythms aligned with linearity, with normativity of publishing and academic career system, and how disciplines operate, but some of these linear rhythms also offered space for cyclical rhythms. Accreditation and PRME-related processes have a linear assumption of outcome, but reaching this outcome often facilitated sequences of cyclical rhythm where the curriculum could be revised or a school began reporting on RME related activities having affirmative impact in the faculty offering processual character to these actions. To highlight our findings, we developed a metaphor of linear heartbeat and cyclical deep breath, which offer a relatable idea of how the rhythms of organising can be felt.

The research objective of article 3 was to investigate how to put into practice a form of education that promotes the necessary transformative learning and renewal of practices in which “organisms (including humans) can realise their typical characteristics and capacities” in planetary scope (Kortetmäki et al., 2021: 4). The aim of this article was to present a theory<sup>7</sup> contribution in the field of education with applicability also in the field of management education.

This task aligns with a processual understanding of organising RME by presenting perspectives of interaction and thought processes in the field of education. Guiding questions for this article in terms of a processual understanding of organising RME are: ‘what are the possibilities and risks of using planetary well-being as the framework of change compared to concepts of sustainability and responsibility?’, and ‘how does the ontological and pedagogical dialogue differ from current practices of higher education?’ In this conceptual paper we present how education for planetary well-being can connect the earlier presented ideas of strong sustainability, and posthumanism (a focus

on human and nonhuman well-being) with dialogue as an ontological and pedagogical solution reaching these conditions.

In sum, this thesis investigates these three questions:

How does the concept of authenticity present processual understanding for organising RME?

How does the conceptualisations of rhythms of organising present processual understanding for organising RME?

How does the conceptualisation of 'education for planetary well-being' present processual understanding for organising RME?

This study has also practice-oriented objective aligning with the idea of understanding and learning ways to deal with polycrisis<sup>2</sup>, the multiple simultaneously occurring crises of human society and planet Earth, and to learn to organise accordingly.

Next, I present an overview of the previous research on RME and the background for presenting the concept of education for planetary well-being.

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<sup>2</sup> Term coined in 1999 by Edgar Morin and Anne Brigitte Kern in their book *Homeland Earth* (Janzwood and Homer-Dixon, 2022).

## 2 KEY CONCEPTS OF THE STUDY

### 2.1 The positioning of the study

In terms of RMLE literature this thesis is positioned somewhere in the middle of more mainstream approach and more critical one. In other words, I recognise the role of accreditations, PRME, and markets as the flagships of change in the business school education (Moosmayer, et al., 2020; Morsing, 2021; Smith et al., 2023) utilising the neo-institutional theory (Rasche, Gilbert, and Schormair, 2020; Snelson-Powell et al., 2016; Preuss et al., 2023), and a more critical stance that is open to revise the whole purpose of business schools (see Parker, 2018) and re-politicise the field of RMLE with critical and pragmatist perspectives (Fougère et al., 2014; Fougère and Solitander, 2023; Murillo and Vallentin, 2016; Perriton and Reynolds, 2018). I find myself agreeing with both sides. And in this position the contribution of this thesis aims to promote a processual understanding of organising RME with the potential for building connections to all dimensions and traditions of this phenomenon in a rich and pluralistic view (see Abend, 2008). This position aligns with Abend's theory<sup>7</sup> with encouragement to utilise theoretical pluralism towards the future of this field including more specific suggestions, such as, a push towards the notion of 'management education for planetary well-being.'

In terms of process philosophy in organisation studies I find myself agreeing with Heikkurinen et al. (2021b) that processual philosophy has potential for guiding organisations towards meaning decreasing overshoot of Earths carrying capacity and burnout, the stress and health problems of people. Helin et al. (2014) presents that process constitutes from temporality, wholeness, openness, force, and potentiality. In my study temporality is present in the article 1 as I investigate the history of organising RME in Finnish business school curricula, and in article 2 in the explicit theorising of rhythms. The article 2 offers also processual dynamics for force, openness and potentiality in the rhythms that enable reflexivity of what is the next step simultaneously recognising the

necessities of stability in organising. In the article 3 we discuss about dialogical ontology which I argue aligns with processual aspect of wholeness.

The theoretical foundations of the articles as individual studies were not explicitly process theoretical, but in this introductory essay I present how all authenticity, rhythms, and planetary well-being can be viewed with Cloutier and Langley (2020) framings of weak and strong process theorising offering new insight also in terms of organising RME.

Next, I present the previous research on RME, and the key concepts of this thesis, which are: the authenticity- and prestige-driven change, rhythms of organising, and planetary well-being.

## **2.2 The previous research on RME and the conceptual need for planetary well-being**

Academic studies on RME have proliferated during the last decades (Matten and Moon, 2004; Figueiró and Raufflet, 2015; Morsing, 2021) following the events of Enron and 2007-2008 financial crisis and discussions on the social responsibility of business schools (Ghoshal, 2005; Alajoutsijärvi, 2012). Recently this literature has been referred to as responsible management learning and education (RMLE, see Moosmayer et al., 2020; Fougère and Solitander, 2023).

This thesis contributes to the RMLE literature by focusing on embedding RME, i.e., how integration efforts take place and what kinds of struggles are involved in such processes. The studies of this thesis also discuss the assessment of embedding of RME and how to study the ways RME shows in the curriculum.

Next a brief overview of to the literature on embedding RME is presented, through consideration of the topics of assessment, the embedding and faculty level challenges of this process as well as the reasons to talk about planetary well-being.

### **2.2.1 The assessment of sustainability in management education**

The following literature is the background to article 1, where a theory<sub>5</sub> (Abend, 2008) approach was utilised to construct a more holistic approach for assessing the embeddedness of RME in Finnish universities. We did not only review the curricula of the schools' but also examined the historical paths that explain the current situations.

In general sustainability assessment in the field of higher education has increased recently following the introduction of UN Sustainable Development Goals (e.g., Times Higher Education Impact Rankings). In the context of business school accreditation processes regular assessments are required and revisions of 'Assurances of Learning' which frames the need for assessment tools and methods. As the basic condition a sustainability assessment is 'how an university / a business school presents sustainability related themes in the curriculum and in the general university organisation' there must be a criteria for the measured

variables and 'what counts' as sustainability in the assessment so that this can be tested and validated in different contexts (see Lozano and Young, 2013; Lozano and Barreiro-Gen, 2019). This approach is a clear example of Abend's (2008) theory<sub>2</sub>.

This is how the embeddedness of RME has been examined in numerous contexts especially in Europe, North America, the Asia Pacific region (Beddewela et al., 2017; Buff and Yonkers, 2004; Christensen et al., 2007; Matten and Moon, 2004; Painter-Morland et al., 2016; Rasche et al., 2013; Wu et al., 2010; Preuss et al., 2023), and, recently, in Africa (Ugwuozor, 2020). These studies have used survey data (e.g., Christensen et al., 2007; Matten and Moon, 2004; Painter-Morland et al., 2016; Ugwuozor, 2020) or secondary data, such as, university website information on study programmes (Buff and Yonkers, 2004; Wu et al., 2010).

From these grounds researchers have suggested that while RME is trending (Christensen et al., 2007; Matten and Moon, 2004; Wu et al., 2010), significant mainstreaming has remained debatable (Painter-Morland et al., 2016; Rasche and Gilbert, 2015). This mismatch shows, for example, in the situation where faculty is often supportive of RME, but organisational or resource-related factors often restrict their opportunities to transform intentions into action (Beddewela et al., 2017). However, in this article we did not focus on faculty related organisational conditions.

Our focus was on the organisation of education itself, i.e., curriculum and how vertical and horizontal integration could be identified in this context (Rusinko, 2010). Rusinko's (2010) model is an example of theory<sub>5</sub> which 'make sense' of curricular reality of business schools with a model of integrating sustainability in management education.

The vertical approach refers to specialisation in exclusivity (of RME) in chosen disciplines with general emphasis on the optional nature of RME for the general student population. This is often referred to as a narrow or discipline-specific approach fostering further development and acknowledgement of the sustainability content (Rusinko, 2010). The horizontal approach has a wider emphasis and therefore could be viewed as the desired goal of the process (Ceulemans and De Prins, 2010). The notion of horizontality refers to a cross-disciplinary approach, where RME is exposed to all students regardless of their disciplines. Previous studies have suggested that RME appears in a vertical sense, usually via electives for most students (Painter-Morland et al., 2016; Rasche et al., 2013). While we chose to apply a simple dichotomy of vertical and horizontal in curricular assessment, we wanted to somehow pay attention to schools' content or competence in terms of RME, and this is why we focused on the histories of the schools RME initiatives offering model-theoretic theorising (Harris et al., 2013) with a theory<sub>5</sub> approach (Abend, 2008).

Orientations towards RME are often driven by external pressures and accreditation requirements. Accreditations are valuable because they can create publicity and quality assurance, especially in the international environment, which is viewed as facilitating both schools' and students' success in the markets

(Engwall, 2007). Accreditations, such as, Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS), Association of MBAs (AMBA), and Business Graduate Association (BGA) are granted based on evidence of organisational missions and strategies implemented in the performance of business schools. In terms of RME accreditation processes have been viewed as a driver, particularly since the financial crisis of 2008, resulting in re-legitimation efforts of business school curricula (Alajoutsijärvi et al., 2018; Cooper et al., 2014; Doh and Tashman, 2014; Rasche and Gilbert, 2015; Wu et al., 2010). According to Snelson-Powell et al., (2016) especially small and prestigious, i.e., quality and excellence (e.g., success with accreditations and rankings) as reputation, business schools show clear signs of embedding RME. Further, it has been argued that there are variations with different accreditations. Wu et al. (2010) have suggested that EQUIS is connected to more 'aggressive' and vertical embedding of RME, whereas AACSB is connected to horizontal RME.

Accreditations as a driving force of RME are, however, not without challenges. Alajoutsijärvi et al. (2018) suggested that accreditations have become more as a necessity, than a process resulting in assessment of real quality. In a similar vein, Guillotin and Mangematin (2018) argued that the accreditation boom of prestige-seeking behaviour has resulted in mass imitation placing less focus on authenticity and the local impact of the schools. While the local champions have key role in the implementation of RME initiatives (Solitander et al., 2012) it has remained unclear what kind of curricular orientations this activity results.

In sum, we provided an assessment of RME in Finnish business schools in article 1 by utilising STARS, a universal self-assessment tool for universities in our assessment of verticality and horizontality (see chapter 3.4). Further we examined the historical and contextual notion of embedding RME through qualitative interview data (see chapter 3.3) and based on our findings conceptualisation of authenticity- and prestige-driven change (see chapter 2.3).

## **2.2.2 The solutions for organising RME**

In this section I present how, in article 2, we identified that RMLE has two main solutions for organising RME. This is an important part of our theory<sub>5</sub> (Abend, 2008) driven theorising in article 2 because we wanted to show how a relatively simple analogical construct of linear and cyclical rhythms of organising can be applied to both how RME is being organised, and how to approach academia as the organisational context for this.

The two approaches in RMLE literature are: mainstream approach; emphasis on existing institutions; and more ontological approach focused on critical pedagogy and pragmatism. A mainstream approach places an emphasis on key institutions, such as, accreditation agencies, UN PRME and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) framework, and markets in the way RME is viewed as progressing in business schools (Moosmayer et al., 2020; Morsing, 2021; Burchell et al., 2014; Snelson-Powell, Grosvold and Millington, 2016; Smith et al.,

2023). Especially, the reporting procedures included in the accreditation processes and soft regulation-based framework of PRME that asks schools to submit Sharing Information on Progress (SIP) reports for PRME community which have pushed RME further in business schools (Burchell et al., 2014; Cooper et al., 2014). These solutions imply that some degree of normativity (major institutions are reason for change) is unavoidable.

The alternative that places emphasis on the ontological aspects of management education, such as, critical pedagogy (Grey, 2004; Perriton and Reynolds, 2004, 2018; Kurucz, Colbert and Marcus, 2014; Fougère and Solitander, 2023; Mavin et al., 2023) and pragmatism and experiential learning (Murillo and Vallentin, 2016; Fougère, Solitander and Young, 2014; Shrivastava, 2010). What critical pedagogy, pragmatism and experiential learning aims to offer is emancipatory freedom from the normativity of business (as usual) school organisations, that is enabling students to decide for themselves what kind of business and society they would like to promote through their agency. One key feature in this field is reflexivity (see Allen, Cunliffe and Easterby-Smith, 2019; Parker, Racz and Palmer, 2020; Roscoe, 2020), for example, with triple loop learning (Tosey, Visser and Saunders, 2011).

However, in reality both sides are present and have continuous interaction with each other. For example, although top-down RME initiatives of key institutions have been impactful, the implications of the accreditation processes, PRME SIP reporting, and embedding of SDGs can be ambiguous (Rasche and Gilbert, 2015; Godemann et al., 2011; Moratis and Melissen, 2022). One reason for this is that the top-down governance and bureaucracy is conflicting with community driven academic traditions (Kallio, Kallio and Blomberg, 2020). The outcome of top-down RME can be pedagogic questions in the faculty level and when cards are played right, for example, accreditation process, and PRME can be used to advance critical and pragmatism driven hybrid approach (top-down and bottom-up) RME (Solitander et al., 2012; Fougère, Solitander and Young, 2014; Burchell, Kennedy and Murray, 2015).

Most often, however, the mix of these two results in descriptions of increasingly normative and detrimental reality of business school education (Roscoe, 2020; Murillo and Vallentin, 2016; Perriton and Reynolds, 2018; Mavin et al., 2023). But from these grounds recent studies have presented ways to create spaces for critical pedagogy and pragmatism aiming to fight against normative conditions in business schools. One example of this is Mavin et al. (2023) 'flipping the normative' in an executive education programme in UK business school. According to Smith et al. (2023) it is important to find the right balance in accepting the market driven approach, and critical / pragmatic approach in how RME is implemented to practice.

The following section provides insight to faculty level struggles both in terms of general academic freedom and organising RME which was another essential layer for our empirical study in article 2.

### **2.2.3 The faculty level struggles and responsible management education**

In article 2 we presented that there is comprehensive understanding of issues in both non-mainstream business school scholarship and organising RME.

Here we explained that faculty level organising is influenced by university level conditions (stakeholders offering frameworks for funding etc.), faculty and its career related needs, and students who have their own demands and who must eventually find some relationship with the job markets (Rasche and Gilbert, 2015; Murillo and Vallentin, 2016). In addition, in contemporary universities publishing has key importance both for the university and for the academics. Publishing is a requirement for the university, business school, to reach its 'targets' which apply to individual academics as well (Jones et al., 2020).

In the beginning what is understood as academic freedom (Gross-Schaeffer, 2010) soon becomes a normative requirement to publish in a chosen field, which in a tenure track system can become very narrow. In this endeavour there is no room or essential value for pedagogic training (Pfeffer and Fong, 2002). From this foundation it is understandable that senior academics are not willing "--to be told by others what and how they are supposed to teach" (Rasche and Gilbert, 2015: 245). Of course, these dynamics are not only related to RME, but more the general phenomenon of managerialism in business schools that has resulted in resistance (and compliance) among faculty (Rintamäki and Alvesson, 2023).

Recently the most glaring conflict, however, has emerged between the senior and early career academics (ECA) (Baudoin et al., 2022; Bristow et al., 2019). According to Baudoin et al. (2023) ECAs are calling for respect and support for their academic alternatives where interdisciplinary work on sustainability and societal change is the focus. Nevertheless, the context of academia is such where both parties are evaluated in the 'performative university' (Jones et al., 2020; Bristow, et al., 2019).

So far, there are no visions of alternatives for the current audit culture, and how the publication game operates. Therefore, the trick appears to be knowing how to play this 'publication game', simultaneously understanding that it is also the game that is playing the players (Butler and Spoelstra, 2020). Nevertheless, this notion of 'less space to play' (Keenoy, 2005: 305) applies beyond publication game, also in, for example, accreditation process (Cooper et al., 2014) which can support the agenda of desired change, although the resulting whole can exacerbate organisational complexity of normative performance measurements.

Above context of faculty level struggles, the different solutions for RME (see chapter 2.2.2), and audit culture in academia acts as the context for our theory<sub>5</sub> theorising of rhythm of organising (see chapter 2.4) presented in the article 2.

### **2.2.4 RME and the concept of planetary well-being**

Whereas articles 1 and 2 offer theory<sub>5</sub> theorising in the explicit context of organising RME, the theoretical emphasis of article 3 is more towards theory<sub>7</sub>. Theory<sub>7</sub> because this study is presenting ideas why principles of education are



necessary to revision all the way from ontological and pedagogical perspectives when we discuss about planetary well-being.

We developed our idea of ontological and pedagogical dialogue by examining the 'current frameworks' that have, for example, utilised the signifiers of sustainability and sustainable development in the context of education. We also examined a number of frameworks that do not mention sustainable development because of its conceptual problems. This study was not explicitly about business schools and management education but developed in a multidisciplinary dialogue with higher education actors. Therefore, I explain next how this study is relevant also for RMLE context.

Previous studies have challenged the ontological worldview basis of business school education (Grey, 2004; Ghoshal, 2005; Giacalone and Thompson, 2006; Perriton and Reynolds, 2004; 2018), proposing visions that lean towards a more ecocentric perspective within the field. However, still today organisation-centred worldview and human-centred individualistic assumptions are still the reality of management education even in a PRME champion business school (Fougère and Solitander, 2023).

Further, in the field of RMLE the terms sustainability and sustainable development are prime examples of 'floating signifiers' (Laclau, 1990: 28, 1993: 287) being used in numerous discourses with changing meanings. This ambiguity can be constructive and practical for numerous interest groups emphasizing different standing points on environmental, economic and social dimensions (Moore, 2011). However, especially the concept of sustainable development is notorious for its ambiguity (Connelly, 2007; Jickling and Wals, 2008). For example, according to Connelly (2007: 270) there are at least three approaches that sustainable development consists of 1) business-as-usual, implying ignorance towards environmental and social aspects of action, 2) a weak approach to sustainable development that could be called 'ecological modernisation' focused on efficiency of current economic model, and 3) a strong approach which could be also called 'eco-socialism' focusing on environmental and social justice.

How to be sure what sustainable development are we talking about and what is the difference between sustainability and sustainable development? According to Bianchi (2020) in the field of education these concepts are used without differentiation, but following the definition by United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) sustainability refers to outcomes of an action, and sustainable development is emphasizing the methods and development towards this goal.

The only viable option within planetary boundaries, i.e. the Earth's life-support system (Rockström et al., 2009) appears to be a strong approach to sustainable development with its rapid implementation. A weak approach does not problematise the social policy goal of economic growth instead the approach is often formulated as sustainable or green growth which have currently been detrimental for Earth's life-supporting mechanisms (Hickel and Kallis, 2020).

This is the context in which the scholars of JYU.Wisdom in the University of Jyväskylä launched the new concept of planetary well-being (Kortetmäki *et al.*, 2021). In 2021 it was announced that the book *Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Planetary Well-Being* (Elo *et al.*, 2023) is in the works and authors were called to write chapters in this edited and peer-reviewed book. I joined this cause with an interdisciplinary group of authors in writing a book chapter that resulted in *Education for the Planetary Well-being* (article 3 of this thesis). The necessity for the new concept is in the more affirmative emphasis on planetary well-being (instead of ambiguous sustainability / sustainable development).

The authors of our book chapter (article 3) originated from different disciplines and faculties, for example, in addition to Jyväskylä University School of Business and Economics, Faculty of Education and Psychology and Finnish Institute for Educational Research, and therefore the writing process consisted of learning to act in a diverse group of scholars having various perspectives and reasons for this collaboration. We shared, however, the sincere interest in the advancement of strong sustainability which we believe that our article promotes in its message. The concept of planetary well-being (see chapter 2.5) calls for dialogue in how we view the world, and how education is put to practice paving the way for theory<sup>7</sup> theorising in this article.

### **2.3 Authenticity- and prestige-driven change**

The conceptual development was not the primary focus of article 1 as the purpose was to examine how the past explains the present of RME in Finnish business schools offering new interpretational potential (theory<sub>5</sub>) for assessment of how RME is embedded in business schools. Here we found it, however, convenient to examine the dynamics of authenticity-driven change and prestige-driven change drawing on Guillotin and Mangematin (2018) where the context is the global monoculture of business school accreditations.

In article 1 we expressed that: “While we acknowledge that variations may exist in the influence of different accreditations on RME, in prestige-driven change, attention is paid to accreditations that is distinct from the emphasis of local context and authenticity.” We connected prestige-driven change towards RME to top-down orientation focused on accreditations and thus notable communication (the talk) on RME. Authenticity, then, was viewed as referring to credibility and being true to oneself (Giddens, 1991) without focus on external acceptance. Therefore, we viewed that authenticity-driven change in RME is activity where justification derives from credible research activity and emphasis on knowledge and practice (the walk) that is relevant and impactful in terms of business challenges but also societal questions. In the end, however, these two orientations were assumed likely to mix.

We also highlighted that authenticity could be viewed as deriving from power relations such as modern control systems (e.g., accreditations), rather than moral judgement (e.g., being original in something) itself (Giddens, 1991). With

our prestige- and authenticity-driven change we, nevertheless set out to examine how the past explains the present in the embedding of RME, placing implicitly emphasis on the processual nature of this agency.

Now, a year later from the final revision of article 1, I have realised that the concept of authenticity could have had more conceptual depth in our paper (see Lehman et al., 2019). This deficiency is now addressed in chapter 5.1.1.

