

Sustainable Corporate Leadership

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Abstracts

Now that there are 7.9 billion people on Earth, humanity must figure out a way to offer them all a good life without destroying the earth. This calls for a sea change in how individuals, corporates, and governments approach this problem. Because of this, sustainability has become an increasingly important guiding concept for the corporate world. The last ten years have seen the rise of sustainability as a buzzword, yet accurately assessing its scope remains challenging. Because the business sector has such a big influence on the fundamental operations of the economy, leaders and corporate entities alike have a responsibility to behave in ways that are responsible from an ecological and social standpoint. These challenging strategic issues concerning social innovation and sustainability are at the forefront of discussions among leaders at major corporates today. Where do their skills fit into the larger picture of addressing issues like rising temperatures, global injustice, and water scarcity? How are they going to further confuse the policies when there are so many different interests involved? Finding solutions to these issues will need further research and effort on our part. The purpose of this research was to shed light on the challenges of long-term corporate leadership in profit-making firms and provide ways forward. The goal of this research was to provide knowledge on these complexities. Although the primary function of the guidelines' indicators is to provide a framework for examining and bolstering the role of leadership within corporates, they also include a vision of leadership skills that support and promote corporate sustainability. This is despite the fact that the guidelines' indicators serve primarily as a framework.

Keywords: Sustainable, Corporate, Leadership, Normative, Learning Tracks.

Introduction

The provision of a decent standard of life for 7.9 billion people while adhering to the restrictions of our planet is now the most challenging problem facing the human race. Because of this, there has to be a huge mentality adjustment towards sustainability among consumers, corporates, and governments (Al-ma'aitah et al., 2024). As a direct consequence of this, one of the most fundamentally important ideas that govern the business world is sustainability. In the last ten

years, sustainability has emerged as a buzzword, but determining the full scope of its effect is challenging (Edwards, 2009).

According to Louise Fresco, one of the concepts that has become the most tainted in our modern day is sustainability, which may be thought of as a prediction for any objective. While there is universal support for long-term viability few agree on its specific consequences (Fresco, 2012). According to the Brundtland Report that was published in 1987 and titled “Our Common Future,” it is hard to deny that the economy’s organizational structure has undergone radical shifts, and that these changes are permanent. The remarks of Herman Wijffels, in which he insists that the existing way of living will soon be obsolete and that we must discover a new way to live, lend credence to this assertion. Wijffels says that we must find a new way to live (Wijffels, 2010).

Corporate Leadership

According to Veenbaas (2004), the idea of leadership or management is rather general, and there is a great deal of variety in the approaches that may be taken to put it into practice (Mahendiren et al., 2023). Spector also asserts that there are numerous unique perspectives on leadership, and that there is no one phrase that is universally accepted (Spector, 2003). It doesn’t matter what someone thinks about leadership; there is one thing that everyone agrees on: being a leader requires having an impact on the thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and beliefs of those you lead (Spector, 2003). Leaders and managers both have an impact on those they work with, but leaders tend to have more of an outsized impact than managers do. Impact may be exerted by stakeholders located both within and outside of the corporation.

In the corporate sector, leaders and top managers are synonymous with one another at all times (Senge et al., 2000). Senge believes that this may be evidence that individuals are not considered leaders until they have achieved a position of authority. That is, in order for corporates to train its leaders, they must first concentrate on the development of their top managers, it implies they have to leave out a lot of powerful people (Danielle et al., 2024). There are two major flaws, according to Senge, in this restricted understanding of leadership. As a first issue, this theory is that it implies that in order to be a leader, one must first have a position of authority. It is impossible to aspire to be a leader unless one already has a high-ranking position in a business. Second, if leadership is merely a position within a hierarchy, since it is exclusively determined by an executive action, it lacks a definable identity (such as a board role) that is located high up in the organizational structure. This renders the concept of leadership meaningless.

