

Sustainable Leadership and Investment-perspective approach toward Sustainable Performance for firms: a cross-sectional study amongst the educational sectors in the UAE

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Abstract

Currently, organizations of all structures are aware that a significant source of competitive advantage is gaining from the appropriate systems for attracting, motivating, managing, and retaining the organizations' talents. Adopting a strategic view of leadership, "sustainable leadership" not only enhances employees as human "assets" but also develops appropriate policies and procedures as investments in these assets to increase their value to the organization and the marketplace. The current study analyzes the sources of employee value and sustainable leadership roles toward sustainable performance. In this background, three UAE-based educational institutions were chosen purposively and administered a closed-ended questionnaire and a short interactive session. The samples were selected by stratified proportional sampling for diverse demographic responses. As the data are quantitative and qualitative, an exploratory analysis has been done to test the hypotheses and conclude the link and importance of the variables. The results validated the proposed conceptual model that was developed from the literature. Subsequently, the study established that sustainable leadership approaches augment strategies for best opportunities and ensures that performance standards are met. This needs a global and innovative mindset from management and employees. Gradually, firms can plan in the longer term and maintain a sustainable performance to have a competitive edge. Finally, it recommends routes for future research in addressing issues in analyzing the human Return on Investment (ROI).

Keywords: sustainable leadership, investment perspective, sustainable performance, Return on Investment (ROI).

1. Introduction

As a broad field of research that links Human Resource Management (HRM) with sustainability, sustainable HRM has been defined in many different ways (e.g., socially responsible HRM, green HRM, community HRM, sustainable work systems). To understand this relationship, different levels of analysis (individuals, organizations, and societies) and time perspectives have been employed (Kramar, 2014, Macke and Genari, 2019; Stankevičiūtė and Savanevičienė, 2018). Sustainable HRM could be defined as *“the pattern of planned or emerging HR strategies and practices intended to enable the achievement of financial, social and ecological goals while simultaneously reproducing the HR base over a long term. It seeks to minimize the negative impacts on the natural environment and people and communities and acknowledges the critical enabling role of CEOs, middle and line managers, HRM professionals and employees in providing messages which are distinctive, consistent and reflect a consensus among decision-makers.”* (Kramar, 2014). To support this view, Macke, and Genari, (2019) identified four categories namely; sustainable leadership, environmental dimension, economic dimension, and social dimension for sustainable HRM and concluded that sustainable HRM is innovative, ever-changing, and requires further research. In light of this aspect, the main motive of this study is to explore the significance of sustainable leadership toward sustainable performance with a moderating variable, the human-investment perspective.

Leadership theories are not a new topic now, several kinds of literature highlight the leadership traits, qualities, and strategies for leaders according to the changing scenario. To support this view, Zaccaro and Klimoski (2001) argue that leadership theories are largely context-free and not linked to structural contingencies that can affect leadership conduct. The inquisitiveness for a single leadership theory that applies to all contexts has attracted considerable attention in the leadership literature. Though there are several models, the question that raises one's eyebrow is how they can be integrated and implicated with strategic human resource development and investment perspective (Parameswaran, 2021). Sustainable leadership has a close relationship with situational leadership as these leadership approaches are more flexible and applicable to various situations. If any organization sticks to any one particular leadership style such as traits-based (Steers 1996), transactional-based (Bass & Avolio 1994; Pardey 2008), transformational-based approach (Epitropaki & Martin 2005; Den et al. 2007), charismatic-based approach, strategic-based approach (Shamir & Hooijkberg 2008), managerial-based approach (Flanagan and Thompson 1993), institutional-based approach (Deutsch 2009), strategic-based approach (Ireland & Hitt 1999) and E-leadership approach (Antonakis et al. 2004), then it is difficult to manage any unpredicted contingencies. Contingency leadership or situational leadership is one of the earliest theories and it highlights both 'task orientation' and 'relationship orientation' (Fiedler, 1967). Fiedlers' study concludes that task-oriented leaders are more effective when situations are categorized as favorable or unfavorable,

whereas relationship-oriented leaders were more effective in moderately favorable environments. However, there are weaknesses of the contingency theory such as the mismatch between the leader and workplace situation, the measurement instruments, and the selection of “least preferred co-worker” (Northouse, 2010). Moreover, House (1996) points out that leaders control the resources that employees value and need to adopt leadership behaviors that make employees respond appropriately to the needs of the organization in the form of path-goal-clarifying leader behavior, supportive leader behavior, participative leader behavior, and achievement leader behavior. From another perspective, transformational leadership has been classified into four ‘Is’, idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration (Bass, 1990, Burns, 1978, Posner & Kouzes, 1988; Keegan & Den, 2004). All these approaches are from a leader’s perspective, more subjective, and need to value employees from various sources, which will explain in the next part. Hence, this study explores the importance of sustainable leadership through an investment perspective of employees in firms toward sustainable performance.