## 2.4 The rhythms of organising

In article 2 we argued that the implementation of RME requires attention, and for this purpose we presented following conceptualisation of rhythms of organising that we utilised in the interpretation of findings showing its interpretative capacity (theory<sub>5</sub>) as a conceptual analogue.

Rhythm has over the last decade gained growing attention in organisation studies (e.g., Huy and Mintzberg, 2003) especially in the context of change (for review see Bartunek, Mueller and Huy, 2017). Conceptual expression of rhythm and its utilisation as more than a mere metaphor has developed in relation to e.g., organisational theorising (Cunha, 2008) academic identities and careers (Bristow et al., 2019), historical perspectives of organisation studies (Durepos et al., 2021), and learning in workspace (Katila et al., 2020; Vesala, 2023). We followed these studies by drawing on Henri Lefebvre's *Rhythmanalysis* (1992) where the concept of rhythm as repeating or periodically occurring sequences of organising and societal behaviour are taken into the focus of analysis.

In the conceptual development of rhythms of organising we utilised Lefebvre's (1992) suggestion that rhythm is not only a musical concept, but a fundamental aspect of human experience pervading all aspects of life, including social, organisational, cultural, and political practices.

Lefebvre (1992) argues that reality consists of both cyclical rhythms, that have cosmic origins, such as, transitions of day and night, seasons, and waves (e.g., sounds or visible in the water) which although follow some cyclic patterns are never the same, and linear rhythms referring to repetitive events activity based on the ways humans have organised. Linear rhythms often aim for replication although minor change is always inevitable. Good examples of cyclical and linear rhythms are the experience of time and measurement of time. Days go by in cycles, but humans measure them in a linear pattern. While both perspectives are experienced and necessary in lived life, cyclical and linear rhythms can be valued differently:

“The cyclical is perceived rather favourably: it originates in the cosmos, in the worldly, in nature. We can all picture the waves of the sea – a nice image, full of meaning – or sound waves, or circadian or monthly cycles. The linear, though, is depicted only as monotonous, tiring and even intolerable.

The relations of the cyclical and the linear – interactions, interferences, the domination of one over the other, or the rebellion of one against the other – are not simple: there is between them an antagonistic unity. They penetrate one another, but in an

interminable struggle: sometimes compromise, sometimes disruption.” (Lefebvre and Régulier, 1992: 76)

This ‘interminable struggle’ of lived experience and reality with more desired cyclical and unavoidable and ‘monotonous’ linear rhythms show also in recent studies. For example, according to Bristow et al. (2019) construction of academic identities has been viewed as suffering from the disrupted and conflicting rhythms of academia implying ‘domination’ or ‘rebellion’ of these rhythms.

Our definition of linear rhythm of organising is that it has a normative tone that is telling ‘how things should be’, and ‘hurry up!’ as it is based on the repetition and the decisions made in the past. The main assumption is the continuity which, however, provides an absence of alternative outcomes.

A cyclical rhythm of organising has less emphasis on the outcome of the action. Here we suggested that the highest order of cyclical rhythms with sequences and varying processes of births, growths, peaks, declines and ends in cycles aligns with processes of reflexivity, creativity, and dialogue, discussed also in the critical / pragmatic approach to RME (see Murillo and Vallentin, 2016; Parker et al., 2020; Fougère and Solitander, 2023). These properties offer a sequence of readjustment. However, here the connectedness of linear and cyclical rhythms come forth. Without a preceding linear rhythm, the readjustment (of what?) in the sequence of cyclical rhythm is meaningless. Therefore, we presented that the sequence of cyclical rhythm in organising begins with an idea, or a reason derived from an earlier linear rhythm. Finally, we viewed that both linear and cyclical rhythms are moving forward as they are only taking different paths and the differences lie in the emphasis of predetermined repetition and open-ended process.

This is the conceptual foundation we applied in the article 2. I suggest that this theoretical framework, especially with our developed metaphor of linear heartbeat and cyclical deep breaths is a theory<sup>5</sup> contribution offering new perspectives for organising RME in the field of RMLE.

## **2.5 Planetary well-being**

The concept of planetary well-being was developed because the previous concepts (such as sustainability / sustainable development) were viewed as inadequate in reaching the agreement with conditions of required societal change and ways of reaching this change. For example, sustainable development, sustainability, and social justice are frameworks that are focused on social transformation, but they have a human-centered ethos without clear orientation to systems and processes essential for continuity of life on Earth (Kortetmäki et al. 2021: 2). Similarly, Kortetmäki et al. (2021: 2–3) argue that the concept of well-being tends to be human-centered, or when the focus is on the ecological, or sentient animal related aspects of well-being, these dimensions have been

studied as separate disconnected domains of well-being. Therefore, Kortetmäki et al. (2021: 3) argued that:

Planetary well-being acknowledges the value of both human and nonhuman well-being for their own sake (intrinsic value): the moral right for both humans and nonhumans to exist, to have their needs satisfied, and to realise their typical characteristics and capacities. The needs of organisms both human and nonhuman – are interconnected so that the satisfaction of the needs of various entities creates both synergies and conflicts. Hence, the concept transcends the level of individual organisms and focuses on the integrity of Earth system and ecosystem processes underlying the well-being of all forms of life. It also serves as a framework that ties together ecological and social equality considerations. As a concept, planetary well-being facilitates scientific and political discussions by using the same vocabulary to address the impacts of human activities on the wellbeing of human and nonhuman nature.

This concept appears convincing for engaging agency toward an anticipated outcome: well-being of planet and its inhabitants. Well-being is not a static condition, but an on-going process, and focusing attention on interconnected human and nonhuman well-being can lead to right kind of agency. Planetary well-being is not the first to suggest this kind of approach, and in terms of education in the article 3 we present a review of these earlier frameworks. Another possibility for similar purposes could have been, for example, ecocentric thinking (Heikkurinen et al., 2016).

While the term well-being can have different understandings, in my view it has positive connotations (not mere survival or 'sustaining' as the form of living!). Our contribution of 'education for planetary well-being' where we applied Buber's (2004) dialogical philosophy and posthumanism (Braidotti, 2013, 2019) as the foundation for ontological and pedagogical dialogue is a theory7 contribution in the field of education.

### **3 RESEARCH DESIGN**

This chapter introduces the philosophical positioning and the research design of the study. Following this I present the methodological choices and their application in this study. Finally, I describe how the analysis of the data was conducted including the limitations of this thesis.

#### **3.1 Philosophical positioning of the study**

The foundation of this thesis is in the philosophy of science that aligns with the main purpose of this work emphasizing possibilities of different alternatives and the processual character of also existence therefore being a methodological consideration (see Helin et al., 2014; Langley et al., 2013; Cloutier and Langley, 2020). An interpretive approach (Yanow and Schwartz-Shea, 2014) refers to the condition where knowledge and meanings are not assumed to exist out there as some treasures to be discovered and collected by the means of research; instead, they are interpreted by different actors, including the researcher. Thus, the data is observed and then interpreted by, for example, the researcher (Yanow and Schwartz-Shea, 2014). Further, this also means that the data is often produced in an interaction of the researcher with the studied phenomenon. Therefore, the research process including the researcher's assumptions, interpretations, and choices that are made over time are acknowledged as shaping the outcome of the interpretive research (Yanow and Schwartz-Shea, 2014). In this interpretive research design and process it is necessary to highlight several things, including reasoning, and the approach for making theoretical contributions.

The original idea of this dissertation was to examine how RME has developed in Finnish business schools, and this kind of explanatory investigation with questions of 'why' and 'how' are appropriate for qualitative case study (see Stake, 1995; Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Further, important dimension of qualitative investigation and interpretive approach is the context which refers to situational

and historical understandings of the environment in which the features of a system are either reproduced or transformed (Archer, 1995: 11).

In terms of reasoning in this thesis while deductive (coherence of system of arguments and theory testing) and inductive (generalisability, predictive capability of arguments) approaches are foundational in scientific inquiry, according to Ketokivi and Mantere (2013) an abductive reasoning (choosing the best explanation) is a natural perspective for qualitative organisation studies.

An abductive reasoning has an emphasis on interpretation, curiosity and creativity that results from prescriptive plausibility and iterative reflexivity in the search for interesting and relevant ways of expressing findings. Prescriptive contrasts with normative and descriptive inference. (Ketokivi and Mantere, 2013).

Normative is dualistic reasoning: good or bad, positive or negative, effective or ineffective. Descriptive offers clarity in what has happened, for example, how data was collected as qualitative interviews that were recorded with a recorder and transcribed by using computer programs and transcription services. Prescription then refers to reliability of data collection, analysis of the data and argumentation of theoretical discussion in terms of the audience, the literature, and the context of the argument (Ketokivi and Mantere, 2013).

Further, my interpretative approach leans on the model of reasoning presented by Ketokivi et al. (2017), where the argumentation is based on the 'grounds' (data), and 'warrants' with its backing (literature of a field), which are the foundation for making 'claims' about theoretical contributions.

As I presented already in the introduction this thesis draws on Harris et al. (2013) 'model-theoretic' theorising. Harris et al. (2013) presented 'model-theoretic' as alternative for law-statement theorising, e.g., assumptions and theoretical evaluation around grand mainstream theories. By this I mean that my theorising is not assuming to present new laws and paradigms, but additions and insights that contribute in the 'model' of understanding, for example, organising of RME. According to Harris et al. (2013: 447) one way to utilise a model-theoretic approach is 'grafting', i.e., uniting, connecting, pulling together, where scholars "join together multiple research traditions to improve the representation of a particular context without having to build a new general model." In other words, grafting, or "making connections between divergent literatures" is a way to construct theoretical contributions in the field of organisation studies (Locke and Golden-Biddle, 1997: 1034).

In addition to this notion of grafting, my view of theorising is drawing on Abend (2008) by stating that the theoretical contributions in articles 1 and 2 are drawing from theory<sub>5</sub> category, and article 3 aligned to theory<sub>7</sub>. By theory<sub>5</sub> Abend (2008: 179) refers to "an overall perspective from which one sees and interprets the world." In other words, this approach gives conceptual analogues for how to understand what is happening with "a framework that is independent from experience, logically prior to any contact with the social world." In article 1 the framework of authenticity-driven change, with emphasis on bottom-up, local and original ideas, and prestige-driven change, top-down, international comparison and accreditations, was presented with the potential to explain the

phenomenon of RME. In article 2 the conceptualisation of rhythms of organising offered ways to understand organising where outcomes were predetermined (linear) and where the process of organising (cyclical) was more important in enabling alternative outcomes.

According to Abend (2008: 181) theory<sub>7</sub> studies are focused on more or less “‘philosophical’ problems, insofar as they call for reflection upon the nature of knowledge, language, and reality, and some sort of conceptual analysis.” This is largely what article 3 aimed to do with our conceptualisation of education for planetary well-being with its foundation in the Buber’s (2004) dialogical philosophy and posthumanism (Braidotti, 2013, 2019) aiming to dethrone the classical theorem of humanism (human is the measure of everything), with a new theorem “Responsibility for planetary well-being is the new measure of humanity” (Aaltonen et al., 2023: 255).

In conclusion, I am not building a new theory of RME, but grafting contributions to the RMLE literature with a theory<sub>5</sub> approach in my discussions of authenticity and rhythms of organising, and theory<sub>7</sub> with education for planetary well-being offering insight to processual understanding of RME. Further, my data tells a story of Finnish context of management education with a methodological contribution aligned with the notion of grafting.

My qualitative research approach touched upon themes of reliability and interpretation present in the data collection and analysis of qualitative interview data. In the following I express what kind of data was collected and used in this dissertation, and how the analysis of data was performed including also limitations and ethical considerations. Next the context of Finnish higher education system, and qualitative datasets are presented more in detail.

### **3.2 The context: Finnish business schools**

The higher education system of Finland has a state-governed nature with the basic assumption that the same degrees should have the same content and quality in each higher education institution offering them (Kettunen, 2013; Wallenius et al., 2020). The Finnish higher education system is part of the European Higher Education Area, which has been enforced especially with the legislative change called Universities Act in 2009 (Berndtsons, 2013; Kettunen, 2013). Of the 14 universities in Finland, ten offer degrees in business administration and economics (Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland, 2019). The citizens of European Union can study in Finland without tuition fees; and therefore, Finnish universities are largely dependent on public financial resources which are distributed according to, for example, numbers of graduating students, academic publishing in top journals, and internationalisation activities (Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland, 2023). According to the Finnish National Agency for Education, more than 11,000 students were studying business, administration, or law in Finland in 2019. The field of business studies has been also the most sought-after study option of applicants to Finnish universities.



According to a recent report on Finnish management education, sustainability and ethical perspectives have been contemporarily common learning goals of business degree programs (Wallenius et al., 2020). Furthermore, it is noted that the UN SDGs are increasingly tagged in the curriculum and research activity of Finnish business schools participating in the PRME network (Nonet et al., 2021). Finance programs have been considered laggards in embedding responsibility (Finland's Sustainable Investment Forum, 2017).

The units of analysis in the article 1 were the university / business school programs that grant bachelor's and Master of Science degrees in economics and business, following the educational criteria of the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture. In this article the phenomenon of RME was studied empirically by examining especially the curricular organising of these degree studies in Finland.

Ten Finnish universities offer degrees in business and economics or are (standalone) business schools with broad basic competencies in economics and business administration subjects (Kallunki, 2017). Of these universities, Aalto University (since 2009) and Tampere University (since 2019) are foundation-based universities, and Hanken School of Economics is the only public standalone business school in Finland. HELBUS, the only private business school in Finland, was excluded from the sample because its degrees are awarded by the University of Northampton, UK.

Article 2 then focused on the organising of RME in these ten business schools, referring to the ways responsibility, sustainability, ethics etc. related business school education were arranged with the emphasis in the business school organisation, and faculty, administration, and student relations.

The collection of qualitative interview data was viewed as necessary for the purposes of both article 1 and article 2. In addition, I collected secondary data, such as, study guides of Finnish business schools which were available in the university websites especially for article 1.

### **3.3 Qualitative interview data**

The processing of the qualitative interviews was conducted with special attention to reflexive and rigorous research practices (Eisenhardt, Graebner and Sonenshein, 2016). The interviews for this thesis were organised first by asking for recommendations from scholars in the field and by searching for potential contacts on the internet. I kept interviewing people until there was representative evidence from all Finnish business schools.

The professional academic experience of the interviewees ranged from more than 30 years to less than 5 years. Altogether, 46 recordings with 39 interviewees were organised as either face-to-face meetings or phone or video meetings depending on the agreement reached with the interviewee. The average length of an interview recording was 44.5 minutes. See details in the Table 5. The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview protocol (Blumberg, Cooper, and Schindler, 2011).

Table 3 Information on the Interviews

Inter- viewee	Active in the field of management education							Record Length (min)
	1990- 1995	1995- 2000	2000- 2005	2005- 2010	2010- 2015	2015- 2020	2020- present	
1				-	-	-	-	62, 64
2		-	-	-	-	-	-	34, 26
3				-	-	-	-	67
4				-	-	-	-	20
5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	47
6	-	-	-	-	-	-		47
7				-	-	-	-	38, 57
8			-	-	-	-	-	42, 41
9				-	-	-	-	28
10				-	-	-	-	29
11					-	-	-	55
12				-	-	-		56
13						-	-	35
14					-	-	-	25
15							-	26
16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	36
17			-	-	-	-	-	48, 64
18	-	-	-	-	-			39
19		-	-	-	-	-	-	69
20					-	-	-	56
21						-	-	43
22					-	-	-	48
23			-	-	-			15, 55
24					-	-	-	41
25						-	-	29
26				-	-	-		41
27						-	-	42
28					-	-	-	62
29			-	-	-	-	-	63
30						-	-	29
31						-	-	10, 35
32		-	-	-	-	-	-	67
33						-	-	53
34		-	-	-	-	-	-	39
35						-	-	39
36	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	45
37			-	-	-	-	-	74
38						-	-	62
39				-	-	-	-	62

The interviews were organised in two rounds to offer a longitudinal and processual understanding of the phenomenon in Finnish business schools. During the first round (2017–2018), the interviews were organised with representatives of five business schools with master’s programs that had sustainability- or responsibility-related specialisation options. In the second round of interviews (2019–2021), the focus was broadened beyond such programmes to include all RME activities in Finnish management education. Seven people from the first round were interviewed a second time, providing information about recent developments.

In addition to recorded interviews, in 2022 I submitted complimentary qualitative open-ended questions to schools’ PRME coordinators, administrative employees or faculty members with hands-on knowledge of how RME activities had been organised in school administrations and across different disciplines. Representatives of all 10 schools replied to five questions on organising RME with written qualitative answers offering data on the organising of RME. This data provided insight into how schools coordinated RME activities and the dissemination of information practices.

All interviews were recorded and transcribed. Most of the interviews were held in Finnish, with four taking place in English. The complimentary material request was delivered through online questionnaire (Webropol) service provided by University of Jyväskylä. The questionnaire was available both in Finnish and English. Each research participant received a privacy notice and research notification following the European Union General Data Processing Regulation because the interviews encompassed personal information about the backgrounds and personal views of the research participants. Transcription of interview records was done partly by me, and partly by a transcription service company. In the analysis, the personal statements were translated to thematic analysis anonymously. I translated exemplary quotes for the articles with an emphasis on the meaning in the original language.

The full interview data was divided to two datasets aligned with the focus of the study in articles 1 and 2:

- Dataset 1: focusing on the data where the origins of the RME initiatives and current situations were described.
- Dataset 2: focusing on the data with descriptions of patterns and issues in organising RME in the schools.

Article 1 examined the dataset 1 and study guide data, article 2 examined dataset 2 and complimentary research materials.

During the dissertation project all the data (the recorded interviews and transcripts) were securely managed behind the personal account and password entry on my private computer and as the backup in the online (U:) drive in the University of Jyväskylä. During the analysis of article 1 and 2 I presented and summarised data without personal information of the research participants for my co-author as the basis of our analysis and theoretical development. Neither my co-author or anyone else ever had direct access to the interview records or original transcripts of data collected for this thesis.

The interview data of this thesis will be anonymized and available in a public repository.

### 3.4 Qualitative secondary data

In addition to primary data from practitioners of RME, the article 1 utilised also qualitative secondary data in the analysis. Triangulation of data as primary and secondary data deriving from different temporal situations is also an important dimension of process studies (see Langley et al., 2013; Cloutier and Langley, 2020).

Secondary data refers to evidence that has been collected or created by others also for non-research purposes (Harris, 2001). The interview data is a primary source, which can offer more specific answers, but there lies risks of subjective interpretations and biases in the way questions and answers are expressed in the interviews and in the analysis of it. Secondary data, such as, study guides of Finnish business schools, serve a purpose of sharing information of the studies for the students. This information must be up-to-date and credible, and therefore this offers also valid information about the embeddedness of RME in Finnish business schools.

I collected two consecutive sets of study guides from business schools (2017–2020 and 2020–2022). The two most recent study guides were chosen due to the improved comparability between university curricula and the harmonisation of a joint application system for business school education. The study guides are updated regularly, and they are publicly available in the websites of the Finnish universities.

Next briefly about the sustainability assessment method that was used in article 1.

#### 3.4.1 Sustainability assessment in higher education

There are a number of sustainability assessment tools available in the practice-oriented use of institutions of higher education (Stough et al., 2018). STARS (Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education, 2019), which is a universal self-assessment tool for universities, has been evaluated to be among the most comprehensive in terms of education (Ceulemans et al., 2015; Stough et al., 2018).

In article 1 we coded the study guide data by drawing on the 39 sustainability-related educational terms developed by Wu et al. (2010) alongside the division ‘sustainability-focused’ and ‘sustainability-inclusive’ as they are described in STARS (Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education, 2019). In a sustainability-focused course, the RME related issue is usually present in the name of the course and plays a significant role in the course description such as “Introduction to corporate responsibility”. Sustainability-inclusive courses indicate that RME related issues are discussed in the course, but the emphasis is secondary to the primary focus of the course (for further details, see Appendix of article 1). In article 1 we further borrowed the dimensions of ‘Economic’, ‘Environmental’, ‘Social’, and ‘Cross-cutting themes’ from the “Sustainability Tool for Assessing Universities’ Curricula Holistically”

(Lozano and Young, 2013). These dimensions were used in the division of different RME related terms in the study guide analysis.

The summary of the Finnish business school curricula in terms of RME is available in the Appendix of the article 1.

### 3.5 Analysis of the data

The thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) and the coding of this article dissertation were performed through engaging both the literature and the data (Locke, Feldman, and Golden-Biddle, 2022) with an interpretative abductive reasoning of grafting the contributions. In the following I explain the patterns of analysis in article 1 and article 2.

Braun and Clarke (2006: 79) describes that “[T]hematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data.” I follow their description by viewing that a theme is understood as information which “captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of *patterned* response or meaning within the data set” (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 82).

