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THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP IN DRIVING BUSINESS AND SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF MANAGEMENT AND MARKETIING LITERATURE

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Abstract: *Leadership plays a strategic role in promoting business and social sustainability amid increasing economic, social, and environmental demands. This study aims to analyze the role of leadership in promoting business and social sustainability, identify the mechanisms through which leadership influences sustainability performance, and examine the challenges and enabling factors for its implementation. The study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method with a qualitative descriptive approach. Relevant literature was analyzed based on the focus on leadership, business and social sustainability, organizational mechanisms, as well as factors supporting and hindering the implementation of sustainability. The results of the study indicate that sustainable leadership, transformational leadership, responsible leadership, ethical leadership, and inclusive leadership play a role in promoting sustainability through increased innovation, knowledge sharing, employee engagement, organizational capabilities, and the strengthening of a sustainability-oriented culture and governance. However, its implementation still faces challenges in the form of limited resources, resistance to change, low competencies, and short-term performance demands. Thus, sustainability-oriented leadership must be supported by organizational culture, innovation, human resource development, and stakeholder collaboration to achieve sustainable business and social outcomes.*

Keywords: *Leadership, Business Sustainability, Social Sustainability, Sustainable Leadership, Sustainability Performance*

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Introduction

Business and social sustainability have become strategic issues in management and marketing literature, in line with growing demands on organizations to create value that is not only focused on economic profit but also takes into account social well-being and environmental conservation. Climate change, resource constraints, stakeholder demands, and growing consumer awareness of responsible business practices are driving organizations to integrate sustainability into their strategies and operational activities. In this context, leadership plays a crucial role, as leaders are responsible for setting strategic direction, establishing a vision for sustainability, influencing the behavior of organizational members, and integrating economic, social, and environmental objectives. (Piwowar-Sulej & Iqbal, 2023) a systematic review of 47 studies shows that sustainable leadership and transformational leadership are the leadership styles most frequently studied in relation to sustainability performance. However, the review also indicates that empirical evidence regarding the relationship between leadership and sustainability has yet to yield a strong consensus.

Leadership for sustainability is not restricted to a single style of leadership. The literature indicates different approaches like sustainable leadership, transformational leadership, responsible leadership, ethical leadership and servant leadership, with different characteristics but common ground in promoting organizational accountability to stakeholders and society. (Foldøy et al., 2021) A systematic review of 28 studies of responsible leadership identifies a range of approaches to operationalize the concept, suggesting that conceptualizations and operationalizations remain to be clarified. In the meantime, (Piwowar-Sulej & Iqbal, 2023) This implies that sustainable leadership is more related to overall sustainability performance, while transformational leadership is more related to environmental performance. This finding emphasizes the necessity of systematically identifying diverse leadership roles and practices that work for the promotion of business and social sustainability.

Leadership does not always act directly but it can influence sustainability thru a variety of mechanisms within organizations. Leaders can set up internal conditions that make it easier to learn, innovate, get employes involved, share knowledge and create an organizational culture that is supportive of sustainability. (Ahsan & Khawaja, 2024) We found that sustainable leadership is positively related to environmental performance, employe well-being and innovation, and employe well-being and innovation are mediators between leadership and environmental performance. Other findings from the (Shafait & Huang, 2024) indicate that sustainable leadership fosters green knowledge sharing and green learning, which in turn contribute to green innovation and organizational performance. These findings suggest that, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the role of leadership, it is necessary to examine the mechanisms that link leadership to the achievement of sustainability.

However, there are many challenges of the implementation of the sustainability-oriented leadership within the organizations. Sustainability integration often involves changes in organizational culture, decision-making patterns, resource allocation, employe behavior and relationships with key stakeholders. Resistance to change, resource limitations, competency gaps, conflicts of interest and pressure to meet short-term performance objectives often impede leaders' ability to embed sustainability into organizational strategy. Therefore, effective leadership is not only the leader's commitment to sustainability, but also the leader's ability to create an organizational environment that supports change. (Ahsan & Khawaja, 2024) indicates that organizational resilience can reinforce the relationship between sustainable leadership and

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environmental performance which means that the internal conditions of an organization are also important in determining the effectiveness of leadership in attaining sustainability.