1.1 Significance of the study

One of the main challenges that HRD professionals are always facing is engaging employees to achieve the optimum level of work performance. Progressively, organizations are taking many initiatives for employee engagement strategies along with operational and technological aspects. According to Krinks & Stack (2008), organizations

realize that they need to consider three main factors related to developing and retaining employees, anticipating and managing change, and enhancing operational effectiveness through a learning organization and HR as a strategic partner. Firms should consider all these factors for sustainable performance. Literature also supports the view that organizational learning related to sustainable development can enhance sustainability (Smith & Ramirez, 2012). Further, firms can gain a competitive advantage through the practice of organizational learning (Hosseini, et al. 2020). Therefore, appropriate leadership is quintessential for high-performance organizations. Leadership is becoming a shared responsibility across the organization and is seen as an interactive, dynamic process among individuals or groups, or both. (Pierce & Newstorm, 2008). In these aspects, sustainable leadership can influence the sustainable performance of employees and organizations and it is necessary to explore more about the related variables. To support this view, Burawat (2019), mentions that the topic of sustainable leadership needs more research on sustainable performance.

1.2 Dimensions of the study

Leadership theories are like the tip of the iceberg! It remains elusive to research. Developing leaders and engaging followers is a complex and ever-changing process. This necessitates change management and learning organization. One of the interventions toward this concept is Google's 'Project Oxygen.' The findings highlight the instrumental role of managers in employee retention and employee development through hard and soft

skills (Bryant, 2011). Moving toward an investment perspective is more critical than physical assets such as facilities, products and services, technologies, and markets as these can be readily cloned or imitated by competitors (Quinn et al. 1990). This view is increasingly important as there is evidence that nowadays most jobs have become less manual and more cerebral and knowledge-based on nature. Therefore, both sustainable leadership and investment perspectives can lead to better employee performance, which in turn enhances sustainable performance. The work of McClelland (1973) and Goleman (1998) mention that superior performance demands emotional intelligence as well as technical competence. Emotionally intelligent leaders are more socially skilled, thus demonstrating high levels of interpersonal effectiveness, such as empathy, conflict management, influential networks, and stress management. An empirical study by Groves et al. (2008) found deliberate long-term training, one of the investment perspectives, can boost emotional intelligence.

1.3 Objectives

Human resource development (HRD) is always challenging and inevitable. The HRD function aims to discover ways of managing things, utilize the resources and opportunities for change, means to deliver processes that can reinforce organizational development and transformation (Vince, 2003). This development function needs all best practices according to the changing landscapes and can be practiced only by sustainable leadership. Moreover, leaders should create a learning atmosphere and culture rather than continuous

training because knowledge management and dissemination of knowledge across the organization encourage a better performance that is long-lasting. The challenge of demonstrating the efficiency and value-added nature of HRD is a significant one. According to Ty (2007), organizations practice HRD in an unintentional, intuitive, and indirect manner in many ways. Mainly, the employees in the lower echelons are affected by a lack of learning practices, which results in incidental and anecdotal learning. There is no systematic use of strategic planning and decision-making within the organization, resulting in these drawbacks. Keeping this in mind, the study aims:

1. To analyze the characteristics and significance of sustainable leadership in organizations.
2. To understand the meaning and importance of the ‘investment perspective’ of HRM in organizations.
3. To explore the relevance of sustainable performance toward competitive advantage in organizations.

