

The Effect of Social Responsibility on the Relationship between Leadership Style and Sustainable Performance of SMEs in Jordan

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Abstract

This study sought to determine how social responsibility mediated the association between leadership style and the long-term success of the SME sector in Jordan. In order to accomplish this goal, the study adopted a descriptive-analytical methodology and created a questionnaire to gather information from the sample of (357) managers employed in Jordan's SME sector. The study employed SPSS and the Structure Equation Model (SEM) to analyses the obtained data and test the hypotheses. A total of (350) appropriate questionnaire was recovered for statistical analysis. The study's findings indicated that leadership style has an impact on the sustainable performance of the SME sector in Jordan, as well as on social responsibility and there is an impact of social responsibility on sustainability performance. Additionally, social responsibility plays a mediating role in the relationship between leadership style and sustainable performance of the SME sector in Jordan. In light of these findings, the study suggested that in order to be more universal, the following study should collect information from other organizations in a different Jordanian industry.

Keywords: Social Responsibility, Leadership Style, Sustainable Performance, SMEs, Jordan.

1. Introduction

Sustainable development is receiving increased attention from academics. In order to increase an organization's long-term performance, researchers are investigating various strategies. In recent years, many businesses have understood how critical it is to priorities not just economic achievement but also success on the level of social and environmental (Bombiak & Marciniuk-Kluska, 2018). Growing environmental consciousness is also increasing stakeholder pressure on businesses to enhance sustainable performance such as (social and environmental performance) (Ghazilla et al., 2015; Kahle & Gurel-Atay, 2013).

Contrarily, the SME sector frequently puts commercial gains ahead of social and environmental considerations because it makes a significant economic contribution to developing countries (Fuji et al., 2020; Hubbard, 2009). Therefore, it is crucial for SMEs to handle environmental issues while maintaining a balance between their performance in terms of the economy, the environment, and society.

Pro-environmental behaviors (PEBs) are frequently used to improve industrial businesses' long-term performance and address environmental issues (Huang et al., 2021). Environmental behaviors known as PEBs have a positive impact (Iqbal & Ahmad, 2020). In earlier studies (Iqbal & Nawaz, 2021; Khan et al., 2021) it was examined how specific PEB traits, such as organizational citizenship behavior towards the environment (OCBE), might be.

Every organization and every department inside an organization needs and values OCBE. On the other hand, academics and employers have paid less attention to OCBE. As a result, it is imperative to focus on OCBE and sustainability issues. Previous studies have shown that leadership also predicts long-term performance. Both responsible and sustainable leadership have been studied as independent characteristics that improve an organization's long-term success (Lamm et al., 2013; Unsworth et al., 2013).

Leadership is one of the most crucial elements determining employees' effectiveness at work, according to several studies (Shafie et al., 2013; Pradeep & Prabhu, 2011; Torlak & Kuzey, 2019). Additionally, CEOs act as motivational role models to increase understanding and support for the organization's objectives (Dess & Robinson, 1984). Leadership, according to Stogdill (1950), is the ability to influence how individuals accomplish organizational goals. Different types of leadership have different effects on the organization. Developing and honing their leadership style is one of the most crucial things that businesses can do to improve their company performance and survive in the current competitive market.

It is not entirely up to managers to decide how Social Responsibility (SR) is carried out. SR initiatives will be carried out more successfully if a firm leader embraces sustainable development and guarantees benefits for stakeholders, communities, and society. SCR interventions have been found by numerous earlier researches to positively affect financial performance (Hasan et al., 2018).

The relationship between leadership and social responsibility (SR) has been supported by a number of researches. Stakeholder theory (Coombs & Gilley, 2005), agency theory (Dunlop & Lee, 2004), institutional theory (Resick et al., 2013), management values theory (Schaubroeck et al., 2000), and upper echelon theory (Manner, 2010) are a few theories that have been used to explain the relationships between leadership and SR. Although several ideas have been used, there is still disagreement among experts over whether leadership has a significant influence on SR decisions or not (Lewis, 2014).