Further while the data was produced ‘inductively’ for this thesis involving the interaction of me as the researcher and the research participants, the themes of the questions for research participants were interpreted from the RMLE literature with a deductive approach. Similarly, the abductive testing of most plausible theoretical explanations implies a deductive approach as the analysis of the chosen aspects of a phenomenon (instead of rich description of all data) was framed to offer theory-driven applications within the data. In terms of article 1 this meant application of Guillotin and Mangematin’s (2018) notions of authenticity and prestige in the theme of RME, and in the article 2 Lefebvre’s (1992) perspectives to rhythms. My thematic analysis followed a process of collecting data, familiarizing with it, and transcribing the data, searching for themes, reviewing the themes, defining, and naming the themes and producing the report (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Table 4 The Process of data analysis

Phase	Actions for article 1 and 2	
I	The development of semi-structured questions based on RMLE literature.	All phases included iterative engagement with the literature, reviewing of the utilised themes especially via international and local
II	In 2017-2019 collection and familiarizing with the first set of interview data	
III	In 2019-2022 the collection and analysis of the study guide data.	

IV	In 2018-2019 searching for themes from the data.	seminar and conference presentations of the manuscript drafts.
V	The revision of semi-structured questions based on RMLE literature.	
VI	In 2019–2022 the second round of interviews and analysis of the data.	
VII	In 2022 Development of complimentary material request for the article 2	
VIII	2022-2023: Collection of complimentary research material with web-based survey.	
IX	In 2019-2023 searching for themes from the data, coding of emerging themes, division of two data sets, reviewing the reliability of themes.	
X	In 2021-2023 naming and defining of the themes in the thematic revisions in submission and publication processes.	

### 3.5.1 The thematic analysis in the article 1

The thematic analysis approach portrayed in chapter 3.5. was performed in article 1 in the following way.

The interpretation drawn from the RMLE literature and my data was that the historical development of RME could be evaluated based on the ways RME currently plays out in the curricula of the schools and by assessing the origins of RME initiatives in specific schools. Therefore, the research question of this article was dual: *How do Finnish business schools currently embed RME in their educational programmes?* which was answered via the analysis of the secondary data of Finnish business school study guides (2017–2020 and 2020–2022). Second, the interview materials were analysed to answer the following question: *How does (non-)engagement with RME in the past explain the present situation?*

The analysis of the study guides was then conducted by interpreting which “concepts had been used, which themes dominated, how bachelor's and master's level education differ, whether the studies are compulsory or voluntary, and how the levels of sustainability focus and inclusivity have developed between these study guides.”

The results, including the identified themes of courses, the quantity of sustainability-focused / -inclusive courses, and if they were mandatory or electives was then collected in the document which is available in the appendix of article 1.

The interview data was then utilised for constructing historical narratives regarding how Finnish business schools had developed their paths to the current forms of RME they possess. The interviews were analysed with “two questions in mind: (1) what key events led to a more explicit focus on RME in the institution;

(2) when did this take place and how did the interviewees perceive the current situation?”

Together the findings of the study guide analysis, and interview data provided the grounds for us to test the plausibility (Ketokivi and Mantere, 2013) and grafting (Harris et al., 2013) of our idea of authenticity-driven and prestige-driven change as the historical narratives of embedding RME in Finnish business schools also explaining the heterogenous nature of current curricular orientations. This approach aligns also with the notion of processuality (Rantakari and Vaara, 2017).

### **3.5.2 The thematic analysis of the article 2**

In article 2 the thematic analysis was focused on the research participant answers for the questions on their experiences of organising RME in their schools and how they expressed themes that had supported or limited this activity. After the collection of interview data and early coding of themes for this article, I felt it necessary to reach out to research participants with a complimentary material request framed to PRME coordinators, or such faculty with responsibility for coordinating RME related tasks in the schools. I requested information regarding how coordination activities were organised within schools and their disciplines.

One limitation of this study in terms of thematic analysis is that although the iterative engagement with both RMLE and organisation theory resulted in the utilisation of Lefebvre's (1992) conceptualisation of rhythms of organising, the research participants were not explicitly asked about rhythms. Our approach was thus “more interpretative focusing on the developmental aspects in agency in relations to each school's unique processes. For us rhythm meant identification of linearity, focus on the predetermined outcomes and (normative) continuity with absence of alternative outcomes, and cyclicity, focus in the process of organising with enabling attitude towards alternative outcomes.” Future research can engage with this question of more explicit analysis for rhythms of organising.

The interview data with complimentary material and our interpretation of rhythms of organising provided the grounds for us to test the plausibility (Ketokivi and Mantere, 2013) of this idea and therefore graft (Harris et al., 2013) our contribution to the RMLE literature.

## **3.6 Methodological limitations**

This study has methodological limitations. First, deriving from an interpretive ontological positioning and an emphasis on prescriptive research, there is no ultimate truth, and therefore it is essential to explain the methods, context and patterns of reasoning reflected within the field specific understandings.

Second, I chose to collect data from practitioners of RME, but this covered only teachers, researchers, and school administration. In the early phase of my

project, I had planned to engage also with the students to gain understanding of their experiences. The student perspective was abandoned because I broadened the focus to all Finnish business schools. A comprehensive and credible assessment of a reliable set of students from all business schools would have been too much for one doctoral researcher to conduct.

Third, as I studied RME in all business schools of Finland this also meant studying my own institution where I was in the beginning affiliated as doctoral student and later employed as a doctoral researcher, and as a project researcher. Although I am grateful to the University of Jyväskylä for enabling my research, in the inquiry I paid attention to equitable treatment of all institutions without favouring any of them basing my scientific inquiry only on the evidence available in the data.

Fourth, researcher bias – limitation and risk of researcher's subjective experiences and understandings – is a challenge for all scientific inquiry. In this study, I have worked with this bias by engaging it in reflexivity. By reflexivity I mean iterative questions, such as, 'am I really sure what this means?', and 'how my own actions resonate with the theoretical lenses that I am using?' when engaging with methods, data, and literature. I have also challenged my personal views by presenting my research in domestic and international events, such as, Responsible Business Research Seminars in Tampere University, International Association for Business and Society Conference, European Group for Organizational Studies Conference, and Academy of Management Annual Meetings gaining ideas for improvement and validation for my research. In addition to formal review and presentation patterns around publications and conferences, I have sent my manuscripts to friendly reviews to my peers, and senior academics.

The reflexivity and iterative testing of ideas within the academic community resulted in article 1, which I perceive as a 'historical' reflection on the emergence of RME in Finnish business schools. This analysis is approached through the lenses of authenticity-driven and prestige-driven change, building on Guillotin and Mangematin's work (2018). Concerning article 2, the testing of ideas led to three versions. Initially, the intention was to apply the theory of bureaucracy (Adler and Borys, 1996; Graeber, 2015; Monteiro and Adler, 2021) to the organisation of RME. However, after presenting this paper to different audiences, I realised that my personal interest in the theory did not align with the findings in the data. Subsequently, I crafted another version incorporating Mary Parker Follett's ideas (1942) on linear and cyclical responses, which offered a more active focus on themes of power and dialogue. However, feedback on the paper called for a more specific theoretical focus. Ultimately, the present version, centred on the rhythms of organising, appeared most convincing, with a more specific focus on organisational rhythms having a more abstract yet structurally identifiable presence in organising.

In article 3, the theoretical development involved an interdisciplinary debate among co-authors who simultaneously considered the feedback from reviewers and editors offering wide range of suggestions and feedback on the



possibilities of writing about education in terms of the concept of planetary well-being. In the end, the article 3 was a truly collective effort that enabled our conceptualisation of education for planetary well-being, emphasising dialogical ontology and pedagogy, which was something that we engaged in practice during this interdisciplinary collaboration, along with our suggestion of the new theorem for humanity.

Additionally, consideration of the potential of process theories in the context of my thesis emerged during the composition of this introductory essay in 2023. Consequently, the individual articles are suggested to implicitly embody process theory, and this essay introduces underlying processual dimensions to these studies, thus contributing as a thesis with new theoretical insight.

Nevertheless, I recognise that my choices, especially with the data, stem from the earlier phase of my doctoral studies when I had no idea of applying Follett's, Lefebvre's, or process theoretical ideas in the final manuscripts of the articles and this thesis. In this context, the interpretive approach has been a pragmatic choice with its 'neutral' stance between reliance on structures—the ideals of generalisability and the recognised role of the researcher—and agency—interpretations and abductive reasoning by the researcher. I take this stance because all rules, orders, and other arrangements (applies also to scientific research) are generally argued to be balancing acts between structure and agency (Archer, 1995; Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Giddens, 1986), simultaneously limiting and enabling action. In the end, through this thesis, I have engaged with insightful literatures, building my abilities as a scholar with respect for myriad theoretical possibilities in different fields and literatures, and in terms of methodological solutions and considerations.

Next, I present the brief descriptions of the articles including author contributions, aims, research tasks, theoretical backgrounds, types of the articles, main findings and contributions, and publication details. The more in-depth discussion of theoretical contributions and conclusions of how these studies resulted processual understanding of organising RME occurs in chapter 5.

## 4 SUMMARY AND THE KEY FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

### 4.1 Article 1: How they walk the talk: Responsible management education in Finnish business schools.

Table 5 Summary of the article 1

<b>Title</b>	<b>How they walk the talk: Responsible management education in Finnish business schools.</b>
<b>Authors</b>	<b>Aaltonen, Valtteri A. and Siltaoja, Marjo</b>
Author contributions	Author is the primary author of the text and responsible for collection and main analysis of the data, and presentation of the results. The theoretical conceptualisation was an equal effort by both authors. While the primary author was the main writer of the manuscript the second author also contributed to writing especially theory development and analysis sections.
Aims	Literature has suggested that accreditations have pushed business schools towards embedding of RME. However, concerns of monoculture of accreditations have built the case for reaching towards authenticity. This research contributes by investigating how accreditations and initiatives drawing from authenticity are offering conditions for embedding RME and show how this results in curricular orientations.
Research task	The research task was dual: First, the themes and terms of sustainability, ethics, and responsibility were mapped alongside the division of economic, environmental, social, and cross-cutting themes by posing the following question: <i>How do Finnish business schools currently embed RME in their educational programmes?</i> Second, the interview materials were analysed to answer the following question: <i>How does (non-)engagement with RME in the past explain the present situation?</i>

Theoretical background	Literature on embedding RME and assessment of sustainability in higher education. Theorising of authenticity in the field of business schools (Guillotin and Mangematin, 2018).
Type of the article	Empirical research article
Main findings and contributions	Embedding of RME in Finnish business schools is a result of authenticity-driven change and prestige-driven change. The hybrid of these conditions appears as increasingly mandatory RME related basic courses at least in bachelor level and increasing emphasis on specialisation studies related to RME in numerous disciplines. The practical contributions concern the role of authenticity in building the case for expertise in the field of responsibility.
Publication	<i>Business Ethics, the Environment and Responsibility</i> , 31, 1117-1135. DOI: <a href="https://doi.org/10.1111/beer.12456">https://doi.org/10.1111/beer.12456</a>

### **Aims:**

To understand how the past and present interact in the embedding of RME in Finnish business schools. The past was examined by interviews where research participants explained the origins of RME in their business schools. This empirical data was then compared to secondary data of two most recent study guides of Finnish business schools, and how organising of RME appeared in them.

Literature has suggested that accreditations have pushed business schools towards embedding of RME (Cooper et al., 2014; Moosmayer et al., 2020; Morsing, 2021). However, concerns of monoculture of accreditations have built the case for reaching towards an alternative of authenticity (Guillotin and Mangematin, 2018). Therefore, the theoretical aim of this paper was focused on investigating how accreditations and initiatives drawing from authenticity offered conditions for embedding RME, and how this had resulted in curricular orientations.

### **Findings:**

Drawing on qualitative interview data and study guides of Finnish business schools we presented how embedding of RME is the outcome of authenticity-driven and prestige-driven change. With authenticity-driven change we refer to educational initiatives by local researchers resulting in RME related specialisation studies. Prestige-driven change refers to the influence of accreditation agencies that assess how the strategies of the schools are put to practice in the curriculum. The implication of prestige-driven change has been the establishment of mandatory RME related course for at least all students in the bachelor level studies. Our conclusion is that the current heterogenous form in

the embedding of RME in Finnish business schools is the outcome of a hybrid presence of authenticity-driven and prestige-driven change.

## 4.2 Article 2: The rhythms of organising responsible management education

Table 6 Summary of the article 2

<b>Title</b>	<b>Rhythms of organising responsible management education</b>
<b>Authors</b>	<b>Aaltonen, Valtteri A. and Siltaoja, Marjo</b>
Author contributions	Author is the primary author of the text and responsible for collection and the main analysis of the data, and presentation of the results. The theoretical conceptualisation was a collective effort by both authors. While the primary author was the main writer of the manuscript also second author contributed to writing especially theory development and analysis sections.
Aims	We identified two main solutions, how RME is viewed as advancing; mainstream approach, leaning on major institutions, and a more ontological approach leaning on critical pedagogy and pragmatism in the way organising of RME is viewed as occurring. Simultaneously there is a growing number of testimonies on struggles in the organising of RME, and how academia has contradictions in terms of careers for RME related scholarship. There is, however, limited understanding of how the implementation of RME is taking place in these contexts. With our framework of rhythm of organising we shed light on this phenomenon.
Research task	To examine the rhythms in RME organising through thematic analysis of rich qualitative data from Finnish business schools with a question: <i>how do rhythms organise (the absence of) alternative outcomes?</i>
Theoretical background	We utilised Lefebvre's (1992) linear and cyclical rhythms in our rhythms of organising.
Type of the article	Empirical research article
Main findings and contributions	Reading the research participant descriptions of RME in Finnish business schools we identified that the context of business can be a cacophony of linear rhythms that moves from academic and personal freedom to academic debates, order within disciplines, careers, and, finally, to publications, which often collide and cause disruption with their focus on predetermined outcomes. However, there were also linear rhythms that offered space for sequences of cyclical rhythms.

	Namely the accreditation process and UN PRME related activities were such that offered readjustment and organisational 'deep breaths' that enabled alternative outcomes and dynamic change. Identification of rhythms is also argued to create room for education of managers as feeling agents.
Publication	Unpublished article. Earlier version of this paper was presented and awarded as the <i>Organizational Development and Change Division Best Doctoral Student Paper 2023</i> at the annual conference of Academy of Management.

### **Aims:**

Recent studies show that RME is occurring in business schools, but nevertheless more needs to be done. The legitimacy of business schools is once again at stake (Alajoutsijärvi, Juusola and Kettunen, 2023) and simultaneously early career academics (ECA) are concerned with their own future in this field (Bristow et al., 2019; Baudoin et al., 2022). Explicitly in the field of RME there is an increasing understanding of the issues concerning why organising RME is difficult or can make things worse (Rasche, Gilbert and Schormair, 2020; Fougère and Solitander, 2023) and at the same time there are not that many studies focusing on actual implementation, how to establish RME in such way that it has continuity and impact (see Solitander et al., 2012). This is the framing for this article. We followed Bristow et al. (2019) by utilising Lefebvre (1992) in our theoretical construct of rhythms of organising. We argued that identification of linear and cyclical rhythms could be path for understanding more dynamic implementation and organising of RME.

### **Findings:**

Our findings show that, for example, the constant pressure to publish does not allow for the pedagogic development that RME requires, and simultaneously academia is organised through disciplines creating new layers of issue because discipline-specific interests can create collisions in the formation of curriculum and how it results in RME solutions. These all are examples of linear rhythms where predetermined outcomes (publication, continuity of a discipline, etc.) are more important than the practice and the process of organising itself.

However, we identified that the accreditation process and activities related to the PRME initiative were linear rhythms that consisted of the possibility of sequence of cyclical rhythm. For example, due to accreditation in one of the business schools, ECA in the field of finance was recruited to teach corporate social responsibility in their field. Here the linear rhythm of 'need to act according to requirements of accreditation' enabled this readjustment of ECA establishing new RME competence in the school. Another example was AACSB Assurance of Learning process that eventually established mandatory for all

capstone course, which utilised cross-faculty engagement. The fact that students and faculty of different disciplines were engaged to assess SDGs implied pedagogical solution where sequence of cyclical rhythm had key role in the alternative outcomes this course had.

We concluded, for example, that our findings align with Brown, Gianiodis and Santoro (2015) and Sandhu and Kulik (2019) suggestions that organising change require continuous but dynamic attitude and careful balancing in between control and more decentralized decision making.

### 4.3 Article 3: Education for planetary well-being

Table 7 Summary of the article 3

<b>Title</b>	<b>Education for planetary well-being</b>
<b>Authors</b>	<b>Aaltonen, Valtteri A., Hiljanen, Mikko, Layne, Heidi, Lehtonen, Anna, Löyttyniemi, Meri, Mykrä, Niina, Virtanen, Anu S. and Heikkinen, Hannu L. T.</b>
Author contributions	The author was the corresponding author of this book chapter throughout the book project. This meant responsibility for interactions with the editorial team, coordination of revision deadlines, writing tasks and responsibilities with co-authors. The author had also a main role in combining and rewriting the manuscript in different phases of the project on behalf of the author team. In the final version it can be said that conceptual development of the text was collective effort of all authors. The writing of text was divided in following patterns: Introduction, and conclusion: Aaltonen and Heikkinen, literature review on ‘current frameworks’: Aaltonen, Layne, Lehtonen, Löyttyniemi, Mykrä, and Heikkinen, The section ‘on ontological and pedagogical dialogue’: Virtanen, Heikkinen, Lehtonen, Hiljanen and Aaltonen.
Aims	The aim of this text is to present how education can promote planetary well-being as well as what the adoption of the planetary well-being means for education. The main objective is to explore theoretical perspectives on the new concept education for planetary well-being by examining its underlying philosophical assumptions and by introducing related approaches in the field of education.
Research task	How to put into practice a form of education that promotes the necessary transformative learning and renewal of practices and that maintains a planetary state in which “organisms (including humans) can realize their typical characteristics and capacities” (Kortetmäki et al., 2021: 4).

Theoretical background	Literature on sustainability education including approaches that aim to foster ecological and social justice without reference to sustainability or sustainable development.
Type of the article	Conceptual paper.
Main findings and contributions	Education for planetary well-being “--advocates non-anthropocentric and posthumanist thinking as well as sustainability in the strong sense. However, it is more explicit in instilling the educational approach with the encompassing idea of planetary well-being as a state in which all organisms, including humans, can realize their typical characteristics and capacities.” (Aaltonen et al., 2023: 252). Further the novelty of this approach is deriving from significant emphasis on both dialogue as an ontological principle and dialogue as a pedagogical principle laying the foundation for a new theorem for humanity.
Publication	Elo M, Hytönen J, Karkulehto S, et al. (eds) <i>Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Planetary Well-Being</i> . London: Routledge, pp.246-258.

### **Aims:**

In this article we argued that the origin of problems of our time in the field of education can be traced back to the birth of the Enlightenment and humanism. By this we mean that there are ontological and epistemological assumptions that undermine possibilities to act sustainability or responsibly in the way it is expressed in the high aims of mainstream statements about sustainable development. Therefore, our aim is to present education for planetary well-being as a framework that can facilitate transformative learning, that is viewed as necessary in changing practices. Before expressing ideas on how education for planetary well-being can be implemented through ontological and pedagogical notions of dialogue, we examined what kind of underlying assumptions preceding frameworks, such as, education for sustainable development, sustainability education, eco-social education have had, and how they relate to our conceptualisation of education for planetary well-being.

### **Findings:**

The concept of planetary well-being has constructive potential in numerous fields. The book *Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Planetary Well-being* addresses these gaps. Our contribution with this book chapter offers a perspective on the requirements and conditions in the field of education, including such that happens under business school organisations.

Our aim was not to declare that ‘planetary well-being’ should from now on be the only concept used to refer to societal transformations that the future of life

on Earth is viewed as requiring. Our argument was that there are number of developments, such as, non-anthropocentric posthumanism, and the notion of strong sustainability, that can relate to less risks compared to predecessors of this concept (especially sustainable development and sustainability). In addition, we argue that dialogue and what it means as an ontological concept, and pedagogical tool have a significant role in contemporary society. When human subjectivity aims towards dialogical consciousness of reality, the path is open for transformative learning, and a new form of presence. Also, the human responsibility of nonhuman well-being is a challenge that we propose in our new measure for humanity.



## 5 CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this part of my essay is to present my research results in relation to the earlier scholarly literature and explicitly point out my contributions.

The aim of this dissertation was to examine the processuality of organising RME by investigating how the concepts of authenticity and rhythms of organising could contribute towards management education for planetary well-being. The main theoretical and conceptual contributions are connected to the following four literatures: assessment of embedding RME, organising of RME, sustainability and environmental education, and process theory. The contributions are grafted (see Harris et al., 2013) with a theory<sub>5</sub> approach in articles 1 and 2, and a theory<sub>7</sub> in article 3 (Abend, 2008; see summary of theory categories in Table 1). In the end, practical contributions are also presented accompanied by some reflections on the credibility and limitations of this thesis. Finally, as closing remarks I offer views on the future research in this field. In the following sections I give answers to the questions that this dissertation claims respond to.

How does the concept of authenticity present processual understanding for organising RME?

How does the conceptualisations of rhythms of organising present processual understanding for organising RME?

How does the conceptualisation of 'education for planetary well-being' present processual understanding for organising RME?

### 5.1 Authenticity occurs through process

The main theoretical (theory<sub>5</sub>) contribution of my first article (article 1) was the insight resulting from the examination of the patterns of (non)engagement with RME that had occurred in Finnish business schools drawing from qualitative interview data and development of study guide data. This methodological approach grants also the revision of processuality that aligns with co-

evolutionary parallel style (Cloutier and Langley, 2020). The categories of authenticity-driven change, that referred to local, bottom-up initiatives, and prestige-driven change, referring to patterns of accreditation process where the embedding of RME was based on top-down initiatives, are two dimensions that refer to tangible processual changes in the organisations and research / educational focus of Finnish business schools.

