

Review Article

Sustainable Leadership Competencies for Sustainable Performance in Federal College of Education in North Eastern Nigeria

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Abstract

This study proposes a model rooted on sustainability leadership competencies for the survival and sustainable performance of Nigerian tertiary institutions. To this end, selected tertiary institutions in the north-eastern Nigeria were considered by the study. The propose framework proposes a suitability leadership variable with five dimensions. viz: conventional leadership competencies, visionary thinking competencies, change agent competencies, ethical consideration competencies and environmental consideration competencies. A cross-sectional design approach was adopted by the study where survey was administered to the sampled lecturers in the selected institutions. SPSS software was used to run a regression to determine the effects of the dimensions of the independent variable on the dependant variable. Recommendations were offered for practical application of the study.

Keywords: Sustainable Leadership; Leadership Competencies; Tertiary Institutions; Institutional Performance

Introduction

Presently, sustainable development has emerged as one of the challenging issues across the globe (P. Smith & Ramirez, 2012). Diverse stakeholders such as government, publics, and nongovernment organizations are forcing businesses to perform sustainably in the highly complex environment (P. Smith & Ramirez, 2012). Sustainability requires leaders who could foster sustainable practices in their society, organizations and ignite economic prosperity (Metcalf & Benn, 2013). In this perspective, sustainable leadership has emerged as effective leadership (Shriberg & MacDonald, 2013). Sustainable leadership stresses on the creation of the present and future profits for an organization, in addition to enhancing the quality of life for all stakeholders (McCann & Holt, 2010). Sustainable leadership promotes sustainability values at the individual, organizational, and social level (Iqbal, Ahmad, Nasim, & Khan, 2020; Peterlin et al., 2015). Furthermore, sustainable leaders focus on capacity building, sustainable change and long-term results (Hallinger & Suriyankietkaew, 2018) which make it imperative to pursue SDGs. Sustainable leadership practices such as valuing employees, shared vision, social responsibility, and amicable labor relations; significantly drive long-term firm performance (Avery & Bergsteiner, 2011). Sustainable leadership is still in the stage of infancy, so there is need to extend the literature in this domain (Burawat, 2019). As sustainable leadership significantly influences the sustainable performance, Burawat (2019) has rec-

ommended to explore the intervening variable that mediates or moderates their relationship in the complex model. Sustainable leadership plays a vibrant part in the growth of organizational learning (Al-Zawahreh, 2019). Learning organizations are highly concerned about systematic thinking, extensive collaborative engagement, and the core assumptions of business and its objectives. Being a social process, contextual factors influence organizational learning. Shared vision, systemic thinking, and leadership influence organizational learning. Support from management is essential to enhance learning (Liao, Chen, Hu, Chung, & Liu, 2017).

Extent literature have also emphasized on the importance of organizational learning in the quest for Sustainability (SD). Effective and efficient knowledge and insights generated under the umbrella of organizational learning related to sustainable development is conducive to deal with sustainability (P. Smith & Ramirez, 2012). Organizational learning is a source of sustainable competitive advantage (Hosseini et al., 2020). In context of sustainable development, learning organizations deal with challenges of the sustainability in the shape of demands from social, ecological, and environmental perspective in the dynamic complex market where it is imperative to create new approaches, policies, and structures (Naudé, 2012). Learning organization is a strategy to improve performance and retain

sustained competitive advantage (Naudé, 2012). Furthermore, higher the inclination toward learning, higher the ability to cope with challenges of triple bottom line approach to sustainability. Therefore, based on the recommendation of Burawat (2019) and regarding Resource-Based View (RBV) and dynamic theory, the study examines organizational learning as underlying the mechanism of sustainable leadership-sustainable performance relationship. Contextual factors significantly influence sustainable performance (Burawat, 2019). On the basis of Job Demands Resources (JD-R) model, the present study investigates the moderating role of psychological empowerment on the organizational learning-sustainable performance relationship. Regarding recommendations of Chen et al. (2019), this study investigates the moderated-mediating role of psychological empowerment on the linkages of sustainable leadership with sustainable performance.