“Leadership,” as defined by Senge et al., (2000) it may be summed up as a human society’s capacity to design their own future and, more specifically, to maintain such processes in the direction of major change. This idea is used by Senge and his colleagues to illustrate another hypothesis on how people feel about leadership. According to this theory, leadership is seen as capable of sustaining structural integrity. When a variety of individuals get together to work toward a common goal and speak the truth about the world as it is right now, a certain kind of energy is generated. Under the framework of interconnected global institutions, a hierarchical structure of leadership is no longer acceptable (Senge et al., 2004). This kind of hierarchical leadership is often centered on one’s capacity for destruction rather than one’s capacity for

construction and creation. This highlights the need for a novel form of leadership, one that is not predicated on exceptional individuals like a saint or a traditional leader but rather on a style of leadership that is exercised by groups such as organizations, establishments, societies, and networks.

Sustainable Corporate Leadership

Andy Hargreaves and Dean Fink examine the idea of leadership in relation to humanity and natural growth in the framework of their conversation. In the realm of education, they blend practice with theory in order to accomplish this goal. They provide seven notions of sustainable leadership that may assist us in breaking out of the all-consuming preoccupation on boosting performance standards at any cost (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). Among the many qualities Hargreaves and Fink highlight in a sustainable leader is the capacity to respond promptly, learn from history and diversity, be flexible despite hardship, calmly wait for accomplishments, and not burn employees out (2006) (Podvalny et al., 2021).

This approach to leadership for the long term is based on moral and ethical ideals and a desire to help people everywhere (2006). The characteristics of dimension, width, broadness, equity, variety, creativity, and preservation are highlighted in Hargreaves and Fink's conception of what constitutes sustainable leadership (2006). This is because the authors place an emphasis on these characteristics, in line with the preceding idea, they also stress the need of preserving natural resources.

Stephen Covey's Perspective on Leadership and Its Practice

A mindful way of life reveals that there are fundamental guidelines for leading a meaningful life, and that in order for us to achieve genuine success and sustained pleasure, it is necessary for us to adhere to those guidelines and incorporate them deeply into who we are as individuals. According to Covey, after World War I, there was a change away from placing a focus on living a moral life and more toward a more realistic way of life. There are clear distinctions between this style of life and others by the individual's achievements, reputation, and capacity to interact with others in a more productive manner. There are now two distinct schools of thought within the realistic lifestyle, which developed through time. The first one focused more on the strategies of leadership, whereas the second stressed the need of keeping an optimistic disposition. Some may see these enhancements favorably, their primary purpose was to facilitate manipulation and even fraud (Covey, 2002). In contrast to the principled way of life, the pragmatic way of life necessitates one's participation in all elements of life in order to have a prosperous living (Covey, 2002).

Finally, Hargreaves and Fink argue that sustainability is innately ethical and requires ethical conduct on our part since it addresses the worth and interdependence of all life. As a result, they believe that the notion of sustainability implies moral behaviors. They emphasize that the only people who can achieve progress in the area of sustainability are leaders who are devoted to the cause. Sustainable leadership, as recommended by Hargreaves and Fink, is good for all people on Earth now and in the future because it is based on values of fairness and decency. According to Covey, if you try to influence other people without straying from your moral goal, you won't achieve any long-term success in your efforts. He draws parallels between the two, saying that

relational procedures are similar to efficiently studying for an exam. You have a chance of getting a good mark, but you won't be able to finish the course (2002). In the absence of an ethics that is founded on integrity, leaders will be unable to sustain long-term human connections and will only experience success in the short term (2002).

Guideline for Sustainable Corporate Leadership

The guideline will feature a number of different signals that, when combined, may assist businesses in responding to difficulties related to sustainability. An analysis of the existing research served as the foundation for the formulation of these guidelines. On the other hand, the foundation of a scientific guideline needs to be a comprehensive empirical investigation, which should then be complemented by a discussion among industry experts and, finally, a consensus statement made by scientists. As a consequence of this, this advice need to just be considered a first effort, and more research is required.

