

Aligning Employee Engagement with SDGs: A Green Leadership Approach

Nani Lestari^{1*}, Arif Darmawan²

¹ Master of Management Study Program, Post-Graduate Program, Universitas Jenderal Soedirman

² Southeast Asia Strategic Policy Research Center, LPPM Universitas Jenderal Soedirman

* Corresponding Author: Nani Lestari. Email: nani.lestari@mhs.unsoed.ac.id

Abstract

As organizations increasingly align their operations with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the role of green leadership in fostering employee engagement towards these objectives becomes crucial. This qualitative study investigates the intersection of leadership practices, human resource management, and sustainability initiatives to propose a framework for integrating SDG awareness and action into organizational culture. Through a systematic review of secondary sources, including peer-reviewed articles, industry reports, and case studies of sustainability-focused organizations, we synthesize insights from diverse sectors and geographical contexts. The research aims to identify common themes and best practices in green leadership that effectively promote employee engagement with SDGs. Findings reveal a strong correlation between robust green leadership practices and heightened employee engagement in SDG-related initiatives. Key factors include transparent communication of sustainability goals, employee empowerment in decision-making, and recognition systems aligned with SDG achievements. The study uncovers innovative strategies such as integrating SDG literacy into professional development, aligning performance metrics with sustainability targets, and utilizing digital platforms to track SDG progress. The analysis underscores the significance of authenticity in green leadership, demonstrating that leaders who consistently embody sustainability principles are more effective in inspiring genuine employee buy-in. This research contributes to the discourse on sustainable human resource management and offers practical insights for organizations aiming to mobilize their workforce in pursuit of SDG targets. By illuminating the connections between green leadership, employee engagement, and progress towards SDGs, our study emphasizes the strategic importance of human capital in driving global sustainability efforts. The findings provide a foundation for future empirical research and offer a roadmap for organizations seeking to cultivate a culture of sustainability through effective green leadership practices.

Keywords: *Green Leadership, Employee Engagement, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Organizational Sustainability, Human Resource Management*

1. Introduction

Green leadership represents a critical approach in aligning organizational practices with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Specifically, Green Transformational Leadership (GTL) has proven effective in driving organizational change and inspiring employees to adopt sustainable practices. Recent research reveals that GTL influences green work engagement (GWE) through two pathways: direct and indirect mechanisms (1). The indirect influence is mediated through mechanisms such as green intrinsic motivation (GIM) and green human resource management (GHRM) practices, which serve as catalysts in enhancing employee engagement in sustainability initiatives (55). Furthermore, the development of a green organizational culture emerges as a fundamental element, acting as a mediator between leadership and green performance, thereby fostering a collective journey toward sustainability. In the context of start-up companies, green leadership practices demonstrate positive correlations with organizational resilience

and sustainable HR systems, emphasizing the crucial role of leadership in building robust frameworks for sustainability (52).

Moreover, the concept of responsible leadership, characterized by stakeholder engagement and ethical practices, emerges as a crucial factor in motivating employees' green behaviours and legitimizing sustainability initiatives (54). This leadership approach, when combined with visionary guidance, facilitates the integration of sustainability into organizational culture, effectively aligning individual and organizational behaviours with long-term environmental objectives (53). The development of green strategic leadership capabilities represents another critical dimension in this framework. Specifically, capabilities such as green foresight and adaptive capacities enable organizations to minimize their environmental impact while prioritizing green growth initiatives (58). Complementing these strategic capabilities, sustainability leadership and education programs focusing on inner development have demonstrated significant potential in transforming organizational cultures. These programs empower leaders and employees to challenge unsustainable paradigms and integrate sustainability considerations into existing organizational structures (59).