Therefore, the goal of this study is to evaluate the link between leadership styles (LS), sustainable performance (SP), and social responsibility (SR) practices, notably in the SME sector. As a result, the study fills a knowledge vacuum and makes significant contributions to the body of information on organizational leadership. In particular, it sheds light on how leadership influences long-term performance and workers' conceptions of social responsibility.

Five sections make up the research. In the Introduction section of the first section, we mentioned the main research issue. We created a theoretical framework that builds on earlier studies on this subject in the second section. In the third section, the investigation's methodology was described in detail. The fourth part makes suggestions regarding data analysis and hypothesis testing. The fifth and last section presents the findings and draws a conclusion.

2. Research Objective

The study's objective was to get a deeper understanding of how leadership styles impact sustainability performance in Jordan's SME sector. In Jordan's SME sector, the study also looked at how social responsibility mediates the relationship between leadership and sustainability performance. It found that leaders can collaborate to enhance sustainability performance, the workplace, and engagement with local institutions. The study also examined how executives perceived workplace sustainability performance in relation to business operations.

3. Literature Review

Many academics have long been interested in leadership studies (Yukl & Michel, 2019). Numerous theories and methods for effective leadership, particularly in organizational behavior and human resource management, have been put forth. For instance, Hughes et al. (2006) classified leadership into three groups: conditions, members, and leaders. In the majority of leadership studies, the three components of the leadership process—leaders, people, and conditions—were acknowledged. The need of effective leadership that encourages team members to freely pursue organizational goals has also been stressed by several academics (Lowe & Gardner, 2000), and self-sacrifice has been acknowledged as a desirable and essential leadership quality (Avolio & Bass, 1995; Conger & Kanungo, 1987).

Leaders inspire their teams to be more creative and tenacious in their pursuit of organizational objectives. In order to foster organizational commitment following employee satisfaction, leaders must use current strategies that encourage employee suitability. These strategies include providing a clear vision, effective communication, and individual concern (Waqas et al., 2017). It has been one of the most extensively studied topics in recent decades due to its significance for organizational effectiveness (Ng, 2017).

Any organization must invest in creativity and innovation if it wants to remain competitive and viable in the fast-paced and fiercely competitive economic world of today. Employee opinions on organizational leadership, practices, and policies that support or obstruct creativity and

innovation must be given priority as a creative catalyst. To get a competitive edge, businesses must be creative and capable of doing so. It may also aid in increasing worker productivity and decreasing stress (He et al., 2019).

Researchers from a variety of fields have tried to identify the essential qualities that foster creativity and innovation. Mumford et al. (2002) place emphasis on a number of variables in their evaluation, including the environment, individual performance, skills, and strategy. Prior studies on the factors that affect creativity and innovation have mostly concentrated on environmental (innovation-friendly environments) and human (leadership traits) aspects (Wang et al., 2014).

In order to enhance overall employee performance, Xian et al. (2020) mentioned that more studies are required to get better understand towards the variables that affect employees' innovative and creative organizational behavior. As a result, this study examines stresses related to obstacles and challenges, organizational innovation, and leadership (Nasir et al., 2020).

Businesses are dynamic due to a number of factors, including the global climate, resource scarcity, unstable, competitive global scenarios, sudden increase in population, political unpredictability, the current economic crisis, and new innovative technologies everywhere in the world (Demir et al., 2021). The essential goal of organizations is to avoid any unanticipated obstacles while maintaining their place in the global market while achieving high levels of performance. The fourth industrial revolution, which the German government recognized in 2011, increased company risk (Oztemel & Gursev, 2020).

According to the literature, sustainability today refers to maintaining long-term success in the international economy. Businesses are even investing in new firm development strategies, personnel, product design, processes, value chains, and culture in order to retain their global performance (ALNasser et al., 2013; Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011).

