



RELISE

*ACCOUNTING AND SUSTAINABILITY IN UNIVERSITIES AND COMPANIES:  
A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW OF THE LAST DECADE<sup>1</sup>*

**CONTABILIDADE E SUSTENTABILIDADE EM UNIVERSIDADES E  
EMPRESAS: UMA REVISÃO SISTEMÁTICA DE LITERATURA DA ÚLTIMA  
DÉCADA**

*Débora Londero Kieling<sup>2</sup>*

*Clayton dos Santos Lima<sup>3</sup>*

*Letícia Rigon<sup>4</sup>*

*Lucas Veiga Ávila<sup>5</sup>*

**ABSTRACT**

Since the Stockholm conference in 1972, the topic of sustainability and accounting has evolved significantly, with companies and universities recognizing the importance of environmental degradation. Advances such as environmental accounting have triggered issues such as the SDGs and ESG, which have created gaps and opportunities for further development. The aim is to present an analysis of the evolution of research correlating accounting and sustainability in universities and companies. The collection was carried out on the Web of Science and included the creation of two search strings. The articles were classified and analyzed using Zotero software and Vosviewer software for data mining. The results show the main authors, journals and countries researching the topics. For research on universities, the focus was on innovation in measuring sustainability, while in companies there is a significant search for information disclosure.

**Keywords:** sustainable, accounting, university, company.

---

<sup>1</sup> Submitted on 27/07/2025. Accepted on 15/09/2024. DOI: [doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17214666](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17214666)

<sup>2</sup> Universidade Federal de Santa Maria. [deborakielingg@gmail.com](mailto:deborakielingg@gmail.com)

<sup>3</sup> Universidade Federal de Santa Maria. [clayton.lima92@gmail.com](mailto:clayton.lima92@gmail.com)

<sup>4</sup> Universidade Federal de Santa Maria. [leticia.rigon@hotmail.com](mailto:leticia.rigon@hotmail.com)

<sup>5</sup> Universidade Federal de Santa Maria. [lucas.avila@ufsm.br](mailto:lucas.avila@ufsm.br)



RELISE

118

## RESUMO

Desde a conferência de Estocolmo em 1972, o tema da sustentabilidade e contabilidade evoluíram de modo significativo, com empresas e universidades reconhecendo a importância da degradação ambiental. Avanços como a contabilidade ambiental, desencadearam assuntos como ODS e ESG, o que gerou lacunas e oportunidades para desenvolvimento da temática. O objetivo é apresentar uma análise da evolução das pesquisas que correlacionam contabilidade e sustentabilidade em universidades e em empresas. A coleta realizada na *Web of Science* contou com a criação de dois *strings* de busca. Com o auxílio do *software* Zotero foram classificados e analisados os artigos utilizando também o *software* Vosviewer para a mineração dos dados. Os resultados indicam os principais autores, *journals*, e países que pesquisam sobre os temas. Para as pesquisas sobre universidades verificou-se o foco para a inovação na mensuração da sustentabilidade, enquanto em empresas há uma significativa busca por divulgação das informações.

**Palavras-chave:** sustentabilidade, contabilidade, universidade, empresa.

## INTRODUCTION

Due to the growing concerns surrounding sustainability, institutions are becoming increasingly aware of issues related to the conscious use of resources (KWON; LEE, 2019). Alongside this, the rising demand for products and services and the pursuit of legitimacy in their actions drive institutions to create a range of innovations to help reduce the environmental impact of their activities and to strengthen their image in the market (BORGHESI; CAINELLI; MAZZANTI, 2015; RAJEEV et al., 2017).

Over the years, much has been discussed about the role of business institutions and educational institutions with regard to sustainability and its dissemination. However, concerning how these institutions can contribute to the process of sustainable development, literature still presents several gaps for future studies. One of these may be considered the relationship and role of management and accounting in the process of adopting and promoting sustainability.



RELISE

Leal Filho et al. (2019) highlight that, because accounting is responsible for control and recordkeeping, and given that it is directly linked to institutional planning, this sector can function as a tool to promote sustainability both in business and academic contexts, given its potential to present stakeholders with the real impact of institutional activities. For greater engagement and success in addressing sustainability issues, institutions must enable stakeholders to participate in the development of sustainability-related matters and also involve key management sectors, such as accounting (SCHNEIDER, 2015). As presented by Schaltegger (2011), many of the tools used in accounting can support the development and understanding of risks in the corporate sector.

In this context, due to their innovative nature, educational institutions can provide important contributions to sustainability-related issues (LEAL FILHO et al., 2019), as they play a key role in shaping and developing both students and society, as well as in fostering practices aimed at the challenges of sustainable development (SIDIROPOULOS, 2014; LEAL FILHO et al., 2019). Furthermore, when institutions engage their students in sustainability-related causes, they may propose changes and create mechanisms to address the problems encountered in the pursuit of sustainable development (LEAL FILHO et al., 2019; ÁVILA et al., 2019).

In this sense, although the literature offers debates on the concept of corporate sustainability and sustainable development (LOZANO, 2008), as well as on the role of accounting in sustainable development (SCHALTEGGER, 2011; SCHNEIDER, 2015), there are still gaps to be explored for new studies. Morioka et al. (2018), when investigating sustainability performance measurement, identified that the number of publications on the topic is scattered but has shown growth in recent years.

Similarly, according to Leal Filho et al. (2017), since the 1980s the field of sustainable development has evolved considerably, with countless studies



RELISE

120

being conducted. However, sustainability research within universities has become uneven compared to businesses, highlighting the need for more balanced approaches to cover areas of research that have thus far been neglected. Between 1992 and 2002, the subject yielded 63 publications; between 2002 and 2012, this number rose to 451; and in the most recent period analyzed, there was a significant increase, with 2,505 studies addressing sustainability in universities and 1,051 addressing sustainability in businesses.