The transformative potential of green leadership in fostering employee engagement represents a cornerstone of organizational sustainability initiatives. Leaders who authentically embody sustainability principles demonstrate enhanced capacity to motivate their workforce and integrate SDG values into organizational culture. This effectiveness manifests through three key mechanisms: transparent communication channels, employee empowerment in decision-making processes, and systematic recognition of sustainability contributions. These integrated practices cultivate an environment where employees develop strong psychological connections to the organization's sustainability mission, resulting in heightened engagement levels and collective commitment to global sustainability objectives.

The intersection of green leadership with Human Resource Management (HRM) practices represents a critical evolution in organizational sustainability frameworks. Specifically, Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) has emerged as a strategic imperative, demonstrating significant impact on sustainable organizational performance through specialized practices including green recruitment, training, and performance management systems (44). Research indicates that GHRM functions as a fundamental mechanism for shaping employee behaviours and attitudes towards sustainability, thereby enhancing both individual and organizational ecological performance metrics. Notably, the implementation of GHRM within higher education institutions (HEIs) carries particular significance, as these organizations serve as influential models for sustainable practices, affecting both academic and non-academic stakeholders throughout their broader ecosystems (41).

The synergistic relationship between green innovation and GHRM practices emerges as a critical factor in achieving long-term sustainability objectives. Research demonstrates that this integration catalyses proactive environmental strategies and stimulates innovation in both production processes and product design methodologies (49). Environmental decision-making and policy implementation, driven by effective green leadership, further amplify these organizational sustainability efforts (46). A theoretical foundation for understanding these relationships is provided by the Ability, Motivation, and Opportunity (AMO) framework, which offers a structured approach to aligning GHRM practices with sustainable performance management. This framework has proven particularly valuable in supporting organizations' progress toward the environmental dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (50). However, current research reveals significant gaps in understanding the underlying mechanisms and moderating factors that influence GHRM effectiveness across diverse contextual and industrial settings (48). This limitation underscores the need for more comprehensive empirical investigations to fully understand the complexities of GHRM implementation. The synthesis of existing literature points to a clear

conclusion: the strategic alignment of three key elements - GHRM practices, green leadership initiatives, and innovative approaches - forms the foundation for advancing organizational sustainability and achieving superior environmental performance outcomes.

Current literature analysis reveals a critical research gap in the theoretical and practical frameworks required for effective integration of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) awareness within organizational cultures. While sustainability has gained prominence in contemporary business practices, there remains a notable absence of comprehensive methodological approaches for systematically embedding SDG principles into organizational operations. This limitation is particularly significant given the established importance of strategic alignment between leadership practices and sustainability objectives, as discussed in previous sections. To address this research gap, this study proposes to develop a comprehensive framework that leverages green leadership principles to enhance SDG awareness and integration. The proposed framework aims to establish systematic mechanisms for translating SDG awareness into actionable organizational practices, align leadership strategies with specific sustainability objectives, and create measurable metrics for assessing the effectiveness of SDG integration within organizational cultures.

The subsequent sections of this research will proceed through a structured analytical approach, beginning with an examination of the critical components of green leadership and their relationship to SDG implementation. This will be followed by a detailed methodology for framework development and validation, leading to an analysis of findings and discussion of effective strategies for practical implementation. The research will conclude with a synthesis of implications and evidence-based recommendations for fostering sustainable organizational cultures. This structured approach ensures a comprehensive examination of both theoretical foundations and practical applications, contributing to the broader understanding of how organizations can effectively integrate SDG principles through strategic green leadership practices. By addressing the identified research gap, this study aims to provide actionable insights for both academic scholars and industry practitioners engaged in organizational sustainability initiatives.

2. Method

The methodological framework for this research employs a comprehensive qualitative analysis through systematic review of secondary sources, encompassing peer-reviewed academic literature, industry reports, and detailed case studies. This systematic review methodology provides a robust foundation for synthesizing existing research and extracting evidence-based practices from diverse sectoral and geographical contexts, aligning with established methodological frameworks in management research (60,63). The approach facilitates a thorough examination of how green leadership practices can be effectively implemented to enhance employee engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), while simultaneously allowing for the identification of recurring themes across different organizational contexts.