However, reflecting a year later after the publication in *Business Ethics, Environment and Responsibility*, I am keen to offer further theory development especially with our conceptual solutions to utilise authenticity- and prestige-driven change as the analytical categories. The theory development on authenticity is followed by discussion on process-related theoretical contributions.

### 5.1.1 Authenticity

In this section I develop the theoretical foundation of authenticity, which was started in article 1. Authenticity has a long conceptual history (Taylor, 1991; Carroll and Wheaton, 2009; Cording et al., 2014; Guillotin and Mangematin, 2018), but only recently Lehman et al. (2019) synthesized the existing literature into three dimensions: authenticity as consistency, authenticity as conformity, and authenticity as connection.

The reason for increased attention and demand for authenticity, for example, derives according to Taylor (1991) from an experience that we are lacking authenticity in current society (Lehman et al., 2019). A proposition shared in studies on business schools (Wilson and McKiernan, 2011; Alajoutsijärvi, Kettunen and Sohlo, 2018; Guillotin and Mangematin, 2018). Calls for authenticity rest on the experience that there is little room for something genuine and original in our daily lives despite the surprising events and crises of the world. Also, according to Lehman et al. (2019) this is the shared foundation of why there is a demand for authenticity in our time, but as they show in their article, authenticity is ultimately a concept characterised by various interpretations and contextual sensitivity.

Lehman et al. (2019) argue that while there is a general agreement on the societal demand for authenticity, and that it can be translated as something genuine, and truthful, under the surface it has lacked clarity. Therefore, they (Lehman et al., 2019: 5) present three meanings for authenticity:

“(1) authenticity as consistency between an entity’s external expressions and its internal values and beliefs; (2) authenticity as conformity to the social category to which an entity has been assigned or that it has claimed for itself; and (3) authenticity as connection to a person, place, or time as claimed.”

However, Lehman et al. (2019) argue that inquiries of three forms of authenticity are sensitive to interpretation and here lies the limitations of the use of this concept. According to Lehman et al. (2019) authenticity is based on subjective and objective judgements of whether something or someone is authentic or not. According to them evaluation of authenticity as consistency is based on

subjectivity, authenticity as connection to objective, and the authenticity as conformity is based on both subjective and objective judgement. Next, I present how these three notions of authenticity could be viewed through the findings of article 1.

My first article investigated “*How does (non-)engagement with RME in the past explain the present situation?*” This question is implicitly about authenticity as connection (3) because this pioneering and local work on RME was often confirmed by a significant number of people, and it was clearly stated in the webpages or documents of the schools. This validated the use of authenticity-driven change referring to history with RME. While the questions, such as, how can we be sure about whose idea was the initiative, or were they genuine about RME back then, are difficult if not impossible to validate, the interpretation was that data offered plausible findings of this pattern. The defining feature was the link to the past when RME related activities were started locally. This definition allowed the hybrid approach where an accreditation process had launched the ‘need for RME’ in the curriculum and afterwards more authenticity-driven change had occurred and faculty had independently built their expertise on the subject and a local initiative on RME began to take shape.

In the study the business schools’ RME was not evaluated with authenticity as consistency (1) approach. Questions, for example, ‘does the school’s curriculum genuinely result in learning responsible management?’ are difficult to give reliable answers because this kind of assessment is highly subjective. On the other hand, the accreditation processes in the schools often implicitly consisted of assessment of the previous question, and here the approach is a more negotiated middle ground between the school’s effort to show objective evidence and accreditors aim for equal treatment of client schools based on their guidelines.

Therefore, Lehman et al’s. (2019) conceptualisation of authenticity as conformity (2) is implicitly present in the prestige-driven change. The business schools’ consistency with their external statements and internal performance is a criterion for accreditations. In other words, accreditations are granted based on conformity to rules of a social category presented by an accreditor. By going through this process of conformity a business school can be granted accreditation as a sign of their authenticity. However, I doubt that the authenticity that accreditations in this perspective symbolise is not the same kind of authenticity that scholars have called for business schools emphasizing more heterogeneous strategic autonomy and importance of local relevance and impact (Wilson and McKiernan, 2011; Alajoutsijärvi, Kettunen and Sohlo, 2018; Guillotin and Mangematin, 2018).

Nevertheless, Lehman et al. (2019) conceptualisations offer fertile ground for discussing how judgement calls of authenticity in connection to different kinds of organising, for example embedding of RME, can be evaluated drawing on three forms of authenticity as consistency, authenticity as conformity, and authenticity as connection.

### 5.1.2 The embedding of RME and the process of becoming authentic

So, how does the concept of authenticity empower a processual understanding of organising RME?

As explained above, authenticity builds over-time as external or internal consistency with words and actions, or through connection. This implies coherence with weak process theoretical perspectives of linear and parallel styles including also possibility for stronger process of recursive style (Cloutier and Langley, 2020). The temporal aspect of authenticity can be connected to place, organisation and living entities, and following events around these gives ground for linear or parallel process theoretical assessment. Further, authenticity is not only objective but a subjective phenomenon implying epistemological and ontological processes and therefore a processual dimension could also include recursive circular interaction between actors and context which can be also conjunctive with changing or connecting patterns over time.

The approach taken in article 1, however, leans more on the parallel approach where two processes, authenticity-driven change (or authenticity as connection) and prestige-driven change (authenticity as conformity), result from two distinctive conditions having varying effects in terms of RME as curricular orientations. The processuality of authenticity-driven change tends to establish RME as vertical, specialisation studies, and prestige-driven change often offered a rapid path to horizontal, mandatory for all, condition of RME. In the study the processual cost of authenticity-driven change and vertical orientation appeared as the growing threshold against interdisciplinary and cross-faculty cooperation in terms of RME. The prestige-driven change and the horizontal embedding of RME was connected to situations where teachers of mandatory courses had sometimes limited background and competence in this field. Both processes create authenticity and orientation that can be identified as RME, but simultaneously these processes consist of risks (too much or too little specialisation) that must be acknowledged because they are part of the process of becoming and remaining authentic. By this I mean that it is important to recognise how times change and therefore to act according to changing times.

Both those who were the first to offer RME years ago, and those who only now (despite their career phase) changed their course and have become champions of this agenda, are equally important actors. And here the question is not so much about authenticity, but about kindness and cooperation. I am convinced that an authentic and dynamic approach to RME is dependent on kindness that invites others to join the movement without judgement and competition (see article 2 and 3; Solitander et al., 2012). Therefore, I argue that an important dimension of embedding RME is a question of the processuality of becoming authentic in actions that does not compete or judge others. It is a process to become authentic in expressing responsibility, or by embracing a planetary well-being, approach in different fields, such as, in the different disciplines of business schools. External pressure can achieve only some degree of this change. Dynamic and resilient change comes from within. Only a conscious subject can reflect on the question 'am I authentic in what I do?' This

paves the way towards a strong process theoretical notion of process ontology (see Cloutier and Langley, 2020; Simpson et al., 2021). What are the processes that I am part of, and the processes my agency has influence upon?

Authenticity is an essential question for organising RME, as it is also for business schools (Wilson and McKiernan, 2011; Alajoutsijärvi, Kettunen and Sohlo, 2018; Guillotin and Mangematin, 2018). The past has showed (e.g., Ghoshal, 2005), that it is the business school's responsibility to show that the criticism is wrong, that there is indeed authentic and credible content and action that can be regarded as RME. Authenticity guides the focus to local, original, and genuine consistency, and these themes imply a significance of process and continuity, and this means that there is always the possibility to over time become an authentic organiser of alternatives, such as of RME.

## **5.2 Processuality in the rhythms of organising**

In article 2 the theoretical (theory<sub>5</sub>) contribution was that investigating the rhythms of organising is insightful especially in terms of the processuality of implementing RME. Already in the Lefebvre's (1992) conceptualisations linear and cyclical rhythms are processual phenomena, and this was also clearly present in the theory development of rhythms of organising in article 2. Next, I will present how the metaphor of linear heartbeats and cyclical deep breaths is a contribution aligning with a recursive style of process theory (Cloutier and Langley, 2020).

The metaphors of a heartbeat and breathing offer insight into a processual understanding of organising without normativity of either side of this metaphor being any way better than the other. A heartbeat implies constant repetition that is a symbol of life force and energy that can be utilised for different actions. A heartbeat can be also connected to situations of stress and exhaustion. In article 2 we showed that organising RME is often limited due to excess and ubiquitously present linear rhythms, such as pressure to publish, discipline specific questions of continuity, and requirements to report and revise, and externally imposed evaluations, such as accreditations. These themes can create stress and exhaustion – the overemphasis of heartbeat – for faculty that are willing to focus more on the organising of RME.

Therefore, the second part of the metaphor, the deep breath is an essential part of the rhythm of organising. Cyclical rhythms of deep breath can readjust in a similar pattern like how a 'deeeeeeep' breath of fresh air and oxygen has an effect in the body, refreshing thoughts, giving relaxation in the body, and offering a moment of readjustment: 'Wait a minute, what am I doing?' Go ahead and try! Take a deep breath and focus on the feeling you have after that. The deep breath as a practical act and as a symbol for the rhythm of organising is a tool for establishing recognition of processes and the possibilities of interaction surrounding us.

The rhythms of organising offer processual understanding for organising RME with a shared and identifiable framework of lived experience (heartbeat and breathing) with notions of a recursive style of process theory (Cloutier and Langley, 2020). The main approach of a recursive style aligns with focus on interactive, systemic, cyclical, and dialectical themes having focus on conditions, such as, rhythms, stability, and variation (Cloutier and Langley, 2020: 17). The contributions of article 2 can be viewed as being significantly aligned to a recursive style. The linear heartbeat symbolises stability and it assumes limited variation with repetition as the basis of continuity. The cyclical deep breath derives from interaction, and there the assumption is systemic with readjustment of organising to such variations and alternatives that are viewed as more suitable to a changing situation from a holistic perspective. This metaphor with its emphasis on dynamic alternative outcomes is, however, dependent on both sides and therefore it is dialectical. I argue that a comprehensive approach to rhythm requires recursive attention. When rhythms are not recognised, the chances are that organising tends to remain or move towards overemphasis of linear heartbeat (see Bristow et al., 2019) implying also a weak process theoretical notion of linear or parallel style (Cloutier and Langley, 2020). Also, organising with only a cyclical rhythm is possible only momentarily (a decision to act implies linear rhythm). Thus, the only comprehensive and credible view of the phenomenon recognises the dialectic nature of linear heartbeat and cyclical deep breaths in the recursive style of process theory.

A constant heartbeat of linearity, and sequences of deep breaths of readjustment have a synthesized coherence with identified principles of organisational change (Brown et al., 2015; Sandhu and Kulik, 2019) and boundary-work (Gieryn, 1983; Friman, 2010). A heartbeat and deep breaths imply centralized coordination with decentralized change initiatives (Sandhu and Kulik, 2019), and notions of discretion and maintenance in the way change is implemented (Brown et al., 2015). The idea of boundary work refers to conditions where, for example, the condition of interdisciplinarity is meaningful only via a specific discipline (Friman, 2010; Gieryn, 1983). Similarly, the sequence of cyclical rhythm of organising in the form of a deep breath cannot have sole existence, it precedes the linear rhythm that has an unchanging nature similar to examples of unavoidable positioning to a discipline. Crossing the boundaries requires readjustment and negotiation implying a linear heartbeat and a cyclical deep breath.

In terms of RMLE the concepts of a heartbeat and deep breath offer explanatory potential for why PRME and accreditation process have been frameworks that enable RME (Solitander et al., 2012; Cooper, Parkes and Blewitt, 2014; Burchell, Kennedy and Murray, 2015). Finally, I want to highlight the notion that all management education could embrace 'vulnerability as a strength' as it is used in executive education (Mavin et al., 2023). Also, the metaphor of a linear heartbeat and cyclical deep breath foregrounds the underlying vulnerability that is ultimately the strength and foundation for the dynamic continuity of organising. Only by acknowledging our vulnerability, that we are

always amid of process, we can open ourselves for processes of learning and unlearning, both of which are necessary for reaching ecocentric organising of planetary well-being. Therefore, this conceptual framework is an insightful construct for understanding and developing the recursive processual dynamics of more continuous and flowing rhythms in the organising of RME.

### **5.3 Process towards management education for planetary well-being**

In article 3 the theoretical (theory<sup>7</sup>) contribution was in the presentation of the concept of *education for planetary well-being* which has potential for numerous subfields of education, including the field of management education. This study has an implicit reference to the field of RMLE and therefore I graft (see chapter 3.1) here the contributions of this study for this field. In this section I will further explain how ontological and pedagogical dialogue in education for planetary well-being is aligned with a conjunctive style of strong process theory (Cloutier and Langley, 2020).

First, the article 3 begins by describing the discourse of sustainable development as a 'toned-down' enlightenment discourse with its assumptions of Euro-centrist, instrumental rationality, humanism, and dualism (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1972; Niiniluoto, 2015; Hietalahti, 2022;), which, according to traditions of environmental education, and posthumanism (Braidotti, 2013, 2019; see Simpson et al. 2021 for views to posthumanism in organisation studies) has a corrupting tone of voice limiting our comprehension of the myriad forms of life on Earth and their processual interconnectedness. This same criticism can be identified in the reasons why many educational frameworks have distinguished themselves without the label of sustainable development or sustainability, providing a message of societal change disagreeing with this conceptual hegemony. Education for planetary well-being aligns with this cause by taking a posthuman approach to education, embracing interaction, and critical pedagogy, with the aim of working towards transformative learning (Mezirow, 1994; O'Sullivan, Morrell, et al. 2002; Wals, 2006) by presenting ontological and pedagogical dialogue as the ethos of education for planetary well-being. Our backing for the importance of dialogue is in the ontological and pedagogical cognition built with Buber's (2004) dialogical philosophy and via, for example, Braidotti's (2013, 2019) posthumanism.

In the field of RME the stream of critical management education aligns with this cause (e.g., Grey, 2004; Perriton and Reynolds, 2004, 2018; Kurucz, Colbert and Marcus, 2014) especially with the notions of dialogue, and critical pedagogy leaning on feminist approach of care in the way students are engaged, and how different contents are framed with reflexivity and double and triple loop learning (see Tosey, Visser and Saunders, 2011) avoiding and resolving all forms of normativity with reflexivity and dialogue. Further, I argue that education for

planetary well-being is also a possibility to move beyond organisation- and human-centred assumptions of management education towards ecocentric perspectives in this field (Giacalone and Thompson, 2006; Heikkurinen et al., 2016).

Therefore, the second contribution is the potential that the concept of planetary well-being holds in the field of RMLE both in practice as the initiator of reflection in classrooms, and as a framing for future scholarship. In the following I point out the limited but emerging attention towards nonhuman life on Earth in the literature of RMLE. Further, I explain how ontological dialogue in education for planetary well-being aligns with conjunctive style of process theory opening avenues for rich pluralism in the future scholarship.

### 5.3.1 Conjunctive processes from planetary well-being

Conjunctive style refers to 'enmeshed' approach where dualisms are viewed as inadequate for assessing a processual phenomenon (Cloutier and Langley, 2020:16–17). According to Cloutier and Langley (2020) in this style it is typical to, for example, abstain from drawing arrows and boxes which are more typical for (weak) linear or parallel styles of process theorising. I argue that education for planetary well-being with its foundation in ontological and pedagogical dialogue could be viewed as a source of conjunctive processes.

First, the conjunctive potential is present in the terms 'planetary' and 'well-being' implying a more holistic and systemic focus than, for example, sustainability or sustainable development. The term planetary refers to even a galactic approach. Planet Earth is the spaceship of life on Earth, and the systems and mechanisms of this spaceship must function properly to sustain its lifeforce. The functioning of these (eco)systems can be discussed with the notion of well-being. The classroom level initiatives to have a debate or a reflective essay assignment on how the students understand planetary well-being, could be a low threshold experiment to try. Elo et al. (2023) covers an impressive number of different disciplines, and this book is available open access for learning, teaching, and research purposes.

Second, I suggest that the RMLE literature could explore alternative outcomes that result from the conceptualisation of education for planetary well-being. For example, what kind of possibilities exist for *management education for planetary well-being*? As pointed out, a posthuman approach focusing also on nonhuman perspectives is only just emerging in this field (see Scott, Cato and Read, 2020; Millar, 2020), but it has been found applicable with a pragmatist process ontological approach (Simpson et al., 2021) so the stepping stones for this have been already set out. However, a 'more than human' approach and its mainstreaming in the business studies is far from reality still. Some imaginations of this have been presented.

Edwards, Alcaraz and Cornell (2021) have imagined how Earth system's science could be integrated into management education. Another phenomenon which has emerged in business school education is 'Doughnut Design for Business' (Sahan et al., 2022) which refers to Raworth's (2012, 2017) Doughnut



Economics is a model where planetary boundaries are integrated with themes of social well-being within economic foundations. The Doughnut Design for Business is focusing on 'deep designs', the organisational structures, of businesses and how they unlock or block transformative action towards better future of life on Earth. Both Edwards et al. (2021) and doughnut economics are not explicit about the problems of anthropocentrism and therefore, in terms of planetary well-being both frameworks could be developed by highlighting the ontological and pedagogical dialogue as the key to respecting life on Earth. Rockström et al. (2023: 2) solved this issue by referring to 'interspecies justice' that "--aims to protect humans, other species and ecosystems, rejecting human exceptionalism."

However, in my view management education for planetary well-being is not only about adding new perspectives, it means also ending some practices that are detrimental in terms of well-being of life on Earth. For example, economic growth (see Hichel and Kallis, 2020), and other assumptions that create a necessity to extract and destroy natural resources and the living conditions of myriad forms of life, are in the core of the dilemma that overshadows the future of Earth (Winkelmann et al., 2018). The emergency and polycrisis of this planet and human societies requires us to really focus on what is necessary, and this could pose an existential question for the business school as an institution (see Parker, 2018; Alajoutsijärvi et al., 2022).

According to Parker (2018) instead of societally detrimental business schools there is room for *agora* like plazas called 'Schools for organising' where all the different alternatives of organising (see Parker, Fournier and Reedy, 2007) could be considered for contexts where they are needed. Today this approach of alternative organisations could be infused with ideas, such as, planetary well-being offering a more-than-human approach to address polycrisis and finding new and old paths to well-being for life on Earth. In the end, if the future can be shaped to provide planetary well-being (for all of us human and nonhuman), perhaps less business schools and economic growth is not a bad option.

Finally, as the third contribution in terms of a conjunctive research orientation in the field of RMLE, I view the ontological dialogue as implying and encouraging theoretical pluralism (Abend, 2008) and what is referred to as process ontology (Cloutier and Langley, 2020). The field of RMLE and beyond could utilise a pluralistic view of different categories of theory (see Table 1 in this thesis) and embrace also the relational aspects between theory and data as per Abend (2008: 190), referred to by Alexander (1982).

According to Abend (2008: 190, referring to Alexander, 1982) in the Figure 1 one can apply "--the word 'theory' to *whatever* is on its left and the word 'data' to *whatever* is on its right." From this stance, pluralism and acceptance of different views is the only viable option. The most important element of scientific rigor and plausibility in theorising is to explain the context and what is meant by theory and data, and what kind of assumptions these decisions have consisted of. This attitude of pluralism could be applied to the future prescriptive evaluation of RMLE studies (see Ketokivi and Mantere, 2013).

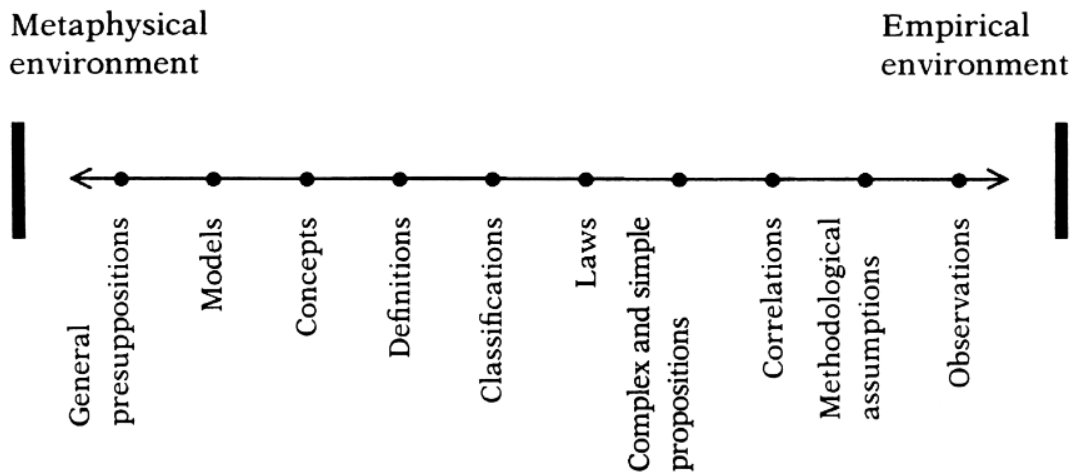


Figure 1 Relationship of theory and data according to Abend (2008: 190 and Alexander, 1982)

Finally more generally, I argue that the concept and aim of planetary well-being is an important signpost offering direction for ecocentric organising, and human agency that, for example, Heikkurinen et al., (2016; 2021a; 2021b) have called for. Our conceptualisation of ontological and pedagogical dialogue aligns also with the view that the encounters with human and nonhuman entities have transformational potential (Tsing, 2015). By admitting our smallness before / within the interconnected life on Earth and through processes of conjunctive dialogue it is possible to reach the condition of planetary wisdom (see Heikkinen et al., unpublished).

