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## Corporate Sustainability Management: A Shift from Green-Washing to Proactive Strategies

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### **Abstract:**

*Corporate sustainability strategies integrate social and environmental issues, caused by the organization's activities into the strategic management process. The commitment of companies to corporate sustainability requires a strategic approach to incorporate sustainability practices into business strategy and operations rather than demonstrating rhetoric and green-washing behaviors as demonstrated by most companies. This paper explains the drive for corporate suitability, how managers integrate sustainability practices into their business strategies, and the factors that hinder the integration of sustainability into strategic management. The paper reveals the drivers for integrating corporate sustainability into strategic management: regulatory compliance, legitimacy, corporate reputation, and external pressures. It also reveals balance scorecard and sustainability reporting as sustainability management tools. This research finds the use of appropriate management tools and systems, stakeholder engagement, transparency and communication, management control, organizational culture, and appropriate investment as factors that can facilitate or hamper successful integration and implementation of corporate sustainability strategies.*

**Keywords:** Strategic management; corporate sustainability strategies; corporate sustainability integration; drivers of corporate sustainability

### **1. Introduction**

Sustainability has become a fundamental concept in strategic management practice. Over the decade, an increasing number of managers are voluntarily incorporating sustainability initiatives and practices into their strategy, business models, organizational processes and structures as they realize its importance for the survival of their companies in the face of fierce global competition (Eweje, 2011; Eccles, Ioannou & Serafeim, 2014).

Sustainability practices have a considerable effect on a company's relationships with its stakeholders such as shareholders, customers, employees, and investors (Ioannou & Serafeim, 2015). To achieve long-term objectives of stakeholders, managers need to consider integrating corporate sustainability into their strategic decision-making processes including strategy formulation, implementation, and evaluation (Baumgartner, 2009; Bonn & Fisher, 2011; Hahn, 2013). Thus, a firm's commitment to achieve corporate sustainability requires a strategic approach that ensures that corporate sustainability becomes an integral part of the firm's strategy and processes. In other words, if a corporate sustainability strategy is to be successful, it must develop from and be embedded into the business vision and strategy.

In addition to the efforts by NGOs, international organizations, and governments, some researchers have concluded that several organizations seem to be demonstrating a commitment to sustainable behavior; but characterized with rhetoric and green-washing (e.g., Ramus & Montiel, 2005). Among the reasons for such green-washing is the fact that, formulating and implementing sustainability strategies remain a challenge: since achieving sustainability is fundamentally different than implementing another strategy in the organization (Epstein, 2008). Further, either many managers are uninformed or lack a strategic approach of how to incorporate sustainability concepts into their business strategies and practices, or they rarely consider it in strategic management (Kiron et al., 2013; Hahn, 2013). In such cases, sustainability issues are pursued more coincidentally than with a clear, integrated strategy (Baumgartner & Ebner, 2010). Besides the green-washing, some managers have failed to develop any comprehensive sustainability strategy or any systematic way of managing their social and environmental impacts (Epstein, 2008).

Following the increasing call on managers to make significant changes to more effectively manage the social, economic, and environmental impacts of their business activities (Epstein, 2008), there is the need for managers to shift from green-washing to proactively incorporate sustainability into the firm's strategic actions. This paper analyses previous studies on the drive for corporate suitability, how managers integrate sustainability practices into their business strategies and review factors that hinder the integration of sustainability into strategic management. Proactively integrating corporate sustainability into strategic management is one of the surest ways for organizations to deal with the challenges to be competitive and achieve sustainable world offers. The primary contribution of this article is to explain how firms

can integrate and implement sustainability practices into business strategies, whilst overcoming barriers that hinder effective integration and implementation of sustainability practices.

## 2. Research Questions

This study aims to answer the following questions:

- Which motives drive firms to embark on corporate sustainability journey?
- What are some tools for integrating Sustainability Practices into Strategic Management?
- What are the supporting factors or barriers for sustainability integration?