□ Then, the procedure for formulating the guideline is described in detail. Since the guideline incorporates data gleaned from a cursory analysis of the relevant literature, it has the potential to be regarded as the single most significant component of sustainable leadership.

□ The second objective of the research is to assess the feasibility of the guideline by illuminating a range of learning possibilities that may encourage (sustainable) leaders to put the suggestions into practice.

Development of the Guideline

By adhering to this rule, the research expects to be able to appreciate the core of what constitutes sustainable leadership. In order to successfully integrate sustainability into corporates, leaders, who are the first-line implementers of vision and purpose, need to take steps in the right way to assist companies to make the transition toward a more sustainable future in their operations.

Be Present and Aware

To be sustainable, leadership must include an openness to feedback from the environment. As a consequence of this, they are required to be considerate of the feelings and requirements of others, as well as the atmosphere in which they do their jobs (Subrahmanyam, 2021). In addition to this, kids need to be aware of how the others around them and the environment are affected by the acts they do. It is about dividing up obligations and rewards in an equitable manner, which is contingent on the cooperation of all of the persons involved. It is imperative that leaders who are dedicated to sustainability be aware of the many paths available to them. In particular, they find themselves in a stressful circumstance, and the choices they are forced to make are ethical ones. In their professional endeavors, leaders have a responsibility to create place for both justice and unity.

Initial Dialogue

There are a number of challenges that might make it challenging for free speech to adequately express the spirit of sustainable development. Government regulations and limited resources are two examples of the kinds of external constraints that might hinder the discourse or referred to as process of learning involving participants. Some non-internal factors that have an effect on

the conversation cannot be eliminated, but you may make use of them automatically (Jacobs, 2010). The significant potential of the conversation has an effect on both the discourse and the circumstances of the discussion. What this means is that the initial signal of the guideline—reflection—occurs inside the discourse itself, and it concerns the context and the assumptions that inform it (Jacobs, 2010).

Create the Future Together

The responsibility for sustainability does not lie with individual leaders. According to Hargreaves and Fink (2006), it is impossible for a leader to initiate change by managing everything by themselves. People who participate in the discussion about sustainability are willing to meet their colleagues in their otherness and allow their perspectives to be evaluated, as stated in the third indication of the sustainable leadership guideline. This willingness is indicated by the phrase “people who engage in the sustainability discussion.” What is most essential is not that the professional is afraid of the ideas of others, but rather that he or she examines the differences and connecting factors with other people in order to achieve sustainable growth.

Be Courageous

Making people promotes and encourages individual creativity to become a part of the process. This encourages colleagues to regard themselves as a part of the subject at hand, allowing them to recognize how they jointly generate new replies. Long-term leadership is an obligation shared by everybody, as Hargreaves and Fink argued. Leadership that lasts requires the strength to fairly weigh the needs of the corporate, employees, and outsiders.

The act of making people fosters and encourages the participation of individual creative expression throughout the process. Colleagues are encouraged to think of themselves as being a part of the topic at hand as a result of this, which enables them to notice how they jointly produce fresh responses. Long-term leadership is a responsibility that must be shared, as both Hargreaves and Fink highlighted. To maintain one’s position as a leader over time, one must have the intestinal fortitude to strike a balance between the competing priorities of the corporate, its employees, and persons who are not affiliated with the corporate. In addition, the contemporary economy, which is based on free markets, as well as the corporate culture that is associated with it require that sustainable leaders communicate their beliefs through serving as role models. As a consequence of this, they are obligated to challenge the norms that define the responsibilities connected with professional activities by establishing the parameters for acceptable behavior and defining and encouraging socially preferred patterns of conduct. The values must have some kind of connection to the professional goals and the profession (Jacobs, 2010).