2. Review of literature

In this knowledge economy, the management of learning and knowledge is fundamental for the strategic well-being of organizations. Increased recognition of the role of tacit knowledge and skills in the modern economy and the realization of creative insights help

organizations to stand alone in a competitive market. As companies seek to stay ahead of the competition and learn faster, they have emphasized human resource development solutions that satisfy the dual purposes of aligning learning to organizational goals and allowing space for learning to follow new and innovative paths (Rainbird, 1995). To support this view, Post (1997) claimed that to have organizational competences (the extent to which a firm excels at outperforming its competitors) that are company-specific, there is a need for distinct competencies through the development of employee knowledge, skills, and capabilities. Hafeez and Ismail (2007) mention that to achieve organizational core competences as a result of collective learning of the organization, it urges instilling the organization with a unique identity and holding that distinguishes the organization in the marketplace and helps it compete more effectively. The emphasis on core competences evolves from the ability of organizations to leverage their unique resources and special assets in a way that adds value to the organization. To ensure the achievement of core competencies in a cutthroat competitive world, this study examines the dimensions of core competencies.

2.1 Sustainable leadership

The development of organizational learning relies heavily on sustainable leadership (Al-Zawahreh et al., 2019). A learning organization emphasizes systematic thinking, extensive collaborative engagement, and dimensions of business and objectives. As leadership is a social process, it necessitates shared vision, personal mastery, and system

thinking in addition to management support (Liao, Chen, Hu, Chung, & Liu, 2017). Though there are multiple leadership styles in works of literature, transformational leadership is more aligned with sustainable leadership. The four recognized characteristics of this leadership are idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 1990; Burns, 1978; Keegan and Den Hartog, 2004; Posner and Kouzes, 1988). All these styles highlight the ability of leaders to inspire their followers through shared vision, critical reasoning, egalitarianism, coaching, and so on. A study by Abu-Tineh et al. (2008) found that a long-term commitment to organizational effectiveness can be achieved by a shared vision as this creates a bridge between the present and future. Garcia-Morales et al. (2008) noted a positive relationship between the two variables of organizational leadership and organizational performance to transformational leadership. Similarly, another study (Gill et al., 2010) found a strong positive relationship between transformational leadership and employee empowerment, resulting from the greater level of trust between leader and employee, leading the latter to take greater responsibility for the organization's problems.

H₁: The variable, leadership has a significant role in the sustainable performance of employees.

2.2 Investment perspective of HRM

An organization can best invest in its people through an investment perspective, like how physical assets are viewed, rather than by viewing them as variable production costs. An organization can also make long-term performance goals more achievable if they consider the risk and return associated with potential expenditures related to acquiring human assets. For instance, if an organization plans to invest in employees through training programs, it needs to consider not only the overhead for the training but also the related opportunity costs, such as the time away from the job. Then the firm can calculate these costs against the potential benefits of the training, such as increased performance, high loyalty, and more motivation. Moreover, the training practices can be assessed for risk management because the enhanced marketability of employees makes them more desirable to competitors. Therefore, the potential return on the organization's expenditure on training will determine whether its training practices are a viable investment strategy. Adopting a strategic view of HR involves valuing employees in various dimensions such as technical knowledge, ability to learn and grow, decision-making capabilities, motivation, commitment, and teamwork (Mello, 2019).

H₂: The independent variable, the investment perspective of HRM has a significant role in the sustainable performance of employees.

2.3 Sustainable performance

Numerous pieces of literature drew attention to the ‘crisis in leadership with the call for developing managers into leaders to achieve high performance. Diminishing mid-management layers, exhausting resources for employee development, depriving managers of critical on-the-job experience, and a global war on talent is creating gaps in vital leadership positions. By focusing on leadership functions instead of developing individuals as leaders, firms can move beyond the short-term succession replacement agenda (Groves, 2007). Relate to employee performance, research has shown that employees who feel supported in the workplace have higher levels of commitment (Wayne et al., 1997) and are more likely to have higher levels of performance (Eisenberger et al., 1990). For their part, McClelland (1973) and Goleman (1998) argue that superior performance demands emotional intelligence is more important to superior performance than a higher IQ. For sustainable leadership development, contemporary leadership programs should focus on tactical and global issues, operations in decentralized conditions, community perspectives, contingency planning, diversity, and inclusion (Doh, 2003).

H₃: The variable, sustainable performance has a significant role in Human resource development.