## 3. Corporate Sustainability

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) defines sustainability as the practice of measuring and disclosing sustainability information alongside or integrated with companies' existing reporting practices. Corporate sustainability has been defined by myriad authorities as a means of meeting the needs of a firm's direct and indirect stakeholders, without compromising its ability to meet the needs of future stakeholders as well (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987; Dyllick & Hockerts, 2002; Hart & Milstein, 2003; Norman & MacDonald, 2004; Elkington, 2004). This definition involves taking into account the needs of a company while protecting, sustaining, and enhancing the human and natural resources for future use (Labuschagne et al., 2005). It is presented in Figure 1 as follows:

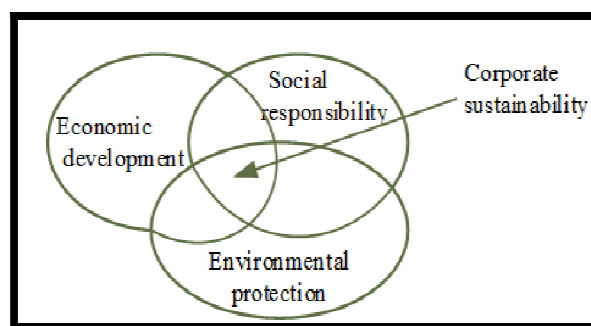


Figure 1: Corporate Sustainability  
Bansal (2005)

From figure 1, it can be realized that, for a company to attain corporate sustainability, the environment, society and economy are of key importance. When economic development, environmental protection, and social responsibility intersect corporate sustainability is achieved (Bansal, 2005). The most widely acknowledged definition of sustainability that has gained eminence over time is the triple bottom line (TBL) consideration of environmental responsibility, economic viability, and social responsibility (Yu & Zhao, 2015). For a company to achieve corporate sustainability all these three elements (economic development, environmental protection, and social responsibility), must come to play. Focus on environmental responsibility or economic sustainability alone can lead to short term success, for long term, all three components need to be satisfied equally (Dyllick & Hockerts, 2002).

## 4. Strategic Management

There are numerous definitions of strategic management. According to Porter (1996), a strategy is choosing to perform activities differently better than rivals do, and in a way which typically lowers costs or better serves customer needs. Whereas Hinterhuber (2004) explains a strategy to mean: how organizations use their resources and capabilities to achieve goals of the firm. Boddy (2005) elucidate a strategy as the business an organization wants to establish, the direction it wants to pursue and the methods the firm would use to achieve its goals.

Johnson and Scholes (2008) describe strategy as the direction and scope of an organization over the long term, which gives an advantage in a changing environment through its configuration of resources and competencies to fulfill stakeholder expectations. The use of the term 'strategic' implies that there is an overall goal, or specific vision concerning the nature of success, and a plan to contribute to strategy implementation and goal attainment (Baumgartner & Korhonen, 2010; Baumgartner & Rauter, 2017). Strategy is formulated at three levels: corporate level, business level and functional level. The Corporate level, business level and functional level is also known as the normative, strategic and operational level respectively. In figure 2 below, the three levels at which strategy is formulated in an organization are illustrated. At the Normative level, strategy is all about the business as a whole. Strategy at this level is concerned with the reason for the organization's existence (mission), its desired future destination (vision) as well as the entire units of the organizations. Strategy at the normative level is formulated by top management. At strategic level, strategy is all about turning business visions into realities and involves defining the competitive position of the firm's business units. At this level, strategy is formulated by heads of strategic units. At the operational level, strategy is all about identifying the organizational strengths and weaknesses so as to achieve strategic level goals and objectives. Strategy at this level is formulated by operational heads.