Encourage the Positive

Maintaining sustainability does not absolve one of responsibilities or need fancy green blather. Instead, it requires an organized approach to the search for the concept, its formulation, and its validation. Covey proved that it is necessary to rigorously test, share, and fine-tune the different ideas and perspectives that affect leaders’ professional positions. This is something that must be done. Leaders in organizations need to have a formidable ethical cause since it is the foundation

for providing ethical direction over the long run. As a consequence of this, it is very important to determine what is valued, as was said in the indication that came before it in the guideline. In order to construct values, it is essential to express them. There is no such thing as a vision without a strategy, there is no such thing as efficiency without clarity, and there is no such thing as unified attention without common direction (Kessels et al., 2008).

Exercise Originality and Creativity.

In order to achieve the aim of generating sustainable initiatives that may contribute to a sustainable future, leaders need to maintain a mindset that is fresh, creative, and inventive in both their actions and thought processes. Because of this, the corporate's culture will need to be one that encourages the growth of such ways of thinking and doing business. This suggests that on the one hand, leaders need to exhibit a level of courage in order to succeed against the more pervasive prevalent culture. On the other side, corporates are responsible for cultivating an environment that is forgiving of errors. Both may potentially aid in the creation of novel plans and ideas (Subrahmanyam, 2018).

Be Patient

As Hargreaves and Fink have established, unsustainable behaviors are caused by corporates having set short-term attainment targets as well as the requirement for early signs of success. However, sustainable leadership is propelled not just by the desire for swift action, as well as by the capacity to delay outcomes in pursuit of the true, long-term, and broad success that is the ethical goal of such leadership. Morally speaking, this is what long-term leadership should aim towards (2006).

Walk the Talk

Being in a position of authority is not easy and it should not be either. The road to success is paved with many obstacles. Being a long-term one is much more challenging than being a short-term one (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). The actions of sustainable leaders need to be guided by their guiding principles. As a consequence of this, they have an in-depth understanding of the reasons why a modification or enhancement is required. In order for leaders to have an impact, continue to grow, and be around for the long haul, the system in which they function has to make achieving sustainable leadership that encompasses a large number of leaders a primary goal (2006). According to Vaclav Havel, if we want the apparently impossible to become reality, we must not be afraid to envisage it even if it seems unattainable (Vaclav Havel; cited by Edwards, 2009).

One of the obstacles that must be conquered is the difficulty of achieving sustainable development. On the bright side, the challenges that must be overcome are good tools for giving a framework for discussion. According to Edwards, sustainability is a representation of the fundamental links that lie at the foundation of environmental, economic, and social issues (Oleksandr et al., 2024). It has the capacity to drive mainstream behavior toward more sustainable practices while simultaneously bringing social change ideals to the attention of mainstream society. Our new path into the future is already starting to be defined by some good development (Edwards, 2009).

Learning Tracks to Support Sustainable Corporate Leadership

Theoretical Framework

A learning path should encourage moral learning within corporations, allowing for the examination of behaviours from a moral standpoint. Aloni's theory highlights several dimensions and the significance of moral learning.

Traditions According to Aloni

In his book published in 2002 titled *Enhancing Humanity*, Aloni differentiates between a variety of philosophical approaches to humanistic education that have an impact on the people's moral development and learning processes. The assumption serves as the foundation for this differentiation. The insights that are provided by various techniques may be of great assistance when it comes to encouraging ethical practices in the workplace. Despite the fact that different methods emphasize different ends, Aloni stresses that it is acceptable and even encouraged to combine methods. This is true even if the methods each place a different emphasis on their own goals.

1. The cultural-classical heritage promotes the growth of higher sorts of humanity or being a perfectionist in life, as Aloni puts it. This means putting up a lot of effort to obtain excellence (Aloni, 2002). (Aloni, 2002).
2. In the naturalistic-romantic philosophical tradition, the act of learning is seen as both an efficient and creative process (Aloni, 2002).
3. The existential tradition is built on authenticity and the act of creating oneself from the ground up (Aloni, 2002).
4. There are two goals served by the vital-radical customary: a) the independence and self-determination of people, and b) the possibility of leading a fulfilling life in spite of the unequal distribution of wealth across the globe (Aloni, 2002).