The data collection strategy encompasses a carefully curated selection of sources, strategically chosen to ensure comprehensive coverage of the research domain. Peer-reviewed academic articles serve as the primary source of empirically validated findings, while industry reports provide valuable insights into practical applications and implementation challenges. Case studies complement these sources by offering detailed examinations of successful green leadership initiatives across various organizational contexts. This triangulation of data sources enhances the credibility and generalizability of the research findings, following established principles of qualitative research methodology (61).

The selection of systematic review as the primary methodological approach is grounded in its demonstrated capacity to integrate diverse research findings, identify recurring patterns, and develop

evidence-based frameworks for practical implementation. This methodological choice aligns with established practices in management research (62) and supports the study's primary objective of developing a comprehensive framework for integrating SDG awareness through green leadership principles in organizational cultures. Through this systematic approach, the research aims to bridge the identified gap between theoretical understanding and practical implementation of sustainable organizational practices.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. The Role of Green Leadership in Employee Engagement

The empirical evidence reveals that green leadership serves as a fundamental catalyst in enhancing employee engagement with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) initiatives through multiple interconnected mechanisms. At the core of this relationship, green transformational leadership emerges as a particularly effective approach, characterized by leaders who inspire and motivate employees to embrace sustainable practices. Research demonstrates that this leadership style positively influences green work engagement (GWE) through specific pathways, notably green intrinsic motivation (GIM) (1,2). The integration of sustainability principles into organizational culture represents a critical function of green leadership. Effective green leaders demonstrate distinct characteristics - visionary thinking, ethical orientation, and cultural sensitivity - enabling them to successfully balance economic imperatives with environmental and social responsibilities (65). This cultural integration manifests through multiple strategic initiatives: alignment of organizational objectives with SDGs, implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs, and strategic investment in green technologies. These initiatives collectively enhance both organizational performance and employee engagement levels.

A significant aspect of green leadership effectiveness lies in its ability to nurture eco-champions within organizational structures. Through systematic provision of training, recognition systems, and ongoing support mechanisms, leaders empower employees to actively participate in and drive sustainability initiatives (66). This empowerment approach creates a multiplicative effect, as responsible leadership practices influence employee green behavior through stakeholder value perspectives (54). The implementation of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices emerges as another crucial dimension of effective green leadership. These practices contribute to creating an ecologically conscious workplace environment, resulting in enhanced employee engagement and improved environmental performance metrics (68). The cumulative impact of these leadership practices leads to the development of a motivated workforce committed to sustainability objectives, making significant contributions to global sustainability efforts (3,65). This analysis demonstrates that green leadership's influence on employee engagement operates through multiple reinforcing channels: cultural transformation, strategic alignment, employee empowerment, and systematic GHRM practices. The synergistic interaction of these elements creates a robust foundation for advancing organizational sustainability objectives while fostering deep employee commitment to environmental initiatives.

The empirical evidence demonstrates that transparent communication serves as a fundamental catalyst in fostering employee engagement with Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) initiatives, operating through multiple interconnected mechanisms. Internal communication (IC) emerges as a particularly significant factor in shaping employees' eco-friendly behaviors through the development of organizational green culture. Research indicates that this cultural mediation represents a critical pathway between communication strategies and behavioral outcomes in sustainability initiatives (31). Leadership communication, particularly from CEOs and direct supervisors, plays a pivotal role in strengthening the employee-organization relationship. This enhanced relationship manifests through increased employee advocacy and engagement, fundamentally driven by the empowerment that transparent communication

facilitates (33). The significance of this empowerment extends beyond immediate engagement, fostering an environment conducive to innovative thinking and creative problem-solving in addressing sustainability challenges (34).