Nevertheless, little has yet been explored regarding the relationship between accounting and sustainability in both businesses and universities, underscoring important gaps for the development of new studies. In this context, the present study seeks to highlight the issues raised in the literature in both fields of analysis and, through a systematic review of studies carried out over the past decade, present authors, publications, and countries that most strongly connect accounting and sustainability - thus identifying the focus of studies already conducted and highlighting gaps for future research.

It is also noteworthy that the results of this study aim to identify strategic factors, linking accounting with sustainability, and encouraging the development of new research in the field. As practical contributions, the study allows the organizations analyzed to identify potential applications of research in addressing challenges related to sustainability and accounting. As a social contribution, this research - through a systematic review - seeks to foster sustainability models that may be adopted by Higher Education Institutions and businesses, promoting greater adherence to sustainability principles and thereby contributing to the social well-being of current and future generations.

## **SUSTAINABILITY IN UNIVERSITIES**

Higher education institutions are moving toward systemic changes in education, research, and community impact activities, reorienting their operations



RELISE

to achieve sustainability (Wals, 2014). Alongside this, they also play an essential role in creating and developing professionals from a sustainable perspective, enabling future professionals to face the barriers imposed by sustainable development (ÁVILA et al., 2019; LEAL FILHO et al., 2019).

There are already studies in the literature indicating that educational institutions (EIs) are promoting new forms of learning, which contribute to greater engagement with sustainable development among those involved in these environments (WALS, 2014). This emphasis on campus operations allows universities to improve their outcomes, increasing renewable energy generation on campus, promoting conscious water use, and managing and recycling disposable materials. These are considered important practices for the sustainable development of both the campus and the institution (AMARAL et al., 2020).

However, Ávila et al. (2019) and Leal Filho et al. (2019) emphasize that for sustainability to be effectively achieved in higher education institutions (HEIs), several barriers must be overcome. These barriers involve financial and management aspects that may hinder the sustainable development of such institutions. An important instrument that can assist in this process is accounting and management, since they are directly connected to organizational administration and have significant potential for disclosure through reports. They can thus be considered useful tools for accountability and for improving the socio-environmental performance of universities (BRUSCA; LABRADO; LARRAN, 2018).

Furthermore, sustainability reports allow universities to become more competitive, serving as an important tool for enhancing institutional legitimacy and reputation, while fostering stakeholder engagement (BRUSCA et al., 2018). Stakeholders, in turn, can contribute to transformation processes, provided they engage positively with the changes imposed by sustainability adoption, the



RELISE

authors add. Lozano et al. (2015) highlight that the commitment of academic leadership was one of the main drivers behind the adoption of initiatives and the implementation of sustainable development, corroborating the ideas previously presented.

Since the 1970s, universities have sought to address the relationship between the environment and sustainable development within their institutional structure, education, research, campus operations, outreach, and reporting (LOZANO et al., 2015). These institutions face the challenge of finding solutions to incorporate sustainability concepts into society, ensuring that individuals understand their role within the community and develop actions aimed at the well-being of future generations (THOMASHOW, 2014).

Higher education institutions promote impactful actions not only in society but also in economic, environmental, and social development (MESEGUER-SÁNCHEZ; ABAD-SEGURA; BELMONTE-UREÑA, 2020). A study that examined the evolution of research on the socioeconomic and environmental dimensions of university social responsibility revealed that this mechanism makes it possible to express the values of educational institutions, thereby ensuring sustainability by committing to the demands of stakeholders as well as the broader community (MESEGUER-SÁNCHEZ; ABAD-SEGURA; BELMONTE-UREÑA, 2020).

In the study by Leal Filho et al. (2021a), through a holistic investigation of universities in Latin America, it is revealed that the different levels of emphasis given to sustainable development need to be better understood in order to catalyze continuous and long-term actions. Furthermore, a considerable number of universities adopt sustainability practices, mainly through campus operations, which include initiatives such as waste management, paper reduction policies, actions related to biodiversity, and measures aimed at improving energy efficiency.



RELISE

123

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as part of the 2030 Agenda, are also a relevant aspect in this context, given that they foster greater awareness among students and support staff about sustainable development (LEAL FILHO et al., 2021b). In this sense, adopting the SDGs within university operations is a complex task, but one that proves worthwhile, as institutional approaches and efforts will be aligned with the goals set forth. The next section of this study addresses the aspects studied and analyzed in the business context.

## **SUSTAINABILITY IN BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS**

With the constant pressure to adopt sustainable practices, companies around the world have been seeking options to develop social and environmental initiatives and, in doing so, gain a competitive advantage (AZEVEDO; VON ENDE; WITTMANN, 2016). Processes such as cleaner production, conscious use of resources, reduction of gas emissions, and the use of renewable energy are measures that can drive corporate sustainability while also reducing certain costs, such as those related to energy and water (WASSERMAN; QUELHAS; LIMA, 2016).

Furthermore, if these practices are aligned with the SDGs and companies disclose such information, there will be an increase in the legitimacy of managers with their stakeholders and the broader community, as this demonstrates corporate engagement with environmental and social causes (ELALFY; WEBER; GEOBEY, 2021).

When referring to a sustainable company, it is not only about environmental issues. Corporate sustainability, by definition, concerns sustainable development at the business level, considering not only profitability but also environmental and social improvements (AKTAS; DEMIREL, 2021). A study conducted with small- and medium-sized enterprises shows that, to develop their sustainability projects, companies often need to rely on their own





RELISE

124

resources, which in some ways inhibits the development of these initiatives within such organizations (SANTOS et al., 2021), given that stakeholders often fail to provide sufficient support (KESKIN; DIEHL; MOLENAAR, 2013).

Similarly, studies also highlight the importance of the board of directors in environmental decision-making (NASCIMENTO; PESSOA, 2021). Lotfi et al. (2021) propose a linear programming model to ensure a sustainable and resilient supply chain by minimizing costs, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and energy use, while maximizing employment. Elalfy et al. (2021), when investigating the integration of the SDGs into Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) reports, identified that larger organizations are more likely to include the SDGs in their reporting. In contrast, smaller companies are less likely to do so, while listed firms are more inclined to address the SDGs in their reports, particularly those with greater sustainability impacts. It was also confirmed that companies adopting the GRI are more likely to disclose SDG-related practices.