Figure 1 Conceptual model for the study

2. Research Design

This part identifies the research design. A pilot study assists to know the feasibility of collecting the data from the three different educational sectors in the UAE. Moreover, a comprehensive examination of the literature on Human resource development programs throws light on the significance of sustainable leadership, sources of investment perspective, and sustainable leadership. Based on this framework, a closed-ended questionnaire, with 28 indicators, by a five-point Likert scale had developed. The study utilized a stratified proportional sampling method with a sample size of 350 employees (varied age, educational qualifications, and experiences) from educational sectors in the

UAE. During data collection, 23 responses were omitted due to inappropriate responses. Of the 350 responses that were collected, 227 were selected for analysis. The purposive sample technique had used in selecting the organizations. To be specific, the questionnaire consisted of demographic factors, and the above-mentioned three variables (each variable with 8 indicators). Supportive reviews had identified in the literature section, and the questionnaire had exhibited in the data analysis section. Moreover, all identified variables are carefully chosen, observed, recorded, and analyzed. Thus, the survey method aids as the best approach for quantitative data analysis. This measures the internal consistency, that is, how closely related a set of items is as a group. In the first part, Cronbach's alpha identifies the reliability of the data. It is the function of the number of test items and the average inter-correlation among the items. Below, for conceptual purposes, the formula for Cronbach's alpha is:

$$\alpha = \frac{Nc^-}{v^- + (N-1)c^-}$$

Here N is equal to the number of items, c^- is the average inter-item covariance among the items and v^- equals the average variance.

Moreover, the values show greater than 7, verifying the reliability of the data. Confirmatory Factor analysis aids to confirm or reject the measurement theory. In the process of developing a scale (e.g., a questionnaire), CFA is almost always used to identify the latent structure of the scale. In this context, CFA can be used to verify the

number of items per factor (factor loadings) and the pattern of item-factor relationships (Brown, 2015). To maintain reliability, the variables were analyzed by regression tests and covariances. The p-values confirm the reliability of the data because its application on the same object of measurement number of times produces the same results. Thus, the three hypotheses were tested and illustrated in the data analysis part.

H₁: Leadership has a significant role in sustainable performance at firms.

H₂: The independent variable, the investment perspective of HRM has a significant role in the sustainable performance of employees.

H₃: Sustainable performance has a significant role in Human resource development.

Related to ethical compliance, there was no compulsion to participate while collecting data. The respondents were voluntarily involved and the researcher explained maintaining confidentiality and anonymity to all respondents before interviewing and filling out the survey.

4. Data Analysis

As a continuation of the methodology, the CFA had done to explore the factor loadings. This was performed using the R (Version 3.66 Bit) Programming package “Lavaan” (Version 0.6-5) and followed by the Diagonally weighted least squares (DWLS) estimation method. Three estimations methods commonly used for strong corrections are:

a. Maximum likelihood (ML) using the sample covariance matrix, b. Unweighted least squares (ULS) using consistent estimates, and c. Diagonally weighted least squares (DWLS) using a polychoric correlation matrix. These estimates are superior to the normal theory-based maximum likelihood when observed variables in latent variable models are ordinal. Hence, the trustworthiness of the data was maintained by four components; credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Moreover, the researcher believes that triangulation utilized in this study aims to satisfy the objectives of the study through qualitative and quantitative analyses.

Table 1 CFA Model Fit of Sustainable Performance

| | |
|--|----------|
| lavaan (0.6-5) converged normally after 273 iterations | |
| Number of Observations | 61 |
| Estimator | DWLS |
| Minimum Function Test Statistic | 1009.340 |
| Degrees of freedom | 365 |
| P-value (Chi-square) | 0.000 |
| Model test baseline model: | |
| Minimum Function Test Statistic | 4222.714 |
| Degrees of freedom | 378 |
| P-value | 0.000 |
| User model versus baseline model: | |
| Comparative Fit Index (CFI) | 0.827 |
| Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) | 0.811 |
| Root Mean Square Error of Approximation: | |

| | | | | | | |
|--|---------|------------|----------|-------|-------|--|
| RMSEA | 0.181 | | | | | |
| 90 | Percent | Confidence | Interval | 0.168 | 0.194 | |
| P-value | RMSEA | <= 0.05 | 0.000 | | | |
| Standardized Root Mean Square Residual: | | | | | | |
| SRMR | 0.196 | | | | | |

The above chi-square model for the goodness of fit for the observed and expected values ensures a significant role in fitting the data well for the study. Calculating the Normed chi-square, it helps to depict the model fits the data precisely, i.e., the least difference between observed and expected values. The latent variable sustainable performance (Q17-Q24) is hypothesized to have two factors namely, sustainable leadership (Q1-Q8), and investment-perspective (Q9-Q16). The model fit is good with a CFI of 0.827, TLI of 0.811, and RMSEA of 0.181 with 90% confidence interval (0.168, 0.194). The χ^2 (minimum function test statistic) is significant with $p < .05$ ($\chi^2(3) = 1009.340, p < .05$). The indicators except Q24, Q25, Q26, Q27, and Q28 all showed significant positive factor loadings, with standardized coefficients above 0.3 (Table 2). There were also significant positive correlations among all three latent factors (Table 3).