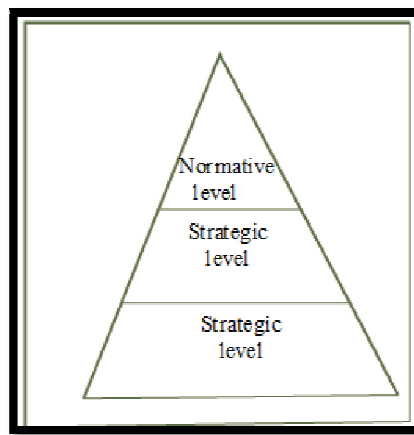


Figure 2: Levels of Strategy

## 5. Corporate Sustainability and Strategic Management

Corporate sustainability strategies integrate social and environmental issues caused through the organization's primary and secondary activities into the strategic management process and highlight the strategic position of a company about sustainable development (Salzmann et al., 2005; Baumgartner & Rauter, 2017). It describes how managers deal with sustainability issues in business practice. Notably, social and environmental issues have attracted increased scrutiny and debate forcing many companies to pursue social and ecological improvements both in their companies (Zimmer et al., 2016; Carter & Rogers, 2008; Dyllick & Hockerts, 2002). In formulating strategies, organizations tackle it from three levels. That is, the normative level, strategic level and the operational level. Integration of organizational strategies with sustainability practices will also have to be tackled from the three levels (normative, strategic and operational). Figure 3 below depicts how integration is done at the three levels of strategy. Multiple frameworks grounded in the strategic management, suggest the integration of corporate sustainability at the normative, strategic, and operational level (e.g., Labuschagne et al., 2005; Zhang et al., 2013; Baumgartner, 2014). Baumgartner (2014) argues that at the normative level, the focus is to promote the legitimacy of firm activities by stakeholders and society as a whole and it consists of corporate vision and policy, corporate governance, and organizational culture. Whereas integration at the strategic management level is to ensure the effectiveness of sustainability objectives in the long-term are achieved, managers at the operational level are to ensure efficient implementation of corporate sustainability strategies at this level (Engert et al., 2015).

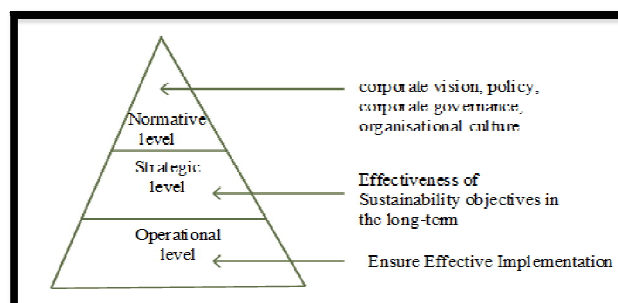


Figure 3: Integration at the Levels of Strategy

Other authors may refer to the three levels of strategy as strategic, business and operational levels. Scientific literature suggest numerous approaches that managers can employ to integrate sustainability into their corporate strategies at strategic, business, and operational levels of their organization (e.g. Dyllick, 2000; Stead & Stead, 2000; Hardtke & Prehn, 2001; Baumgartner, 2009; Galbreath, 2009; Nathan, 2010). In particular, managers of manufacturing firms have been challenged to consider integrating sustainability practices beyond regulatory requirements (e.g., Srivastava, 2007; Zhu & Lai, 2007; Carter & Rogers, 2008). The many management systems required to execute sustainability strategies are critical elements for achieving competitive advantage (Brunner, 2006; Epstein, 2008). Subsequently, researchers suggest ways of measuring the sustainability performance of firms (e.g., Atkinson, 2000; Montiel, & Delgado-Ceballos, 2014).

## 6. Results and Findings

### 6.1. Drive for Sustainability in Corporate Strategy

The motive to integrate sustainability into strategic management has become a dominant topic within academia and among practitioners (Klettner et al., 2014). Before an organization decides to take a step towards sustainability, managers have to be convinced that there is a business need to respond to sustainability. The sustainability drivers are critical since they can influence initiatives emphasizing the adoption of new manufacturing technologies, the development of new markets for sustainable products (Schrettle et al., 2013). Integrating sustainability into a corporate strategy can

increase employee motivation and thereby improve productivity, and equally make the organization attractiveness to existing and potential employees (Carter & Rogers, 2008). In today's competitive business environment, customers and consumers demand companies to demonstrate considerable environmental, economic and social standing while environmentally and socially friendly in their business activities. Firms are therefore keen on abiding since this has become a source of competitive factor.

#### 6.1.1. External Pressures and Company Size

External pressure is one of the reasons why firms embark on a corporate sustainability journey. Stakeholders play a key role in the success of any organization due to the power or interest they possess concerning the firm. According to Harm et al. (2013), the motivation for integrating sustainability into strategic management can result from pressures and requirements of different internal and external stakeholders. Companies may be faced with the challenge of engaging in integration whether ready or not when pressure seems to be mounted from people who have interest or power in the organization. These people can either make or mar an organization hence, a reason why firms may embark on integration. Motives within the organizational influence include the size of the company, top management initiatives, legitimacy, corporate reputation, risk reduction, and cost optimization, (Harm & Kuhnen, 2013). Researchers, however, have a diverse opinion on the extent to which company size influences the drive for integrating sustainability into strategic management. Yu and Chen (2014), for example, state that, corporate sustainability initiatives and strategies strongly associate with the size of a company and that a company's commitment to corporate sustainability is evident irrespective of company size. In contrast, Siebenhüner and Arnold (2007) argue that company size has little impact on the integration of corporate sustainability.