In light of the above, this stage of the study was carried out with the aim of identifying aspects previously addressed in the literature that explored the relationship between sustainability and business organizations. The next section presents the methodological steps undertaken, as well as the structure and criteria adopted for selecting the articles to be analyzed.

## **METHOD**

This study aims to identify the evolution of the literature addressing accounting and sustainability, seeking to determine how researchers address this relationship in the business world and at universities. In this sense, this study aims to support the development of new research by providing information on the evolution of the topic as well as its main authors and works.

The research was divided into two stages. In the first, a search was conducted in the Web of Science (WOS) database using the keywords





"sustainable x accountability x university." This search identified the aspects of accounting and sustainability in these institutions. This search returned 2,505 results. Similarly, to identify the aspects addressed in the business sector, a search was conducted using the keyword "sustainable x accounting x company," which returned 1,051 results.

As highlighted by Garza-Reyes (2015), to facilitate the understanding of the processes defined for SLR, it is necessary to create criteria to be analyzed in each study, facilitating the organization and interpretation of the data obtained. In this context, in order to summarize the operations carried out in both literature reviews, Chart 1 presents the steps developed for each RSL.

In this context, as shown in Table 1, this study's analysis period was June 13, 2013, to June 13, 2022, covering the productions of the last decade available on the WOS platform that addressed the study topic. Furthermore, mechanisms were created for inclusion and exclusion of articles, where only studies that met the following criteria were included: (a) Studies published in the analyzed period; (b) Articles that addressed the topic; and, excluded: (a) Papers published outside the stipulated period; (b) Books; (c) Duplicate documents; and, (d) Articles that do not address the aspects analyzed.

These screenings yielded 164 results in stage 1 of the study and 129 in stage 2, totaling 293. These results were sent to Zotero for data processing and then to Vosviewer for analysis and creation of bibliographic links used in the next stage of the study. Given the methodological design of this study, the following sections aim to present the analysis of the data collected based on the procedures outlined in this section.



Chart 1 - Summary of RSL stages

Stage	Stage 1	Stage 2
Formulate the research	<i>Search string: "accountability" and "university" and "sustainability"</i> Time frame: 13/06/2013 to 13/06/2022	<i>Search string: "accountability" and "company" and "sustainability"</i> Time frame: 13/06/2013 to 13/06/2022
Find studies	<i>Web of Science</i>	<i>Web of Science</i>
Obtain results	2.505	1.051
Select and evaluate the results	Inclusion Criteria: Studies published during the period analyzed; Articles addressing the topic; Exclusion Criteria: Papers published outside the stipulated period; Books; Duplicate documents	
Results	164	129
Synthesis and analysis	Content analysis and Vosviewer	

Fonte: Elaborado pelos autores (2022).

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

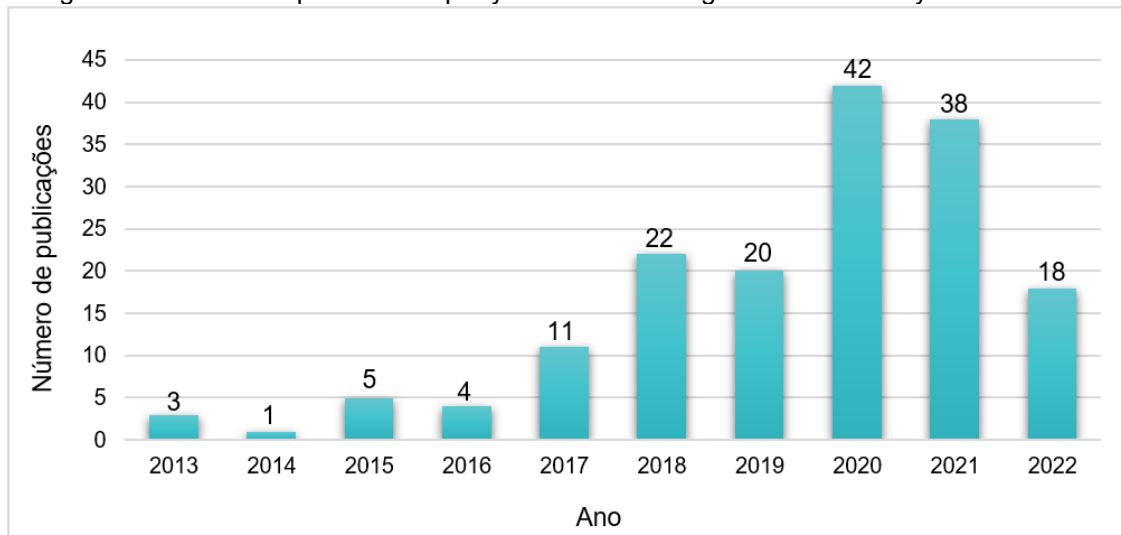
### *Sustainability and accounting in universities*

To develop this section, we analyzed aspects related to the publication period of the RSL findings using content analysis and Vosviewer software. We also analyzed bibliographical links to identify the most cited authors, journals with the highest impact, and the main countries developing debate on the topic.

In this context, Figure 1 presents the publication years of the results obtained in the first stage of the study, using the search strings "accountability," "sustainability," and "university."



Figure 1 – Number of publications per year on accounting and sustainability in universities



Source: Prepared by the authors (2022).

It should be noted that the years 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2016 did not demonstrate a large volume of studies, with only 3, 1, 5, and 4 publications, respectively. However, starting in 2017, when 11 studies were presented, there was an increase in the number of studies addressing accounting and sustainability in universities, with a notable increase in 2020 and 2021, with 42 and 38 publications, respectively, totaling 48.7% of the sample analyzed at this stage of the study.

It is worth noting that 2022 was analyzed only up to June 13th, presenting 18 results obtained to date. Figure 2 aims to demonstrate the most cited authors in the studies selected as a sample.