Components that Help to Promote and Encourage the Processes of Moral Education

According to Hos Kessels, Eric Boers, and Pieter Mostert (2008), meaning, coherence, purposes, foundations, comprehension, positive, elegance, and pleasurable aspects of life, as well as similar topics, should all be addressed honestly and gently within the context of the workplace. By group practices of thinking and debate, a route may be developed and maintained for moral learning on a wide range of moral issues, difficulties, and ethical concerns.

Element One – (Self) Reflection

Gary Jacobs asserts that our worldview is the driving force behind our patterns of behavior. This means that the worldview should be taken into account at all times throughout the reflective phase, which may occur at any point prior to, throughout, or following the activities (2008). Investigating one's own preconceived notions may cause one to rethink the way they approach new information and knowledge (2008). The first and second learning loops are differentiated by Gary Jacobs (2008). The first draft offers a point of view on the accomplishment of one's goals. This line of reasoning is dictated by a number of methodological and technological

concerns. The second learning loop is characterized by a reflection on the professional's behaviors, intentions, and underlying beliefs in light of the influence such things have on other people and the social context in which they operate.

Element Two – Dialogue

You will have the opportunity to expound on these issues if you participate in a healthy discussion. According to Kessels, having excellent conversations does not come naturally, and the idea that initiating a good discussion is simple is a fiction (Kessels, Boers & Mostert, 2008). Impatience with actions is all too often used as a replacement for slow thought. The ability to think in a collaborative manner necessitates the use of a certain study style, etiquette, and approaches to comedic as well as serious topics.

Providing Assistance to the Corporate Leaders in Their Efforts

Professionalism as a normative notion highlights the value of the professional in the context of the larger community, in addition to the professional's communication abilities, sensitivity to existential issues, and normative reflective ability. According to Kunneman (2012), Jacobs stresses the need of connoisseurs having a thoughtful perspective on their coworkers and their personal, social, and cultural surroundings. Being aware of the value-laden nature of one's actions and actively working to find ways to apply ethical principles in one's work are both essential components of the normative model of professionalism (Wierdsma, 2004).

This implies that corporates should pay careful consideration to their leadership and normative competence by actively promoting and supporting the development opportunities available to their staff. If companies that are driven by profit wish to address issues relating to sustainability, they need to ensure that the professionals working for them are able to deal with intricate normative concerns. Jacobs (2010) argues that professionals may benefit from having frank discussions about their values and emphasizing the importance of moral principles within the work of sustainable leaders. This path for moral learning should also include a conversation among professionals about how they came to their conclusions.

Learning Track to Support Sustainable Corporate Leadership

Based on the difference in corporate aspiration levels, three possible learning tracks are established to assist corporates in developing sustainable corporate leadership to the next level. These are the several factors that are necessary and appropriate for developing sustainable corporate leadership:

The Purpose Behind the Many Learning Paths

It's possible that the learning paths may be considered a part of the corporate's overall strategy for long-term growth. Corporate leaders who choose to take the learning route are sharpening their skills at the level of their sustainability target, which is incorporated into their day-to-day operations and the environments in which they work. The similarities and differences in the challenges faced by corporate leaders, as well as the varying amounts of ambition that leaders have, are processed using three separate learning designs.

Having well-defined objectives is one of the most critical factors in obtaining one's desired level of achievement (Kaufman & Ploegmakers, 2005). There are a number of different ways in which the goals of a learning path might be articulated and organized. In order to construct the learning track objectives, we will use the work structure developed by Kaufman and Ploegmakers (2005). They advise that it is better to start from more general to more particular goals when defining the objectives of a learning route. This is because broader goals are more broad in scope than precise goals. They identify three stages: global learning, specific learning, and learning goals that are tangible.