#### 5.4 Practical contributions and managerial implications of the study

This study has numerous practical contributions. First, as presented in article 3, dialogical ontology gives ground for addressing our times of uncertainty where traditions of perfection and expertise have resulted in expert level failures of numerous fields resulting in, for example, the covid-19 pandemic, financial crises, climate crisis, ecological disasters, and mental health crisis, all of which could be referred as polycrisis. I argue that, if our practices were based on dialogue, both in a cognitive ontological level and in the ways in we interact with other human and nonhuman life forms, many of the current and upcoming crises could be mitigated or prevented.

One very practical example and contribution to the importance of dialogue, and of my agency in article 3 was my action in establishing the currently active interaction between JYU.Wisdom and the Finnish Institute for Educational Research in University of Jyväskylä. The background for this was that in the original team of authors for this book, by accident, there were no representatives

from the Finnish Institute for Educational Research. During the early phases of writing the book chapter this deficit of interdisciplinarity was recognised and eventually representatives of this institution were brought in as co-authors in the book chapter and to the community of JYU.Wisdom. I learned that interdisciplinarity does not happen, it must be created, and it requires active maintenance.

This acknowledgement of ontological dialogue and tangible actions of interdisciplinarity aligns also with the notions of linear and cyclical rhythms of organising. Also here, the readjustment and interaction with context and current situation were of key importance. In the current times organisations must pay attention to the ways in which they offer spaces of interaction and organising with alternative outcomes.

Personally, I would like to emphasize here the practical importance of recent archaeological and anthropological findings presented in Graeber and Wengrow (2021) that argue for a more optimistic view of humanity emphasizing the leading light of curiosity towards alternatives of organising implied also in article 2 and 3. I realise that these views on dialogue and organising alternatives are in strong contrast with existing legal and economic frameworks, but in my view, this is the foundation that must be considered if we are to aim for mitigation of the polycrisis of human societies and planet Earth.

From this stance the recommendations for contemporary business schools and for the wider field of higher education are clear: planetary well-being and RME require significant support with a dynamic, affirmative, and enabling attitude for experimentation of new approaches. In article 1 we argued towards authenticity. I repeat this view, highlighting the importance of encouragement of authenticity in the way RME is being established, and how the call for planetary well-being is brought into action. For the context of business schools, local and international businesses are key stakeholders, and also in this interaction new forms of dialogue embracing planetary well-being are needed.

This aligns also in the way resources should be distributed in and for academia (more basic funding, continuity and trust, less competition-focused fixed-term funding). In article 2 we highlighted the risks of organising RME in a discipline specific pattern with recommendations for the avoidance of money in the activities of organising RME. Therefore, the recommendation to increase resources and continuity, is not directed at the context of disciplines, but in the national or international level of resourcing of universities and science.

While scarcity can create innovations and creativity, in the current condition of polycrisis I doubt the possibility to solve the numerous field specific and often interrelated issues in competition for scarce resources. What is needed is an abundance of enabling resources that would help people to focus on what is truly important without the issue of a lack of money to do something or risk of unemployment etc.

Recent history of the political economy has showed, most recently, in the context of Covid-19 pandemic, how governments and central banks globally had limitless financial capacity to save airline companies, and banks from economic

down-turn resulting from pandemic. When there is enough will, money can be created without limits<sup>3</sup>. A similar attitude towards emergency level financial support should be given to universities to enable transformative learning of societies, but also, to many other fields to address the different facets of polycrisis.

Another way to view the solution I try to present is to consider what are all the different services that society could provide for free? How to enable a sense of freedom in society by allowing people to move, disagree, and create as Graeber and Wengrow (2021) have suggested necessary for freedom to really occur? And in the spirit of planetary well-being, it is necessary to investigate how life on Earth can become 'wild' and free again. Therefore, the three freedoms (Graeber and Wengrow, 2021) have potential also for nonhuman context. Currently human entities (not all) can create new and alternative organisations (see Parker, Fournier, and Reedy, 2007) but this is the only freedom we usually have because it can be very difficult to disagree or refuse with existing organisations, and because moving around and crossing the borders is dependent on your wealth, or occupation and condition of having a passport from a state like Finland.

According to Graeber and Wengrow (2021) we need to learn to ask better questions. I am not sure if these are better in the right way, but I think we need to ask for example: How do we create education and societal conditions that truly embrace freedom, not only for humans but, for example, wildlife? How do we establish planetary wisdom and regain the justification for the Latin name of human species, *Homo Sapiens*, the wise human? And underlying all these questions is the assumption of the role that the wide and multidisciplinary collective of academics play in the society. How to place ontologically and epistemologically sound science in a place where it belongs behind the decisions that create the future of planetary well-being?

## 5.5 Suggestions for further research

The merits of this study show in the three articles which, at the time of writing, are: published in *Business Ethics, the Environment and Responsibility* (article 1); published in an edited and peer-reviewed book *Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Planetary Well-Being* (article 3); and awarded *Organizational Development and Change Division Best Doctoral Student Paper 2023* at the Annual Meeting of Academy of Management (an earlier version of article 2).

However, there are limitations in this thesis. While I employed methods for decreasing the risks of researcher bias, the interpretative approach underlines the fact that researcher is co-producing the data with the research participants. On the other hand, authenticity is one way to approach this, and further, there are calls for more engaging, impactful research in the field of organisation studies

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<sup>3</sup> Current high levels of inflation have been identified as 'greedflation' resulting recently from corporate profits not that much from energy, food, or labor costs. See, for example, <https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2023/06/26/europes-inflation-outlook-depends-on-how-corporate-profits-absorb-wage-gains> (accessed 16 August 2023)

(Ergene et al., 2020). I hope my interaction with research participants has been an impactful one, both in terms of the encounter, dialogue, and interaction we had around the interviews, but also in terms of analysis and research impact this has generated.

One limitation of this study that paves the way for future studies is all the research ideas that I had during this study that I did not have opportunity to perform due to an absence of unlimited amount of money and time. For example, the main stakeholder of education are the students. My original plan was to engage with students either by interviewing or surveying them. One of the ideas was to test video ethnography (Jarrett and Liu, 2018) by filming examples of business school education and then present the video to a sustainability expert. Then the reactions and live commentary of this expert would have been recorded on another video. Finally, the video including both the original teaching and the expert reactions could be showed to those students that were participating on that lecture resulting in a processual dialogue involving the studied phenomenon, participants and the role of the researcher (see Langley et al., 2013). However, I was not able to undertake this research idea.

Further, during the dissertation project I worked most with article 2, and around this paper many future studies could be identified. For example, the original idea of this paper was framed with the theory of bureaucracy (Adler and Borys, 1996; Graeber, 2015; Monteiro and Adler, 2021), but over time I abandoned this idea and built a new paper around Mary Parker Follett's notion of circular response and dynamic organising (Follett, 1942). In the end, however, the organisational questions of time and pacing resulted in the final version of article 2 drawing on Lefebvre's (1992) linear and cyclical rhythms. Also, the notion of management education for planetary well-being is a prominent path for future studies. None of these themes are currently in the mainstream of organisation studies or RMLE research, but I argue that they offer relevance in the context of polycrisis and insight in terms of alternatives of organising.

Finally, the paradox of interdisciplinarity is unsurprisingly the final suggestion for future studies. During this thesis, especially during the writing of article 3, I learned how difficult and simultaneously rewarding the encounters and dialogue between different fields and disciplines of academia can be. Nevertheless, it is a careful balancing act of how to pursue interdisciplinarity from the disciplines that we belong. However, if we aim for planetary well-being, we must learn to cross boundaries, listen, understand what the well-being of life on Earth requires, and finally transform our practices accordingly. I hope that this thesis inspires agency, courage and love that aligns with our basic theorem for education for planetary well-being:

*Responsibility for planetary well-being is the new measure of humanity.*

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## **PART II: THE ARTICLES**



# I

## **HOW THEY WALK THE TALK: RESPONSIBLE MANAGEMENT EDUCATION IN FINNISH BUSINESS SCHOOLS**

by

Aaltonen VA and Siltaoja M (2022)

*Business Ethics, the Environment and Responsibility*, 31, 1117–1135

<https://doi.org/10.1111/beer.12456>

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## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

# How they walk the talk: Responsible management education in Finnish business schools

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**Abstract**

Responsible management education (RME) has become a common initiative in the educational discourse of business schools worldwide. However, little is known about how (non-)engagement with RME in the past influenced the way RME is organised today. We examine this in one of the pioneering countries of RME, Finland, using extensive qualitative research materials. Our results suggest that RME has been embedded with authenticity-driven change (local context and research) since the 1990s. In the late 2000s after the legal educational reforms implemented in Finland, the prestige-driven change (accreditations) began to shape the embedding of RME. In the 2020s, both the authenticity- and prestige-driven changes with vertical and horizontal RME, respectively, often appear as hybrids. This article discusses both the weaknesses and strengths of these approaches in embedding RME.

**KEYWORDS**

accreditation, authenticity, Nordic country, qualitative study, responsible management education, sustainability

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

The field of responsible management learning and education (RMLE) has emerged to study how business schools engage with responsible management education (RME) (Matten & Moon, 2004; Moosmayer et al., 2020). RME is an umbrella term that captures a systemic approach of *sustainability*, the behavioural aspects of *ethics*, and an interdependent stakeholder approach of *responsibility* applied in the curricular activities of business schools (Moosmayer et al., 2020, p. xxvii). Recently, RME has rapidly expanded. Scholars have acknowledged two main external factors that have facilitated RME alongside general stakeholder pressure. The first is the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) supported by the United Nations (UN) (Moosmayer et al., 2020). PRME has been voluntarily signed by more than 800 business schools worldwide, representing, however, only a fraction of the total number of business

schools (15,000) (Burchell et al., 2015; Morsing, 2021). The second factor is the top-level accreditation agencies, such as Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) and European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS), and how they guide business schools towards RME (Alajoutsijärvi et al., 2018; Cooper et al., 2014; Wu et al., 2010).

Despite the increasing “talk” of embedding RME worldwide, claims of its existence as a decoupled phenomenon (Rasche & Gilbert, 2015; Snelson-Powell et al., 2016) or merely as a niche under the discipline of management and organisation still exist (Painter-Morland et al., 2016; Rasche et al., 2013). Accordingly, scholars have argued for the need to examine what conditions enable and enforce RME to the educational curricula. Scant research has explained this to originate from the prestige of schools (Snelson-Powell et al., 2016), or from the emphasis placed on RME as a learning process for the school itself (Solitander et al., 2012; Weybrecht, 2017).

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On the other hand, the sought-after prestige in the field of management education has resulted a monoculture of accredited schools (Alajoutsijärvi et al., 2018), and here the dimension of authenticity has been suggested as a solution (Guillotin & Mangematin, 2018). However, the impact of these conditions in terms of embedding RME over time remains unknown.

Our purpose is to examine conditions that have influenced in the embedding of RME in all business schools in one country, Finland. Our materials comprised of study guides from 2017 to 2022 and 45 interviews with faculty members who had participated in organising RME at these universities. We focused on one country because the institutional context greatly influences and regulates the orientation of organisations, either enforcing or limiting the embedding of sustainability and responsibility (Kourula, 2022; Siltaoja et al., 2020). Many Finnish business schools participate in the PRME Nordic chapter, where the traditions of the Nordic stakeholder approach and collaborative engagement in management theorisation have been identified as the shared framework for RME (Carroll & Nasi, 1997; Nonet et al., 2021; Pinheiro et al., 2019; Strand & Freeman, 2015). However, not all business schools are PRME signatories, and the RME approach varies even within the PRME Nordic chapter (Nonet et al., 2021). We argue that a comprehensive examination of how educational institutions in a context perceived as "proactive in sustainability" are embedding RME is valuable for a global audience.

Our analysis has two research objectives. First, we mapped the themes and terms of sustainability, ethics, and responsibility alongside the division of economic, environmental, social, and cross-cutting themes (Lozano & Young, 2013; Wu et al., 2010) by posing the following question: *How do Finnish business schools currently embed RME in their educational programmes?* Second, we analysed the interview materials to answer the following question: *How does (non-)engagement with RME in the past explain the present situation?*

Our findings show that RME is embedded both in a vertical sense, referring to elective minors and master's programmes, and in a horizontal sense, which means that at least one mandatory sustainability-focused or sustainability-inclusive course exists for all bachelor's students (Rusinko, 2010). We argue that the variations have resulted from two approaches, authenticity-driven emphasising research and local context, and prestige-driven changes, emphasising accreditations and market orientation as motives for RME (see also Guillotin & Mangematin, 2018). While prestige-driven change has systematically resulted in horizontal RME, authenticity-driven change has initially resulted in vertical RME.

Our study makes two contributions to the existing literature. First, authenticity- and prestige-driven change appear increasingly as hybrid over time, with significant coexistence of vertical and horizontal RME in Finnish business schools. Second, the collaborative engagement of local faculty in RME is decisive in how the embedding of RME occurs. We discuss our results and their implications for the general management of responsibility in organisations.

In the following, we present a literature review, our selection of materials and methods, our findings, and, finally, our discussion and conclusions.

## 2 | LITERATURE REVIEW ON RME

Previously, the status of RME has been examined, especially in Europe, North America, the Asia Pacific region (Beddewela et al., 2017; Buff & Yonkers, 2004; Christensen et al., 2007; Matten & Moon, 2004; Painter-Morland et al., 2016; Rasche et al., 2013; Wu et al., 2010), and, recently, in Africa (Ugwuzor, 2020). Methodologically, studies that examined the embedding of RME have mostly used survey data (e.g., Christensen et al., 2007; Matten & Moon, 2004; Painter-Morland et al., 2016; Ugwuozor, 2020) or secondary data such as university website information on study programmes and mission statements (Buff & Yonkers, 2004; Wu et al., 2010).

Researchers have suggested that RME is trending (Christensen et al., 2007; Matten & Moon, 2004; Wu et al., 2010). However, whether significant mainstreaming has occurred is debatable (Painter-Morland et al., 2016; Rasche & Gilbert, 2015). This difficulty in "walking the talk" has been connected to the availability of resources and supportive environment (Rasche & Gilbert, 2015). Internally, faculty are often supportive of RME, but organisational or resource-related factors often restrict their opportunities to transform intentions into practise (Beddewela et al., 2017).

The organisation of education itself is therefore important and can be addressed, for example, through vertical and horizontal integration (Rusinko, 2010). The vertical approach refers to specialisation in a limited number of disciplines and a general emphasis on the optional nature of RME. This is often referred to as a narrow or discipline-specific approach that paves the way for further development and acknowledgement of the issue (Rusinko, 2010). The horizontal approach has been argued to represent a desired goal of the process (Ceulemans & De Prins, 2010), referring to a cross-disciplinary approach, where all students are exposed to RME regardless of their disciplines. Contemporary research has argued that RME appears in a vertical sense, usually via electives for most students (Painter-Morland et al., 2016). Conditions that explain the dominance of the vertical approach are portrayed as weak pedagogical settings in largely instrumentally oriented business schools (Kearins & Springett, 2003; Painter-Morland, 2015) and with growing specialisation and variance between business disciplines (Painter-Morland et al., 2016; Rasche et al., 2013).

However, a simple dichotomy of vertical and horizontal studies does not reveal schools' content or competence in terms of RME. Orientations towards RME is often driven by external pressures and accreditation requirements. The value of accreditation lies in its potential to create publicity and quality assurance, especially in the international environment, which should facilitate both students' and schools' success in the markets (Engwall, 2007). Accreditations, such as EQUIS, AACSB, Association of MBAs (AMBA), and Business Graduate Association (BGA) are granted based on evidence of organisational missions and strategies implemented in the performance of business schools. The accreditation process has been a driver of RME, particularly since the financial crisis of 2008, resulting in re-legitimation efforts of business school curricula (Alajoutsijärvi

et al., 2018; Cooper et al., 2014; Doh & Tashman, 2014; Rasche & Gilbert, 2015; Wu et al., 2010).

Accreditations as a driving force of RME are not without challenges. Alajoutsijärvi et al. (2018) warned that accreditations can act “neither as a quality improvement nor competitive advantage, but simply as a necessity, which might lead accreditation agencies away from accomplishing their articulated missions of quality improvement” (p. 219). In a similar vein, Guillotin and Mangematin (2018) claim that the accreditation boom has led to mass imitation that has placed less focus on authenticity and the societal impact of schools and more on prestige-seeking behaviour. Business schools compete for prestige to attract talented students, acknowledged financiers, and reputable faculty members (Alvesson & Gabriel, 2016). Also, it has been argued that the embedding of RME varies with different accreditations. More specifically, Wu et al. (2010) identified that EQUIS was connected to more an “aggressive” (p. 526; larger number of sustainability-related courses) but vertical embedding of RME, whereas AACSB was connected to horizontal RME.

While we acknowledge that variations may exist in the influence of different accreditations on RME, in prestige-driven change, attention is paid to accreditations that is distinct from the emphasis of local context and authenticity. We understand the prestige-driven change towards RME as a top-down orientation focused on accreditations and the increased communication (“the talk”) on RME. Authenticity implies credibility and being true to oneself (Giddens, 1991). In a similar vein, we view authenticity-driven change in RME as an activity where justification goes through credible research activity and emphasis on knowledge (“the walk”) that helps to solve not only business challenges but also societal issues. In reality, these orientations are, however, likely mixed. Also, being authentic in a societal context is often defined by power relations such as modern control systems (e.g., accreditations), rather than by moral judgement itself (Giddens, 1991). For example, organisations are expected to communicate about themselves in a particular way to be considered as “authentic”, which is also likely to drive them towards prestige-oriented behaviour. However, how such development occurs over time is not well understood.

We argue that assessing RME in one country enables an acknowledgment of conditions that explain the adopted orientations and their developments. Thus, we focused on one so-called sustainability-oriented country where all selected educational institutions are public universities and under the same education legislation, providing a more coherent picture beyond a focus on single schools.

### 3 | METHODS

#### 3.1 | The context of management education in Finland

The word *context* emphasises a situational and historical understanding of the environment in which the features of a system are either reproduced or transformed (Archer, 1995, p. 11). The context of higher education in Finland has a state-governed nature, with the

basic assumption that the same degrees should have the same content and quality in each higher education institution offering them (Kettunen, 2013; Wallenius et al., 2020). Of the 14 universities in Finland, ten offer degrees in business administration and economics (Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland, 2019). The citizens of Finland (European Union) can study in Finland without tuition fees; the largely public financial resources of Finnish universities are dependent on, for example, the number of graduating students, academic publishing in top journals, and internationalisation activities (Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland, 2019). The Finnish higher education system is part of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), which has been enforced especially with the legislative change called Universities Act in 2009 (Berndtson, 2013; Kettunen, 2013). According to the Finnish National Agency for Education, more than 11,000 students were studying business, administration, or law in Finland in 2019. The field of business studies was also the most sought-after study option of applicants to Finnish universities. According to a recent report on Finnish management education, sustainability and ethical perspectives are contemporarily common learning goals of business degree programmes (Wallenius et al., 2020). Furthermore, it is noted that the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are increasingly tagged in the curriculum and research activity of Finnish business schools participating the PRME network (Nonet et al., 2021). Finance programmes have been considered laggards in embedding responsibility (Finland's Sustainable Investment Forum, 2017).

The units of analysis in this study are university/business school programmes that grant bachelor's and master of science degrees in economics and business, following the educational criteria of the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture. Ten Finnish universities offer degrees in business and economics or are (standalone) business schools with broad basic competencies in economics and business administration subjects (Kallunki, 2017). Of these universities, Aalto University (since 2009) and Tampere University (since 2019) are foundation-based universities, and Hanken School of Economics is the only public standalone business school in Finland. HELBUS, the only private business school in Finland, was excluded from the sample because its degrees are awarded by the University of Northampton, UK. Information of the sample schools is collected in the Table A1 (all the tables are in Appendix).

#### 3.2 | Data and analysis

We used two types of research materials. First, we collected consecutive study guides from business schools (2017–2020 and 2020–2022). The two most recent study guides were selected owing to the improved comparability between university curricula and the harmonisation of a joint application system for business school education. Second, for the purposes of this study, the first author conducted 45 interviews on organising RME (see Table A2) to understand the developmental paths of RME and how the current situation manifests in educational planning and organising.

All interviews were organised by first searching for potential contacts through an internet search and by asking for recommendations from scholars of the field. Each research participant received a privacy notice and research notification following European Union GDPR standards. The interviews were conducted both in face-to-face meetings and phone or video meetings, depending on the agreement made with the research participant. The average length of the interview recordings was 44.5 min. Seven people were interviewed twice to form a more comprehensive account of the developments. E-mail communication with the research participants provided clarifying details on the current situation and addressed uncertainties that remained after the interviews. The interviews dealt with the establishment of RME in Finland, how study programmes or first courses had been initiated, and how the research participants described the current state of RME in Finnish business schools.