Table 2 CFA for model fit

| Factor Loadings: Confirmatory Factor Analysis | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--------|-------|--------|-------|---------|-----|
| Factor Loadings (* p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001) | | | | | | | |
| Factors | Indicators | B | SE | Z | Beta | p-value | sig |
| SL | Q1. Do you have a leader with shared sense of purpose, persistent and determined? | 0.068 | 0.031 | 2.192 | 0.096 | 0.028 | * |
| | Q2. Does your leader engage in the vision of the future, inclusive, attractive, and attainable to the followers? | -0.443 | 0.04 | -11.01 | -0.5 | 0 | *** |

| | | | | | | | |
|----|--|--------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-----|
| | Q3. Does your leader maintain creativity, honesty, and integrity? environment? | -0.5 | 0.037 | -13.51 | -0.6 | 0 | *** |
| | Q4. Do you have a leader who maintains a close relationship with the followers to bring changes in the firm? | -0.675 | 0.045 | -15.13 | -0.68 | 0 | *** |
| | Q5. Do you have trust in your leader? | -0.425 | 0.03 | -14.35 | -0.65 | 0 | *** |
| | Q6. Does your leader have emotional skills? | -0.516 | 0.031 | -16.52 | -0.75 | 0 | *** |
| | Q7. Does your unit have a shared interest? | -0.365 | 0.027 | -13.36 | -0.59 | 0 | *** |
| | Q8. Do you feel your leader has more power over you? | 0.337 | 0.034 | 9.953 | 0.499 | 0 | *** |
| IP | Q9. Does your firm have short term commitment to employees? | 0.09 | 0.019 | 4.813 | 0.144 | 0 | *** |
| | Q10. Does your organization provide intrinsic motivation? | 0.55 | 0.036 | 15.108 | 0.736 | 0 | *** |
| | Q11. How extent you are socialized (informally) with your team? | 0.375 | 0.031 | 12.04 | 0.583 | 0 | *** |
| | Q12. Does your organization give a clear objective to do? | 0.528 | 0.036 | 14.661 | 0.675 | 0 | *** |
| | Q13. Does your organization is flexible in tasks? | 0.436 | 0.039 | 11.27 | 0.525 | 0 | *** |
| | Q14. Does your company emphasis on rewards and punishments? | 0.674 | 0.038 | 17.879 | 0.866 | 0 | *** |
| | Q15. Does your firm give opportunities to learn and grow? | 0.595 | 0.035 | 16.908 | 0.797 | 0 | *** |
| | Q16. Do you like to take risks in your workplace? | 0.604 | 0.037 | 16.42 | 0.772 | 0 | *** |
| SP | Q17. Do you have opportunities for systems development through inputs, processes, feedback? | 0.123 | 0.172 | 0.718 | 0.681 | 0.473 | |
| | Q18. Do you have enough opportunities for competencies through skill and knowledge development? | 0.18 | 0.25 | 0.719 | 0.84 | 0.472 | |
| | Q19. Do you feel quality work-life? | 0.144 | 0.201 | 0.718 | 0.776 | 0.473 | |
| | Q20. Do you feel you have a team-learning environment? | 0.178 | 0.248 | 0.719 | 0.846 | 0.472 | |
| | Q21. Do you feel your organization is adaptable to changes? | 0.238 | 0.034 | 6.936 | 0.352 | 0 | *** |
| | Q22. Do you feel your organization has a reputation in the market? | 0.238 | 0.034 | 6.936 | 0.352 | 0 | *** |
| | Q23. Does your firm encourage diversity and inclusion? | | | | | | |
| | Q24. Do you feel you are equally treated in your | 0.595 | 0.041 | 14.439 | 0.798 | 0 | *** |

organization?