4. Research methodology

Quantitative research is the detailed examination of social phenomena via the use of quantitative methods, sometimes known as number crunching. Aspects of quantitative research include the development and use of numerical models, the formulation of hypotheses, and investigations into miracles. The estimate technique is crucial to quantitative research because it forges a strong link between real observation and the mathematical formulation of quantitative relationships (Sekaran, 2010).

Due to the analytical descriptive approach's suitability for the current study's nature, this study also developed a questionnaire as the primary instrument for gathering data from the study sample. The theoretical literature pertinent to the current study's subject was also reviewed in books or scientific periodicals.

4.1 Research Respondents

Around 4300 people who work at the administrative level in Jordan's SME industry were chosen as respondents for this study based on who is most impacted by this system. The researcher also looked at any crucial data that may be gleaned from this group.

4.2 Sample of the Research

The study sample was selected based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample determination table, according to that the size of the study sample is (340), and according to Leveugle (2009) to ensure a 95% confidence level the study sample was (357) participants.

The study's participants were chosen at random, and the researcher handed 357 questionnaires to participants. For statistical analysis, a total of 350 valid surveys—or 98.03% of all distributed surveys—were recovered. This speed is suitable for scientific research. The following table shows the demographic factors of the research sample.

Table 1. The research sample distribution according to their demographic factors

Factor	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Age	20-29	64	18.29%
	30-39	116	33.14%
	40-49	92	26.29%
	50 and above	78	22.29%
Qualification	bachelor's	162	46.29%
	Master	121	34.57%
	PhD	67	19.14%
	Total	350	100%

4.3 Study Instrument

A questionnaire was the main tool the researcher utilized to collect data for the current investigation. The questionnaire is made up of several related questions that work together to help the researcher accomplish her goal by presenting a challenge. In addition, the questionnaire is a search tool that consists of a number of inquiries in addition to other data requests to collect information from the people being studied. The questionnaires are inexpensive, require little

work, and frequently have predetermined answers that make data collection and organization simple.

A questionnaire with five options from strongly agree to strongly disagree to a relative weight (5-1)—was used in this investigation. The questionnaire was divided into the following sections:

The first section is focused with the respondents' personal information (age and education level).

The second section addresses the independent variable (Leadership Style).

Third Section: This section is concerned with the dependent variable (Sustainable Performance).

Fourth Section: This section is concerned with the mediator variable (Social Responsibility).

3.5 Statistical Techniques

Descriptive and analytical statistical methods were employed to test the study's hypotheses, with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences - SPSS 25 and Amos software.

1. Statistical descriptions (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation).
2. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) in Amos v.21.

5. Findings and Discussion

This section shows the results of the data analysis process and the discussion of these results according to the study hypotheses and previous studies.

5.1 Descriptive Analysis

A descriptive assessment of the construct being investigated in the current study is provided in this section. The leadership styles and social responsibility criteria listed below were used to generate the lowest, maximum, mean, and standard deviation scores for the 24 items in this study.

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis the Study Variables

No.	Variables	Min	Max	Mean	SD
1	Leadership Style (LS)	1.00	5.00	3.65	.779
2	Sustainable Performance (SP)	1.00	5.00	3.68	.787
3	Social Responsibility (SR)	1.00	5.00	3.67	.707

Table 2 show that, leadership style variable achieved mean (3.65) and standard deviation (.578), with a medium degree of acceptance, a high degree of acceptance with a mean (3.68) and standard deviation (.787) for the sustainable performance, and a moderate degree of acceptance with a mean (3.67) and standard deviation (.707) for the social responsibility.