The study guide analysis provides an answer for research objective 1, and the analysis of the interview data with the results from research objective 1 forms the basis for research objective 2. The analysis of the study guides was performed as follows: First, we developed criteria for data drawing on STARS (Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education, 2019), a universal self-assessment tool for universities that has been evaluated to be among the most comprehensive in terms of education (Ceulemans et al., 2015; Stough et al., 2018). We coded the course materials by drawing on the 39 sustainability-related educational terms developed by Wu et al. (2010) alongside the division "sustainability-focused" and "sustainability-inclusive". In a sustainability-focused course, the key dimension of the sustainability issue is usually shown in the name of the course and plays a significant role in the course description such as "Introduction to corporate responsibility". Sustainability-inclusive courses indicate that a dimension of sustainability issues is discussed in the course, but the emphasis is secondary to the primary focus of the course (for further details, see Appendix). Furthermore, we borrowed the dimensions of "Economic", "Environmental", "Social", and "Cross-cutting themes" from the "Sustainability Tool for Assessing Universities' Curricula Holistically" (Lozano & Young, 2013). We used these dimensions in the division of different sustainability-related terms in the study guide analysis.

Second, we analysed which concepts had been used, which themes dominated, how bachelor's and master's level education differ, whether the studies are compulsory or voluntary, and how the levels of sustainability focus and inclusivity have developed between these study guides. This process resulted in the content of Tables A3 and A4. Here, each university is presented with its bachelor's degree, master's degree, and sustainability specialisation study programmes characterised by the terms associated with them in the assessment. In Table A5 the sustainability-focused, sustainability-inclusive, and "mandatory for all" courses are offered for both study guide periods.

Third, we used the interviews to develop historical narratives of the schools' paths to RME. We analysed the interviews with two questions in mind: what key events led to a more explicit focus on RME in

the institution, when did this take place and how did the interviewees perceive the current situation? The data suggest that the embedding of RME originated in Finnish business schools from local research interest and context, and educational markets (i.e., accreditations).

Fourth, we searched for the most plausible explanations for our research objective 2, drawing on abductive reasoning in the historical narratives (Mantere & Ketokivi, 2013). We defined authenticity-driven change in embedding RME as arising bottom-up from the local context and the original source of ideas and initiatives to have a unique impact. Accordingly, RME change has been enabled by external funding or local educational reforms. In the prestige-driven change, the focus is on the top-down implementation of RME and external justification that is culminated in the criteria of accreditations that prioritise markets over the local and original expertise in RME. This does not imply that prestige-driven change would result in having the status of a prestige school, but rather how external validations and judgements guide schools to mimic the image of prestige schools. As a prestige-driven orientation does not have a requirement of research background in RME relevant topics, this distinction between authenticity- and prestige-driven changes has context-sensitive implications in the curricular outcomes, and, of course, approaches tend to mix.

While our data are connected to single business school contexts, we discuss the presence of authenticity- and prestige-driven changes without specifying the school at hand. Our perspective of analysis was at the country context level, that is, how the authenticity- and prestige-driven changes explain the embedding of RME in all Finnish business schools longitudinally.

Our results were discussed in domestic and international seminars, and our analysis involved a constant process of iteration, as is generally done in qualitative case studies. We now move on to present our findings.

## 4 | FINDINGS: FINNISH BUSINESS SCHOOLS AND RME

We compiled the main divisions in authenticity- and prestige-driven approaches in Table A6. In the following, we outline the development of Finnish business schools' RME orientations, drawing on the interview and study guide data. We show how the authenticity- and prestige-driven approaches have influenced the way the curricular embedding of RME has occurred.

The authenticity-driven change has origins in a research- and faculty-led bottom-up orientation resulting vertical RME since the 1990s and increasingly in the early 2000s. The prestige-driven change emerged in the early 2010s, and in the 2020s, all Finnish business schools have embedded RME horizontally. Finally, we show how the presence of both authenticity- and prestige-driven changes as hybrid culminates how the RME appears in the Finnish country context. In terms of thematic emphasis in RME, authenticity-driven change has built on a social dimension and cross-cutting themes. Prestige-driven change has resulted

in a wider range of themes, also increasingly in the economic dimension.

## 4.1 | Authenticity-driven change

### 4.1.1 | Local context and the bottom-up RME

For half of the studied schools, the origin of RME engagement was in the business studies conducted in the 1990s, with topics such as social responsibility, stakeholder theory, business ethics, and environmental accounting. These streams were developed by individuals in the schools who conducted research activities around these topics.

We've had this theme of sustainable development in management and organisation already since the early 1990s and there have been also active colleagues in the accounting and finance. (Interviewee 12)

While the number of scholars in these fields was marginal in the 1990s and until the early 2000s, the focus on these fields in the same schools has continued until this day. Another common feature of these initiatives was the effort towards cross-disciplinary collaboration between university faculties/departments. However, most schools struggled to establish collaboration.

We proposed this master's study path to be the new foundation for the whole degree program of business. Unfortunately... well there were courses from corporate law and insurance sciences, but, for example, the marketing was not willing to participate. Anyway, our idea was that the approach would be comprehensive. (Interviewee 5)

The first RME initiatives were aimed at the horizontal approach, but as they lacked wide institutional support and were dependent on the activity of key actors, they became organised as elective vertical RME. Only when the key figures who had initiated RME left the institutions the progress in RME tended to stop temporarily.

### 4.1.2 | Unique research background building RME

The early vertical RME was enabled by external research funding that provided independence for responsibility-related scholarship to build expertise and ultimately RME.

1990s recession was difficult time for Finland and its universities. The membership in European Union since 1995 opened new opportunities for applying funding for research and education... but it does not

mean that the aim was only to do only some trendy things with the new funding. There was the societal need and we had already some knowledge on this (environmental management) field. (Interviewee 2)

In addition to research funding that enabled the building of RME, local university-wide initiatives enabled the establishment of vertical RME. In the 1990s, a Finnish university had an initiative to label itself as an "environmental university". This local event built the momentum for establishing cross-disciplinary RME studies that still exist today.

In the end of 1990s, there was an initiative to label (our university) as an "environmental university" and we jumped into this process. Then we established the minor of sustainable development that was available for all. We also developed a course "sustainable business" (elective) which still exists. (Interviewee 34)

The PRME was globally launched in 2007. This immediately attracted two schools where RME engagement was authenticity-driven, and they joined the PRME initiative among the first business schools in the world.

Authenticity-driven change was enabled by local and unique research ideas, external funding, and local initiatives in universities. The aim of the initiatives was collaborative and bottom-up, but usually, they were not yet ready for institution-wide support; therefore, their outcomes were often vertical RME.

### 4.1.3 | The presence of authenticity-driven change in the 2017–2022 study guides

The schools where early authenticity-driven changes occurred placed significant RME emphasis is on "soft" disciplines such as management, international business, accounting, and cross-cutting themes. The exceptions are the broad minors that cover a wide range of topics such as peace, poverty, ecology, water, and human rights. Authenticity-driven change appeared to build especially the emphasis on social responsibility and vertical RME. Only one school in our sample established horizontal RME (with a sustainability-inclusive course for all bachelor students first appearing in the 2021–2022 study guide) without an accreditation process.

## 4.2 | Prestige-driven change

### 4.2.1 | Accreditations justifying the top-down RME

In the 2010s, after the new Universities Act was enacted, all Finnish universities harmonised their degree structures to EHEA



standards (bachelor's and master's degrees). This harmonisation resulted in increased competition in educational markets and the role of accreditations, especially AACSB, gaining ground in Finnish business schools. The international frameworks that helped convince the school leadership on the relevancy of RME were AACSB, Globally Responsible Leadership Initiative (GRLI), and PRME.

The societal debate on climate change intensified, and universities became increasingly explicit with regard to sustainability or responsibility in their strategy documents. The school-level (AACSB) accreditation processes began to push horizontal RME. Schools' organisational mission for sustainability and responsibility must be shown clearly in the implementation.

Accreditation (AACSB) process has made these (sustainability) courses mandatory. (Interviewee 37)

The top-down requirements (AACSB reaccreditation) I guess convinced some people also afterwards that yes we have to have this. It is important to have this as flagship course on responsibility so as to be able to show our important stakeholders that we are taking this seriously. (Interviewee 21)

This effect of the accreditation process was identified in all schools<sup>1</sup> and resulted in horizontal RME (at least at the bachelor's level).

Currently, all business schools in Finland are at least AACSB accredited or in the accreditation process. Some schools have also undergone other accreditations such as those by the EQUIS, AMBA, and BGA. All accredited schools and some of those that are still in the process of accreditation are also signatories of the PRME.

#### 4.2.2 | Tensions in top-down horizontal embedding of RME

Especially accreditations "mainstreamed" the horizontal RME in Finnish business schools, but not without problems. Prestige-driven change required only the embedding of RME in the learning goals of course descriptions and other official documents in the accreditation process. Sometimes, this resulted in "factitious" horizontal RME established top-down for the accreditation, without much focus on the actual content.

And that (a lecture about accreditation process) was how we realised that responsibility is one of the things in the mission of the business school. Where is that taught in the bachelor level? Nowhere! That course (social responsibility course established in 2018) was organised for it, and it was factitious for this purpose. (Interviewee 22)

Another situation was that faculty members without prior experience in this area were appointed (top-down) to teach RME.

I did not do my PhD on that (sustainability), but I ended up teaching this, which is great because I think it is a great topic and I like to teach it. However, I am less of an expert than someone who has done her or his PhD on this topic. In addition, I guess this is not the only place where this happens. (Interviewee 33)

When I started in this position, sustainable development approach was not my main field of competence. I needed to dive into the literature and the themes very quickly to become teacher in this topic. (Interviewee 20)

These examples highlight the commonplace problems that can occur in organisational top-down initiatives, and knowledge on the topic that does not actually exist in organisations. However, sustainability has become so commonplace in societal discourse that it is not easy for faculty members to decline the offer to teach it as the topic is supposed to be everyone's concern. In some cases (interviewee 36), universities have then used external teachers to provide sustainability teaching from other universities where such expertise exists.

#### 4.2.3 | The presence of prestige-driven change in the 2017–2022 study guides

Prestige-driven change has shaped the RME orientation towards previously unexposed "hard" fields such as economics and finance. "Sustainable", "responsible", and "ethical" labels have increased not only in the economics and finance electives but also in mandatory courses. Prestige-driven change is shown in the use of terms such as carbon, SDGs, energy, pollution, socially responsible/sustainable investing, environmental economics, and subprime-/financial crisis. A sustainability-focused or sustainability-inclusive course is mandatory for the bachelor's level and sometimes in the master's level emphasising horizontal orientation.

### 4.3 | Authenticity- and prestige-driven change as hybrid

#### 4.3.1 | Tendency towards hybrid over time

Towards the end of the 2010s the presence of prestige-driven change incrementally increased in all schools including those with authenticity-driven background. Also, in schools with prestige-driven change the local authenticity has started to take shape as local scholars have engaged in RME-related research (interviewee 31). Currently authenticity- and prestige-driven change coexist as hybrid in most schools. The prestige-driven change has often acted as the institution-wide support for the cross-disciplinary embedding of RME that was missing in the early days of authenticity-driven



initiatives. Especially the AACSB process has given an institutional mandate to enforce RME across disciplines.

Partly because of the on-going accreditation process (AACSB), we have discussed in the business school how to best integrate sustainability into all study programs. For example, should we use our existing sustainable business course, or should each discipline organise this content on its own? (Interviewee 34)

The combination of early authenticity-driven change with cross-disciplinary engagement has occasionally resulted in a curriculum with a broad corporate responsibility minor available for all students, sustainability specialisation tracks in the master's programmes, and mandatory courses for all bachelor's and master's students. In such context, the school's accreditations (AACSB, EQUIS, AMBA, and BGA) and engagement with the PRME have enabled the strategic leveraging of RME since early 2010s (interviewees 1 and 17). For example, one mandatory master level sustainability-focused course was explicitly developed due to "Assurance of Learning", which is part of the AACSB accreditation. In this course, master students must engage with neighbouring disciplines and discuss the cross-disciplinary relevance of SDGs in their course assignments (interviewees 1 and 17). This and other RME initiatives have resulted in unexpected new openings.

We are actually also finding out certain things that we did not even know that were there! It has been an interesting process. Things are going forward in a good direction mostly slowly, but they have been going forward so long that now we can say that we have good integration (of RME). (Interviewee 1)

#### 4.3.2 | Human interaction

The cross-disciplinary cooperation and human interaction appeared in our data as a theme that divided the schools whether and how the embedding of RME currently occurred. In other words, the structural engagement with accreditations in prestige-driven change appears as the starting point for human interaction that can result in new authenticity and cross-disciplinary collaboration towards RME. The approach to collaboration appears to be decisive in human interaction and how it results in RME.

In one of our sample universities, both the business school and school of engineering offered RME-related studies. While the business school built its prestige-driven change during the 2010s towards "authenticity" (increasing related research), it was in the school of engineering where the topic originally emerged in the early 2000s. Active cooperation between units did not, however, take place when the interest in RME emerged in the business school.

These business and sustainability topics are taught in two separate (schools)—this is why business students

visit us and take our (engineering) courses—that at least within the school of engineering these things (sustainability scholarship) are done, which they (field of business) are now starting to focus on as a department or as a school. (Interviewee 19)

In another example a school with authenticity-driven origins and hybrid condition with accreditations and PRME in the end of 2010s had extensive RME in the curriculum but non-existing coordination of these studies. The RME reconstruction that occurred in late 2010s and early 2020s originated from collaborative individual interest.

When I started (2017)—suddenly I learned about all the existing studies in responsible business and this minor, which you are referring to, that had no professor level or anything else, any coordinator. Then I said to our vice dean, "Hey, I would be happy to take charge of this." (Interviewee 29)

On the basis of our findings, the embedding of RME has been dependent ultimately on the people and principles involved in this activity. Active faculty can create change, but without cross-disciplinary cooperation, the outcome can be ineffective or discontinuous even in hybrid conditions.

#### 4.3.3 | The hybrid presence in 2017–2022 study guides

The change between the 2017–2020 and 2020–2022 study guides show an increasing horizontal embedding of RME and increasing use of "economic" RME terms. This could be explained with increasing prestige-driven change in all schools. In addition to horizontal RME the presence of authenticity-driven change has increased or held stable the number of sustainability-focused or -inclusive courses alongside schools' growing research focus on the themes.

#### 4.4 | Summary of findings

Our first objective was to examine how RME appears in the curricula of Finnish business schools. In 2022, all business schools had at least one mandatory sustainability-focused or sustainability-inclusive course at the bachelor's degree level. Most business schools offer extensive vertical RME, but students can complete the degree requirements with one basics of management (sustainability-inclusive), corporate responsibility, or business ethics course. Authenticity-driven change appears in the use of "social" RME terms, and prestige-driven change appears especially in "economic" terms.

Our second objective was to examine how the (non-)engagement in the past explains the present. Here, we viewed the significance of context, that is, local events and initiatives, in how the embeddedness of RME has occurred. We applied Rusinko's (2010) framework

of sustainability integration and Guillotin and Mangematin's (2018) authenticity-/prestige-driven change in the examination of RME development. We conclude that RME is currently being organised as hybrid of authenticity- and prestige-driven change, but it is largely a question of school context and principles in the human interaction that explain the varieties in the hybrid approach.

The division to authenticity- and prestige-driven changes offer explanations how and why the RME has developed in variety of ways. In the authenticity-driven change, the local context and expertise build over time, whereas prestige-driven change can bring swift and visible transformations. Prestige-driven change has however overcome the complexity of cross-disciplinary cooperation connected to early authenticity-driven change. Top-down processes enable the establishment of new mandatory RME courses for all. But this can result in situations where course content is secondary, or the teachers does not feel comfortable with their inadequate experience in RME.

Lastly, it is usually the hybrid of these approaches that culminates in comprehensive vertical and horizontal RME solutions.

## 5 | DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Our study was conducted to examine how Finnish business schools, which are all research-oriented institutions, have embedded RME. We analysed the schools' bachelor's and master's programmes alongside conditions that historically explain the differences between schools. Our findings summarise the heterogeneous embeddedness of RME. We now discuss our main contributions to the RME literature, which also have practical implications.

First, the recent literature has argued for the importance of acknowledging the conditions that drive the embeddedness of RME. Whereas some studies have argued that external pressures have been crucial for the adoption of RME (see Alajoutsijärvi et al., 2018; Cooper et al., 2014; Doh & Tashman, 2014), others have suggested that leadership and the influence of faculty champions are also crucial in enabling pedagogical change (Rasche & Gilbert, 2015; Solitander et al., 2012). Also, the vertical or horizontal RME orientation was suggested to follow the accreditations of schools (Wu et al., 2010). However, the literature has not explained in detail the influences of various conditions over time. Our results show how schools that have built on authenticity-driven change have initially designed their curricula with vertical RME through strong research orientation, mainly using individual champions' interests and targeted research funding. These conditions are quite different from the conditions created by accreditations and top-down orientation. Accordingly, as a result of prestige-driven change, RME has taken place through horizontal embeddedness. However, schools where authenticity-driven change has occurred have later often streamlined their RME to cover the horizontal approach, even without accreditations. More importantly though, our data show that no school has begun from the horizontal approach without accreditations. Although the horizontal approach is generally

perceived as a preferred mode, we argue that such claims also need to be judged in terms of the research competence within the given school and the amount of exposure available throughout students' study paths. More specifically, even when a programme includes one or two compulsory courses on sustainability, does this mean that sustainability is highly embedded or mainstreamed (see also Painter-Morland et al., 2016)?

Second, our data indicate how authenticity driven change towards RME has largely relied on institutional entrepreneurs and the "activities of actors who have an interest in particular institutional arrangements and who leverage resources to create new institutions or to transform existing ones" (Maguire et al., 2004, p. 657) within the school context. In addition, time and context have created a strategic potential for faculty to bring change to their organisations. Not only have these individuals sought to transform the content and curricula of schools, but they have also further influenced RME through research. This has also been a natural choice in a context where all domestic business schools are clearly research oriented. Furthermore, this "human factor" is also essential in later stages of RME development. Without scholarly collaboration, RME is hardly becoming embedded between different units.

Our study has also indicated similar challenges in the business school context that business organisations face when implementing responsible management, such as lack of competence and resources. The question then is not only about the agency of individuals to develop RME but also about how the institution supports research engagement that has the potential to build authenticity in RME beyond minimum-level external requirements (Guillotin & Mangematin, 2018). We develop the Guillotin and Mangematin (2018) argument to RME context by suggesting that while the authenticity in RME appears more original than uniform conditions derived from accreditations and rankings, neither of these organisational conditions exist as a pure form. Our findings suggest that temporal examination is crucial; prestige-driven change can create incentive for more authentic orientation and authenticity-driven RME does not disappear when engaged with prestige-driven change. Authenticity and RME-enabling research could be helpful in overcoming the "not invented here" syndrome (Solitander et al., 2012, p. 353), which has been identified as a significant barrier in embedding RME. The question for future research is how to build authentic research-based competence in RME so that the whole organisation, regardless of disciplines, can collaborate in this framework.

Our study has also managerial implications. Our study shows how bottom-up initiatives create new knowledge but often clash with barriers between units. And even though the top-down adoption of responsibility tends to streamline the organisation more quickly, it may unveil the gaps that the organisation holds in having the required knowledge. Also, a solution to purchase the "responsibility knowledge" via external specialists may signal responsibility functions as an outsourced activity. Ergo, our recommendation for organisations is to aim for authenticity and a field-specific approach in embedding responsibility. It is vital for managers to utilise various terms such as *ethics*, *responsibility*, and *sustainability* as boundary

concepts to invite joint sense making on these issues across units and teams.

The limitation of our study is that the data used originated solely from Finnish business schools, which are all research-oriented institutions. Thus, our material did not consist of organisations that were mainly teaching-oriented. However, at the same time, this enabled a more in-depth focus. We believe that our study provides an extensive description of RME in a sustainability-oriented Nordic country. Other limitations are linked to general epistemological challenges linked to scientific inquiry. Our interview data offer clues on how reality in business school education has been experienced but ultimately dependent on subjective experience. Also, the curricular information in the university study guides is context-dependent and interpretative.

Certain limitations of this study could be addressed in future research. For example, our framing of the system of management education in one country limited our ability to evaluate the microlevel dynamics with detailed pedagogical approaches in RME. More specifically, is RME operated by permanent faculty and staff, or does a school rely on external teachers and collaborative modules? Furthermore, the timing and location of RME in the curriculum (whether is it first or last or embedded throughout in general academic or discipline-specific studies) influence the construction of student and faculty mindsets, calling for future research. Finally, it was beyond the scope of our study to investigate the pedagogic quality of RME in schools, but we see this as an important avenue for future research (Roscoe, 2020).

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank the anonymous reviewers and editors of BEER for the constructive feedback during the review process, and Kimmo Alajoutsijärvi, Katariina Jusuola, and participants of Responsible Business Research Seminar 2021 for early phase feedback for the article. Both the article and our thinking have greatly benefited thanks to them. All errors and misinterpretations remain our own.

#### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no competing interest.

#### DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

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#### ENDNOTE

- 1 Except Tampere University Faculty of Management and Business, whose faculty members considered themselves as ineligible for accreditations owing to their close connection with political sciences and engineering.