Organizations generate positive and negative externalities along with their processes of creating and delivering value to their several stakeholders [45]. The negative ones can affect the economic, social, and environmental systems, interfering with the process of achieving Sustainable Development (SD). In this context, due to several charters and initiatives, such as the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME), the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) perceive to assume an important role for sustainable development. These universities have been adapting themselves and redirecting their actions by developing their institutional leadership role in promoting SD; caring about their educational system and top management teams, staff, professors, and researchers as sustainable leaders, and encouraging the development and education of tomorrow's leaders who will assume important positions at companies, NGOs, and government.

Regarding the perspective of the HEIs as sustainable leaders, they must become change actors, considering the needs of present and future generations and encouraging professionals that are adept and aware of SD [29]. This implies that the whole university system should become oriented to educate students that will be capable of leading different types of organizations, in a responsible way, towards sustainable societal patterns [29]. Still, in a complementary way to the definition by Lozano and colleagues (2013), sustainable leadership is also explored from a theoretical perspective of how sustainable development can be connected to different leadership approaches, such as traits/style school, context/situational school, and interactionism/contingency school. Thus, the term sustainability leadership or, more specifically, leadership for sustainability could be expressed as a combination of different leadership approaches in a defined context (in this case, sustainable development) [53].

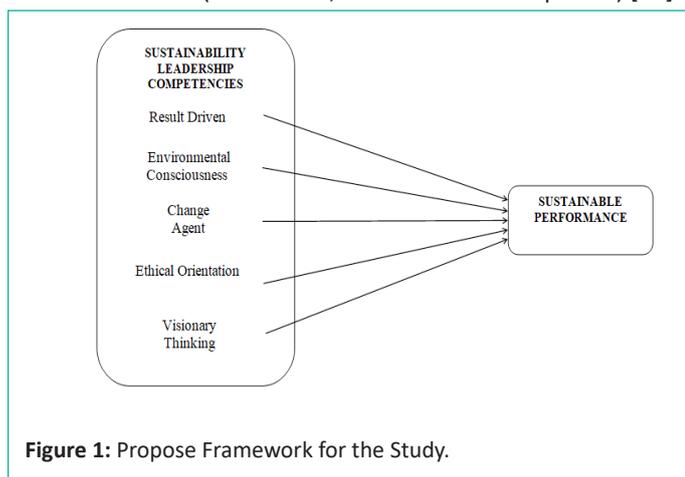


Figure 1: Propose Framework for the Study.

Academic inquiry of leadership is mainly related to the practical skills of an organization or individual to guide followers (i.e., employees and team members) and to take actions that have a considerable effect on the outcomes of an organization [17]. Leadership, as an activity and a role, is especially vital whenever the state of a system or organization needs to be transformed, which always creates uncertainty (Cicero, Pierro & Knippenberg 2010).

The African continent and Nigeria in particular is wealthy in natural heritage and resources and is characterised by a diversity of cultures, knowledge, resources and development opportunities [52]. According to Bokpin, (2017) [9], Africa which Nigeria is part of gathers one fifth of all known plant, mammal and bird species, and one sixth of amphibians and reptiles. Its climate is naturally highly diverse and highly variable, with climatic conditions ranging from the extremely arid regions of the Saharan deserts to the extreme humid regions of the Congo rainforest [57].

The three (3) rich and diverse natural and cultural environments in Africa endows the continent with a multiplicity of opportunities for development. However, the productivity and sustainability of Africa's environment and the future wellbeing of its people depends on how these resources are managed now, and in the future. Despite the existence of development opportunities, Nigeria is currently faced with a number of sustainability challenges which are threatening both the natural environment and the socio-economic well-being of its people. Global climate change reports indicate that Nigeria is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change [31]. Other threats to the natural environment include deforestation, over-exploitation of resources, deterioration of marine coastal ecosystems and water quality issues [9,52].