5.2 Measurement Model

Using a pooled CFA technique, this study aims to validate the key constructs of leadership, social capital, and organizational culture. Because the Pooled-CFA technique is more effective, thorough, and free of model identification problems (Awang et al., 2015; Awang, 2014), it was chosen. All constructions are pooled together and connected using the double-headed arrows shown in Figure 1 in order to examine the correlation between the constructs. As indicated in Table 3, the fitness indices of this structural model were compared to the threshold indices from the literature to assess the model's fit.

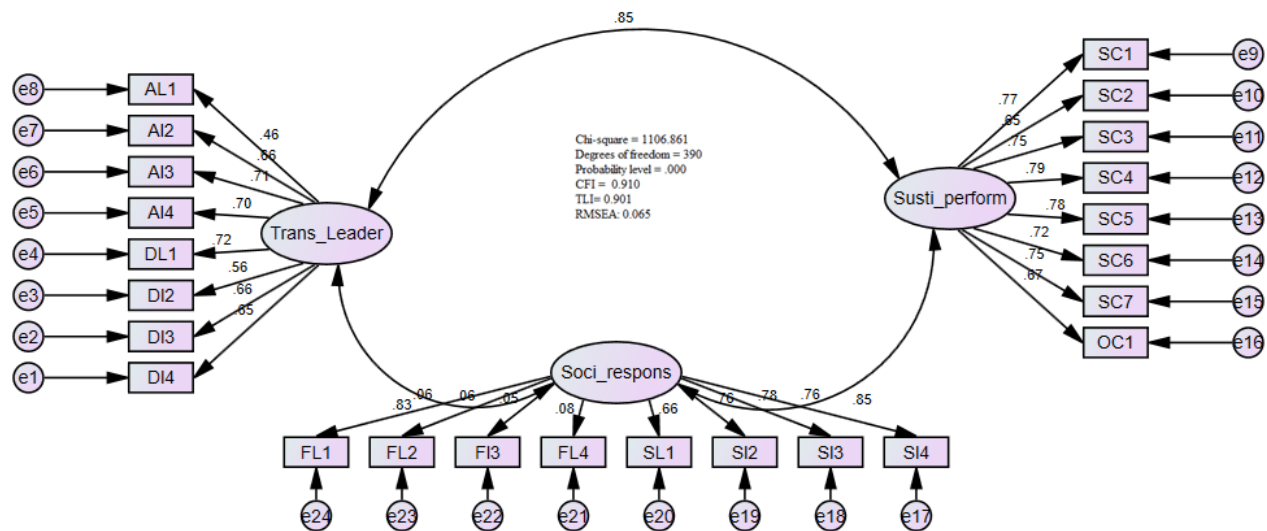


Figure 1. Measurement Model for Pooled Confirmatory Factor Analysis.

Table 3. Fit for the Structural Model Evaluation

Name of category	Name of index	Fit Criteria	Level of acceptance	Comments
Absolute fit	RMSEA	=0.08	0.065	Meet the required level \leq 0.08
1. Incremental fit	CFI	0.90 or greater	0.910	Meet the required level \geq 0.8
	TLI	0.90 or greater	0.901	Meet the required level $>$ 0.8
2. Parsimonious fit	Chisq/df	$1.0 = \chi^2 / df = 5$	2.838	Meet the required level \leq 4.0

The final measuring model, as seen in Figure 1, consisted of 24 items, and the fitness indices (RMSEA, TLI, CFI, and Chisq/df) met the necessary standards.

5.3 Standardized Regression Weights

The relationships between study variables are shown in Figure 2. Three models fit categories—absolute fit (Chi-square, RMSEA, and GFI), incremental fit (CFI), and parsimonious fit (Chi-square/df)—were first used to assess the model's overall fit. This was done to make sure the model accurately represented the whole set of accidental relationships.