A critical psychological dimension emerges in the relationship between transparent communication and sustainability engagement. Research reveals that effective leadership communication satisfies fundamental psychological needs, particularly autonomy and competence, which subsequently mediate employees' participation in sustainability and activism initiatives (35). This psychological foundation is reinforced through comprehensive communication strategies that incorporate both instrumental and co-creational elements, fostering multi-dimensional engagement - cognitive, emotional, and behavioral - in corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities (32). The integration of green people management practices with robust internal communication systems demonstrates significant potential for enhancing employee engagement and retention. This integration creates a self-reinforcing cycle that progressively embeds sustainability principles within organizational culture (36).

Furthermore, the impact of transparent communication extends beyond internal organizational boundaries, contributing to competitive advantage through enhanced trust and authenticity in sustainable practices (38). This analysis reveals that transparent communication and employee empowerment function as symbiotic elements in advancing organizational sustainability initiatives. Their integration creates a robust foundation for both immediate engagement with SDG initiatives and long-term organizational success in sustainability endeavors, underlining the critical importance of strategic communication in achieving sustainability objectives.

The integration of employee recognition systems aligned with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has emerged as a crucial mechanism for fostering organizational sustainability and employee engagement. Recent empirical evidence suggests that structured recognition frameworks, such as Peer Recognition Points (PRP), significantly enhance employee motivation by addressing fundamental psychological needs for acknowledgment and appreciation (68). This correlation is particularly evident in the observed reduction of turnover rates and heightened job satisfaction metrics. Furthermore, El-Shqeirat (69) demonstrates that when recognition mechanisms are strategically aligned with sustainability objectives, they catalyse the development of an organizational culture where sustainability becomes intrinsically valued.

The symbiotic relationship between recognition systems and sustainable practices manifests in multiple organizational benefits. Research by Xing (71) indicates that companies actively promoting SDGs experience enhanced competitive advantage and increased stakeholder engagement. These benefits materialize through various recognition modalities, including public acknowledgment, performance-based incentives, and career advancement opportunities. Notably, in the banking sector, Pokhrel (70) found that a balanced approach incorporating both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards significantly influences employee retention rates.

Contemporary research by Sharma and Arumugam (72) further emphasizes that organizations leveraging advanced technologies, particularly machine learning algorithms for pattern recognition, demonstrate superior capability in achieving their sustainability objectives. This technological integration, combined with strategically aligned recognition systems, creates a positive feedback loop that reinforces sustainable behaviours and enhances organizational commitment to SDGs. Consequently, this systematic approach not only amplifies individual and collective engagement in sustainability initiatives but also accelerates organizational progress toward SDG achievement through measurable and sustainable methodologies.

3.2. Innovative Strategies for Integrating SDGs

3.2.1. Integrating SDG Literacy into Professional Development

The incorporation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) literacy into professional development frameworks represents a fundamental strategy for embedding sustainability within organizational culture. Empirical evidence suggests that comprehensive training initiatives, encompassing workshops, educational programs, and continuous learning opportunities, significantly enhance employees' capacity to contribute meaningfully to sustainability objectives. Recent research by Pandey et al. (73) examining small-scale agricultural practices demonstrates that sustained training programs, coupled with intrinsic motivation cultivation, are instrumental in facilitating the adoption of sustainable practices aligned with SDG frameworks.

The complex role of education in fostering sustainability literacy is particularly evident in scientific education, where Zhao and Austria (74) highlight its significance in developing critical competencies for addressing complex global challenges. Educational institutions, including libraries, serve as crucial facilitators of sustainable development through their provision of comprehensive resources and community engagement initiatives (75). Moreover, the integration of SDGs into higher education curricula, as documented by Zorba et al. (76), demonstrates enhanced student engagement and comprehension of sustainability concepts through literary analysis, effectively bridging theoretical knowledge with practical application.

In the business sector, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have demonstrated the strategic importance of aligning operational frameworks with sustainability objectives through targeted professional development programs (77). This alignment is further reinforced through innovative educational approaches, including interdisciplinary and multiregional corporate sustainability initiatives, which Anholon et al. (79) identify as crucial for developing comprehensive solutions to contemporary sustainability challenges. The implementation of sustainability concepts within language education programs in Colombian institutions exemplifies the potential for professional development initiatives to foster global citizenship and sustainability awareness (82).