Although leadership and sustainability is an emerging field of study, there are still signs of fragmentation in the management and marketing literature in the areas of leadership styles, influence mechanisms, dimensions of sustainability and organizational contexts under study. Some studies are based on environmental performance, some on social aspects, employe well-being, innovation or organizational performance. Up to now, there is no empirical consensus from the previous studies and a more broad approach to the relationship between leadership and sustainability performance is still needed (Piwowar-Sulej & Iqbal, 2023) The situation underscores the need to combine the findings of different studies to understand the role of leadership, the mechanisms thru which leadership can exert influence, and the conditions under which business and social sustainability can be enhanced or impeded. A Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach is relevant for identifying patterns, comparing findings, and systematically synthesizing developments in the literature.

Based on this gap, this study aims to provide a systematic synthesis of the role of leadership in promoting business and social sustainability based on management and marketing literature. Specifically, this study is designed to answer three research questions: (1) What are the roles and forms of leadership applied in promoting business and social sustainability based on management and marketing literature? (2) Through what mechanisms does leadership influence the achievement of business and social sustainability within organizations? and (3) What are the challenges and enabling factors that influence the effectiveness of leadership in integrating business and social sustainability into organizational strategies? This synthesis is expected to contribute to clarifying the contribution of leadership for sustainability and to providing a conceptual basis for organizations to develop leadership practices capable of creating sustainable economic and social value.

Literature Review

Leadership and Business and Social Sustainability

For business and social sustainability, organizations must consider not only profit, but also the well-being of employes, the interests of stakeholders, and the social and environmental impacts of their business activities (Eustachio et al., 2023). Leadership is a strategic factor in this context as leaders are involved in defining the vision, prioritization, allocation of resources and building an organizational culture that supports sustainability (Sun et al., 2022). (Yang et al., 2025) A systematic literature review show that sustainable leadership and transformational leadership are leadership approaches that are often associated with sustainability performance. Conversely, responsible leadership emphasizes accountability, inclusivity, innovation and the generation of value for a wide range of stakeholders (Heim et al., 2026).

In practice, the idea of sustainability-oriented leadership is not just a leadership style, but rather the ability of a leader to translate the principles of sustainability into organizational strategies and activities (Akinwalere et al., 2025). Sustainable leadership is based on a long-term perspective and on creating sustainable value for the organization and its environment (Algharabli et al., 2026). Transformational leadership is about creating a clear vision and facilitating transformative change thru inspiration, intellectual stimulation and a focus on individual development. Responsible leadership, in contrast, pays particular attention to the interests of different stakeholders thru building relationships based on trust, accountability and

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the creation of shared value. The different methods used show that leadership can help support sustainability in many ways and through different actions, whether it's about reaching business goals or making a positive impact on society. (Koen & Grobler, 2026)

Mechanisms of Leadership in Driving Sustainability

Leadership affects sustainability by influencing different processes within the organization. Leaders can foster an environment that encourages organizational learning, innovation, knowledge sharing, empowerment, employee well-being, and an organizational culture that supports sustainability. From an environmental leadership perspective, leaders' behavior serves as a critical link between organizational characteristics, employee behavior, and sustainability outcomes at the organizational level. (Zacher et al., 2024) explains that leadership can influence sustainability through several channels, including setting an example of green behavior, shaping organizational policies and culture, and fostering pro-environmental behavior among employees. Thus, the effectiveness of leadership is determined not only by leadership style but also by leaders' concrete actions in creating a work environment that supports sustainability.

Thus, leadership mechanisms can be understood through the relationship between leadership, internal organizational change, and sustainability performance. The latest conceptual framework maps out how leadership competencies influence governance, sustainability culture, and innovation within organizations (Muff & Dyllick, 2026). Leaders that are able to create a work environment that enables learning, innovation, collaboration and employe engagement are more likely to implement effective sustainability practices. This implies that the effectiveness of leadership depends not only on the style utilized, but also on how that influence is exercised thru organizational processes and resources.

