

SDG-Oriented Leadership Models Transforming Management Practices for Sustainable Futures

Fuangfa Amponstira¹, Bezuglaya Victoria², Mexican Niu³, Rachna Saxena⁴, Dr. A.Pankajam⁵

¹Lecturer, Faculty of Management, Shinawatra University, Thailand

Email ID : fuangfa.a@siu.ac.th,

²Associate Professor, Department of Economic Sciences, International Institute of Management and Business, Belarus

Email ID : bezygla4@gmail.com,

³Lecturer, Sichuan University, China

Email ID: 1178041418@qq.com,

⁴Centre for Teaching, Learning and Development, Teerthanker Mahaveer University, Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh, India.

Email ID rachnasaxena7260@gmail.com

⁵Associate Professor, Department of Business Administration, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore-641043, Tamil Nadu, India

Email ID: ambipankaj@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have swept across the globe as one of the strategies to address the pressing social environmental and economic issues. The paradigm shift in the leadership process is a dire necessity in the organization all around the world that is more and more expected to align their strategic goals to it. In this essay, SDG-based models of leadership will be discussed that dwell upon adopting the sustainability principles of practice of management. Concluding on the literature of the time, the best practice and the assessment of case studies, the research proves that leaders can foster innovation, involvement of every follower and the sustainability of a business in the long-term. The authors have adopted a mixed method of the study in conducting their research, i.e. they use the qualitative data provided by the organizational case studies in conjunction to the quantitative data of surveying the effectiveness of leadership in enabling the implementation of SDGs. Results indicate that SDG-based leadership individual increases the strategic alignment, ethical decision making and stakeholder collaboration. Nevertheless, implementation of such models are affected by the organizational culture, availability of resources and the domains of regulations. The research can enhance the theoretical insight into the concept of sustainable leadership and provide the leaders in practical work with effective instructions on how to incorporate SDG concepts into day-for-day decision making

Keywords: Sustainable Development Goals, SDG-oriented leadership, sustainable management, organizational transformation, stakeholder engagement, ethical leadership

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1. INTRODUCTION

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are an indication of a global roadmap of bringing the world closer to being fair, strong, and environmentally responsible, by the year 2030. As the organization is now the significant player essential to the development of the economy and the society, the alignment of the organization strategies with SDGs is the issue which has acquired even more significance. The management and the leadership models employed are orthodox models in which management and leadership is considered under a short run profile without considering either the social and environmental responsibility [2]. This alienation has contributed to the urgency of a new step of creation of new paradigms of leadership, which would enable the achievement of not only the business objectives but also the sustainable development. Among the latest models, which seek to fill this void, is the SDG-oriented leadership which aids in integrating the principles of sustainability to the essence of decision-making within organizations, their strategic orientation, and other organizational activities entailing stakeholder's involvement.

The justification to carry out this study is the perceived growing significance that leadership would be a factor of a successful implementation of the sustainability initiatives. Leaders influence the culture within the said organization, innovations as well as the stipulation of expected performance of the interested individuals, which are what lead to fulfillment of SDGs as a success. But with the increased assimilation into the business world, many organizations are ceasing to entrench the strategies to tangible outcomes [8]. Some of the challenges that are likely to impede poor implementation of the SDG-aligned practices issues include resource hiccups, regulating palliations, cultural impediment and expertise gap. This article targeting is expected to address the models of leadership specifically intended at incorporation of SDGs into the management practices that would be necessary to provide actionable information that would help organizations to become more responsible and sustainable in their working.

This paper includes a critical discussion of SDG-oriented leadership on an end to end basis, indicating the ways the visions of such framework contradict the conventional framework of leadership. The postulations under analysis relate to SDG centred leadership that defines the principles of transformational, ethical, and inclusive leadership that encourage collaboration, innovation and long term thinking. The scope of qualitative case studies and quantitative surveys of data, grants a versatile insight as to the idea of leadership through promotion of the sustainability of the research. The proposed project has three objectives of the research: the researcher would investigate the contemporary context of leadership in the perspective of SDGs, define the factors, which allow the organization to implement SDGs and challenges, and would recommend a theoretical framework, which could be applied in the development of SDGs into the heart of the management practice by the practitioners [7].