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**How to cite this article:** Aaltonen, V., & Siltaoja, M. (2022). How they walk the talk: Responsible management education in Finnish business schools. *Business Ethics, the Environment & Responsibility*, 31, 1117–1135. <https://doi.org/10.1111/beer.12456>

## APPENDIX A

How the Sustainability-focused courses were analysed according to STARS: “The course title or description must indicate a primary and explicit focus on sustainability. This includes: (1) Foundational courses with a primary and explicit focus on sustainability (e.g., Introduction to Sustainability, Sustainable Development, Sustainability Science). (2) Courses with a primary and explicit focus on the application of sustainability within a field (e.g., Architecture for Sustainability,

Green Chemistry, Sustainable Agriculture, Sustainable Business). As sustainability is an interdisciplinary topic, such courses generally incorporate insights from multiple disciplines. (3) Courses with a primary and explicit focus on a major sustainability challenge (e.g., Climate Change Science, Environmental Justice, Global Poverty and Development, Renewable Energy Policy). The focus of such courses might be on providing knowledge and understanding of the problems and/or the tools for solving them.”

Sustainability-inclusive course according to STARS: “Courses that are not explicitly focused on sustainability may contribute towards scoring if sustainability has clearly been incorporated into course content. To count as sustainability-inclusive, the course description or rationale provided in the course inventory must indicate that the course incorporates a unit or module on sustainability or a sustainability challenge, includes one or more sustainability-focused activities, or integrates sustainability challenges, issues, and concepts throughout the course”

**TABLE A1** The background information for the Finnish business schools

School, year of establishment	Accreditations in 2022	Year of PRME signatory
Aalto University School of Business, 2009 (former Helsinki School of Economics, 1911)	EQUIS, AACSB, AMBA	2008 (May)
Hanken School of Economics, 1909	EQUIS, AMBA, AACSB, BGA	2008 (April)
Jyväskylä University School of Business and Economics (JSBE), 1967	AACSB, AMBA, BGA, EQUIS application in process	2019
Lappeenranta-Lahti University of Technology (LUT), 1969	EFMD, AACSB	2015
Oulu Business school (OBS), 1991	AACSB	2018
Tampere University Faculty of Management and Business, 1965 (TUNI)	–	–
University of Eastern Finland Business School (UEF), 2010	AACSB application in process	–
University of Turku School of Economics (TSE), 1950	AACSB	2013
University of Vaasa (UVA), 1966	EFMD, AACSB application in process	2020
Åbo Akademi, 1927	AACSB application in process	–

Abbreviations: AACSB, Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business; AMBA, Association of MBAs; BGA, Business Graduate Association; EFMD, European Foundation for Management Development's accreditation; EQUIS, European quality improvement system; PRME, United Nations Principles for Responsible Management Education.



TABLE A2 Information on the interviews

Interviewee	Active in the field of management education						Record Length (min)
	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020	
1							62, 64
2							34, 26
3							67
4							20
5							47
6							47
7							38, 57
8							42, 41
9							28
10							29
11							55
12							56
13							35
14							25
15							26
16							36
17							48, 64
18							39
19							69
20							56
21							43
22							48
23							15, 55
24							41
25							29
26							41
27							42
28							62
29							63
30							29
31							10, 35
32							67
33							53
34							39
35							39
36							45
37							74
38							62
39							62

TABLE A3 Responsible management education related terms in Finnish business Schools' 2017–2020 study guides

University	Economic	Environmental	Social	Cross-cutting themes	Standalone courses and specialisation study programmes on sustainability
Aalto University School of Business (Aalto)	Environmental economics BM, externality M, ESG M, sustainable growth M, circular economy B, financial crisis M, development economics M, economic growth BM	Climate change BM, pollution B, energy BM, rural M, natural resources M	Inequality BM, gender M, poverty M	Systems thinking S, corporate responsibility BM, ethics BM, governance M, sustainability BM, sustainable development BM, CSR M, transition M	"Corporate responsibility and ethics" (3 ECTS, for all B), specialisation track "Sustainability Management" and "Creative Sustainability" (CS) a master's programme and minor
Hanken School of Economics (Hanken)	Financial crisis M	Climate change M, green M, energy M, water M, cleaner production M	Cultural diversity BM, gender M, peace B	Corporate responsibility BM, governance BM, ethics BM, sustainability BM, sustainable development BM, CSR BM, multidisciplinary M	"Introduction to Corporate Social Responsibility" (6 ECTS for all B), "Global Competence: Social Responsibility across Business Studies" (3 ECTS for all M) "Corporate Responsibility" study module, specialisation tracks in master's programmes: "International Strategy and Sustainability", "Humanitarian Logistics", "Logistics and Corporate Social Responsibility"
Jyväskylä University School of Business and Economics (JSBE)	Circular economy S	Climate change S, green M, energy S, ecosystem S, waste S, water S	Cultural diversity BM, gender M, health S	Ethics BM, governance M, CSR B, sustainability BM, sustainable development B, transition M	"Introduction to Responsible Business" (4 ECTS for all B), master's programme "Corporate environmental management" (CEM)
Lappeenranta-Lahti University of Technology School of Business and Management (LUT)	Environmental economics B, economic growth B	Renewable B, energy M, green M, stewardship M, carbon M, water M	Community M	Corporate responsibility M, ethics BM, governance M, CSR BM, sustainability BM, sustainable development BM	"Introduction to Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability" (6 ECTS for all B), "Sustainability", "Environmental Responsibility", "Environmental Technology" minors
Oulu Business School (OBS)			Cultural diversity B	Corporate responsibility B, governance M, ethics BM, sustainability M, sustainable development M	"Globally Responsible Business" (6 ECTS for all M)

TABLE A3 (Continued)

University	Economic	Environmental	Social	Cross-cutting themes	Standalone courses and specialisation study programmes on sustainability
Tampere University Faculty of Management and Business (TUNI)	Environmental economics B, circular economy S	Climate change B, pollution B, renewable B, natural resources B, sustainable production S, biodiversity S, ecosystem S, water S, energy S	Inequality B, safety B, cultural S	Corporate responsibility B, governance M, ethics BM, CSR B, disaster B, sustainability BM, sustainable development BM	"Thematic Module in Responsible Business and Sustainability", master's program of "Responsible Business" minors "Sustainable development" (Faculty of Social Sciences), "Circular economy" (Faculty of Engineering and Natural Sciences)
University of Eastern Finland Business Studies (UEF)			Labour M, culture M	Ethics B, CSR B, sustainability M	
University of Turku School of Economics (TSE)	Development economics S, Ethical Issues in Finance and Responsible Investing BS	Natural resources S, climate change S, rural S, ecology S	Cultural diversity B, gender S, poverty S, human rights S	Corporate responsibility BM, ethics BM, CSR B, disaster S, governance S, systems change S	"Responsible Business: an Introduction", "Ethical questions in business", "Responsible business", "Accounting Trends and Corporate Social Responsibility" (discipline specific courses). Minors of "Sustainable development" and "Responsible business"
University of Vaasa Faculty of Business School (UVA)	Financial crisis M, sustainable growth M, sustainable investing M, Corporate responsibility and ethics in finance M	Climate change M, green M, energy M, renewable M		Corporate responsibility M, CSR M, ethics BM, governance M, sustainability BM, sustainable development BM	"Introduction to Business Law and Business Ethics" (3 ECTS for all B), "Corporate Responsibility and Ethics in Finance"
Åbo Akademi Faculty of Social Sciences and Economics (Åbo Akademi)	Circular economy S	Climate change M, ecology S, water S	Cultural diversity BM, poverty S, gender BM, peace S	CSR B, governance M, ethics BM, sustainability BM, sustainable development S	"Sustainability studies" minor



TABLE A4 Responsible management education related terms in Finnish business Schools' 2020–2022 study guides

University	Economic	Environmental	Social	Cross-cutting themes	Standalone courses and specialisation study programmes on sustainability
Aalto	Environmental economics BM, externality M, sustainable finance M, sustainable investing B, financial crisis B, circular economy BM, ESG M, development economics M, sustainable growth M, economic growth BM, consumption BM, green finance M, ESG M	Biodiversity B, environmental law M, pollution BS, climate change BM, waste B, natural resources BM, ecology S, energy BM, green BM, recycling B, renewable B, reuse B, carbon M, water M	Inequality BM, population B, employment BM, labour M, poverty M, gender BM, culture BM, corruption M, diversity BM, human rights M	Sustainability BM, corporate responsibility BM, CSR BM, ethics BM, sustainable development BM, systems thinking BM, holistic M, triple bottom line BM, governance M, transition BM	"Corporate responsibility and ethics" (3 ECTS, for all B), specialisation track "Sustainability Management" and "Creative Sustainability" (CS) a master's program and a minor
Hanken	Financial crisis M, circular economy BM, ESG M, capitalism B, economic growth B, consumption BM, production M, ESG M	Climate change BM, ecology M, energy BM, green BM, recycling M, renewable BM, carbon BM	Employment BM, labour BM, poverty B, gender BM, culture BM, diversity M, peace B	Sustainability BM, corporate responsibility B, CSR BM, ethics BM, sustainable development BM, governance BM, transition BM	"Introduction to Corporate Social Responsibility" (6 ECTS for all B), "Global Competence: Social Responsibility across Business Studies" (3 ECTS for all M) "Corporate Responsibility" study module, specialisation tracks in master's programmes: "International Strategy and Sustainability", "Humanitarian Logistics", "Logistics and Corporate Social Responsibility"
JSBE	Socially responsible investing M, circular economy BM, economic growth BM, consumption BM, production BM, degrowth S	Biodiversity S, environmental law S, pollution S, climate change BM, waste S, natural resources S, ecology BMS, energy S, ecosystem S, green S, renewable BM, sea S, water S, land S	Local community S, inequality BM, employment BM, poverty B, gender BM, culture BM, diversity BM, peace BM	Sustainability BM, corporate responsibility M, CSR BM, ethics BM, sustainable development BM, systems thinking S, holistic BM, governance BM, transition M	"Introduction to Responsible Business" (4 ECTS for all B), master's programme "Corporate environmental management" (CEM)
LUT	Circular economy M, market economy, economic growth B, consumption B, production BM	Environmental law S, pollution S, climate change S, waste MS, natural resources S, ecology S, energy S, global warming M, green MS, carbon MS, water S	Labour BS, culture M, diversity M	Sustainability BM, corporate responsibility MS, CSR M, ethics BM, sustainable development BM, governance BM, transition BS	"Introduction to Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability" (6 ECTS for all B), "Sustainable Business", "Environmental Technology", "Environmental Responsibility" minors
OBS		Environmental law S, ecosystem S	Labour M, culture M, diversity M	Sustainability M, corporate responsibility B, ethics BM, sustainable development BS, interdisciplinary MS, governance M	"Globally Responsible Business" (6 ECTS for all M) "Entrepreneurship" minor with focus also in SDG's

TABLE A4 (Continued)

University	Economic	Environmental	Social	Cross-cutting themes	Standalone courses and specialisation study programmes on sustainability
TUNI	Consumption BM, environmental economics B, circular economy S	Pollution S, climate change B, natural resources S, energy M, ecosystem S, renewable B, water S, energy S	Employment BM, labour BM, poverty B, culture BM, diversity B	Sustainability BM, corporate responsibility B, CSR BM, ethics BM, sustainable development B, governance BM	"Thematic Module in Responsible Business and Sustainability" B, master's programmes of "Responsible Business", "Leadership for Change - Governance for Sustainable Change" minors "Sustainable development" (Faculty of Social Sciences), "Circular Economy" (Faculty of Engineering and Natural Sciences)
UEF	Circular economy M		Labour B, culture BM	Sustainability BM, ethics BM, interdisciplinary M, governance BM	"Responsible marketing" (6 ECTS) mandatory in Kuopio campus B, elective for Joensuu campus B
TSE	Financial (banking/subprime) crisis BM, ethical issues in finance and responsible investing BS, ESG M, development economics S, economic growth B, production BM, ESG B	Pollution S, climate change B, natural resources S, energy M, ecosystem S	Inequality BS, employment BM, labour B, poverty BMS, gender S, culture BMS, corruption M, human rights BM	Sustainability BM, corporate responsibility BM, CSR BM, ethics BM, sustainable development BS, systems thinking S, interdisciplinary BM, governance BM, transition MS	"Responsible Business: an Introduction", "Ethical questions in business", "Responsible business", "Accounting Trends and Corporate Social Responsibility" (discipline specific courses). Minors of "Sustainable development" and "Responsible business".
UVA	financial Crisis M, Corporate responsibility and ethics in finance M, sustainable investing M, sustainable growth M, consumption B, production B,	Environmental law B, energy BM, green M, renewable M	Inequality B, gender M, culture B, corruption B, diversity BM,	Sustainability M, corporate responsibility M, CSR M, ethics BM, sustainable development BM, holistic B, governance BM, transition B,	"Introduction to Business Law and Business Ethics" (3 ECTS for all B), Sustainable development and ethics in business" (3 ECTS for all). "Corporate Responsibility and Ethics in Finance"
Åbo Akademi	Externality M, sustainable finance M, sustainable investing B, financial crisis B, circular economy S, degrowth S	Biodiversity S, environmental law S, climate change S, waste S, ecology S, water S	Labour B, poverty BMS, equality B, gender BMS, culture BS, corruption M, diversity B, peace S	Sustainability BM, ethics BM, sustainable development S, interdisciplinary S, governance BM	"Sustainability studies" minor

Abbreviations: B, bachelor' level studies; M, master's level studies; S, only in sustainability specialisation studies.

TABLE A5 The sustainability-focused, the sustainability-inclusive, and the mandatory courses. Study guide period 2017–2022

Bachelors degree University	Sustainability-focused courses		Sustainability-inclusive courses		Mandatory sust. course for all		change from 2017–2020 to 2020 onwards
	in 2017–2020	2020->	in 2017–2020	2020->	in 2017–2020	2020->	
Aalto	3	8	6	5	1	1	increased 4 courses
Hanken	3	8	2	6	1	1	increased 4 courses
JSBE	3	2	2	17 <sup>a</sup>	1	1	increased 16 courses
LUT	2	2	3	2	2	2	decreased 1 course
OBS	1	2	5	3	2	2	decreased 1 course
TUNI	8	5	1	4	0	1	increased 1 mandatory course
UEF	1	2	1	2	1	1	increased 2 courses
TSE	9	11	2	6	1	1	increased 6 courses
UVA	1	2	3	2	1	2	increased 1 mandatory course
Åbo Akademi	3	1	4	1	1	1	decreased 5 courses
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>	
Masters degree	Sustainability- focused courses		Sustainability inclusive courses		Mandatory sust. Course for all M		change from 2017–2020 to 2020 onwards
University	in 2017–2020	2020->	in 2017–2020	2020->	in 2017–2020	2020->	
Aalto	21	22	4	8	0	0	increased 5 courses
Hanken	12	7	7	8	1	1	decreased 4 courses
JSBE	14	16	2	20 <sup>a</sup>	0	0	increased 20 courses
LUT	8	8	7	11	0	0	increased 4 courses
OBS	2	2	1	1	1	1	Stable
TUNI	6	6	2	1	0	0	decreased 1 course
UEF	0	2	1	0	0	0	increased 1 course
TSE	2	7	6	6	0	0	increased 5 courses
UVA	7	6	3	1	0	0	decreased 3 courses
Åbo Akademi	0	0	3	4	0	0	increased 1 course
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	

Note: Relationship to United Nations Sustainable Development Goals mentioned in most of the courses.

TABLE A6 Authenticity- and prestige-driven change in embedding responsible management education

Key themes in embedding responsible management education (RME)	Organising of RME	Orientation
<p><b>Local context and the bottom-up RME</b></p> <p>"We've had this theme of sustainable development in management and organisation already since the early 1990s and there have been also active colleagues in the accounting and finance." (Interviewee 12)</p> <p>"We proposed this master's study path to be the new foundation for the whole degree programme of business. Unfortunately... well there were courses from corporate law and insurance sciences, but, for example, the marketing was not willing to participate. Anyway, our idea was that the approach would be comprehensive." (Interviewee 5)</p> <p>"—we had possibilities to cooperate cross-disciplinary (in establishing responsibility minor)." (Interviewee 1)</p>	<p>Bottom-up, local context, often without institution-wide support</p>	<p>Authenticity-driven</p>
<p><b>Unique research background building RME</b></p> <p>"1990s recession was difficult time for Finland and its universities. The membership in European Union since 1995 opened new opportunities for applying funding for research and education—"—"but it does not mean that the aim was only to do only some trendy things with the new funding. There was the societal need and we had already some knowledge on this (environmental management) field." (Interviewee 2)</p> <p>"In the end of 1990s, there was an initiative to label (our university) as an 'environmental university' and we jumped into this process. Then we established the minor of sustainable development that was available for all. We also developed a course 'sustainable business' (elective) which still exists." (Interviewee 34)</p> <p>"We established the research group of responsible management (that became later the organiser of responsible business master's programme) after we received the funding from Academy of Finland." (Interviewee 5)</p>	<p>Original research and external funding, local initiatives in the schools, vertical RME (specialisation and expertise)</p>	
<p><b>Accreditations justifying the top-down RME</b></p> <p>"Accreditation (AACSB) process has made these (sustainability) courses mandatory." (Interviewee 37)</p> <p>"The top-down requirements (AACSB reaccreditation) I guess convinced some people also afterwards that yes, we have to have this. It is important to have this as flagship course on responsibility so as to be able to show our important stakeholders that we are taking this seriously." (Interviewee 21)</p> <p>"—Until then we had thought that 'it (responsibility) is there somewhere, and we certainly have these green themes in the courses here and there', but then (during the AACSB reaccreditation process) we realised that this is not enough. We needed to have the responsibility explicitly and clearly in the curriculum." (Interviewee 28)</p>	<p>Top-down, accreditation driven</p>	<p>Prestige-driven</p>
<p><b>Tensions in top-down horizontal embedding of RME</b></p> <p>"And that (a lecture about AACSB accreditation process) was how we realised that responsibility is one of the things in the mission of the business school. Where is that taught in the bachelor level? Nowhere! That course was organised for it, and it was 'factitious' for this purpose." (Interviewee 22)</p> <p>"I did not do my PhD on that (sustainability), but I ended up teaching this, which is great because I think it is a great topic and I like to teach it. However, I am less of an expert than someone who has done her or his PhD on this topic. In addition, I guess this is not the only place where this happens." (Interviewee 33)</p> <p>"When I started in this position, sustainable development approach was not my main field of competence. I needed to dive into the literature and the themes very quickly to become teacher in this topic." (Interviewee 20)</p> <p>"—and damn it! I need to call (one of the few teachers of environmental accounting in Finland) 'could you come visit here?'" (Interviewee 36)</p>	<p>Horizontal RME (mandatory for all) with(out) existing resources/ research background</p>	

TABLE A6 (Continued)

Key themes in embedding responsible management education (RME)	Organising of RME	Orientation
<p><b>Tendency towards hybrid over time</b></p> <p>"Partly because of the on-going accreditation process (AACSB), we have discussed in the business school how to best integrate sustainability into all study programmes. For example, should we use our existing sustainable business course, or should each discipline organise this content on its own?" (Interviewee 34)</p> <p>"We are actually also finding out certain things that we did not even know that were there! It has been an interesting process. Things are going forward in a good direction mostly slowly, but they have been going forward so long that now we can say that we have good integration (of RME)." (Interviewee 1)</p> <p>"The two big new trends in finance (in 2021) that are growing in importance are FinTech on one side – and then there is this sustainability area in which I am involved (also as a teacher of mandatory for all course that was established during AACSB process). So, I would say that a lot of my colleagues are now doing research in CSR (corporate social responsibility) and stuff that they have not been considering in at all before." (Interviewee 31)</p> <p><b>Human interaction</b></p> <p>"These business and sustainability topics are taught in two separate (schools)—this is why business students visit us and take our (engineering) courses— at least within the school of engineering these things (sustainability scholarship) are done, which they (field of business) are now starting to focus on as a department or as a school." (Interviewee 19)</p> <p>"When I started (in 2017)—suddenly I learned about all the existing studies in responsible business and this minor, which you are referring to, that had no professor level or anything else, any coordinator. Then I said to our vice dean, 'Hey, I would be happy to take charge of this.'" (Interviewee 29)</p> <p>"When we ask them (faculty in other disciplines) 'are you integrating responsibility?' and they say 'yes we are doing it' and each time we ask this they go further in doing it." (Interviewee 17)</p>	<p>Coexistence of original RME context and accreditations result increasing horizontal and vertical RME</p> <p>(Lack of) Collaborative engagement and development of RME</p>	<p>Authenticity- and prestige-driven as hybrid</p>



## II

# THE RHYTHMS OF ORGANISING RESPONSIBLE MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

by

Aaltonen VA and Siltaoja M

Unpublished manuscript.

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### III

## EDUCATION FOR PLANETARY WELL-BEING

by

Aaltonen VA, Hiljanen M, Layne H, et al. (2023)

In Elo M, Hytönen J, Karkulehto S, et al. (eds) *Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Planetary Well-Being*. London: Routledge, pp.246–258

<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003334002-24>

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# 18

## EDUCATION FOR PLANETARY WELL-BEING

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### **Education is the key to transforming practices<sup>1</sup>**

The ongoing global crises are the motivation for the concept of planetary well-being (Kortetmäki *et al.*, 2021). These crises can be regarded as being nested in one another (Heikkinen *et al.*, 2023; Kaukko *et al.*, 2021). The most discussed of these nested crises are the climate emergency and the global loss of biodiversity, but the global tangle of crises also includes social and economic crises, like the social justice gap between the global North and the global South, and health crises, like global pandemics (*e.g.*, Johnson *et al.*, 2020; Kaukko *et al.*, 2021). To be able to solve these nested crises, humans must learn to act in a new way; in other words, humanity needs to make a rapid shift from unsustainable practices to sustainable ones. The term *green transition* has increasingly been used to describe this shift (*e.g.*, Bianchi, 2020), the urgency of which has been recognized worldwide.