Challenges and Enabling Factors in Sustainability Leadership

Leadership is crucial for the promotion of sustainability, but its implementation faces many challenges, such as resistance to change, limited resources, low sustainability competencies, lack of employe engagement, conflicts of interest between stakeholders, and pressure to achieve short-term performance (Wijaya et al., 2025). This can result in a gap between what an organization says it is committed to regarding sustainability and how this is actually done in business operations. (Sajjad et al., 2024) The points to the ongoing conceptual fragmentation and variety of approaches used in sustainability leadership research, and the need for a more integrated understanding of the role of leadership in sustainability.

In contrast, an organizational culture that supports sustainability, employe engagement, organizational learning, innovation, open discussion of the vision and collaboration with interested parties may strengthen the effectiveness of leadership. (Liao, 2022) This shows that leaders can help create a sustainable future by setting a good example, involving employees, making smart plans, checking on progress, and working with others. Therefore, the success of leadership in promoting sustainability depends not only on the characteristics of the leader but also on organizational conditions that support the consistent implementation of sustainability. These three perspectives form the basis of this study to identify the role of leadership, mechanisms of influence, as well as challenges and supporting factors in promoting business and social sustainability.

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Methods

Research Design

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method with a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze the role of leadership in promoting business and social sustainability. The research process follows the stages of an SLR (Kitchenham, 2004), including the formulation of research questions, literature search, establishment of inclusion and exclusion criteria, article selection, data extraction, and synthesis of results.

The literature was obtained through Google Scholar and relevant academic databases using keywords such as leadership and sustainability, sustainable leadership, transformational leadership and sustainability, responsible leadership, and leadership and sustainable performance. The articles were only from the years 2021 to 2026, and they were picked by looking at their titles, summaries, and complete content.

The articles chosen are scientific journal publications that are relevant to the research questions and discuss the relationship between leadership and business, social or organizational sustainability or sustainability performance. Articles that do not substantially address this relationship, are not scientific journal articles, are duplicates, or lack sufficient information were excluded from the analysis.

The selected literature was subsequently categorized into three focus areas: (1) leadership styles and practices, (2) leadership mechanisms for promoting sustainability, and (3) challenges and enablers of embedding sustainability in organizational strategies. The results of the study were analyzed and synthesized to answer three research questions regarding leadership styles, mechanisms of influence, and challenges and enabling factors for sustainability.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted using a qualitative descriptive approach through several stages: reading, identifying, classifying, comparing, and synthesizing the research findings from articles that met the selection criteria. Each article was analyzed based on the leadership characteristics examined, the dimensions of sustainability, the research context, the research methods, the mechanisms of leadership influence, and the main findings related to sustainability.

The analysis results were then divided into the three research questions. Articles related to RQ1 were analyzed for leadership styles and practices encouraging business and social sustainability. The RQ2-related articles were analyzed to find out the mechanisms explaining the impact of leadership on sustainability performance such as innovation, organizational learning, employe engagement, knowledge sharing, organizational culture and employe well-being. Meanwhile, articles related to RQ3 were analyzed to identify different challenges and enabling factors affecting the effectiveness of leadership in the integration of sustainability into organizational strategy.