The ever-increasing complexity of the requirement of business sustainability conduct has made SDG oriented leadership issue relevant not only ethically, but also theoretically. Based on the premise of effective fusion leadership practices and SDGs, staffing firms have been discovered to grow stakeholder confidence, boost effectiveness in innovations, and become more resilient to the environmental, social, and economical threats. Thus, it is a critical insight that researchers and stakeholders should understand about the role played by leaders in driving SDGs. The exploration of the links between leadership, the strategy, and sustainability provides a input into the bigger discussion on responsible management and provides more specific resources to realize the change suggested by the researchers.

Altogether, the current paper views the SDG-oriented leadership as a transformational business strategy that entails the application of organizational sustainability. It sheds light on the significance of how the leaders must pursue a balance between moral accountability and strategic aspirations with a disposition to collaborate, become creative, and think logically. In the paper, the practical implementation of organizations in the real world is explored, as well as factors and barriers identified, and models to recommend that would help inculcate leadership to proactively contribute to achieving SDGs. The scholarship is influenced by the economic condition of the gloomy state of the world issues of the global requisition of sustainable development and is intended to facilitate certain useful contributions, which can spur the academic hypothesis and practice [4-6].

Novelty and Contribution

This study is innovative as it makes direct reference to SDG-oriented leadership models as a specific framework of changing the organizational management practices. Although this area of work has been investigating sustainable leadership, or corporate social responsibility, the work is unique because it incorporates the holistic SDG framework into the sustainable leadership theory providing a systematic method of coordinating the organisational strategy with the global sustainability targets. In contrast to traditional leadership frameworks that tend to prioritize the bottom-line, top-down accountability or closed-loop effects, SDG-based leadership lays more emphasis on the principles of ethical decision-making, inclusion of stakeholders and long-term contribution to society and the ecological actors.

The study has had three major contributions that are paramount. One, it provides theoretical orientation of SDG-oriented leadership, providing it with a syntactic openness of the concentration on the existing theories of leadership, highlighting the essential regulations, behavior and organizational processes to attain the sustainability solution. Second, it is an empirical study, which focuses on the effectiveness of leadership in fostering the implementation of SDG, which both incorporates the findings of qualitative research based on case studies and the quantitative data constituted by the survey as the methodology. The two-method approach renders the results valid and gives the findings a broader applicability. Third the study identifies the essential enabling factors, bottlenecks that an organization undergoes in the process of implementation on SDG-based strategies; and this presents viable indeed advice on how the culture, resources, and regulatory impediments issue can be countered [9].

The article also has some practical recommendations on the problems that managers who want to incorporate the concept of sustainability in their day to day decisions. It demonstrates that the SDG-compliant leadership can lead to better innovation and stakeholder deals within the organization and resiliency, and, simultaneously, assist in achieving world-level sustainability targets. Breeding such a discord between theory and practical, this work got added to a growing body of mutual knowledge regarding responsible and sustainable management and the paper under discussion can be applied to such organizations that pursue profitability without resting on society and environment.

What this study entails is, the argument on leadership and sustainability is furthered in this paper through making a close relation of the management practice and SDG outputs as aphorized such that offers a holistic, practical and empirically valid framework which could assist an organization to create a sustainable future.

2. RELATED WORKS

In 2024 H. Yang *et al.*, [3] proposed the research into the area of sustainable leadership and development has now placed a high order taking into consideration the fact that organizations have now emerged with full throttle whereby; organizations are working to ensure that the organizations are aligning its operations within the larger social, environmental and economic objectives. As researched, leadership plays a crucial role towards embedding the principle of sustainability within the organizational culture, motivational, and decision-making. Best leaders are agents of change and this would cause them to fuel in innovation, moderate ethical behavior and coordination throughout the organizational levels. In addition, skills and training were key determinants of human capital, whereas social interaction, trust, social identification, and shared knowledge were key determinants of social capital which affected social innovation development [16] that can lead to SDGs development in any organization. It is no longer a delegate leadership style but a strategic requirement of organizations that are interested both to be competitive in the long run, as well as to be an individual on the society.

Research in sustainability- significance leadership specified that numerous organizations that possess such presumptions are generally superior to the others in the regard of innovation, employee engagement, and controlling their image. The sustainability-focused leaders create the environment in which creativity and initiative problem-solving remain. Such a strategy demands balancing between short term goals of operations by looking towards long term societal/environmental goals so that the decisions made can be beneficial to the organization and hence to the community. Such leadership practices as vision articulation, ethical decision-making, and stakeholder inclusivity are found again and again to be associated with an improved sustainability performance at the organizational level.