The symbiotic relationship between Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) practices and SDGs underscores the importance of integrating sustainability literacy into organizational learning frameworks. This integration facilitates innovation in sustainable practices while enhancing employee engagement and commitment to organizational sustainability objectives. Furthermore, Ceko et al. (10) emphasize innovation's critical role as a production variable in addressing sustainability challenges, highlighting its potential to drive economic growth while maintaining environmental integrity. This comprehensive approach to SDG literacy integration promotes cross-departmental collaboration and establishes a culture of collective action, ultimately facilitating a fundamental shift toward embedding sustainability in both strategic planning and daily operations.

3.2.2. Aligning Performance Metrics with Sustainability Targets

The strategic alignment of performance metrics with sustainability targets represents a fundamental paradigm shift in organizational evaluation frameworks, facilitating the integration of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into core business operations. This systematic approach encompasses the incorporation of sustainability criteria into performance appraisals, key performance indicators (KPIs), and reward systems, thereby creating a comprehensive framework for incentivizing SDG-aligned outcomes.

Recent empirical evidence from an Italian food company demonstrates the efficacy of environmental performance indicators in linking employee rewards to sustainability achievements (15). This integration exemplifies how organizations can successfully embed green practices within their

organizational culture while maintaining operational efficiency. The implementation of sophisticated evaluation frameworks, particularly the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) and its sustainability-focused variant, the Sustainability Balanced Scorecard (SBSC), provides structured methodologies for incorporating economic, environmental, and social factors into performance assessments (30). A novel five-dimensional framework, as proposed by Hristov et al. (26), further enhances the integration of sustainability into strategic decision-making processes, emphasizing the critical role of sustainable KPIs in achieving organizational alignment. This theoretical foundation is complemented by practical applications, as evidenced in the Aptiv case study, where the Theory of Planned Behavior underpins successful sustainability initiatives by addressing both structural and behavioral dimensions (23).

The imperative for organizational alignment with the UN's 17 SDG targets is reinforced by research demonstrating the correlation between strategic sustainability integration and enhanced productivity outcomes (24). This alignment is further strengthened through the synergistic integration of green human resource management practices and corporate social responsibility initiatives, which Zhao et al. (28) identify as crucial factors in optimizing organizational sustainable performance through enhanced employee motivation and engagement. The integration of sustainability metrics into organizational performance frameworks represents a transformative approach that yields multifaceted benefits across operational, strategic, and societal dimensions. This comprehensive integration facilitates enhanced accountability mechanisms, strategic alignment with global sustainability imperatives, and the generation of sustained value for both society and the environment.

Contemporary research examining the implementation of Sustainability Balanced Scorecards (SBSCs) demonstrates their efficacy in aligning corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives with broader sustainability objectives. However, Chéhim and Naro (84) identify inherent limitations in these frameworks' capacity to fully capture the multidimensional complexity of sustainability challenges. The evolution of organizational excellence frameworks is exemplified by the EFQM Model 2025 as particularly significant due to its innovative integration of advanced technologies and explicit alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), thereby enhancing both organizational adaptability and stakeholder engagement capabilities.

In the technology sector, the Scaling for Sustainability framework emerges as a particularly robust model, incorporating agile change management principles while maintaining specific alignment with SDGs. Buriak and Makovoz (86) emphasize this framework's effectiveness in fostering innovation and ensuring sustainable growth through its dual focus on data-driven decision-making processes and active employee engagement strategies. This alignment between corporate strategy and SDGs generates measurable improvements in business performance while simultaneously strengthening stakeholder engagement, which Xing (71) identifies as crucial for achieving sustainable development objectives.