#### 6.1.2. Corporate Reputation

In today's competitive environment, the aim of every firm is to be the best and stay at the top while building reputation. This has necessitated organizations to identify and engage in activities that creates competitive advantage and builds corporate reputation. Implementing corporate sustainability strategies has a positive effect on corporate reputation (Klettner et al., 2014) According to Falkenberg and Brunsael (2011), improvements to corporate reputation resulting from sustainability initiatives and strategies are often difficult to imitate. Sustainability initiatives that focus on social dimensions are of great importance in enhancing corporate reputation. However, these social initiatives strategically integrate and connect to organizational strategy. Other internal drivers primarily focus on sustainability-oriented optimization of processes such as increases in eco-efficiency or Socio-efficiency, and reduction in both resource consumption and costs (Dyllick & Hockerts, 2002).

#### 6.1.3. Legitimacy

Another driver for integrating corporate sustainability into strategic management is the commitment by managers to social and environmental responsiveness. Inversely, Konar and Cohen (2001) indicate that, firms with better sustainability performance are more attractive investments due to the lower perceived compliance and reputational costs and liabilities. The line in-between legitimacy, as an internal factor and as an external is sometimes blurred. Some organizations view legality as a firms activities being desirable and consistent with societal norms. Achieving legitimacy means that a firm is expected to comply with environmental and social regulations and laws, and establishing and maintaining stakeholder relationships (Ramus & Montiel, 2005; Epstein, 2008;).

Several researchers have discussed social responsibility in terms of implementing it strategically as a win-win strategy. Porter and Kramer (2006) call this win-win situation. Falck and Heblich (2007) explain this win-win strategy as follows: a company 'can do well by doing good'; in other words, it can make a profit and make the world a better place at the same time.' Yu and Chen (2014) stated that a company which decides to assume environmental responsibility needs a fully functional strategic framework that is consistent with the company's objectives, and that the context must encompass both the current ecological initiatives and philosophy.

#### 6.1.4. Regulatory Compliance

The external drivers consist of government and regulatory compliance, societal values and norms, customer demands, demand by pressure groups and competitive advantage (Harm & Kuhnen 2013; Schrettle et al., 2013). There is a growing perception that most businesses are the primary cause of the economic, environmental, and social problems in our world today, resulting in more regulation and mistrust of businesses and a decline in their competitiveness (Porter & Kramer 2011). Many firms have therefore adopted sustainability into their corporate strategies to comply with social and environmental laws related to their businesses and to avoid financial losses resulting from possible legal fines (Schaltegger, 2011). Day in and out, sustainability frameworks have been developed by regulatory bodies to serve as a guide to firms. There are many regulations such as those to do with human rights, employment, animal welfare, company reporting and food quality and safety that cross the economic, social and environmental sustainability dimensions (Marshall et al., 2005).

### *6.2. Tools for Integrating Sustainability Practices into Strategic Management*

Implementing corporate sustainability in an organization is a vital management task (Epstein, 2008). It is not enough for managers to only integrate sustainability practices in their strategies, but there is also the need to acquire new knowledge, new practices and to choose and apply specific management measures (Bansal, 2002). Sustainability management tools describe administrative technologies to manage sustainability issues by structuring, organizing,

measuring, and communicating sustainability information and developing and establishing processes and structures (Windolph et al., 2014). Sustainability management tools enable business managers to operationalize sustainability-oriented strategies and to coordinate the activities throughout an enterprise to support managers to find ways to reduce negative environmental and social impacts, exploit and manage positive results, and simultaneously stay competitive and economically successful (Johnson & Schaltegger, 2016). As indicated by researchers, well-organized sustainability management requires instruments and tools to measure, manage, and communicate sustainability issues effectively. Sustainability management tools help to achieve sustainability objective within the corporate strategy (Epstein, 2008).