In 2024 R. L. F. Bella *et al.*, [1] introduced the other important reliability that is discussed in related literature is the incorporation of sustainability framework in decision making as also enhanced in the global development goals. Companies that clearly trace their strategies in accordance with sustainable development principles are prepared to view the market trends and shifts in regulations and interests of stakeholders. In most cases, these organizations tend to be more resilient to environmental, social and economic shocks. When leaders implement sustainability measures in the performance evaluation and strategic planning process, they are convinced about the fact that sustainability is not an additional process implemented in an organization but is part and parcel of success in an organization.

The topic of an inclusive leadership becomes one of the main areas of discussing a sustainability-oriented model. When the leaders listen to employees, communities, customers and others and include them in decision making processes, they would make them feel a sense of ownership. This kind of engagement is necessary because it implements sustainability initiatives efficiently as any other opinions would be taken into account, and the initiatives would have higher chances to be accepted and adopted throughout the organization. When this practice of leadership in an organization is carried out on the basis of transparency, communication, and collaboration, the results the organization will record in areas that pertain to stewardship over the environment, social responsibility and organizational resiliency are going to improve significantly.

In 2024 R. Rame *et al.*, P. Purwanto *et al.*, and S. Sudarno *et al.*, [14] suggested the experiments regarding the sustainability-oriented leadership environment prove that the sustainability-oriented approach to leadership is connected with concrete (and intangible) advantages. Physical outcome is objective decrease in the environmental impact, increase in resource lean and additional sugarcane that accumulates demands of the regulations. The soft benefits are made up of positive employee morale, greater trust of the stakeholders as well as brand value. The companies which cultivate the culture of sustainability are also linked with the improved performance in the long term, the operations of such company's costs less prepared and find out the socially responsible investors.

One more, in literature, the dilemmas associated with the establishment of a sustainability-oriented leadership are characterized. The lack of resources, other organizational interests, resistance to changes, and the uncertainties of assessing the impacts of sustainability are some of the challenges that are often experienced. Success of leadership has a tendency of hinging on giving of support by the organization, strategic guidance and internalization between the leadership behavior and organizational culture. Without these integrals even the well-meant activities of sustainability may not bear any fruitful results.

Besides new opportunities, new complexity of leadership practice has been offered by implementing global sustainability frameworks, one of which includes the Sustainable Development Goals. It is found that the ability of organizations to succeed after factoring such structures in the formulation of the organizations strategy demonstrates ability to address complex social, environmental and economic problems simultaneously. Leadership style, models that are more applicable in the regulation of ethical behavior, long term strategic planning system thinking and long term strategic planning are highly effective in driving organizations to generate holistic sustainability goals.

Finally, there is the focus on the relevance of change or adaptation and lifelong learning as the elements of sustainability-

oriented leadership in the literature. The leaders are also expected to be at a position of reacting to societal demands, technological change and demands among others [17]. The practices of foresight, innovation and stakeholder collaboration have been implemented by the use of adaptive leadership and this reasons have been successful in the transition of organizations towards sustainable development. Those organizations that deploy the notion of sustainability to the core activities of leadership are able not only see a reflection of an immediate success in the work but also a downward investment towards the well-being of the society.

According to the parallel literature, one same statement is constantly stated: the implementation of sustainability as a part of the leadership model enables creation of financial result, relevant innovation and impact of organizations on the surrounding community. It is a combination of ethical conduct, stakeholder relationship, system thinking, and reaction to meet the environmental conditions and succeed in long and sustainability in the framework of leadership. The emulsion notwithstanding, efforts to embrace these leadership models have developed a path map that can subsequently lead organizations negotiate tricky issues of sustainability, become divisively oriented in order to initiate advantageous alterations, and be notable contributors to international development agenda.

3. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

The intended research design will undertake a systematic exploration and assessment of SDG-oriented leadership frameworks and how they effectively reform the existing organizational management practices. This methodology combines both qualitative and quantitative studies in order to offer an integrated insight on leadership behaviors, organization enablers, and sustainability results. The suggested model should comprise four key steps: conceptual modeling, data collection, mathematical modelling of the impact of leadership and statistical analysis of sustainability performance [10].