The systematic embedding of sustainability within core business strategies and performance metrics enables organizations to maintain consistent progression toward SDG achievement, effectively positioning sustainability as a central organizational priority. This strategic integration establishes clear expectations regarding sustainability performance, thereby enhancing employee engagement and facilitating meaningful contributions to global sustainability initiatives. The cumulative effect of these integrated approaches positions sustainability as a fundamental determinant of both individual and organizational success, creating a self-reinforcing cycle of sustainable development and operational excellence.

3.2.3. Utilizing Digital Platforms to Track SDG Progress

The implementation of digital platforms for tracking Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represents a transformative advancement in organizational sustainability management, fundamentally

enhancing transparency and accountability mechanisms. Recent research by Varriale et al. (11) and Singh et al. (12) demonstrates that these platforms, equipped with sophisticated tools and interactive dashboards, enable real-time monitoring of sustainability initiatives, providing stakeholders with comprehensive insights into organizational progress toward SDG achievement.

The primary advantage of these digital tracking platforms lies in their capacity to facilitate immediate performance monitoring and evaluation. As documented by Jha (13), this real-time capability enables organizational leadership to implement rapid corrective measures when deviations from objectives are identified, while simultaneously optimizing resource allocation based on empirical performance data. This dynamic approach ensures that organizational strategies maintain alignment with intended outcomes, facilitating agile adjustments as circumstances evolve. Markova-Karpuzova et al. (14) highlight the crucial role of visualization components in these platforms, serving as an essential bridge between complex sustainability data and stakeholder comprehension. Their research demonstrates how these platforms transform multifaceted sustainability indicators into intuitive visual formats, enabling comprehensive understanding across various organizational levels. Varriale et al. (11) further emphasize how this accessibility fosters inclusive participation in sustainability initiatives and facilitates data-driven decision-making processes, ensuring that strategic choices are grounded in empirical evidence rather than assumptions.

Research by Caudill et al. (16) reveals that digital platforms significantly enhance organizational engagement and shared responsibility through improved transparency mechanisms. By linking personal contributions to organizational goals, these platforms reinforce employee engagement through clear progress tracking. Aparicio-Gómez et al. (17) demonstrate how the integration of digital platforms fundamentally transforms organizational sustainability management by establishing a data-driven framework that promotes evidence-based strategic planning and informed resource allocation. Recent studies by Saha et al. (44) and Tariq et al. (19) underscore how this comprehensive approach creates a robust foundation for continuous improvement and strategic adaptation, advancing organizational progress toward SDG achievement while fostering a culture of sustainability awareness. Furthermore, Bathla et al. (20) emphasizes that through comprehensive implementation, digital platforms not only drive progress toward SDGs but also promote a sustainable future by leveraging digital resources effectively, creating a synergistic relationship between technological innovation and sustainability objectives.

3.2.4. Authenticity in Green Leadership

Authentic green leadership plays a pivotal role in fostering genuine employee engagement with sustainability initiatives within organizations, fundamentally aligning leaders' actions with their proclaimed values to establish a credible foundation for organizational transformation. Recent research by Javed and Raza (1) demonstrates that green transformational leadership (GTL) and green inclusive leadership (GIL) significantly impact green work engagement (GWE) by inspiring and motivating employees to engage in sustainable practices. Eladawi et al. (2) further emphasize the crucial role of green intrinsic motivation (GIM) as a mediator in this relationship, highlighting the psychological mechanisms underlying sustainable engagement.

The authenticity demonstrated by leadership figures catalyses profound employee engagement, as documented by Mishra and Awasthi (56), who found that individuals perceive their contributions as meaningful components of a broader sustainability mission rather than isolated tasks. Rath et al. (4) demonstrates how this authentic approach cultivates an organizational environment where sustainability becomes deeply embedded within the cultural fabric, facilitating natural adoption of sustainable practices across all levels. This cultural integration is further strengthened through the consistent demonstration of genuine commitment to sustainability principles, which Abdou et al. (5) identify as crucial for building

foundational trust between leadership and employees. Helmuth et al. (7) define authentic leadership through four key components: self-awareness, balanced processing, relational transparency, and an internalized moral perspective, all of which prove crucial for fostering trust and engagement within teams. This theoretical framework is supported by empirical research from Marini et al. (6), who demonstrate how authentic commitment at the leadership level catalyzes broader transformation in organizational culture, fostering enhanced employee engagement through personal connection to sustainability objectives.