Learning and education play a key role in the green transition. However, in order to change prevailing practices, learning and education need to be understood in a new way. Traditionally, education has socialized new generations to conventional practices and ways of thinking. Given the present circumstances, reproducing prevailing practices and habitual belief systems is no longer defensible; rather, education should promote new kinds of practices and new ways of thinking. Education should, in other words, promote *transformative learning* that aims for something unprecedented (Mezirow, 1994; O’Sullivan, Morrell and O’Connor, 2002; Wals, 2011). Transformative learning means bringing about such a fundamental change that it transforms a person’s psyche, forming a new kind of identity; it is a shift of consciousness that dramatically and permanently alters the human way of being in the world. Such a profound transformation involves experiencing a deep, structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feeling, and action.



To enable such a transformation, we must first critically examine the prevailing practices and reflect on their underlying beliefs. One fundamental belief system that makes us reproduce previous practices in a path-dependent manner is our human-centred worldview, in other words our anthropocentrism. The concept of *education for planetary well-being* advocates a more-than-human view, or rather a planetary view, as the basis for education—one which manifests as a dialogic relationship between humans and the rest of nature. The current paradigm of socialization—that is, societal continuity and reliability based on educating new generations with required knowledge and skills (Värri, 2018)—appears to be inadequate to securing planetary well-being. For example, according to Ruuska (2017), higher education reproduces the current drastically unequal economic systems, which exacerbates the ecological crises. This notwithstanding, in recent decades, numerous initiatives and frameworks have been introduced in order to address this problem. These initiatives, which we refer to as current frameworks, have been helpful but have not been sufficient to effect fundamental change. Nonetheless, in our view, some of these ideas are germane to the concept of *education for planetary well-being* and therefore germane to our present purposes.

The key question is how to put into practice a form of education that promotes the necessary transformative learning and renewal of practices and that maintains a planetary state in which “organisms (including humans) can realize their typical characteristics and capacities” (Kortetmäki *et al.*, 2021, p. 4). To answer this question, we suggest the concept of *education for planetary well-being* as a framework that could bring together important existing educational themes and ideas with a new, more focused stance. *Education for planetary well-being* refers to the processes of upbringing, teaching, and learning that enable individuals and communities to promote the well-being of the planet and its inhabitants, which we refer to as life on Earth (consisting of nonhuman and human life in the biosphere and its ecosystems as well as the geophysical Earth systems). *Education for planetary well-being* promotes transformative learning and empowers individuals and societies to make responsible choices in terms of life on Earth. It focuses on learning about the interconnectedness of all life on Earth and the importance of preserving the liveable planet into the future, emphasizing the need to advance toward this goal.

## The undercurrents of education for planetary well-being

### *Humanism, instrumental rationality, and dualism*

A considerable number of the problems of our time (in education systems built on “Western” beliefs) stem from anthropocentric thinking, which attributes the greatest value to that which is good for humans. In other words, the actions and activities that yield benefits for humans are seen as worth pursuing foremost. This worldview does not necessarily take into consideration what is good for the rest of nature.

Quite the contrary: Very often humans have acted in a way that undermines the well-being of the rest of nature.

The origin of these problems can be traced back to the birth of the Enlightenment and humanism. A decisive change in thinking was the shift towards Cartesian dualism in the sixteenth century, based on the philosopher René Descartes' concept that the human mind is separate from the world outside of it; that is, humans are conscious "subject" and the rest of the world is regarded as an "object" of human thought and action. The transition to Cartesian dualism was also on the background of the Enlightenment project. Originally a European philosophical movement that began at the end of the seventeenth century, the influence of the Enlightenment has continued into modern times, especially with regard to its emphasis on rationality and knowledge (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1972). In humanism, what is good for humans is thought to have the highest absolute value. A phrase by Protagoras of Ancient Greece was quoted as the motto of humanism: *Homo mensura*—the human being is the measure of everything (Hietalahti, 2022; Niiniluoto, 2015).

The Enlightenment and humanism thus share the assumption that all life on Earth exists *for* humans. One of their guiding principles was that humans should free themselves from the power of the natural forces. The greatest achievement of the Enlightenment era was thought to be that the human species had managed to subjugate nature and other lifeforms on Earth to its own use with the help of human reason. In other words, everything on Earth was deemed to be of instrumental value for the benefit of humans specifically: Since the Enlightenment, the value of nature has been measured from the perspective of how it increases human well-being and wealth. The Age of Enlightenment has thus been seen as the triumph of *instrumental rationality*. Education has further reproduced and developed the idea that humans should use their reason to subdue natural resources for their own advantage (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1972).

Posthumanist thinking has emerged as a counter-movement to this tradition (Hietalahti, 2022). Posthumanism assumes that the continuation of life on this planet is of higher value than the life of one particular species, *Homo sapiens*. Posthumanism has developed from various philosophical origins and has expanded in many directions, and it is not a unified school of thought. It is rather an umbrella term that challenges anthropocentric ways of thinking and redefines the idea of what it means to be human and how humans (should) relate to their material and mediated environment (Ennsner-Kananen and Saarinen, 2022).

The concept of planetary well-being is based on a similar criticism of human-centred thinking typical of posthumanism. In the definition of planetary well-being, the highest value, according to our interpretation, is not attributed to human well-being exclusively but rather to achieving a planetary state in which organisms, including humans, can realize their typical characteristics and capacities. Therefore, the concept of planetary well-being can be considered a natural continuation of the discussion that has taken place within posthumanist theorization in terms of its critique of Cartesian dualism, instrumental rationality, and anthropocentric humanism.

Consequently, *education for planetary well-being* is also based on this thinking. It is not our intention to claim that *education for planetary well-being* is the only educational approach that is based on non-anthropocentrism and the critique of instrumental rationality, as there are also other approaches in the field of education that share these assumptions to varying degrees. These current frameworks are introduced in the upcoming section to present the earlier and current stages and concepts in the field of education that have paved the way for developing the concept of *education for planetary well-being* introduced in this chapter.

### ***The historical background of the current frameworks***

There are a number of approaches in the field of education whose common denominators are sustainability, protection of nature, and consideration of the natural environment. We call these approaches current frameworks. They consist of different initiatives, literature, and terms related to environmental and social responsibility as well as intergenerational justice in the context of education. Such current frameworks are presented here firstly as a historical continuum. These current frameworks offer a kind of mirror against which we outline the idea of *education for planetary well-being*.

According to Bianchi (2020), the historical development of initiatives and literature of the field has undergone three phases. Originating in the 1960s, the first phase is characterized by the impact of Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring* (1962) and others whose work preceded the environmental movements and the tradition of environmental education. The environmental education tradition embraced ecological arguments without conceits and eschewed anthropocentrism (Robottom, 1992). While these developments were the foundation for the first international UN conference on environmental issues, organized in Stockholm in 1972, these principles did not influence the framework and key term that was to dominate environmental policy in the coming decades: Sustainable development. According to *Our Common Future* (World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), 1987, p. 16): "Humanity has the ability to make development sustainable to ensure that it meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". Although the legacy of sustainable development and its emphasis on intergenerational justice has had significant influence in the world, ultimately it was founded on anthropocentric humanism and can be seen as directly continuing the Enlightenment project, albeit in a slightly toned-down form.

The second phase was framed around the UN Rio conference in 1992 and the adoption of Agenda 21, a non-binding sustainable development action plan that pushed educational policies towards skills and values linked to social, developmental, and environmental justice. This is the explicit educational foundation for the sustainable development tradition, currently present in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) framework (Laurie

*et al.*, 2016). According to UNESCO (2017), learning about sustainability must prepare students and learners of all ages to find solutions for the challenges of today and the future. Education should be transformative and should allow citizens to make informed decisions and take individual as well as collective action to change our societies and care for the planet.

The third phase is the era after the World Summit for Sustainable Development that took place in Johannesburg in 2002. This event served as the impetus for the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014), which emphasized lifelong learning and spurred initiatives worldwide. That project was followed by the UN Global Action Programme (2015–2019), which aimed to intensify the initiatives of Education for Sustainable Development and set Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a framework adopted by the UN in 2015 which, in addition to providing general guidance for sustainable change, places an explicit focus on the quality of and conditions for education (SDG 4) (Bianchi, 2020, p. 11). Currently, the UN Global Action Programme is being followed up by UNESCO's Education for Sustainable Development as part of its 2030 programme, which aims to bring about the personal and societal transformation that is needed to achieve sustainable development worldwide (Bianchi, 2020; UNESCO, 2022).

Sustainable development and sustainability are ubiquitously present in educational policy discourse, but it is not always clear what these terms mean. Bianchi (2020, p. 10) sums up the recent policy focus on sustainable development and sustainability as follows:

Sustainability and sustainable development are often used interchangeably, despite their conceptual difference. In reference to the UNESCO definitions, sustainability is best described as a long-term goal, such as attaining a more sustainable world; while sustainable development, like the term suggests, refers to the many processes and pathways to achieve development.

The “take-home message” of Bianchi is that it makes a difference whether we discuss sustainability or sustainable development, and that this choice has consequences for education. As indicated by Matero and Arffman (see Chapter 7), the concept of sustainable development has been interpreted in different ways during its relatively short history, depending on the context in which it is used. However, often it has been connected to the idea of continuous economic growth, especially by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the European Union. Economic growth as a policy goal is difficult to align with planetary well-being as it has been previously linked to overconsumption of materials, ecosystem destruction, inequality in human societies, and the general destruction of life on Earth (see Kortetmäki *et al.*, 2021). Hence, the concept of sustainable development too can be regarded as a direct heir of the Enlightenment tradition and the belief in human progress based on instrumental rationality.

Sustainable development-related frameworks are globally influential in the field of education to the extent that they can even be referred to as a paradigm, delineating the set of concepts and beliefs that prefigure public debate during a particular period of time. The ambiguity of sustainable development can be seen in the ambivalence surrounding how the concept is interpreted and used by different scholars. Therefore, some educational researchers consciously avoid using the term sustainable development or are sceptical of the concept of sustainability. However, there are also approaches that use the word sustainability but still want to distinguish themselves from the idea of continuous growth implied by the concept of sustainable development. Further still, there are some frameworks in the field of education that make no reference at all to either of these concepts (e.g., Bianchi, 2020; Connelly, 2007; Jickling and Wals, 2008; Snaza *et al.*, 2014).

Next, we briefly introduce some well-known and commonly used frameworks as alternatives to the prevailing sustainable development paradigm, that is, alternatives that support the idea of *education for planetary well-being*. The concept of *sustainability as education*, as defined by Stephen Sterling (2001, 2010) and Arjen Wals (2006, 2015), who are among the earliest and most central authors representing the move, called for holistic behavioural change and transformative learning. Sterling's (2001) original distinction between sustainability as education and *education for sustainable development* highlights that the latter was framed to raise awareness without challenging the existing institutions and status quo. Sustainability as education, instead, requires a profound change in one's worldview, switching from a dualistic, hierarchical worldview to systems understanding and relational sustainability competences.

*Global Citizenship Education Otherwise* (Andreotti, 2015; Stein and Andreotti, 2021) criticizes the framework of the taken-for-granted Eurocentric knowledge system in regard to how, for example, Sustainable Development Goals are framed and understood as global goals by the United Nations. The education for global citizenship promotes the transition from a singular universal belief or knowledge to an approach of listening and including counternarratives on knowledge in the curriculum. In this approach, education is viewed as a dialogue that considers diverse historical, political, and knowledge foundations (Andreotti, 2015).

In the Nordic countries, the concept of *eco-social education* (or *eco-social Bildung*) is one of the more influential current frameworks that calls for transformation by stressing the acute need for prioritizing diversity of life on Earth in the value system. Eco-social education has been part of the public debate for more than a decade, and it is explicitly mentioned, for example, in the national core curriculum of Finland (Finnish National Board of Education, 2014; Halinen, 2018; Lehtonen, Salonen and Cantell, 2018). Eco-social education emphasizes ecology, takes climate crises seriously, and considers planetary boundaries (Rockström *et al.*, 2009) instead of the economy as the basis for social and economic well-being (Salonen and Konkka, 2015).

*Ecojustice education* (Martusewicz, Edmundson and Lupinacci, 2011, p. 9) highlights “the necessary interdependent relationship of humans with the land, air, water, and other species with whom we share this planet”. Ecojustice education calls for critical awareness of the unequal power dynamics related to binaries (e.g., men/women, white/other, European/other, culture/nature, reason/emotion, science/local), indigenous knowledges, and how these inequalities are sustained across different languages and means of communication. The theoretical foundations of ecojustice education include ecofeminism and neo-agrarianism, with a shared dedication to a feminist ethic of care for ecological social justice and posthumanism (*ibid.*).

Other examples of approaches that avoid using the term “sustainable development” are *environmental education*, in its advanced mode, (Reid *et al.*, 2021) and the hybrid concept of *environmental and sustainability education* (Wals, Weakland and Corcoran, 2017). Both of these can be regarded as taking a critical stance toward anthropocentrism. Additionally, we acknowledge that critical approaches to human-centred education have also been raised by posthumanist writers (e.g., Morris, 2015; Snaza *et al.*, 2014). Overall, posthuman education has wider perspectives in its critic of humanism in education, such as colonialism and complex relations not only between humans and nonhuman animals, but also technology.

Criticism of anthropocentrism can be seen as a distinguishing factor according to which education for sustainability can be divided into two different types of approaches: Weak and strong (Connelly, 2007). The *weak* form is associated with continuous technological development and economic growth, or, at best, so-called ecological modernization (*ibid.*, p. 270) emphasizing efficiency in energy use and recycling of materials. The weak approach also includes an assumption about sustainable development benefitting all humanity, but, in reality, the approach accepts drastic inequalities between different human communities, such as the division between the global North and global South. Education for sustainability in the *strong* sense, in contrast, could be translated as *eco-socialism* (*ibid.*) with an emphasis on a just transition toward the well-being of all life on Earth, which aligns well with the concept of planetary well-being.

Based on the review above, we conclude that our concept of *education for planetary well-being* builds on the ideas raised by many of the current frameworks. In many respects, *education for planetary well-being* agrees with the mentioned frameworks; it advocates non-anthropocentric and posthumanist thinking as well as sustainability in the strong sense. However, it is more explicit in instilling the educational approach with the encompassing idea of planetary well-being as a state in which all organisms, including humans, can realize their typical characteristics and capacities.

### Dialogue as an ontological and pedagogical principle

Our conceptualization of *education for planetary well-being* is rooted in a dialogic relationship between humans and other lifeforms on Earth, one in which it is assumed that human well-being is built in dialogue with the rest of nature.



Dialogue can be identified implicitly in many of the current frameworks, such as in sustainability as education, global citizenship education otherwise, and ecojustice education. In *education for planetary well-being*, however, the dialogical way of being is central and explicitly present, drawing from Buber's (2004) dialogical philosophy and posthumanism (Braidotti, 2013, 2019).

The opposite of a dialogical relationship is a monologic (and an instrumental) relationship. The monological relationship is based on the aforementioned dualistic assumption that nature is understood as an object separate from humans and as an instrument for human well-being. In a dialogical relationship, humans are viewed as one of the species living in a given ecological niche of the Earth system and as largely dependent on and connected to different ecosystems and various forms of life on Earth. It is only through the interaction of species in and between ecosystems, including human societies, that well-being occurs (see Kortetmäki *et al.*, 2021, p. 3). The dialogic approach provides an ontological basis for the concept of *education for planetary well-being*.

As an ontological principle, dialogue can be regarded as a human way of being where the relations between beings are more fundamental than the beings themselves and where the ethical aspect of these relations is emphasized. Beings are understood to be constructed through these relationships, which are characterized by interconnectedness, diversity, and respect for alterity. The nature of this ontological "in-betweenness" has been aptly described by Martin Buber (2004) as two basic modes of existing, representable as word-pairs: *I-it* and *I-Thou*. According to Buber, the monological I-it relationship is characterized by the experience of a detached object and a concept of oneself as an isolated subject of experience that defines another being according to one's interests. According to Buber, one can be truly human only in a dialogical relation between I and Thou, where the other is encountered openly without any restricting classification. Hence, as a true "other", Thou has an inherent value.

Applied to the planetary well-being concept, this means that both humans and the rest of nature have an absolute value, or rather, that human dignity is best realized through the recognition of the dignity of nature. In this case, human beings are not seen as separate from the rest of the world, but as embodied being who co-exists through senses and affects. These ideas of co-existence and interdependence are also typical of posthumanism. For example, Braidotti (2019) calls to become aware of human embodiment and accountability to the way one affects and is affected in the dynamic web of human and nonhuman relations.

*Education for planetary well-being* requires dialogic consideration and an empathic understanding of other species' needs also in the pedagogical practice. Dialogical practice is a way of learning new, posthuman, and even planetary ways to relate to other species (see Davies and Renshaw, 2020; Saur and Sidorkin, 2018). However, the needs of different species are often conflicting and evoke challenging ethical questions that should be acknowledged and discussed (Valtonen, 2022). Posthumanism offers a view of pedagogy that emphasizes a critical awareness

of the highly unequal power relations between humans and Earth's "others" and embodied and sentient being (Braidotti, 2019). Participation in a collective dialogic practice is a moral phenomenon focused on the nature of our identity and existence as humans (Wegerif, Mercer and Major, 2020) and on how we are connected to the well-being of the whole planet.

Dialogue as pedagogical practice is based on the collaborative construction of knowledge through interaction between learner and teacher. The dialogical principle is an alternative to monological teaching's mere transmission of knowledge from a teacher to a learner. In dialogical teaching, learners are not regarded as objects of a teacher but rather as active subjects of knowledge construction. In this sense, one could say that *education for planetary well-being* is essentially based on constructivist learning (Tynjälä and Gijbels, 2012).

According to Alexander (2020), dialogic talk is understood to be collective, affirmative, and reciprocal. This means that learners and teachers address learning tasks together and are able to express their ideas. It is also crucially important to listen to others and profoundly explore alternative viewpoints. Ideally, dialogue is deliberative, cumulative, and purposeful. Based on dialogue, something new emerges. However, this does not mean that learning goals cannot be set in dialogic teaching. Quite the opposite, dialogical learning can be structured towards a specific learning outcome. In the context of planetary well-being, the dialogue should focus on personal meaning-making, emphasizing strong sustainability, planetary boundaries, and social justice.

Dialogical teaching in terms of *education for planetary well-being* calls for humility and empathetic openness to alterity in our human way of relating to all life on Earth. Dialogue thus enables transformative learning instead of a socialization to current practices and belief systems: It promotes a structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feeling, and action that can fundamentally alter the human way of being in the world (Mezirow, 1994; O'Sullivan, Morrell and O'Connor, 2002; Wals, 2011).

### **A new measure for humanity: Responsibility for planetary well-being**

This chapter has explored how planetary well-being appears in the context of education in relation to other frameworks, and how planetary well-being could be promoted in education through dialogue. *Education for planetary well-being* aligns with many of the current approaches, embracing transformative learning towards social change, aiming for humanity to live in balance with other lifeforms on Earth and within the limits of the planet. It can be viewed as the culmination of these developments, offering a new stepping stone for reaching a shared goal: The well-being of all inhabitants on planet Earth.

The main argument of this chapter is that what is good for humans can no longer be regarded as the guiding premise for education; instead, what is good for all life



on Earth should become the new rule. Therefore, a new theorem of *education for planetary well-being* is introduced to replace the motto of humanism, *homo mensura* or human is the measure of everything. Now, in accordance with posthumanist thinking, the guiding theorem can be turned into *natura mensura* or nature is the measure of everything (Niiniluoto, 2015). It is evident that a shift in pedagogy is needed, away from the perspective of humanistic anthropocentrism and towards posthumanism with an emphasis on the well-being of both human and nonhuman lifeforms.

Nevertheless, the transition from classical humanism to a posthumanist and planetary perspective does not mean that humans should not be the central focus of education. Humankind must reclaim its name as *Homo sapiens*, the wise human. Accordingly, our proposal for a basic theorem of *education for planetary well-being* is the following: *Responsibility for planetary well-being is the new measure of humanity*. It is worth pointing out that this theorem does not undermine human dignity, rather the opposite. By following this principle, human beings could paradoxically demonstrate their greatness by admitting their smallness before nature, or rather *within* nature. This new motto for humanity would be the starting point of *planetary wisdom*, which is a human ability that enables and promotes planetary well-being, and thus helps us to build a world worth living in.

### Acknowledgements

The writing of this chapter has been supported by the following research funding: Academy of Finland, Wisdom in Practice project, funded under grant agreement 351238 for Hannu L.T. Heikkinen, Niina Mykrä, and Anu S. Virtanen; European Union's Green Deal/Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme, ECF-4CLIM project, funded under grant agreement 10103650 for Hannu L.T. Heikkinen, Niina Mykrä, and Anna Lehtonen; Jyväskylä University School of Business and Economics, Grant for doctoral research for Meri Löyttyniemi; Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland, KESTO project, funded under grant agreements OKM/239/523/2020 and OKM/117/523/2020 for Hannu L.T. Heikkinen and Anu S. Virtanen; Wihuri Foundation, grant for doctoral research for Valtteri A. Aaltonen.

### Note

- 1 This chapter is the result of a collective effort and intense discussions among the authors. All authors contributed to the work significantly and are listed in alphabetical order, except for the first and the last author.

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