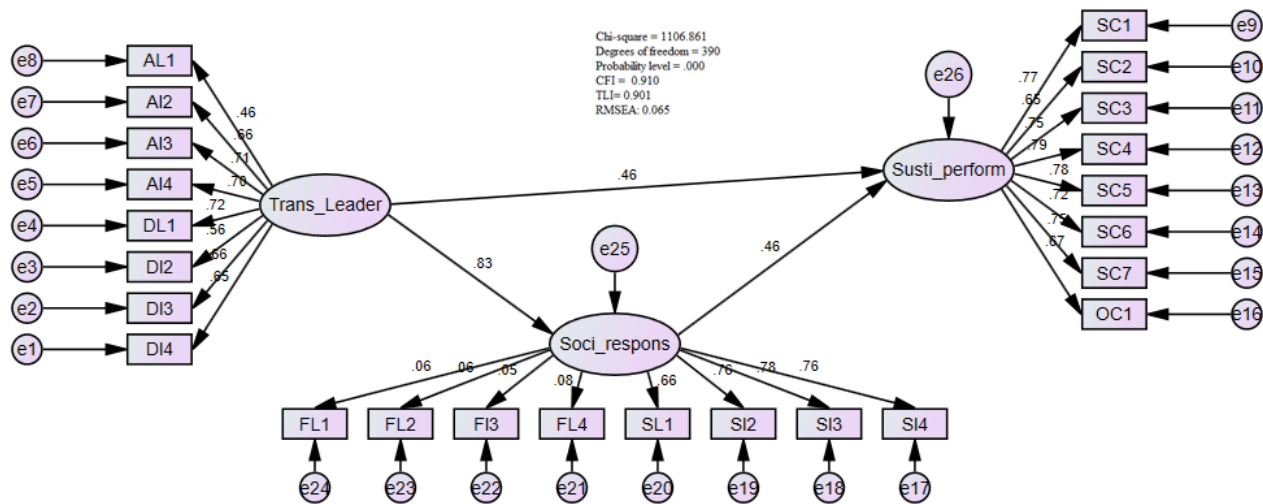


Figure 2: The Standardized Path Coefficient in the Model between Constructs

Four hypotheses were presented in this study, three of which were direct and one indirect. The investigation in this paper is focused on the following routes:

H01: There is no effect of leadership style (LS) on sustainable performance (SP) in SME in Jordan.

H02: There is no effect of leadership style (LS) on social responsibility (SR) in the SME in Jordan.

H03: There is no effect of social responsibility (SR) on sustainable performance (SP) in the SME in Jordan.

H04: There is no mediating role of social responsibility (SR) on the relationship between leadership style (LS) and sustainable performance (SP) in the SME industry in Jordan.

Table 4. Regression Path Using Standardized Regression Weights of Constructs

Construct	Path	Construct	Beta Estimate	Standard Error	Critical Region	P-Value
SP	<---	LS	0.518	0.093	5.587	***
SR	<---	LS	0.927	0.076	11.819	***
SP	<---	SR	0.474	0.084	5.616	***

According to the results shown in Table (4), the first hypothesis claimed that LS has an impact on SP in the SME Industry in Jordan ($\beta=-0.518$, $p=0.000$). In other words, for every increase in LS of 1, SP increased by 0.518. Thus, the aforementioned research hunch is supported.

According to the results shown in Table (4), the second hypothesis claimed that LS had an impact on SR in the SME industry in Jordan ($\beta=-0.927$, $p=0.000$). In other words, SR increased by 0.927 while LS increased by 1. Thus, the aforementioned research hunch is supported.

The third hypothesis claimed that, according to the results shown in Table (4), SR was discovered to have an impact on SP in Jordan's SME industry ($\beta=-0.474$, $p=0.000$). In other words, SP increased by 0.474 while SR increased by 1. Thus, the aforementioned research hunch is supported.

5.4 Mediation Hypotheses

The mediation hypothesis asserted that social responsibility (SR) has a mediating impact and proposed that it mediates the link between leadership style (LS) and sustainable performance (SP) in the SME sector in Jordan. The researcher evaluated both the direct and indirect effects of influencing variables on user satisfaction in this study. Therefore, the researcher could ascertain if SR mediated the association between LS and SP if the direct influence of LS on SP is substantial. A mediator's job is to show how LS has an indirect impact on SP. So, as will be covered below, the researcher used bootstrapping to assess the mediation effect.