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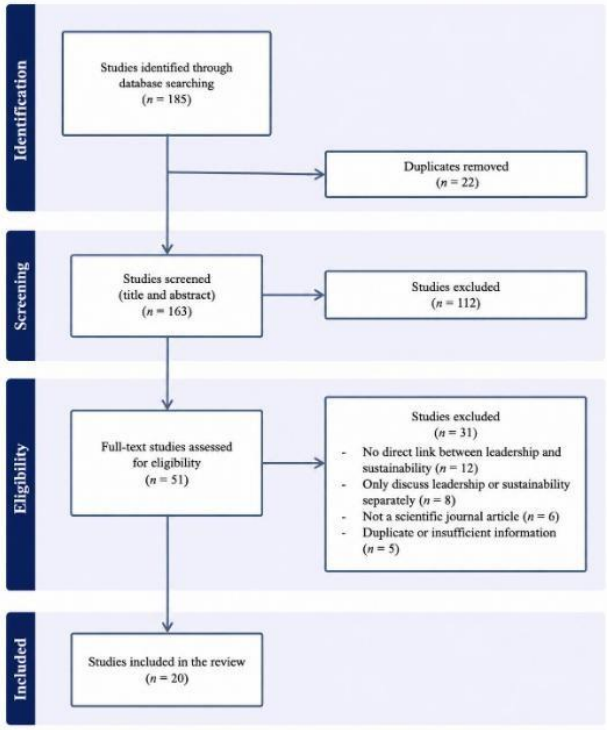

Figure 1: PRISMA Diagram

The literature selection process is presented in a PRISMA diagram showing the number of articles found in the identification stage, articles screened, articles evaluated for eligibility, articles excluded, and articles finally included in the research analysis. The literature selection process, as shown in the above PRISMA diagram, included four main steps: identification, screening, eligibility assessment and inclusion.

In the identification stage, 185 documents were identified from the searches made on Google Scholar and other academic databases in management and marketing fields. In these searches, different sets of key words were used including "leadership and sustainability", "sustainable leadership", "transformational leadership and sustainability", "responsible leadership", "leadership and business sustainability", "leadership and social sustainability" and "leadership and sustainable performance". A total of 22 duplicates were removed from the list leaving 163 documents.

A total of 163 papers were identified by screening through their titles and abstracts. Through the process of screening, 112 articles have been discarded as they did not relate to the theme of either leadership or sustainability, leaving a total of 51 articles for the eligibility stage.

During the eligibility phase, 51 articles were assessed for eligibility through a full-text review. A total of 31 articles were excluded for various reasons. Twelve articles were excluded because they did not substantively address the relationship between leadership and sustainability. Eight articles were excluded because they discussed only leadership without the dimension of sustainability or sustainability without the dimension of leadership. Six articles were excluded because they were not scientific journal articles but rather news articles, opinion pieces, or non-academic reports. Five articles were excluded because they were duplicates or did not provide sufficient information to answer the research questions.

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During the inclusion phase, 20 articles were found to meet all inclusion criteria and were subsequently used in the synthesis analysis to address the three research questions that had been formulated. The 20 articles were written between the years 2021 and 2026 and have provided substantial information on leadership in the areas of business sustainability, social sustainability, organizational sustainability, and sustainability performance and findings that are relevant to the research questions.

Results and Discussion

From a review of existing literature, it is clear that there is a growing trend for researchers to consider the link between leadership and sustainability in both management and marketing literature. Past research has considered different forms of leadership such as sustainable leadership, transformational leadership, responsible leadership, and ethical leadership in connection with sustainability performance in organizations. Besides analyzing leadership styles, many studies have also identified various ways through which leadership influences sustainability, such as innovation, organizational learning, engagement of employees, knowledge sharing, organizational culture, and well-being of employees. However, research findings are still dispersed in various dimensions of sustainability, making it necessary for a consolidated view of leadership's impact on sustainability to be made.

The uniqueness of this research is evident from its consideration of different perspectives on leadership in the achievement of business and societal sustainability through the integration of leadership styles, leadership practices, influence mechanisms, and even challenges and enablers. The earlier researches had considered leadership styles and sustainability in different ways without linking them together in order to develop a holistic view of how leadership can act as a strategic lever for sustainable development.

Effective Leadership Styles and Practices Promote Sustainability (RQ1)

From the analysis of 20 articles, it is evident that there are different types of leadership styles and activities that have been proven to increase the performance of organizations in terms of sustainability. These leadership styles do not exist in isolation but are used together.