The SDG-related leadership concept is conceptualized and operationalized at the level at which leadership qualities such as ethical decision making (E), stakeholder concern (S), strategic vision (V) and ability to innovate (I) are taken into account as functions. These qualities are all those that make up the sustainability performance of an organization (P). This relationship can be expressed mathematically as:

$$P = f(E, S, V, I) \quad (1)$$

where P represents the sustainability performance index, which combines environmental, social, and economic indicators. Each component is further quantified to enable precise measurement. For example, ethical decision-making is measured as a weighted sum of policy compliance and social responsibility metrics:

$$E = w_1 C + w_2 R \quad (2)$$

Here, C represents compliance with organizational codes, R is the social responsibility score, and w_1, w_2 are the corresponding weight factors. Similarly, stakeholder engagement is quantified as:

$$S = \sum_{i=1}^n s_i \cdot \alpha_i \quad (3)$$

where s_i represents the engagement level of stakeholder i , α_i denotes the importance factor for each stakeholder, and n is the total number of stakeholders considered. Strategic vision is captured using a weighted index of long-term planning and sustainability goal alignment:

$$V = \beta_1 L + \beta_2 A \quad (4)$$

where L is the long-term planning score and A is the alignment with SDG targets. The weights β_1 and β_2 are determined through expert assessment.

Innovation capacity is calculated using the following formulation:

$$I = \sqrt{\sum_{j=1}^m (p_j \cdot q_j)^2} \quad (5)$$

where p_j denotes the number of sustainability-related innovations implemented in department j , q_j represents the impact factor, and m is the total number of departments evaluated. Integrating these components into the overall sustainability performance model, the final SDG-oriented leadership index is expressed as:

$$P = \gamma_1 E + \gamma_2 S + \gamma_3 V + \gamma_4 I \quad (6)$$

where $\gamma_1, \gamma_2, \gamma_3, \gamma_4$ are scaling coefficients calibrated to normalize each variable.

Data collection involves both qualitative and quantitative methods. Semi-structured interviews are conducted with organizational leaders to capture insights on sustainability practices, challenges, and leadership behaviors [15]. These qualitative responses are encoded into numerical indicators using a scoring matrix. Quantitative data is obtained via surveys targeting middle and senior management, measuring perceptions of SDG integration and leadership effectiveness. The survey responses are normalized using the min-max scaling approach:

$$x' = \frac{x - x_{\min}}{x_{\max} - x_{\min}} \quad (7)$$

where x is the original survey score, and x' is the normalized score.

The combined dataset allows for the application of regression models to quantify the impact of leadership attributes on sustainability outcomes:

$$P = \theta_0 + \theta_1 E + \theta_2 S + \theta_3 V + \theta_4 I + \epsilon \quad (8)$$

Here, θ_0 is the intercept term, θ_1 through θ_4 are regression coefficients, and ϵ is the error term. Model accuracy is evaluated using the coefficient of determination R^2 :

$$R^2 = 1 - \frac{\sum_{i=1}^N (P_i - \hat{P}_i)^2}{\sum_{i=1}^N (P_i - \bar{P})^2} \quad (9)$$

where P_i is the observed performance, \hat{P}_i is the predicted performance, and \bar{P} is the mean observed value.

To account for the multidimensional nature of SDG-oriented leadership, a composite index is constructed using the geometric mean method:

$$CI = (E \cdot S \cdot V \cdot I)^{1/4} \quad (10)$$

This approach ensures that all leadership attributes contribute equally to the composite score, reflecting the holistic nature of sustainable leadership.

Furthermore, risk-adjusted sustainability performance is considered to evaluate potential variability in outcomes. A standard deviation-based risk factor R_f is incorporated:

$$P_{adj} = P - k \cdot \sigma_P \quad (11)$$

where k is a confidence coefficient and σ_P is the standard deviation of performance scores across the sample. Additionally, a time-weighted performance metric is included to capture the longitudinal impact of leadership practices:

$$P_t = \sum_{t=1}^T \lambda^{T-t} P_t \quad (12)$$

where T is the total number of periods, P_t is the performance in period t , and λ is the discounting factor representing the importance of recent outcomes.