Problems of poverty, food insecurity, wars and violence, HIV/AIDS, environmentally related diseases, drought, water and sanitation are prevalent in Nigeria [37,52]. In fact, within the world economy, Nigeria holds a marginal position. Nigeria do not meet the human development index (Wackernagel, 2007). The challenge for Nigeria is to overcome these threats to development and utilise and manage its rich natural resources sustainably for the well-being of its people today and tomorrow. Nigeria needs to urgently increase human capacity and skills to improve development opportunities, and to respond and adapt to these risks. In Nigeria, higher education was identified to be of significance in facilitating the development process (Samoff and Carrol, 2003); New Partnership for Africa's Development [33] and universities and other tertiary institutions are acknowledged to be key agents for improving sustainable development in the country [1].

The African Union has therefore put in place an initiative to revitalise Higher Education in the continent so that it can contribute more effectively to Africa's development path [33]. However, as Nigeria has become ever-more affected by increases in

Table 1: Analyse of Variance (ANOVA).

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1012.051	5	202.410	21.811	.000 ^b
	Residual	1215.715	131	9.280		
	Total	2227.766	136			

Table 2: Model Summary.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.674 ^a	.454	.433	3.046

Table 3: Analyses of Co-efficiency.

Model		Coefficients									
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	8.759	2.598		3.371	.001					
	RESULT DRIVEN	.889	.127	.532	7.023	.000	.607	.523	.453	.726	1.378
	INCLUSIVNESS	-.068	.103	-.061	-.657	.512	.319	-.057	-.042	.477	2.098
	CHANGE AGENT	.385	.125	.289	3.069	.003	.479	.259	.198	.470	2.130
	ETHICALLY ORIENTED	-.370	.133	-.191	-2.784	.006	-.091	-.236	-.180	.884	1.131
	VISIONERY THINKIMG	-.026	.108	-.018	-.238	.812	.272	-.021	-.015	.704	1.420

poverty, and state spending has come under pressure, tertiary institutions have been neglected, and have suffered enormously from brain drain [2].

The North East (NE) geopolitical zone of Nigeria covers close to one-third (280,419 km²) of Nigeria's land area (909,890 km²). It comprises 6 states: Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe. According to projections for 2011 by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), these States have 13.5% (i.e. 23,558,674) of Nigeria's population which is put at 173,905,439.1 [36]. Additionally, the Zone shares international borders with three countries: Republic of Cameroon to the East, Republic of Chad to the North East and Niger Republic to the North. Although the Zone has been a major contributor to national net food production, NBS' 2010 Statistics show that the North East of Nigeria has serious sustainability problems and had the worst socioeconomic conditions in the country. Its average absolute poverty rate put at sixty-nine Percent (69.0%) is above the national average of sixty point nine per cent (60.9%) [32]. This characterizes the Zone as having the highest rate of poverty in Nigeria.

Leadership is not a rank; it is a responsibility [49]. It is the lifting of employees' vision to higher sights of the raising of employees' performance to a higher standard. It is the building of employees' personality beyond its normal limitations. It is difficult to get leaders to develop leadership styles that are opposite their preferred styles [39]. The key to success is for leaders to have the range of skills that allow them to use the appropriate leadership styles according to the situation [35].

Literature attest that chief executives in Nigerian tertiary institutions especially those located in the north eastern Nigeria exercises different type of conventional leadership styles in an attempt to manage the institutions to optimal level (Salau, Falola, Ibidunni & Igbino, 2016). Conventional leadership styles may not always guaranty success and sustainability of tertiary institutions situated in the north eastern Nigeria due to present condition of the region [13]. Patrick and Felix, (2013) argued that tertiary institutions of learning in north eastern Nigeria are faces with myriad of challenges that are aggravated by the mayhem of Boko Haram mayhem, the problem that bedevilled the region in the past few years. These problems include closure of school in the worse affected areas and overcrowding on campuses in the state that are relatively peaceful in the region, among others [40].

Evidence from the extant literature suggest that sustainable leadership style plays a significance role in enhancing the sustainability of several organizations both public and private around the globe [4,18,23,43,54]. To place our proposed work in the existing body of literature, we propose a framework that conceptualize sustainability leadership as a multi-dimensional

variable that that has the mixture of strategic leadership competencies [24] and behavioural competency competencies (Behavioural, 2015). Previous empirical researches on the competencies of sustainability leadership is limited and incomplete (D'Amato, et al, 2009; Fernández et al., 2006). A key issue is that the research on these competencies has not converged around a common framework (Behavioural, 2015). Below is the propose framework for the study.