### 6.2.1. Balanced Scorecard

One tool that firms use to support the successful implementation of corporate strategies is the Balanced Scorecard. This links operational and non-financial corporate activities with causal chains to the firm's long-term strategy, while managing the organizing function of firm activities based on their strategic importance (Figge et al., 2002). According to Figge et al., (2002), the Balanced Scorecard is a promising management tool which incorporates environmental and social aspects into the primary management system of a firm. The Balanced score card translates a company's vision and strategy into strategic objective and measures, performance indicators, targets and measures with respect to four perspectives: finance, customers, internal business processes, and learning and growth (Falle et al., 2016). This is further explained in tables 1 and 2 below.

Perspective	Indication
Financial	How to create sustainable economic value
Internal Business Process	How to satisfy stakeholders
Learning and Growth	Employee Performance, High Performance
Customer	Customer requirements

Table 1: Balance Scorecard

Source: [www.pinterest.com](http://www.pinterest.com)

Perspective	Generic Measurement
Financial	Cash flow, Sales growth, Economic value - added, Return on Capital Employed
Customer	Profitability, market share, customer satisfaction, retention, acquisition
Internal Business Process	Measurements along the value chain for: Innovation: measures how well the company identifies the customers' future needs Operation: measures of quality, cycle time and costs Post sales service : measures for warranty, repair and treatment of defects and returns
Learning and Growth	Includes requirement for: People: employee retention, training, skills, morale Systems : measure of availability of critical real time information needed for front line employees

Table 2: Balanced Scorecard Measurements

Source: [www.pinterest.com](http://www.pinterest.com)

Conceptually, sustainability management with the BSC seeks to address the problem of corporate contributions to sustainability in an integrative way (Figge et al., 2002). It posits that for companies to contribute to sustainable development, it is desirable that corporate performance improves in all three dimensions of sustainability – economic, environmental and social – simultaneously (see Figge et al., 2001). Figge et al. (2002) argue that the process of formulating a Sustainability Balance Scorecard (SBSC) involves three significant steps. First, select the strategic business unit. This step presupposes that a strategy of the business unit exists. Thus, before top executives formulate an SBSC, they must reach a general agreement on what the plan is, no matter whether it explicitly mentions sustainability issues or not. Second, identify the environmental and social aspects. The result is a profile of the social and ecological exposure of the business unit. The purpose of this step is to identify all the pertinent social and ecological aspects to obtain a comprehensive list of all possibly strategically relevant social and ecological issues. For the identification of the social and ecological exposure of a business unit, two generic frameworks can be used. Third, the relevance of these aspects for the specific business unit's strategy has to be determined. Accordingly, Figge et al., (2002) indicate that the purpose of this step is to translate the verbally formulated strategy of a business unit into causally linked objectives and indicators. They have also developed a matrix that can be used to determine the strategic relevance of environmental and social aspects of Sustainability Balance Scorecard. They argue that sustainability management with the Balanced Scorecard helps to overcome the shortcomings of conventional approaches to environmental and social management systems by integrating the three pillars of sustainability into a single and overarching strategic management tool.

If a company can correctly manage sustainability issues, the information generated from the Balanced Scorecard and other strategic planning tools should not be used solely for internal purposes. Companies can become more

transparent and inform external stakeholders about their sustainability performance through sustainability reporting (Butler et al., 2011).

### 6.2.2. Sustainability Reporting

Sustainability reporting describes the practice of measuring, disclosing, and being accountable to internal and external stakeholders, for organizational performance towards the goal of sustainable development (GRI, 2010). Sustainability reporting as a type of non-financial report is the practice of measuring, disclosing, and being accountable to stakeholders for organizational performance (Goel, 2010). It is synonymous with citizenship reporting, social reporting, triple bottom line reporting, and other terms that encompass the economic, environmental, and social aspects of an organization's performance (GRI, 2010). Sustainability reporting is an on-going journey by businesses, which is geared towards increased transparency and accountability (Jackson et al., 2011), which aims at ensuring that firms are engaging in sustainable activities.

The discrepancies in sustainability reports by firms necessitated the need for a guide to ensure that reports are by the set standards. Hence, several initiatives were launched to guide organizations in preparing sustainability reports. These initiatives include the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact, the ISO 26000 Guidance Standard on Social Responsibility and the Global Reporting Initiative (Slack, 2011; Vanclay & Esteves, 2011).