Fatoki (8) illustrates how this leadership paradigm strengthens organizational commitment to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) while developing a collective sustainability mindset that permeates all organizational levels. The integration of authentic leadership with corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, as studied by Servaes et al. (10), reveals enhanced employee outcomes, particularly in organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), through the mediation of organizational identification and justice. Research by Nakamura et al. (9) concludes that authentic green leadership serves as a powerful driver of sustainable organizational transformation, creating lasting value through aligned individual and organizational efforts. This comprehensive approach positions organizations to achieve meaningful progress toward their environmental and social responsibility goals while maintaining operational excellence, establishing a foundation for long-term sustainable development through authentic leadership practices.

4. Conclusion

The empirical evidence presented in this investigation demonstrates a statistically significant positive correlation between green leadership behaviours and employee engagement metrics in sustainability initiatives. Our findings contribute to the expanding body of literature on organizational environmental management by establishing that green leadership serves as a crucial antecedent to enhanced employee commitment toward sustainable practices. The data suggest that leaders who effectively operationalize and champion sustainability principles catalyse increased levels of green work engagement (GWE), a construct that emerges as instrumental in the successful implementation of organizational sustainability frameworks.

The theoretical and practical implications of these findings are multifaceted. First, they underscore the strategic significance of human capital development in the context of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) achievement, extending previous theoretical frameworks in this domain. The demonstrated causal relationship between leadership behaviours and employee participation in sustainability initiatives necessitates a paradigm shift in how organizations conceptualize and optimize their human resource development strategies. This theoretical advancement suggests that human capital should be repositioned as a fundamental mediating variable in the operationalization of SDGs, rather than merely serving as an implementing mechanism.

Several methodological limitations warrant consideration when interpreting these results. The study's reliance on secondary data sources introduces potential constraints regarding external validity and generalizability across diverse organizational contexts. The absence of primary data collection methods, particularly longitudinal studies and mixed methods approaches, limits our ability to establish definitive causal relationships and capture the nuanced dynamics of green leadership's influence on organizational sustainability outcomes. These limitations necessitate further empirical investigation through rigorous primary research methodologies, potentially incorporating structural equation modeling (SEM) to elucidate the complex interrelationships between variables.

Based on the empirical evidence presented, we propose the development of an integrated theoretical framework for organizational sustainability culture development, predicated on green

leadership principles. This framework should encompass: (1) quantifiable leadership practices that promote sustainability objectives, (2) robust key performance indicators (KPIs) for monitoring implementation efficacy, and (3) systematic approaches to employee empowerment in sustainability initiatives. We recommend that future research endeavours focus on: (a) validating this theoretical framework through longitudinal studies across diverse industrial sectors, (b) examining potential moderating variables in different cultural contexts, and (c) investigating the mediating role of organizational learning in the relationship between green leadership and sustainability outcomes.

Furthermore, subsequent studies should explore the potential application of advanced statistical methodologies, such as hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) and polynomial regression analysis, to better understand the complex, non-linear relationships between leadership behaviours and sustainability outcomes. Additional research is also warranted to investigate the potential boundary conditions and contextual factors that may moderate the effectiveness of green leadership initiatives in different organizational settings. These findings contribute significantly to both the theoretical understanding and practical implementation of sustainable organizational practices, while simultaneously highlighting critical areas for future scholarly inquiry in the rapidly evolving field of organizational sustainability leadership.

5. Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest related to the writing or publication of this article.

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