Transformational leadership has turned out to be the most extensively researched and demonstrated way of advancing sustainability. Research by (Gaybullaev & Strode, 2026), (Thapa & Gurung, n.d.), and (Alqatan et al., 2025) consistently reveal that transformational leadership positively impacts on environmental, social, economic, and governance performance. Transformational leaders can inspire their employees to transcend individual interests for the greater good of organizational goals related to sustainability. This is in line with the findings (Meneses-La-Riva et al., 2026) that proves that transformational leadership is an enabler of innovation, commitment, and sustainability in family business.

Other than transformational leadership, one of the other types of leadership which has been identified as dominant in the facilitation of integration of sustainability is responsible leadership. This is according to the studies carried out by (Javed et al., 2026) and (Wijaya et al., 2025) who have stated that responsible leadership is the most commonly used leadership type for the issue of sustainability around the globe (Heim et al., 2026) further supports this statement by showing that responsible leadership has an effect on all four levels.

Ethical leadership is also critical in establishing a sustainable organizational culture. Both (Tabaghdehi et al., 2026) and (Meneses-La-Riva et al., 2026) emphasize the ability of ethical

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leadership to enhance the levels of trust, common values, and social responsibility due to transparency and accountability of the process. It means that ethical aspect of leadership plays an important role in the creation of a sustainable organizational culture.

On the contrary, green leadership and digital leadership are both recognized as modern perspectives as well (Shiferaw et al., 2025) believes that green leadership helps to create performance outcomes such as economy, society and environment by way of innovations carried out by the leaders. (Theryo et al., 2026) views digital leadership as a strategy that could assist in the performance success of the business in the digital era. But there is a scattered body of evidence for this effect.

Moreover, inclusive leadership, as per (Anane-Simon & Atiku, 2023) is another form of leadership that can help in sustainable development because of its ability to encourage creativity and effectiveness of organizations, along with their environmental and social responsibility in the time of organizational changes. Female leadership is also considered by (Wijaya et al., 2025) and (Javed et al., 2026) as a form of leadership that is sustainable, according to SDG goals for gender equality.

In all, different leadership styles such as transformational, responsible, ethical, green, digital, inclusive and feminine leadership have been seen to work effectively in fostering sustainability. However, no single leadership style can be applied universally as the effectiveness of any particular leadership style varies according to the organization, the industry, and the sustainability problems faced.

Mechanisms Through Which Leadership Influences Sustainability Performance (RQ2)

The literature review highlights various mechanisms that explain the impact of leadership on sustainability performance. Multidimensional links between sustainability outcomes and leadership practices are established through these mechanisms.

Innovation appears to be the most commonly referred mechanism in the literature. According to (Shiferaw et al., 2025), leader innovation behavior acts as an enhancer of green leadership effects on sustainability performance. (Alqatan et al., 2025) the same researchers showed that transformational leadership and knowledge sharing increase innovation capacity, which leads to environmental dynamism and enhances sustainability performance. (Demirsoy et al., 2026) identifies the cluster "organizational resource management & dynamic capabilities" among other leading clusters related to leadership and sustainability research. (Khan et al., 2026) stated that the strategic focus on eco-innovation has a significant effect on sustainable practices development.

Knowledge sharing and knowledge management skills are another set of mechanisms through which leadership is related to sustainability performance as identified by (Gaybullaev & Strode, 2026) and (Alqatan et al., 2025). Organizational citizenship behavior and knowledge sharing are one of the major groups of topics in the research of leadership and sustainability, as described by (Demirsoy et al., 2026). Digital transformation was identified as another mechanism linking visionary leadership to the implementation of circular economy as suggested by (Khan et al., 2026). Thus, digital transformation functions as a catalyst in this relationship.

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Moreover, the employee engagement approach was also highlighted by (Wijaya et al., 2025) and (Gaybullaev & Strode, 2026). According to (Tabaghdehi et al., 2026), ethical leadership is helpful to enhance the engagement of employees along with the innovation process towards achieving sustainability goals. Moreover, according to (Chen & Wu, 2022), green transformational leadership and green HRM practices help to improve the green mindfulness of employees, along with green behavior.