The global learning goals are meant to serve as a reflection of the overall purpose of the learning path. Each segment of the learning route has its own unique set of learning goals, which are determined by the individual learning objectives. The concrete goals are connected to particular tasks taken from the specified learning tracks, as well as their respective methodologies. To return to the topic of individualized learning goals, Kaufman and Ploegmakers provide some needed clarification by noting the wide variety of options available. These types may be categorized by one's level of expertise, level of understanding, level of ability, and level of conduct (Kaufman & Ploegmakers, 2005).

Compliance-driven Corporates

Compliance is the driving force behind the first kind of corporation. The purpose of a corporate is to help society so long as it operates lawfully and ethically within the parameters set by the proper authorities. In addition, the company fulfills its responsibilities as a steward and a charitable organization (Van Marrewijk & Werre, 2003).

Developing Possibilities

The first step in putting the concepts of the guidelines into practice is for the leaders of the organization to develop an internal vision. The need of an internal vision is motivated by the difficulty of acting contrary to the accepted standards, which are codified in laws and indicate appropriate action within the bounds of the restrictions imposed by the aforementioned authorities. As a direct consequence of this, the learning path prioritizes introspection. Based on the idea of constructing one's own personal intellectual framework, as a vital aspect of leadership, the capacity to construct one's own conceptual framework is essential for long-term success in the corporate world. Developing one's own set of values and philosophy of life requires a dedication to expanding one's cognitive abilities throughout time.

The main goal of this learning route, which is common in compliance-driven businesses, is to foster an introspective perspective toward one's personal life, the workplace, and the larger society. As a consequence of this, the learning path provides corporate leaders with the resources they need to cultivate and improve upon this unique characteristic of leadership. The first three indications of the recommendations are the primary emphasis of the learning path:

- a) Make growth over the long term a priority.
- b) Evaluate the validity of your points of view, and
- c) Maintain a state of heightened awareness and presence.

The following is one possible formulation for the global learning goal:

This learning path's primary objective is to deepen participants' comprehension of the numerous facets of reflection that pertain to and revolve around the function of the senior executive.

The following is an outline of the particular goals for each of the learning paths:

Knowledge: The leaders are well-versed in the guiding concepts necessary for the long-term leadership of the firm. The first three criteria of the sustainable corporate leadership guideline are the primary emphasis of the learning path.

Realization - The leader is aware of and appreciates the significance of reflection in the process of putting the guiding principles into practice. The establishment of a personal vision for corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities that aim to move the firm to the next level of CSR is made possible when one investigates one's values in relation to CSR goals.

Abilities: A leader is able to recognize not just their own ideals but also the values of others around them. The following step is to think about these guidelines and norms as a basis for one's actions and routines, which brings us to the third stage.

Behaviour - The leader integrates these reflective skills into their work procedures and, through self-reflection, develops genuine compassion for his or her fellow humans and the world in which they live. Having genuine compassion is crucial to the development of one's CSR goals.

Concluding Remarks

The functioning of the economy is significantly impacted by the activities of the business world. They are accountable for acting in ways that are responsible to the community as well as the environment. For today's leaders, the order of the day is to tackle difficult strategic challenges incorporating issues of sustainability and social innovation, such as the following: Where do their skills fit into the larger picture of addressing issues like rising temperatures, global injustice, and water scarcity? How are they going to further confuse the policies when there are so many different interests involved?

Leadership from the top down and the bottom up are both essential for solving today's and tomorrow's issues. Role models in society may be found in many different places, including profit businesses and the workers of such corporations. As a result, sustainable corporate leadership is a reaction to the monolithic style of leadership that persists in many businesses in the present day. One term for this kind of leadership is "command and control." This kind of leadership acknowledges that the complication of sustainability has negative implications and studies alternative worldviews about people and our planet in order to find solutions to these problems.

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