Initiatives	Mode of Operation
OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises	The OECD Guidelines is a government-backed international corporate accountability mechanism that is geared towards encouraging good business ethics around the world. They are recommendations from governments to multinational enterprises operating in or from countries that are signatories to the Declaration on International Investment and Multinational Enterprises (OECD 2011). The international nature of the OECD distinguishes it from the other sustainability reporting standards. The Guidelines cover business ethics on employment, human rights, information disclosure, combating bribery, science, and technology, competition, and taxation
The Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact	The UN Global Compact's Ten Principles are derived from: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Labor Organization's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and the United Nations Convention Against Corruption. These principles aim at companies operating in ways that, at minimum, meet the fundamental responsibilities in the areas of human rights, labor, environment and anti-corruption.
ISO 26000 Guidance Standard on Social Responsibility	ISO 26000:2010 is intended to assist organizations in contributing to sustainable development. It is intended to encourage them to go beyond legal compliance, recognizing that compliance with the law is a fundamental duty of any organization and an essential part of their social responsibility. In applying ISO 26000:2010, it is advisable that an organization take into consideration societal, environmental, legal, cultural, political and organizational diversity, as well as differences in economic conditions while being consistent with international norms of behavior.
Global Reporting Initiative	Global Reporting Initiative is an international organization, launched in 1997 with the goal of enhancing the quality, rigor, and utility of sustainability reporting by developing and disseminating sustainability reporting guidelines.  It pioneered and developed a comprehensive sustainability reporting framework that is widely used around the world and has enabled organizations to measure and report their economic, environmental, social and governance (Key areas of sustainability)

Table 3: Sustainability Reporting Initiatives

Source: OECD, 2011

### 6.3. Supporting Factors and Barriers to Sustainability Integration

With sustainability gaining popularity amongst businesses, most firms are trying to incorporate sustainable activities, into their strategies. However, there are factors that either facilitate or hamper successful integration and implementation of corporate sustainability strategies.

### 6.3.1. Use of Appropriate Management tools and systems

The use of appropriate management tools and systems (Gond et al., 2012) is one of the supporting factors to sustainability integration. For effective sustainability integration, firms need to make use of the right management tools and systems. Once management tools and systems are inappropriate, sustainability integration become impossible. Good and efficient management tools and systems are supporting factors to sustainability integration whereas wrong and inefficient management tools and systems are barriers to sustainability integration. It is therefore necessary that firms identify their line of integration and choose appropriate management tools and equipment to yield positive result. Researchers indicate the more managers rely on effective management control tools, the better they are able to integrate sustainability into competitive corporate strategies and its related positive impacts on economic performance (Kaplan & Norton, 1992; Figge et al., 2002; Schaltegger, 2011). For example, findings from previous researches show that environmental (ISO 14001) and quality management systems (ISO 9001) are the most management systems that managers employed. Only a few scholars (e.g. van Bommel, 2011; Hahn, 2013) focus on management systems for social responsibility, or to related standards and guidelines social accountability 8000 (SA 8000), the British standard for occupational health and safety management systems (OHSAS18001), and the social responsibility guideline (ISO 26000).

### 6.3.2. Stakeholder Engagement

Strategic management involves managing the expectation of stakeholders. Various stakeholders have different interests and powers, the extent to which they can facilitate or block the strategy of an organization. The extent to which various stakeholder are engaged would either facilitate or hinder the integration of sustainability practices into corporate strategies. Kourula (2006) identified various forms of stakeholder engagement that contribute to the creation of shared value. These include sponsorship, single-issue consultation, research cooperation, employee training and volunteerism, certification and eco-labelling, systematic dialogue, common projects and programs, strategic partnerships). The integration of environmental and social issues into corporate mid-term and long-term goals demands that a careful balance be achieved between the needs of internal and external stakeholders (Baumgartner & Rauter, 2017).