(Gaybullaev & Strode, 2026) and (Demirsoy et al., 2026) have also found green human resource management (GHRM) as the main cluster and one of the important mechanisms that are influenced by the leadership in relation to sustainability performance. Another important mechanism that is supported by organizational resource management is the sustainability oriented organizational culture created by ethical leadership, as mentioned by (Tabaghdehi et al., 2026).

Organizational learning is found to be one of the mechanisms for achieving business sustainability according to (Wijaya et al., 2025). This observation is in agreement with the conclusions of (Sajjad et al., 2024), who find out that sustainability leadership uses mechanisms at personal, organizational, and social levels. Intrinsic motivation, which is one of the mechanisms that can increase the impact of transformational leadership on sustainability performance according to (Gaybullaev & Strode, 2026), and the well-being of employees, as stressed by (Wijaya et al., 2025), are two important aspects of the triple bottom line approach. Transparency and accountability also become important aspects in helping with sustainability-driven corporate strategies and performance, as highlighted by (Tabaghdehi et al., 2026) and (Puspita et al., 2024). In addition to this, (Chen & Wu, 2022) showed that green mindfulness and green self-efficacy enhance the link between green transformational leadership and green behavior among employees, thus implying that it is important for employees to have proper knowledge about the issue.

Generally, the pathways whereby leadership affects sustainability are multi-dimensional and interactive in nature. The main pathways of leadership for sustainable performance include innovation, knowledge management, employee empowerment, GHRM, organizational culture, organizational learning, intrinsic motivation, employee welfare, transparency, accountability, and mindfulness. There is a lack of scholarly literature concerning the behavioral pathways of CEO engagement in ESG practices, as noted by (Agnese et al., 2026).

Challenges and Factors Supporting Leadership Effectiveness (RQ3)

The efficacy of leadership in incorporating sustainability in the organization's strategy depends to a large extent on the challenges and other contributing elements that affect the process. In light of the analysis of literature, there are several major challenges associated with the promotion of sustainability.

The greatest difficulty is that of stakeholder resistance. It has been noted by (Wijaya et al., 2025) and (Javed et al., 2026) that the resistance by several parties, both internal and external to the organization, is a significant hindrance in achieving sustainability. Also, financial issues are another important hurdle because sustainability needs certain investments that might be considered as financial burden for the organization, particularly in its early stage of development towards sustainability. Furthermore, there are other difficulties related to organizational and human resources capacity-building because sustainability needs certain skills and knowledge which are not always available in the organization.

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There are other barriers related to regulation in order to put sustainability into practice. The uncertainty and difficulty of regulations in many different areas make it hard for organizations to incorporate sustainability in their operations. This is because of the fragmented nature of the research conducted, as explained by (Agnese et al., 2026) and (Theryo et al., 2026), where there is a lack of evidence on the effect of leadership, especially of the CEO and digital leadership, on sustainability performance in the long run. There is also an unbalanced view on the different aspects of sustainability according to (Demirsoy et al., 2026), environmental sustainability is more dominant compared to social sustainability and economic performance.

However, there are many factors which have been mentioned in the literature that make leadership effective in creating sustainability. The cross-sector collaboration approach suggested by (Javed et al., 2026) has been very helpful in removing the barriers of sustainability since it facilitates organizations to use resources and knowledge from different stakeholders. Another important aspect for making sustainability effective is aligning it with business goals. In this way, organizations can see it as an opportunity rather than a burden.

Educational and communicative efforts will help to minimize the level of resistance to sustainability efforts by increasing the level of stakeholder awareness. The harmonization of regulations is also important since it helps to provide legal certainty and consistency in policies when companies are implementing their sustainability programs. According to (Puspita et al., 2024), the efficiency of corporate governance systems has an important role in sustainability performance improvement.