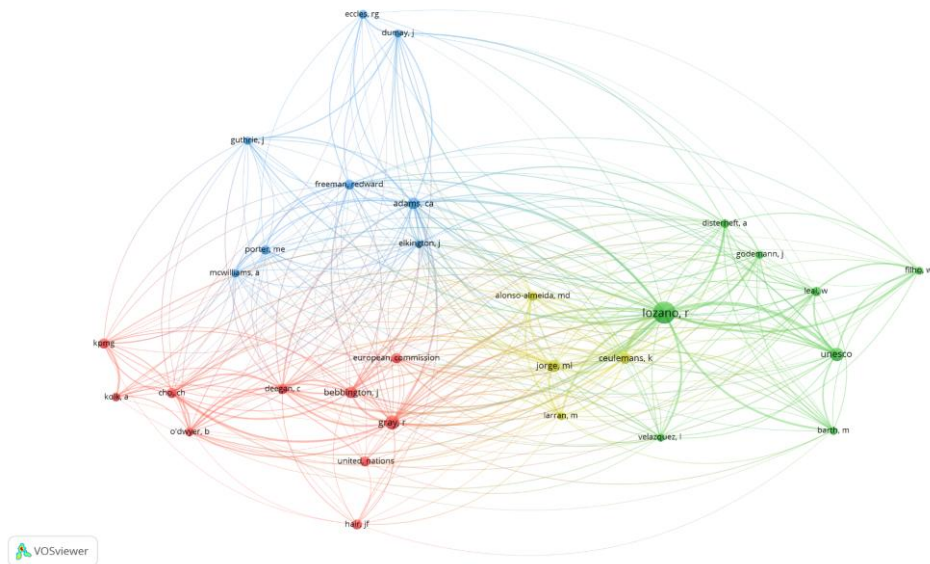
Based on the coupling of the 40 most cited authors, performed using Vosviewer software, Professors Lozano, Gray, and Bebbington stand out. UNESCO also stands out for its significant impact, given its role in developing the debate on sustainability and its reports. Professors such as Leal Filho also stand out for their significant influence on sustainability in academia.



RELISE

128

Figure 2 - Most cited authors in studies on accounting and sustainability in universities



Source: Prepared by the authors based on data from the systematic review (2022).

Professors such as Freeman and Elkington also stand out for their important role in developing theories that underpin the development of studies in both areas. Given these authors, journals also have a high impact through their publications and help good studies reach larger audiences, facilitating and driving debate on the topic. In this context, Figure 3 presents the main journals presented in the study's results.

Among the 40 most prominent journals in the field of sustainability are the Journal of Cleaner Production and Sustainability. For universities, the International Journal of Sustainable in Higher Education. For accounting, two highly influential and impactful journals are the Journal of Business Ethics and the Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal.





RELISE

130

Regarding the countries with the greatest influence on the studies that make up the university sample, Europe stands out, with an emphasis on countries like Spain and England. Regarding Asia, China has a significant impact on its publications, with more than 15 studies published in the selected sample. Regarding the Americas, countries like the USA, Brazil, and Colombia feature prominently in studies addressing the topic. Using data provided by WOS, it is possible to analyze the studies with the highest number of citations in the first stage of the study; these are highlighted in Chart 2.

Table 2 - Most cited articles in the first stage of the study

Item	Title	Citations
1	The Association between Sustainability Governance Characteristics and the Assurance of Corporate Sustainability Reports	149
2	The Impact of Social Media on Learning Behavior for Sustainable Education: Evidence of Students from Selected Universities in Pakistan	93
3	Dialogic Accountings for Stakeholders: On Opening Up and Closing Down Participatory Governance	67
4	Sustainable Management of Digital Transformation in Higher Education: Global Research Trends	61
5	The challenge of sustainability and integrated reporting at universities: A case study	57

Source: Prepared by the authors based on data from the systematic review (2022).

The study entitled “The Association between Sustainability Governance Characteristics and the Assurance of Corporate Sustainability Reports” addresses issues related to governance mechanisms and their impact on institutional sustainability, also highlighting the role of a sustainability committee. The results indicate that several institutions tend to adopt certain governance aspects focused on sustainability, with the aim of aligning themselves with a desired social performance. In this context, the sustainability committee, when composed of qualified managers, tends to provide greater assurance of sustainability performance within the institution.

Abbas et al. (2019) examine the role of social media in academic performance and student learning, discussing how its use can be either beneficial



RELISE

131

or detrimental to students' development. Their results identified 18 adverse factors and 18 constructive factors; however, the adverse factors predominated, suggesting that in many cases students' social performance is negatively affected by social media use.

The study conducted by Emilio Abad-Segura and others addresses the importance of technological development and the impact of digital transformation in the education sector. It provides a review of how literature has approached this subject, identifying authors, journals, and other relevant contributions. Brown and Dillard (2015) discuss the relationship between accounting and stakeholders, offering insights into participatory governance with the aim of creating value for stakeholders.

In the study by Brusca et al. (2018), the authors analyze an integrated report from a higher education institution in Spain. Their findings show that the report is focused on social values and institutional sustainability; however, it cannot be considered a fully integrated report. Moreover, the article provides important insights into the key issues related to implementing integrated reporting in higher education institutions.

Given the analysis related to the first stage of this research, the following section aims to examine the results obtained through the second search string, in order to identify the current state of the literature addressing accounting and sustainability in business organizations.