IP- Investment Perspective, SL – Sustainable Leadership, SP- Sustainable Performance

The significance of each indicator to latent variables is clarified by the p-value from the preceding table 3. To ensure that the model estimators are non-significant or that the data fits, the least difference between predicted and actual values must be checked. The Std. all is a list of model matrices with values representing standardized model parameters with variances of both observable and latent variables set to unity.

A latent variable's variance has been considered useful for some research areas, particularly longitudinal research and invariance analysis (McArdle and Cattell, 1994; Schmitt and Kuljanin, 2008; McArdle, 2009), and is illustrated below.

Table 3 Variance of Observed variables

| Factor | Item | Estimate | Std.Err | z-value | P(> z) | Std.lv | Std.all |
|--------|------|----------|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|
| SL | Q1 | 0.503 | 0.098 | 5.109 | 0 | 0.503 | 0.991 |
| | Q2 | 0.610 | 0.149 | 4.015 | 0 | 0.6 | 0.754 |
| | Q3 | 0.445 | 0.108 | 4.129 | 0 | 0.445 | 0.64 |
| | Q4 | 0.521 | 0.112 | 4.666 | 0 | 0.521 | 0.533 |
| | Q5 | 0.242 | 0.076 | 3.194 | 0.001 | 0.242 | 0.573 |
| | Q6 | 0.212 | 0.072 | 2.927 | 0.003 | 0.212 | 0.443 |
| | Q7 | 0.246 | 0.065 | 3.767 | 0 | 0.246 | 0.649 |
| | Q8 | 0.342 | 0.13 | 2.628 | 0.009 | 0.342 | 0.751 |
| IP | Q9 | 0.381 | 0.101 | 3.793 | 0 | 0.381 | 0.979 |
| | Q10 | 0.255 | 0.077 | 3.324 | 0.001 | 0.255 | 0.458 |
| | Q11 | 0.272 | 0.066 | 4.103 | 0 | 0.272 | 0.66 |
| | Q12 | 0.334 | 0.075 | 4.439 | 0 | 0.334 | 0.545 |
| | Q13 | 0.498 | 0.133 | 3.745 | 0 | 0.498 | 0.724 |
| | Q14 | 0.152 | 0.082 | 1.855 | 0.064 | 0.152 | 0.251 |
| | Q15 | 0.203 | 0.077 | 2.629 | 0.009 | 0.203 | 0.365 |
| | Q16 | 0.248 | 0.079 | 3.15 | 0.002 | 0.248 | 0.404 |
| SP | Q21 | 0.227 | 0.07 | 3.265 | 0.001 | 0.227 | 0.537 |
| | Q22 | 0.174 | 0.08 | 2.179 | 0.029 | 0.174 | 0.295 |
| | Q23 | 0.177 | 0.072 | 2.46 | 0.014 | 0.177 | 0.398 |
| | Q24 | 0.162 | 0.08 | 2.032 | 0.042 | 0.162 | 0.284 |
| | Q25 | 0.179 | 0.074 | 2.426 | 0.015 | 0.179 | 0.41 |

| | | | | | | |
|-----|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Q26 | 0.201 | 0.096 | 2.089 | 0.037 | 0.201 | 0.362 |
| Q27 | 0.234 | 0.084 | 2.772 | 0.006 | 0.234 | 0.337 |
| Q28 | 0.518 | 0.069 | 7.513 | 0 | 0.518 | 0.998 |

The scaling method allows the comparison of the contributions of different latent variables to observed scores for the same confirmatory factor model. The values show the consistency between each latent variable. Thus, it relates the various scaling methods to each other and integrates them into a common framework.

Table 4 Regression -Sustainable Performance

| Factors | Estimate | Std.Err | z-value | P(> z) | Std.lv | Std.all |
|---------|----------|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|
| SL | -4.903 | 5.889 | -0.832 | 0.405 | -1.366 | 1.2 |
| IP | -0.829 | 0.676 | -1.226 | 0.220 | -0.231 | 1.32 |

The table clarifies that sustainable learning has significant values (std all) as the std error is slightly high for the factor diversity. Based on this inference, the covariances also had measured and are illustrated below. To adjust the linear effects of covariates, the analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) combines ANOVA and regression (Karpen, 2017).