1. This study is carried out within the scope of Federal College of Education Technical Gombe, Gombe state, Federal College of Education Technical potiskum, Yobe state and Federal College of Education Yola located in the north eastern Nigeria. The main objective of the study is to assess whether sustainability leadership competencies could lead to sustainable performance in federal colleges of education situated in the north eastern Nigerian. Other specific objectives include: To examine the effect of resource driven competency on organizational sustainable performance of staff in Federal College of Education in the orth-eastern Nigeria.
2. To investigate whether being conscious with the environment as a sustainable leadership competency has anything to do with organizational sustainable performance of staff in Federal College of Education in the North-eastern Nigeria.
3. To assess the if change agent dimension influences organizational sustainable performance of staff in Federal College of Education in the North-eastern Nigeria.
4. To examine the role of ethical orientation on organizational sustainable performance of staff in Federal College of Education in the North-eastern Nigeria.
5. To investigate whether visionary thinking dimension has effect on organizational sustainable performance of staff in Federal College of Education in the North-eastern Nigeria.

Literature Review

Sustainable Leadership

The sustainability requires leaders that could devise approaches, policies, and programs to foster sustainable practices at social and organizational level and ignite economic success (Metcalf & Benn, 2013). Sustainability, sustainable leadership, eco-sensitive leadership, green leadership, and sustainability leadership are used interchangeably to link sustainable practices with leadership and/or management (Cosby, 2014). Multiple diverse stakeholders consider sustainable leadership as top priority and standard practice in the green economy (Avery & Bergsteiner, 2011). Furthermore, Riseley (2016) contend that sustainable leadership is viewed as a vital organizational prac-

tice to foster organizational learning. Sustainable leadership comprises of those behaviors and practices that create lasting value for all stakeholders such as the society, environment, and future generations at large (Avery & Bergsteiner, 2011). Sustainable leadership is a source of competitive advantage for organizations. Sustainable leadership brings opportunities to the organizations in the shape of innovation, continuous improvement, sustained competitive advantage, and long-term success (McCann & Holt, 2010). As sustainable leadership creates an environmental vision through cultural changes and create networking with various stakeholders to cope with climate change; therefore, deemed as the crux of green initiatives and ecological performance at organizational level (Al-Zawahreh et al., 2019).

Furthermore, sustainable leadership increases organizational performance by reducing costs and increasing potential revenue. Sustainable leaders have proactive approach where they constantly scan the environment to monitor the external changes in the market (Gerard et al., 2017) where they develop sustained relationship with internal and external stakeholders. Regarding internal activities, sustainable leaders develop a long-term vision, emphasize on the green initiatives, recognize sustainability issues, instil green management systems, and promote incremental and radical innovation (Avery & Bergsteiner, 2011). Yet, out of the organization, sustainable leaders focus on accomplishing optimum performance for both society and environment (Avery & Bergsteiner, 2011). Under sustainable leadership, organizations reap numerous benefits such as protecting the natural resources and efficient usage of resources.

Sustainability Leadership in Universities

It is common sense in the literature that human beings are moving social and environmental systems far beyond the limits of viability [29]. Hence, there is a commonly known need to pursue sustainable development that, according to the Brundtland's Commission, means understanding the needs in order to meet the expectations of the current generation while respecting the demands of the coming generations. Sustainable development should be based on the principles of balance and stewardship [45].

Today's students that absorb the sustainability culture could become sustainable leaders of tomorrow [38]. They may guide organizations to pass through an adaptive process of learning [19] towards a more sustainable state, capable of dealing with complexity and goal conflicts between the social, economic, and environmental aspects [29]. In other words, these leaders need to have systems thinking competencies [41] and be able to think outside of the box [29], to overcome wicked sustainability challenges. In this sense, developing leadership and empowerment of students should be seen as not only an effort by universities but from a systemic and situational perspective. In this sense, three other dimensions of sustainability leadership development are discussed: the leader perspective, the actions, and the context in which the leader-follower dyad is being established [53].