The use of the literature by (Gaybullaev & Strode, 2026) will help in understanding the features of the board and the organizational culture as supportive factors that enhance the effects of transformational leadership on sustainability performance. The identification of five leadership competencies namely technological innovation, aligned execution, value creation, business intelligence, and dynamic capabilities that support sustainable corporate performance clearly indicates that enhancing the competencies of leaders is an effective strategy for organizations. According to (Khan et al., 2026), having a strategic focus on eco-innovation has a significant effect on encouraging sustainability practices. Digital transformation according to (Khan et al., 2026) and (Theryo et al., 2026) will act as a driving force that enhances the link between leadership and sustainability.

In general, the efficiency of leadership on sustainable integration depends on the interaction of various internal and external challenges and already existing enablers. Issues like stakeholders' reluctance, financial limitations, building capacity, legislative issues, lack of integration of research, imbalance in the triple bottom line may be overcome by means of the following strategies: cross-sector collaboration, strategic alignment, good governance, competency development of leaders, innovative culture and digital transformation. The integration of sustainability requires the balanced use of all three aspects of the triple bottom line and the implementation of strategies to cope with challenges and benefit from enablers at the same time.

Integration of Research Findings and Contributions

This study makes a significant contribution by integrating various perspectives on leadership and sustainability that were previously fragmented. The novelty of this study lies in its comprehensive synthesis, which encompasses three main aspects: the identification of effective leadership styles and practices; the mapping of mechanisms through which leadership influences

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sustainability; and the analysis of challenges and enabling factors that affect leadership effectiveness. Unlike previous studies, which tended to examine leadership styles and aspects of sustainability separately, this study demonstrates that the success of leadership in promoting sustainability depends not only on selecting the right leadership style but also on a deep understanding of the mechanisms linking leadership to sustainability outcomes, as well as the ability to overcome various challenges and leverage existing supporting factors.

Conclusion

This study aims to systematically analyze the role of leadership in promoting business and social sustainability based on management and marketing literature. Using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method on 20 articles published between 2021 and 2026, this study successfully answered the three research questions that had been formulated.

Based on the results of the analysis, transformational leadership, responsible leadership, ethical leadership, green leadership, digital leadership, inclusive leadership, and female leadership have been shown to be effective in promoting organizational sustainability. Transformational leadership was the most researched style and always had a positive effect on environmental, social, economic and governance performance. The results show that the effectiveness of every leadership style depends on the organizational context, industry and sustainability challenges. Combining different leadership styles leads to a better impact than using a single leadership style in isolation.

The study also identified ten mechanisms that play a key role in linking leadership to sustainability performance: innovation, knowledge sharing and knowledge management, employe engagement, green human resource management (GHRM), organizational culture, organizational learning, intrinsic motivation, employe well-being, transparency and accountability, and green mindfulness and green self-efficacy. These mechanisms serve as channels thru which leadership influences sustainability outcomes, showing that effective leadership is not only dependent on a particular style but also on a leader's ability to activate and manage organizational mechanisms that support sustainability.

Conversely, the key challenges faced are resistance from stakeholders, financial constraints, capacity building, regulatory barriers, fragmentation of research and imbalances in the triple bottom line. Critical enablers include cross-sector collaboration strategies, aligning sustainability with business goals, stakeholder awareness raising, regulatory harmonization, effective corporate governance, board characteristics and organizational climate, leadership competencies, a culture of innovation, and digital transformation. Sustainability can be achieved thru a comprehensive strategy that integrates strategies to address challenges and leverage enabling factors simultaneously.

This study has several limitations, including: the literature review was limited to articles indexed in Google Scholar between 2021 and 2026; the qualitative descriptive approach adopted does not statistically examine causal relationships; and the literature is dominated by developed countries and the manufacturing industry, which may limit the generalizability of the results. Future research could include quantitative empirical studies to test causal relationships, a deep analysis of CEO behavioral mechanisms in ESG strategies, an evaluation of the long-term impact of digital leadership, research on the triple bottom line balance, and an expansion of the scope to developing countries and the SME sector. Therefore, the development of sustainability-

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oriented leadership capabilities is a strategic investment for organizations that aim for sustainable long-term performance.

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