Table 5 Covariances

| Factors | Estimate | Std.Err | z-value | P(> z) | Std.lv | Std.all |
|---------|----------|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|
| IP | -0.876 | 0.057 | -15.378 | 0.000 | -0.876 | -0.876 |
| SP | -0.851 | 0.061 | -1.004 | 0.000 | -0.851 | -0.851 |

Similarly, the p-values are <0.001, proving its significance to the latent variable, Sustainable performance. As a result of changes in covariate variables, ANCOVA detects variance changes for the dependent variable and distinguishes them from variance changes for qualitative variables. Doing so reduces the uncertainty of the variability of a

dependent variable (error) and produces pure results, as well as increasing analytical power (Rutherford, 2007).

5. Findings and Recommendations

Firstly, a model of fit was created using DWLS and it confirms the validity of the data. Confirmatory factor analysis by model fit indices (Table 1) clarifies that all elements weighed appropriately with the dependent variables. The fit measures were examined by the Chi-Square test and confirmed the goodness of fit (degrees of freedom is 345). Various measures derived from the CFA reinstate the relationship between the factors and the latent variables. The model fit is good with a CFI of 0.827, TLI of 0.811, and RMSEA of 0.181 with a 90% confidence interval (0.168, 0.194). The χ^2 (minimum function test statistic) is significant with $p < .05$ ($\chi^2 (3) = 1009.340, p < .05$). The indicators except for Q24, Q25, Q26, Q27, and Q28 all showed significant positive factor loadings, with standardized coefficients above 0.3 (Table 2). Moreover, the Z value represents the Wald statistic and the distribution score of the data and is obtained by dividing the parameter value by its standard error, $P(>|z|)$. A greater Z value indicates a positive correlation between the variables and factor loadings. Beta is the standardized regression coefficient and compares the relationship amongst variables, it varies from -1 to 1, and a greater estimate points to a stronger relationship. Thus, the H1, H2, and H3 were accepted, even though sustainable leadership indicators show variations in their response. There were also significant positive

correlations among two latent factors (Table 3). The latent variable sustainable performance is hypothesized to have two factors namely, sustainable leadership (Q1-Q8), investment perspective (Q9-Q16), and sustainable perspective (Q17-24). The hypothesis test through regression analysis shows there is some disparity amongst respondents for the factor, of sustainable leadership as the standard deviation is found to be 5.889 and the p-value as 0.405 (Table 4). This indicates similar responses from the survey and a stronger relationship with limited variances. Since sustainable leadership has a higher std. error estimate, the responses are unlikely valid due to a higher error ratio among survey responses. The study emphasizes the importance of frequent training for leaders to build a shared vision and instill that in their followers to encourage a greater sense of purpose and meaning (Abu-Tineh et al., 2008). In addition, it shows that the shared cultures and open support structures created by transformational leaders inspire employees to get creative at work and increase organizational learning (Garcia-Morales et al., 2008).

As a next step, the covariances confirm the significance level with a p-value <0.001 and standard error of 0.057 and 0.061 for investment perspective and sustainable performance respectively (Table 5). Both these factors have a stronger correlation as the estimate measures and std. all matrices are closer to zero. Furthermore, the measures are closer to each other, and it confirms higher covariance as well. Though it is challenging to achieve all sources of employee value, the selected educational firms can consider factors for a learning organization by the acquisition of knowledge/skills and openness to new ideas.

Training or leadership can create an organizational culture that improves analytical skills, problem-solving skills, change management practices, and implementation skills. Moreover, teamwork enhances interpersonal skills and leadership ability. If employees are motivated, they can accept challenging tasks, develops a perceived “fit” with the organization, and have high job satisfaction. Additionally, technical knowledge allows employees to know about markets, processes, customers, and the environment (Mello, 2019). Hence, the H₂ has been accepted and it validates that the investment perspective always values employees and can lead to sustainable performance. The study proves that modern leadership development programs should focus on strategic and global issues, operations in decentralized environments, community perspectives, contingency planning, diversity, and inclusion for sustainable performance (Doh, 2003). Further, it confirms the necessity of emotional intelligence for leaders while dealing with their followers through self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills (McClelland, 1973; Goleman, 1998). This trait can be enhanced by long-term training with relevant feedback. More importantly, shared leadership suggests that leadership is a pluralistic multivariate concept. Therefore, the result signals the transition of traditional training to a customized, collaborative learning program aimed at real business issues combined with developmental relationships and reassuring participant feedback.