At this point, Visser and Courtice (2011) added to this framework of that sustainability leadership also needs to consider the external context (ecological, economic, political, cultural, and community) and the internal context (sector, industry, organizational reach, organizational culture, governance structure, and leadership role) [53]. It is worth considering that universities also could be seen as institutional leaders in the effort of promoting sustainability. Universities may contribute to the sus-

tainable development of their region and are recognized as pivotal institutions that can deal with problems, as well as provide the education of future leaders and the development of sustainable solutions for the future [29]. The PRME and SDG inclusion in universities' activities reflect the need to focus not only on teaching and researching but also in developing new paradigms related to sustainability. It transforms society, whether from its students, the surrounding community, staff, or professors.

The university's engagement with sustainability is a challenge (del Mar Alonso-Almeida, Marimon, Casani & Rodriguez-Pomeda, 2016), and it can be motivated by the institution's interest in enabling a new organization form and action focus [55] by its high administration team [46]. The universities also seek to implement sustainability in many other ways. They formulate principles or are signing declarations (e.g., global compact and PRME) or integrate sustainability into their curricula. Sometimes, wholly new educational institutions are created, adapting both the mission and management of the university itself [6].

However, the successful implementation, whether in research, teaching, or campus-management, is confronted with significant barriers. These barriers include overcrowded curricula, irrelevance given by lecturers to sustainability, limited knowledge of employees on sustainability, and the limited direction and commitment of the institution (del Mar Alonso-Almeida, Marimon, Casani & Rodriguez-Pomeda, 2016). Besides, there are significant barriers to the implementation of a sustainable university, for instance: the often legally guaranteed freedom of research and teaching, the lack of recognition of teachers who work with and for sustainable development, the lack of a desire for change, and the lack of pressure from society [16].

Methodology

This study examines the contribution of sustainability leadership competencies for the survival and sustainable performance of Nigerian tertiary institutions. The study uses some selected tertiary institutions in the north-eastern Nigeria were considered by the study. A cross-sectional design approach was adopted by the study where survey was administered to the 150 sampled lecturers in the selected institutions. SPSS software was used to run a regression to determine the effects of the dimensions of the independent variable on the dependant variable.

Results and Discussions

From Table 1: the ANOVA table, the P value of 0.000 indicates the significance of the sustainable leadership factors on sustainable performance of the staff in Federal College of Education in the North-eastern Nigeria.

From the Model summary in Table 2, the R² of 0.454 which is greater than 0.3 means significant. This indicates that 45.5% of sustainable leadership factors have significance effect on sustainable performance of staff in Federal College of Education in the North-eastern Nigeria.

Standardize Coefficient

From Table 3 suggested that the Result Driven Competency has greater contribution with 0.532, followed by Change Agent with 0.289, followed by visionary thinking with -0.018, then inclusiveness with -0.061 and finally ethical Orientation pays the lowest contribution in achieving sustainable performance of staff in Federal College of Education in the North-eastern Nigeria.

Coefficient P Values

For coefficient P Values, anything less than 0.05 indicates significance. Therefore, result driven competency is highly significant impact on sustainable performance with 0.000. This means there is automatic increase in result driven factor on sustainable performance of staff in Federal College of Education in the North-eastern Nigeria. Similarly, change agent factor has significant effect on the sustainable performance with 0.003. This indicates that for any increase in three units of change agent factor, sustainable performance increase by 38.5%. So also, ethical orientation has significant effect on the sustainable performance with 0.006. This indicates that for any increase in six units of ethical orientation, sustainable performance increase by 37%. Likewise, Inclusiveness and Visionary thinking has negative or no significant effect on sustainable performance of staff in Federal College of Education in the North-eastern Nigeria.

Correlation

For correlation, we use "part" (partial correlation) to explain the unique contribution of each sustainable leadership factor (predicted variables). Therefore, the greatest unique contributor on sustainable performance is result driven competency with 0.453. Then followed by change Agent with 0.198, followed by visionary thinking with -0.015, then inclusiveness with -0.042 and finally ethical Orientation pays the lowest contribution in achieving sustainable performance of staff in Federal College of Education in the North-eastern Nigeria with -0.180.