### 6.3.3. Transparency and Communication

Internal and external communication plays an important role in enhancing the transparency of corporate sustainability issues within a company (Engert et al., 2016). Some researchers emphasize external communication mainly in the form of sustainability reporting) and use of reporting and disclosure tools (e.g. Zhang et al., 2013; Klettner et al., 2014; Engert et al., 2016). Few researchers also indicate the significance of internal communication, with particular reference to the process of integration and implementation of corporate sustainability (e.g. Siebenhüner & Arnold, 2007; Engert et al., 2016). In general, the most common way of ensuring that firms are responding to the call for increased sustainability has been to ensure that they report on the entity's performance.

### 6.3.4. Organizational Culture

The authors over years have realized that culture is a key determinant of the performance of an organization and plays a critical role in ensuring successful integration. It refers to the way of life of a people. Thus, their belief patterns, values and ways of adapting to situation, which then becomes a part of them and influences their behavior. Objectively, an appropriate organizational culture is to promote a sustainability-oriented organizational culture such that in practice a full response may be made to environmental and social challenges (Linnenluecke & Griffiths, 2010). When employees at all levels share values, assumptions, beliefs that are aligned with sustainability goals and Several authors point to the critical role of corporate culture in creating and implementing business sustainability (Dubois & Dubois, 2012; Epstein & Buhovac, 2014; Laszlo & Zhexembayeva, 2011; Renwick et al. 2013; Savitz & Weber 2013, Hoffman, 2010) As indicated by Bonn and Fisher (2011), corporate leaders need to ensure that sustainability initiatives and strategies embedded in and supported by organizational culture in a way that allows incorporation of corporate sustainability into strategic management.

### 6.3.5. Management Control

Most often, economic performance has an effect on the attitudes and behavior of management of a company. This therefore directly affects and limits the ability of managers to incorporate sustainability integration. According to Maon et al. (2008), manager attitudes towards, and perceptions of, the concept of corporate sustainability exert an apparent influence on related strategy design. Also, attitudes among middle management tend to mirror those of top management (Engert et al., 2016). Harmon et al. (2009) argues that changing manager attitudes and behavior concerning corporate sustainability integration would minimize internal organizational deficiencies and make for a much stronger business case. As indicated by Millar et al. (2012), 'implementation and organizational change are the key issues the sustainability agenda is demanding action on. This requires a change of thinking, a change of attitude that usually needs to start with leadership'.

### 6.3.6. Appropriate Investments

Finally, integration of corporate sustainability into strategic management will require increased investments (Paraschiv et al., 2012; Peters & Zelewski, 2013). The extent to which investments are channeled into sustainability will determine its success, especially at the initial stage. Holmberg and Robert (2000) state that such investments are essential in that they lead to lower resource use in production and thus to less waste. Firms who cannot make such huge investments in the sustainability process may be compelled to abort the idea of corporate sustainability and vice versa.

## 7. Conclusion

It is evident that many companies are incrementally integrating corporate sustainability into their business activities and organizational culture. The extant literature has not established inconsistencies in strategy building processes between sustainability strategies and traditional strategies. Different drivers, barriers, and capabilities influence strategic management decisions, and the same applies to corporate sustainability strategies. Firms have continuously engaged in rhetoric strategies instead of proactive ones.

The factors that either facilitate or impede integrating corporate sustainability into strategic management for success reveal that, varying organizations of different capabilities can strive to balance both internal and external drivers to be responsive to the sustainability demands.

This study adds to the body of knowledge on corporative sustainability. As research in this area increases by the day, it becomes evident that integration actually starts at the three levels of strategy. Firms should therefore start the integration process from that level and see how best sustainability practices could be inculcated from that level.

Firms should make it a point to have specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound. Most strategies are not specific, not measurable, unattainable, unrealistic and not time-bound; the reason why they are unattained.

Practitioners should take note of the drivers of integration as they play a key role in attaining corporate sustainability. Firms should also identify which tool for integrating sustainability practices works for them and adhere to it. The tool that may work for company 'A' may not work for company 'B'. Firms should therefore examine their vision, mission and goals and see which tool works for them.

This paper proposes a guide to attaining corporate sustainability: firms should understand that a chunk of the work depends on how best they will adhere to set goals and maintain discipline.

## 8. Future Research

Future research should explore the relationship between managers and corporate sustainability by examining how managers directly influence the integration of sustainability practices into their corporate strategies, and how they manage and measure implementation of sustainability strategies within corporate strategy.

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