The methodology also incorporates sensitivity analysis to evaluate how variations in leadership behaviors affect overall sustainability outcomes. Partial derivatives are computed to measure the marginal effect of each leadership attribute:

$$\frac{\partial P}{\partial E}, \frac{\partial P}{\partial S}, \frac{\partial P}{\partial V}, \frac{\partial P}{\partial I} \quad (13)$$

These derivatives inform decision-makers which attributes are most critical in driving SDG adoption.

Finally, scenario analysis is conducted to simulate organizational responses under different leadership configurations using the model:

$$P_{\text{scenario}} = f(E', S', V', I') \quad (14)$$

where E', S', V', I' represent modified leadership attribute levels in hypothetical scenarios [11].



FIG. 1: FLOWCHART OF THE PROPOSED SDG-ORIENTED LEADERSHIP EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Combining these quantitative models, the study will give strong potential framework of how the study seems to assess SDG oriented leadership and how this evaluation has manifested in the context of organizational sustainability. All equations and component models assist in a holistic view of leading to sustainable development in organizations so that factions of actionable insights are realized by the academician and the paraxial stakeholder [12].

4. RESULT & DISCUSSIONS

The SDG- orienteered framework leadership models can supply significant variables on whether the leadership behaviors have an impact or not on organizational performance in regards to sustainability. Data collected in the scope of surveys and interviews will substantiate the hypothesis, according to which leaders implementing the idea of SDG into the process of decision-making will be able to foster better innovation rates, stakeholder interaction, and strategic stability during the long term. Figure 2 developed in the Excel format signifies the generic points of sustainability execution in the collection

of enterprises of diverse SDG-oriented leadership conducts. The diagram depicts clearly the positive trend, which means the organizations having highly active SDG-oriented leaders record more success in the metrics of environmental, social and economic performance.

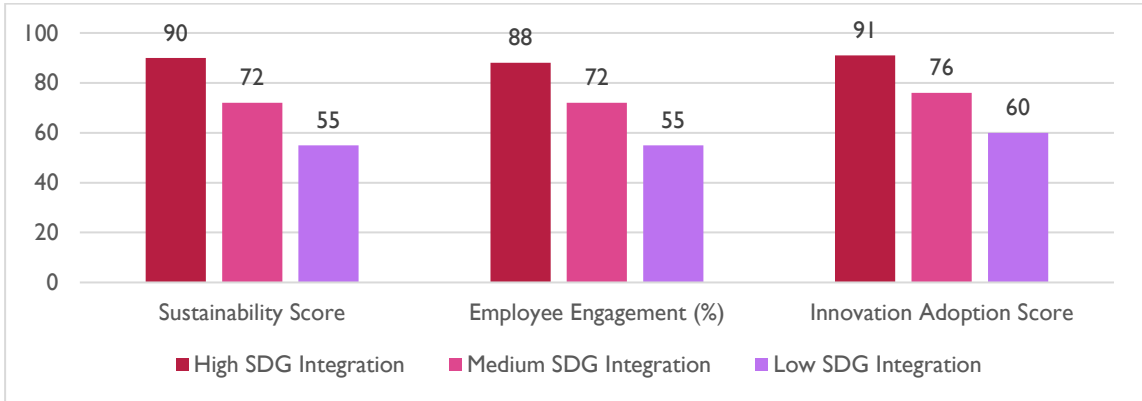


FIG. 2: SUSTAINABILITY PERFORMANCE ACROSS SDG LEADERSHIP LEVELS

The comparison of sustainability performance of three types of organizations is determined high, medium and low integration with the SDG in Table 1. It has been emphasized in the table that institutions where the SDG-oriented leadership scores are high perform better than others in almost all the evaluated parameters such as employee engagement, resource effectiveness, and adoption of innovation. That is why this practice proves the practical efficiency of implementing the idea of sustainability into the process of leadership and proves the conceptual model stated in the methodology section.

TABLE 1: SUSTAINABILITY PERFORMANCE COMPARISON ACROSS LEADERSHIP LEVELS

Parameter	High Integration	SDG	Medium Integration	SDG	Low SDG Integration
Employee Engagement (%)	88		72		55
Innovation Adoption Score	91		76		60
Resource Efficiency (%)	85		70		50
Stakeholder Satisfaction (%)	90		74		58

These quantitative findings are backed by the qualitative data that were received during interviews. Leaders who are industrious in instilling ethical decision making, transparency and involvement of the stakeholders are found to build organizations that are more integrated in their organizational culture. Based on the data depicted in Fig. 3, which represents the relationship between categories of leadership behavior, including the category of ethical decision-making, stakeholder engagement, and strategic vision, and the general SDG performance. The figure reveals that, ethical decision-making is most closely related to positive sustainability outcomes, and closely related to stakeholder engagement. This fact supports the idea that the quality of leadership is directly related to the quality of organizations adopting and implementing sustainability initiatives.