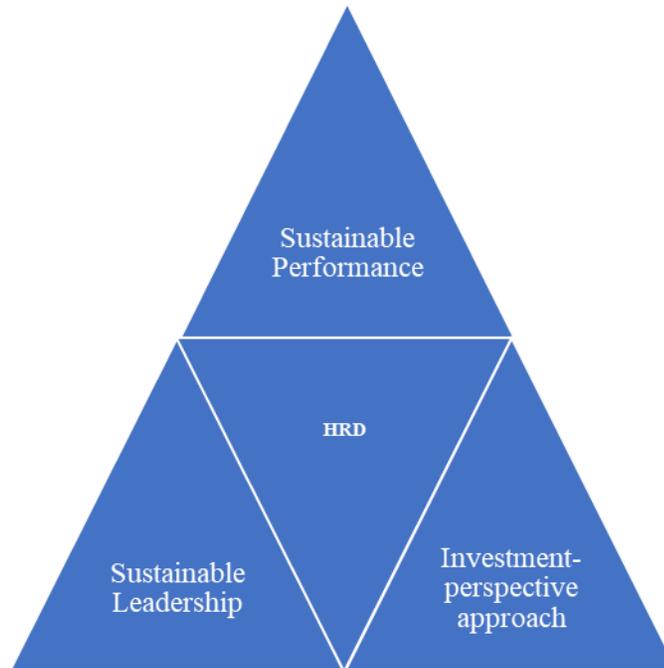


Figure 2: Sustainable leadership and Investment-perspective approach toward sustainable performance for firms.

6. Conclusion

The concept of sustainable leadership includes a multitude of trends, strategies, and functions, which combines to create a balance between task-oriented and relation-oriented styles. The focus of leadership development has shifted from personalized conceptions of leadership to contemporary relational approaches. Furthermore, another variable selected for the study, the investment perspective, ensures that HR best practices synchronize with the organization's overall strategy, which in turn allows the organization to invest in its best opportunities. Thus, it can ensure that its performance standards are met. Additionally, organizations that invest in long-term HR

programs can gain a competitive advantage through their employees, which is difficult to duplicate by competitors since such programs are more ingrained in the culture of the organization. The Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) confirms the significance of sub-variables to each variable for the study. Further, the hypotheses test validates the relationship between dependent and independent variables. Additionally, there is a realization that sustainable leadership needs to be developed throughout the organization, and not solely vested in the CEO. Nurturing development relationships and developing future leaders remain vital to long-term success and sustainability. Therefore, this study investigated the HRD factors in achieving sustainable performance through sustainable leadership and an investment-perspective approach. The conceptual model can be applied to leadership development programs in educational sectors as well as any sector that is interested in keeping a finger on the pulse of change management. This study will undoubtedly boost a firm's competencies toward global economic competences.

Although investment in human assets may be risky and the return may take a long time to materialize, investment in people continues to be the main source of sustainable competitive advantage for the organization. This concept limits the effectiveness of investment approaches in the selected educational sectors. Basically, in cross-sectional research like this only limited information could be collected. Additionally, the response can be biased due to their work culture, tight schedule, subjective aspects, etc. The evidence from the analysis limits the disparity amongst respondents in some

sub-variables owing to the factors such as unprecedented changes, virtual work teams, masculinity, diversity, career plateau, etc. Ethical dimensions have not been covered in this study regarding the firm's corporate social responsibility.

As there is a move from personalized learning to task-oriented and interactive learning, these types of studies are the need of the hour. Interactive and relationship-based learning can be achieved only by a proper source of investment perspective and by analyzing these values by human ROI. Sustainable performance programs are transforming, and it is a continuous process. The result identifies that leadership in the form of transformational must-have characteristics of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. This can create followers who are productive and vision-oriented. Additionally, it opens the way for more HR information systems to value employees in the firms. Likewise, sustainable performance with a multifactorial approach can unlock all radical challenges soon. This study can be utilized by academicians in their curricula to explore the leadership styles in a transformational approach by causing changes to individuals and social systems. Additionally, the investment perspective can heighten employee commitment and loyalty and leads to a competitive edge in firms. Thus, it lays a bedrock for sustainable HRM. As part of managing employees as investments, an organization must develop a strategic HR approach that is appropriate and integrated (Mello, 2019).

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