5.4.1 Mediation Effect Using Bootstrap Approach

In order to determine if mediation affect existed, Preacher and Hayes (2008) bootstrapping the indirect effect approach was employed in this study. Mediation took place when the lower bound (LB) and upper bound (UB) values of the indirect effect did not straddle a 0 in between.

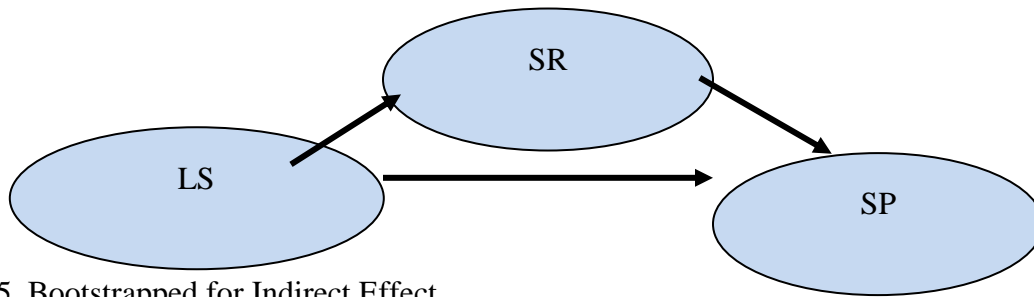


Table 5. Bootstrapped for Indirect Effect

Mediator	Standardised Estimate	Indirect	95% Confidence Interval (CI)	
			Lower Bound (LB)	Upper Bound (UB)
LS → SR → SP	.398		.333	.464
	Standardised Direct Estimate			
LS → SR → SP	.256		.185	.320

According to the result in table 5 the lower limit was 0.333 and the higher limitation was 0.464 (both of which are in the positive zone). In other words, the SME Industry in Jordan's SR mediates the link between LS and SP.

Conclusion

Understanding the function of social responsibility in moderating the relationship between leadership style and sustainable performance in Jordan's SME industry was the main objective of this study. We acquired information from about 340 managers from diverse organizations for this purpose by having them respond to a questionnaire. A structural equation modelling (SEM) strategy was proposed to assess the provided data.

The results showed that, SP has a high degree of acceptance with mean (3.68) and standard deviation (.787), the SR variable achieved mean (3.67) and standard deviation (.707), with a moderate degree of acceptance, while LS variable achieved mean (3.65) and standard deviation (.578), with a moderate degree of acceptance.

The findings also indicated that there is a relationship between leadership style and sustainable performance in the SME sector in Jordan, as well as a relationship between leadership style and

social responsibility in that sector, as well as a relationship between social responsibility and sustainable performance in that sector, with social responsibility serving as a mediator.

According to Waldman et al. (2006), leadership style had a favorable impact on organizational SR practices. Du et al. (2013) also saw a large influence. However, the current study supported the findings of the other researchers, and we contend that Leadership Style significantly affects organizations' SR practices.

Studies (De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008; Mazutis & Zintel, 2015) have found a substantial correlation between the ethical aspects of leadership styles and businesses' CSR actions. The current study also supports the notion that leadership styles significantly influence SR practices in organizations. The financial success of the businesses is assumed to be impacted by the SR practices. Based on our research, we recommend that organizations choose morally upright managers or leaders who will run their businesses with moral principles, hence encouraging SR practices and favorably affecting the organization's financial return.

The study does have some constraints. At first, there wasn't much data used in this investigation. Additionally, it solely pertains to the industrial sector in Jordan. It can't be used in every circumstance. The next study will need to collect information from additional organizations in a different Jordanian industry in order to be more comprehensive.

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