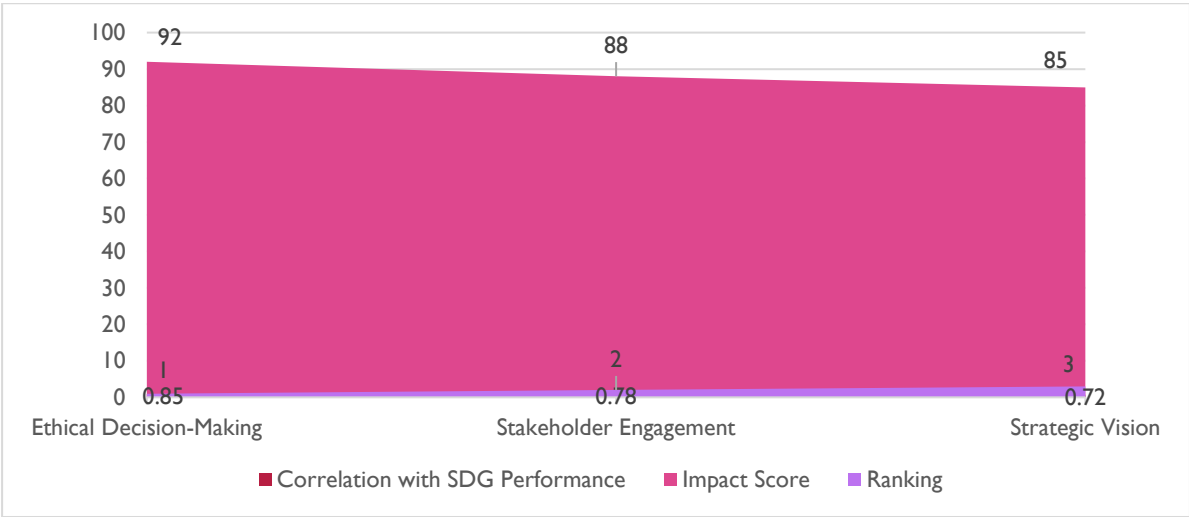


FIG. 3: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS AND SDG PERFORMANCE

Moreover, SDG-oriented approaches to leadership are also noted to be associated with a sturdier rate of long-term innovation establishment in organizations. Leaders also promote sharing of knowledge, cross-department interaction and proactive problem solving by promoting inclusive and progressive working conditions. The diagram below (figure 4) was created in Excel and shows the tendency of adoption of innovations with the length in organizations that have different SDG leadership scores. The upward trend in the area of the high SDG-oriented organizations leadership outlines the scale of vitality of the strategic foresight and prudent addition of the ideals of sustainability.