## **SUSTAINABILITY AND ACCOUNTING IN BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS**

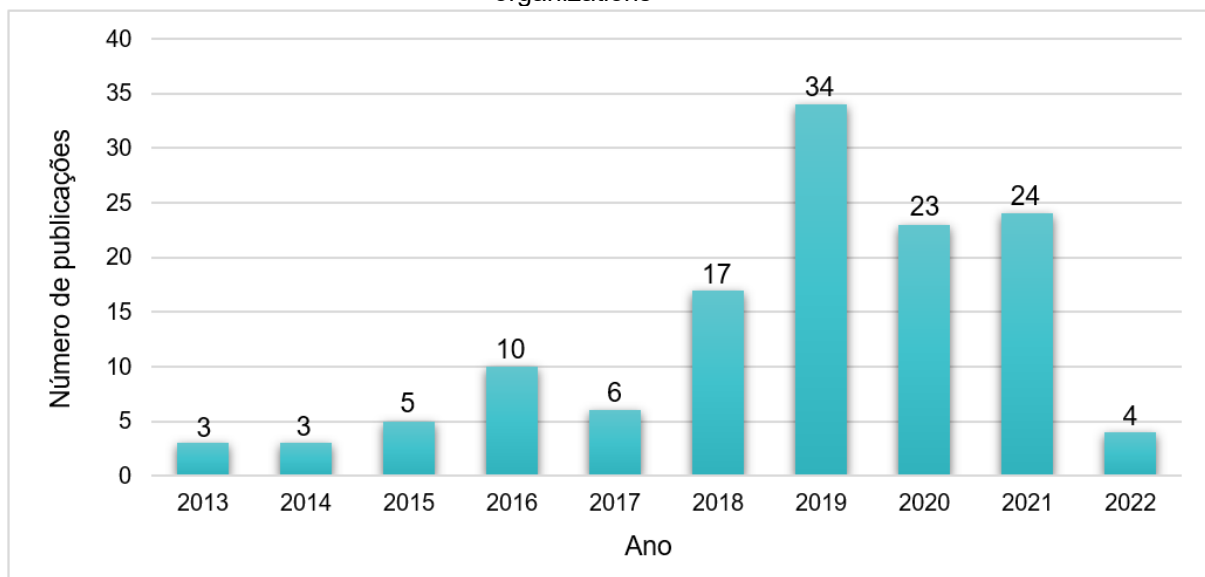
As with the previous string, the data were processed through content analysis using Zotero software, and Vosviewer was used to create bibliographic links. Therefore, Figure 5 presents the publication years of the results obtained in the second stage of the study, using the search strings "accountability," "sustainability," and "company."





Regarding research aimed at identifying the relationship between accounting and sustainability in companies, there was an increase in searches for the topic starting in 2018, with 17 results selected. A notable highlight was 2019 and 2021, with 34 and 24 studies, respectively, comprising 44% of the sample analyzed. As with the previous analysis, it is worth noting that 2022 was considered up to June, thus justifying the findings of only four studies that year.

Figure 5 – Number of publications per year on accounting and sustainability in business organizations



Source: Prepared by the authors based on data from the systematic review (2022).

To understand the publications from this period, Figure 6 presents the coupling of the most cited authors in studies that sought to analyze aspects related to accounting and sustainability in companies.

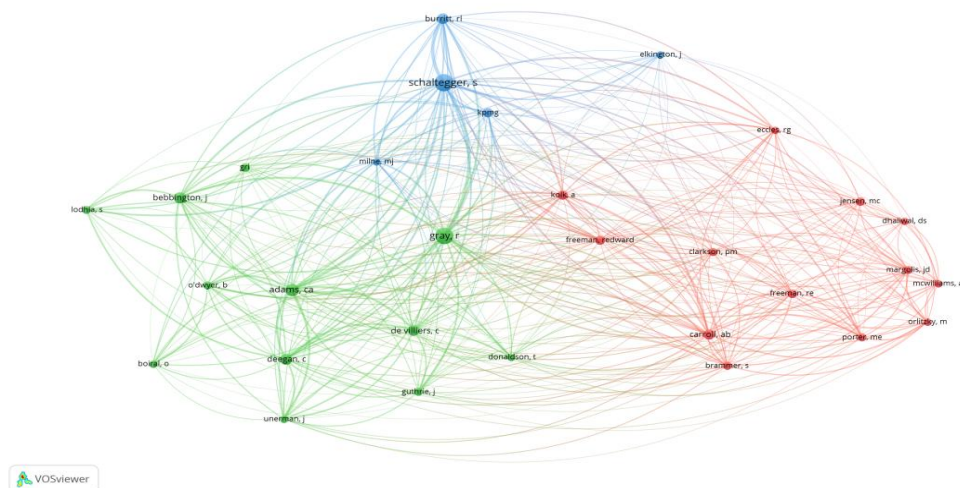
The authors with the greatest citation impact in the studies in the sample are: Schaltegger, with 63 citations; Gray, with 60 citations; Addams, with over 30 citations; and Bebbington, with 28. As in the first analysis of the study, authors like Freeman have a significant impact on the studies, largely due to his theory, stakeholder theory, developed in 1963, which has influenced academic thought ever since.



RELISE

133

Figure 6 - Most cited authors in studies on accounting and sustainability in business organizations



Source: Prepared by the authors based on data from the systematic review (2022).

Just like authors and their citations, the quality of the papers is also taken into consideration when analyzing the impact and development of the studies. In this context, the main journals found in the analyzed publications are outlined in Figure 7.

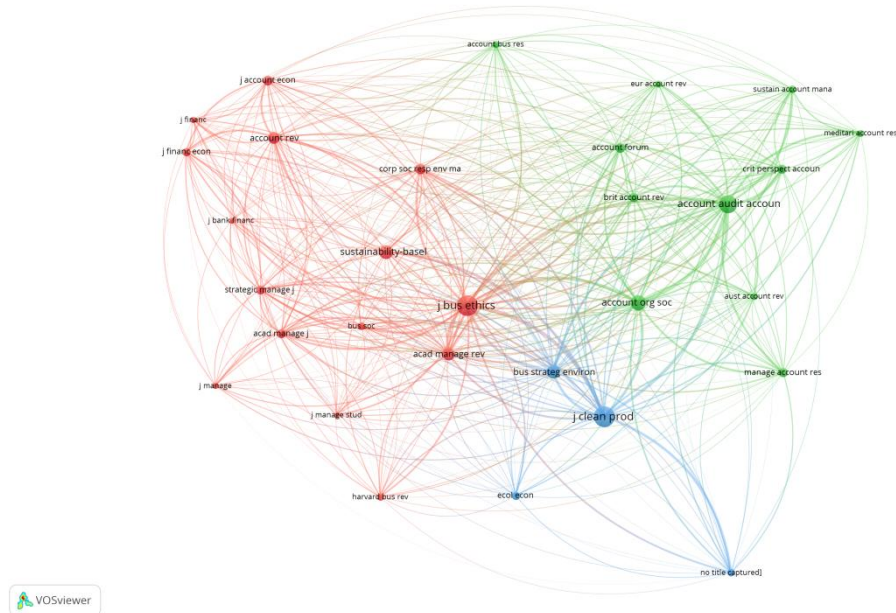
Similar to the previous step, the journals with the greatest impact on publications involving the analysis of accounting and sustainability in companies are: Journal Cleaner Production; the International Journal of Sustainable in Higher Education; the Journal of Business Ethics; and the Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal.