Discussion of Findings

Base on the analyse of the data collected from the study, the study revealed that 45.5% of sustainable leadership factors has significance effect on sustainable performance of staff in Federal College of Education in the North-eastern Nigeria. This is in line with the findings of Sekaran and Bougie (2016). The mean value of sustainable leadership was 3.20, which indicates that there was a moderate presence of sustainable leadership practices in the organizations. A previous study measured the level of sustainable leadership in Jordanian HEIs and the reported results were much higher than those of this study (Iqbal & Ahmad, 2020).

In addition, Iqbal and Piwovar-Sulej, (2021) in their study Sustainable leadership in higher education institutions: social innovation as a mechanism, posits that SI also mediates the relationship between SL and SP. Regarding the mediating impact, Table 3 indicates that SL significantly affects SP through SI ($b=0.061$; $p<0.05$). Therefore, H3 was accepted. Thus, it is concluded that sustainable leaders substantially influence SP through SI in HEIs. Furthermore, the study suggested that the Result Driven factor has greater contribution with 0.532, followed by Change Agent with 0.289, followed by visionary thinking with -0.018, then inclusiveness with -0.061 and finally ethical Orientation pays the lowest contribution in achieving sustainable performance of staff in Federal College of Education in the North-eastern Nigeria.

Similarly, coefficient P Values revealed result driven factor is highly significant impact on sustainable performance with 0.000. This means there is automatic increase in result driven factor on sustainable performance of staff in Federal College of Education in the North-eastern Nigeria. Similarly, change agent factor has significant effect on the sustainable performance with 0.003. This indicates that for any increase in three units of change agent factor, sustainable performance increase

by 38.5%. So also, ethical orientation has significant effect on the sustainable performance with 0.006. This indicates that for any increase in the units of ethical orientation, sustainable performance increase by 37%. Likewise, Inclusiveness and visionary thinking has negative or no significant effect on sustainable performance of staff in Federal College of Education in the North-eastern Nigeria.

Finally, the greatest unique contributor on sustainable performance is result driven competency with 0.453. Then followed by change Agent with 0.198, followed by visionary thinking with -0.015, then inclusiveness with -0.042 and finally ethical Orientation pays the lowest contribution in achieving sustainable performance of staff in Federal College of Education in the North-eastern Nigeria with -0.180.

Conclusion

Base on the findings of the study concluded that 45.5% of sustainable leadership factors has significance effect on sustainable performance of staff in Federal College of Education in the North-eastern Nigeria. Furthermore, the study suggested that the Result Driven competency has greater contribution by Change Agent competency followed by visionary thinking, then inclusiveness and finally ethical Orientation pays the lowest contribution in achieving sustainable performance of staff in Federal College of Education in the North-eastern Nigeria.

Similarly, coefficient P Values revealed that there is automatic increase in result driven factor on sustainable performance of staff in Federal College of Education in the North-eastern Nigeria. Similarly, change agent factor has significant effect on the sustainable performance. So also, ethical orientation has significant effect on the sustainable performance. Likewise, Inclusiveness and Visionary thinking competency has negative or no significant effect on sustainable performance of staff in Federal College of Education in the North-eastern Nigeria.

Finally, the greatest unique contributor on sustainable performance is result driven competency, followed by change Agent competency, followed by visionary thinking, then inclusiveness and finally ethical Orientation competency pays the lowest contribution in achieving sustainable performance of staff in Federal College of Education in the North-eastern Nigeria. Therefore, to sum off, sustainable leadership has significant effect on sustainable performance of the staff in Federal College of Education in the North-eastern Nigeria.

Recommendations

1. Result driven competency, change competency and ethical orientation should be encouraged to realize more sustainable performance in Federal Colleges of Education in Nigeria.

Little or no consideration should be given to Inclusiveness and visionary thinking competency as they paid no contribution to sustainable performance in Federal Colleges of Education in Nigeria.

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