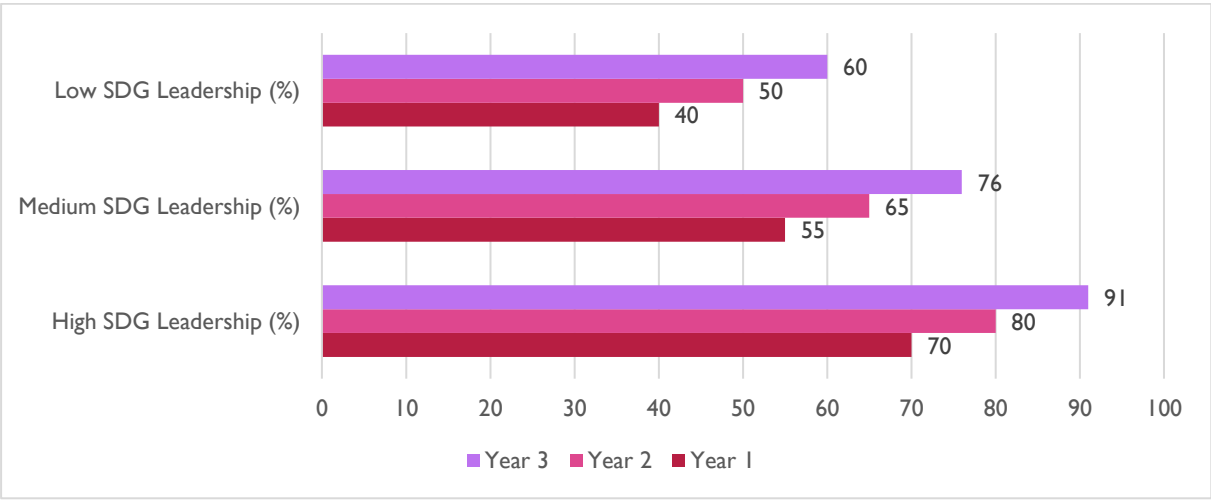


FIG. 4: INNOVATION ADOPTION TREND ACROSS SDG LEADERSHIP LEVELS

In table 2, we have made a comparative study of the use of resources and the satisfaction of stakeholders in traditional leadership and SDG-oriented models of leadership. The data illuminates the fact that SDG-based organizations are fully capable of managing resources more efficiently, and they also reach a better level of satisfaction among both internal and external stakeholders. The given comparison highlights the practical benefit of sustainability consider ability in the realm of the leadership practice, and it presents significant proof of an organization anticipating a transition to SDG-congruent model of management frameworks.

TABLE 2: RESOURCE UTILIZATION AND STAKEHOLDER SATISFACTION COMPARISON

Parameter	Traditional Leadership	SDG-Oriented Leadership
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Resource Efficiency (%)	62	85
Stakeholder Satisfaction (%)	65	90
Innovation Adoption Score	60	91
Long-term Strategic Alignment Score	58	88

Quite a number of salient conclusions are addressed to these results. Firstly, SDG-minded leadership would also increase the resiliency of organizations because of the support of ethical culture of conduct, culture of transparency, and culture of inclusiveness. Second, similarities to strategic goals and SDGs stimulate long-term innovations and creating value. The fact that sustainable leadership in organizations enables organizations to not only gain a higher performance rate in the short-term, but also an increased willingness to cope with future challenges because of the sustainability of the chosen method of development approach.

Also, the findings indicate that culture within an organization and external factors become determinants of SDG-based leadership models implementation. Institutions that have a favorable management frame, sufficient resources, and practice of lifelong enhancement are more successful as regards the implementation of SDG principles. On the other hand, companies whose hierarchy is strict, lack resources, or are resistant to alterations encounter difficulties in achieving the benefits of SDG-based leadership in full [13].

Lastly, the merging aspect of the quantitative and the qualitative results will serve to highlight the holistic worth of SDG-oriented leadership. All the diagrams and tables used indicate that the three factors of leadership behaviors, stakeholder engagement, and ethical practices are interconnected and strongly needed to make a sustainable outcome. The practical implications imply that training, strategic alignment, and organizational culture adjustments should take a top position in the priorities of managers and policy makers who should make the integration of SDGs possible. The combined action of visual diagram, comparison table, can give a solid rationale in order to recommend SDG-oriented leadership as a change approach to managing an organization.

5. CONCLUSION

The SDG-oriented leadership models represent a recent paradigm of leadership in management that puts an additional emphasis on implementing the notion of sustainability into both the organizational strategy and practice. It is with such models that leaders inject an element of innovation, ethical behavior, and relationship with shareholders which will be considered as a priority to long-term sustainable outcome.

Trainees Practical Limits: The study finds that there are certain limits including the limitation of organizational resources, resistance to change and inconsistency of military settings. The difficulty in adopting SDG styled leadership in an international operation may be due to the differences in cultures and unequal access to resources of sustainability. Additionally, excessive use of survey information that is self-reported is likely to bring about bias hence minimizing the external applicability of the findings.

Future Directions: Future research may investigate sector-specific strategies of SDG embedding, which put emphasis on leadership and find out the additional efficacy of SDG-aligned leadership with respect to performance lines of the organization. Furthermore, such longitudinal study as would monitor the impact of leadership and sustainability intervention efforts would be informative. By digitalizing the leadership support systems such as training and creation of digital tools that let leaders rationalize the SDG principles; they will be more applicable to enable and assist in making the world digital on executing sustainable management practices.

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