RELISE

134

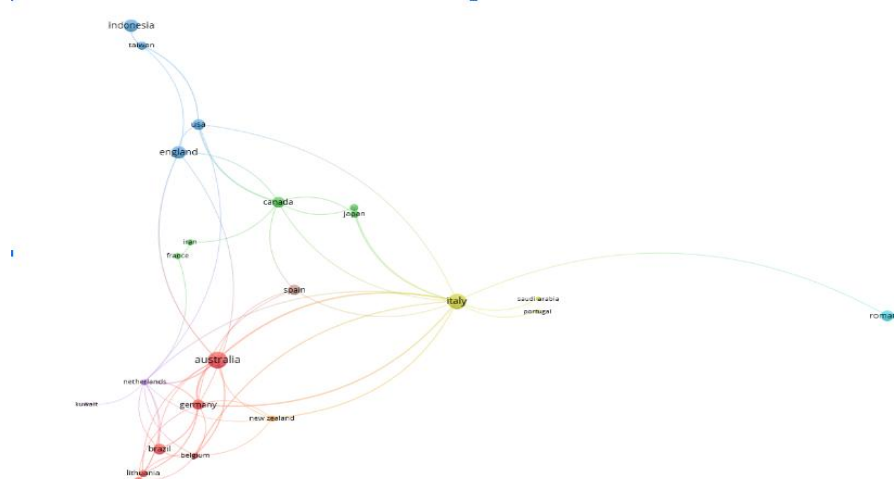
Figure 7 - Main journals found in the second stage of the research



Source: Prepared by the authors based on data from the systematic review (2022).

In order to understand the region with the greatest emphasis on this topic, Figure 8 presents the results obtained in relation to the countries that stand out with studies carried out in the area of sustainability and corporate accounting.

Figure 8 - Main countries that develop research in the area



Source: Prepared by the authors based on data from the systematic review (2022).



Unlike the results found in the previous stage, the major highlights for the development of studies are: Italy, with 14 studies, totaling 245 citations; Australia, with 16 studies, totaling 547 citations; Germany, with only 6 studies, yet with significant impact, totaling 513 citations; and, although at a lower level, Brazil also demonstrates significant impact in its studies, presenting 7 analyzed results that together total 291 citations.

Among the articles analyzed based on the criteria developed by the systematic literature review form and with the help of data provided by WOS, it is possible to observe the results with the greatest impact in terms of citations. In this sense, Chart 3 presents the main articles found in the search for the second stage of the study.

Chart 3 - Most cited articles in stage two of the study

Item	Title	Citations
1	<i>The effects of environmental, social and governance disclosures and performance on firm value: A review of the literature in accounting and finance</i>	174
2	<i>Green training and green supply chain management: evidence from Brazilian firms</i>	148
3	<i>Integrating corporate sustainability assessment, management accounting, control, and reporting</i>	137
4	<i>Business Cases and Corporate Engagement with Sustainability: Differentiating Ethical Motivations</i>	131
5	<i>Stakeholder Relationships, Engagement, and Sustainability Reporting</i>	111

Source: Prepared by the authors based on data from the systematic review (2022).

The article entitled “The effects of environmental, social and governance disclosures and performance on firm value: A review of the literature in accounting and finance” by Chris Brooks and Ioannis Oikonomou seeks to identify aspects addressed in the literature regarding the disclosure of sustainability information, while also highlighting gaps for the development of future research.

The second most cited study focuses on issues related to sustainable purchasing and developments within the supply chain. To this end, Brazilian companies certified with ISO 14001 were analyzed. The results highlight that



green training is directly linked to the criteria adopted by the company, such as purchasing from sustainable suppliers. As a consequence of such decision-making, there is an improvement in both internal and external sustainability indicators.

The research conducted by Karen Maas, Stefan Schaltegger, and Nathalie Crutzen addresses an important gap in the sustainability literature: its measurement. It raises the question of how companies can integrate sustainability issues into their accounting reports and management control systems.

Stefan Schaltegger and Roger Burritt developed the study “Business Cases and Corporate Engagement with Sustainability: Differentiating Ethical Motivations”, in which the authors analyze ethical relations and the type of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in order to distinguish different business cases. They emphasize that among corporate concerns are short-term financial returns, reputation, and their role in society. The study highlights that CSR performance is directly correlated with the ethical motivations of institutions. Furthermore, the findings show that managers are also concerned with the survival of their businesses and their long-term durability.

The study by Irene Herremans, Jamal Nazari, and Fereshteh Mahmoudian, developed based on the need to engage stakeholders in the use of reports for the disclosure of sustainability-related information, sought to identify how companies address their dependence on stakeholder resources. The authors point out that stakeholder participation and the reliance on their resources create bonds among professionals and, given their shared characteristics, the sustainability report can also serve as a tool for stakeholder engagement.

Given the analysis of the study’s findings, the following section aims to discuss the results, seeking to identify correlations and key issues for advancing the debate on the subject.



## CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed to present an analysis of the evolution of research that correlates accounting and sustainability in universities and businesses. To this end, a systematic review was carried out using the Web of Science database for the period from 2013 to 2023, which returned 164 results analyzing the theme from the perspective of universities and 129 from the perspective of businesses.

Based on the study's findings, there has been an increase in research on the relationship under analysis regarding universities from 2018 onwards, and likewise, from 2018 in relation to businesses. Although the dissemination of the subject is broad and carried out by several journals, notable impact can be observed from journals such as the Journal of Cleaner Production (JCP), the International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education, the Journal of Business Ethics, and the Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal, which, given their influence, publish relevant information on the analysis of the theme.

Another point worth highlighting is that Spain, England, and Italy stand out in the development of the debate on the topic. With regard to Brazil, there is significant participation in publications in both areas. As presented by Lima et al. (2022), this is largely due to the participation in and creation of partnerships between Brazilian institutions and international researchers, which has globalized Brazilian research and generated impactful output. In terms of influential authors, Rodrigo Lozano, Rob Gray, and Stefan Schaltegger stand out, as they are frequently cited in the articles that comprise the sample, highlighting their importance in the themes under discussion.

Based on the most prominent studies in both samples, it is noted that, regarding universities, much has been said about the role of technological innovation in teaching methodology and in the creation of tools that assist in the process of assessing sustainability. As for sustainability in businesses, the major



RELISE

138

emphasis of the studies lies in the process of disclosing sustainability information to stakeholders. Furthermore, studies on businesses also seek to understand the needs and choices behind sustainability processes, presenting their impacts and distinctions across different areas of activity.

These issues highlight gaps that enable the development of new studies, including analyses focused on the creation and development of metrics that can support the process of measuring sustainability. Such aspects add value and address gaps in the field. Similarly, identifying ways to disclose this information in management reports is relevant, since these practices can help stakeholders understand the real impact of sustainability on their organizations, fostering interest and development in sustainability.

In the same way, identifying the role of accountants and how they can drive or influence the adoption of sustainability also represents a gap. Thus, examining how these professionals can use their knowledge and management tools to provide stakeholders with information that supports decision-making regarding sustainability - both in businesses and educational institutions - also contributes to strengthening the relationship between accounting and sustainability.

It is expected that this study will contribute to the development of new research that fosters the advancement of both fields, given that the analysis of the impact of accounting and management practices in universities and businesses, despite showing significant growth, still reveals issues that remain unexplored in the literature.

## REFERENCES

ABBAS, J.; AMAN, J.; NURUNNABI, M.; BANO, S. The impact of social media on learning behavior for sustainable education: evidence of students from





RELISE

139

selected universities in Pakistan. **Sustainability**, v. 11, n. 6, p. 1683, 2019. Disponível em: <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11061683>. Acesso em: 23 jul. 2024.

AKTAŞ, N.; DEMIREL, N. A hybrid framework for evaluating corporate sustainability using multi-criteria decision making. **Environment, Development and Sustainability**, v. 23, n. 10, p. 1-28, 2021. Disponível em: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10668-021-01311-5>. Acesso em: 23 jul. 2024.

AMARAL, A. R.; RODRIGUES, E.; GASPAR, A. R.; GOMES, Á. A review of empirical data of sustainability initiatives in university campus operations. **Journal of Cleaner Production**, v. 250, p. 1-41, 2020. Disponível em: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2019.119558>. Acesso em: 23 jul. 2024.

ÁVILA, L.; BEURON, T. A.; BRANDLI, L. L.; DAMKE, L. I.; PEREIRA, R. S.; KLEIN, L. L. Barriers to innovation and sustainability in universities: an international comparison. **International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education**, v. 20, n. 5, p. 805-821, 2019. Disponível em: <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSHE-02-2019-0067>. Acesso em: 23 jul. 2024.

AZEVEDO, J. B.; VON ENDE, M.; WITTMANN, M. L. Social responsibility and corporate image: a global brand company. **Revista Eletrônica de Estratégia e Negócios**, v. 9, n. 1, p. 95-118, 2016. Disponível em: <https://doi.org/10.19177/reen.v9e1201695-117>. Acesso em: 23 jul. 2024.

BORGHESI, S.; CAINELLI, G.; MAZZANTI, M. Linking emission trading to environmental innovation: evidence from the Italian manufacturing industry. **Research Policy**, v. 44, n. 3, p. 669-683, 2015. Disponível em: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2014.10.014>. Acesso em: 23 jul. 2024.



RELISE

140

BROWN, J.; DILLARD, J. Dialogic accountings for stakeholders: on opening up and closing down participatory governance. **Journal of Management Studies**, v. 52, n. 7, p. 961-985, 2015. Disponível em: <https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12153>. Acesso em: 23 jul. 2024.

BRUSCA, I.; LABRADOR, M.; LARRAN, M. The challenge of sustainability and integrated reporting at universities: a case study. **Journal of Cleaner Production**, v. 188, p. 347-354, 2018. Disponível em: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2018.03.292>. Acesso em: 23 jul. 2024.

ELALFY, A.; WEBER, O.; GEOBEY, S. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): a rising tide lifts all boats? Global reporting implications in a post SDGs world. **Journal of Applied Accounting Research**, v. 22, n. 3, p. 557-575, 2021. Disponível em: <https://doi.org/10.1108/JAAR-06-2020-0116>. Acesso em: 23 jul. 2024.

GARZA-REYES, J. A. Lean and green—a systematic review of the state of the art literature. **Journal of Cleaner Production**, v. 102, p. 18-29, 2015. Disponível em: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2015.04.064>. Acesso em: 23 jul. 2024.

HERREMANS, I. M.; NAZARI, J. A.; MAHMOUDIAN, F. Stakeholder relationships, engagement, and sustainability reporting. **Journal of Business Ethics**, v. 138, n. 3, p. 417-435, 2016. Disponível em: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-015-2634-0>. Acesso em: 23 jul. 2024.

KESKIN, D.; DIEHL, J. C.; MOLENAAR, N. Innovation process of new ventures driven by sustainability. **Journal of Cleaner Production**, v. 45, p. 50-60, 2013.



RELISE

141

Disponível em: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2012.05.012>. Acesso em: 23 jul. 2024.

KWON, H.-B.; LEE, J. Exploring the differential impact of environmental sustainability, operational efficiency, and corporate reputation on market valuation in high-tech-oriented firms. **International Journal of Production Economics**, v. 211, p. 1-14, 2019. Disponível em: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijpe.2019.01.034>. Acesso em: 23 jul. 2024.

LEAL FILHO, W. et al. Mapping sustainability initiatives in higher education institutions in Latin America. **Journal of Cleaner Production**, v. 315, p. 1-10, 2021a. Disponível em: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2021.128093>. Acesso em: 23 jul. 2024.

LEAL FILHO, W. et al. A framework for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in university programmes. **Journal of Cleaner Production**, v. 299, p. 1-12, 2021b. Disponível em: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2021.126915>. Acesso em: 23 jul. 2024.

LEAL FILHO, W. et al. The role of green and Sustainability Offices in fostering sustainability efforts at higher education institutions. **Journal of Cleaner Production**, v. 232, p. 1394-1401, 2019. Disponível em: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2019.05.273>. Acesso em: 23 jul. 2024.

LEAL FILHO, W. et al. Identifying and overcoming obstacles to the implementation of sustainable development at universities. **Journal of Integrative Environmental Sciences**, v. 14, n. 1, p. 93-108, 2017. Disponível em: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1943815X.2017.1362007>. Acesso em: 23 jul. 2024.



RELISE

142

LIMA, C. S. et al. Towards sustainable development: a systematic review of the past decade's literature on the social, environment and governance and universities in Latin America. **International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education**, v. 24, n. 2, p. 279-298, 2023.

LOTFI, R.; MEHRJERDI, Y. Z.; PISHVAEE, M. S.; SADEGHIEH, A.; WEBER, G. W. A robust optimization model for sustainable and resilient closed-loop supply chain network design considering conditional value at risk. **Numerical Algebra, Control & Optimization**, v. 11, n. 2, p. 1-33, 2021.

LOZANO, R. Envisioning sustainability three-dimensionally. **Journal of Cleaner Production**, v. 16, n. 17, p. 1838-1846, 2008. Disponível em: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2008.02.008>. Acesso em: 23 jul. 2024.

LOZANO, R. et al. A review of commitment and implementation of sustainable development in higher education: results from a worldwide survey. **Journal of Cleaner Production**, v. 108, p. 1-18, 2015. Disponível em: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2014.09.048>. Acesso em: 23 jul. 2024.

MESEGUER-SÁNCHEZ, V. et al. Examining the research evolution on the socio-economic and environmental dimensions on university social responsibility. **International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health**, v. 17, n. 13, p. 4729, 2020. Disponível em: <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17134729>. Acesso em: 23 jul. 2024.

MORIOKA, S. N. et al. Systematic review of the literature on corporate sustainability performance measurement: a discussion of contributions and gaps.



RELISE

143

**Gestão & Produção**, v. 25, n. 2, p. 284-303, 2018. Disponível em: <https://doi.org/10.1590/0104-530X2720-18>. Acesso em: 23 jul. 2024.

NASCIMENTO, I. C. S.; PESSOA, A. F. P. Participação Feminina no Conselho de Administração e a Sustentabilidade Empresarial. **Revista Gestão Organizacional**, v. 14, n. 2, p. 138-163, 2021. Disponível em: <https://doi.org/10.22277/rgo.v14i2.5381>. Acesso em: 23 jul. 2024.

RAJEEV, A. et al. Evolution of sustainability in supply chain management: a literature review. **Journal of Cleaner Production**, v. 162, p. 299-314, 2017. Disponível em: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2017.05.026>. Acesso em: 23 jul. 2024.

SANTOS, J. A. R. D. et al. Projetos Sustentáveis em Micro e Pequenas Empresas (MPEs): Características e Financiamento. **Teoria e Prática em Administração**, v. 11, n. 2, p. 103-114, 2021. Disponível em: <https://doi.org/10.22478/ufpb.2238-104X.2021v11n2.57135>. Acesso em: 23 jul. 2024.

SCHALTEGGER, S. Sustainability as a driver for corporate economic success. Consequences for the development of sustainability management control. **Society and Economy**. In Central and Eastern Europe | Journal of the Corvinus University of Budapest, v. 33, n. 1, p. 15-28, 2011. Disponível em: <https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=624454>. Acesso em: 23 jul. 2024.

SCHNEIDER, A. Reflexividade na contabilidade e gestão da sustentabilidade: transcendendo o foco econômico da sustentabilidade corporativa. **Journal of**



RELISE

144

**Business Ethics**, v. 127, n. 3, p. 525-536, 2015. Disponível em: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-014-2058-2>. Acesso em: 23 jul. 2024.

SIDIROPOULOS, E. Education for sustainability in business education programs: a question of value. **Journal of Cleaner Production**, v. 85, p. 472-487, 2014. Disponível em: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2013.10.040>. Acesso em: 23 jul. 2024.

THOMASHOW, M. The nine elements of a sustainable campus. **Sustainability: The Journal of Record**, v. 7, n. 3, p. 174-175, 2014.

WALS, A. E. Sustainability in higher education in the context of the UN DESD: a review of learning and institutionalization processes. **Journal of Cleaner Production**, v. 62, p. 8-15, 2014. Disponível em: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2013.06.007>. Acesso em: 23 jul. 2024.

WASSERMAN, J. C.; QUELHAS, O. L. G.; LIMA, G. B. A. Analysis of Cleaner Production practices in a printing company in Brazil. **Environmental Quality Management**, v. 26, n. 2, p. 45-63, 2016. Disponível em: <https://doi.org/10.1002/tqem.21486>. Acesso em: 23 jul. 2024.

ZOTERO. Citation and research management tool. Center for History and New Media at George Mason University, **Fairfax**, VA, 2006. Disponível em: <http://www.zotero.org>. Acesso em: 23 jul. 2024.