



The Influence of Sustainable Leadership towards Sustainable Development and Organizational Commitment in Omani Sustainable Schools

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of Sustainable Leadership on Sustainable Development, as well as the mediating role of organizational commitment in this relationship. Data were collected via questionnaires distributed to teachers in sustainable schools in Oman and analyzed using SPSS and PLS-SEM. The findings revealed that Sustainable Leadership positively influences both Sustainable Development and organizational commitment. Additionally, organizational commitment was found to mediate the relationship between Sustainable Leadership and Sustainable Development. Based on these results, the researchers provide recommendations, including urging the Ministry of Education to organize intensive training programs for school principals to enhance their understanding of Sustainable Leadership—its principles, applications, and strategies for fostering it among staff. Furthermore, future studies in different educational settings are suggested to expand on these findings.

Subject Areas

Education, Schools, Leaders, Teachers, Sustainable Development, Oman

Keywords

Sustainable Leadership, Sustainable Development, Organizational Commitment and Sustainable Schools

1. Introduction

Oman places significant emphasis on environmental conservation as a cornerstone of its social and economic development [1]. In its pursuit of sustainable de-

velopment goals, Oman has relied on extensive community participation at both the national and local levels [2] [3]. The Sultan Qaboos Award for Environmental Protection, recognized as the inaugural Arab prize in the field of environmental achievements, serves as a clear testament to Oman's commitment to this principle [1]. Accordingly, schools play a vital role in effectively participating in and positively contributing to the growth of their communities, as they are both the creators and developers of individuals and development [4]. They are the fundamental driver in providing the community with outputs capable of taking the initiative to achieve the SDGs [5] [6]. Since the educational process is the foundation for building societies and individuals, it is necessary to develop leadership as an essential pillar within an integrated system capable of managing and leading the educational process to achieve the hopes and aspirations of communities [7].

Throughout history, leaders have been the key to positive and impactful change for the societal renaissance [8]. According to Al Rusheidi and Supian, in light of the 2040 vision and the tremendous scientific development, it has required a different qualitative leadership to achieve the requirements, develop and renaissance the nation and achieve the ambitious vision [9].

Indeed, most developing nations, including Oman, have yet to thoroughly examine the concept of leadership to utilize it as a key success factor in their organizations and institutions [10]. This is primarily due to a lack of resources, knowledge, and experience in these countries [6]. However, recent initiatives have emerged to introduce leadership training and development, such as the Royal Academy of Management, a partnership between the government of the Sultanate of Oman and international organizations aimed at promoting leadership development within a comprehensive institutional framework [11].

Moreover, promoting sustainable development within educational institutions is imperative, as it aligns with the developmental visions and objectives set forth by the Sultanate of Oman to accomplish the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at all levels. Sustainable development has become a huge agenda for change management, and it is a key driver for success in any type of organization [12]. However, for an organization to make this kind of change, it needs to start from the very top and have employees and other stakeholders actively involved, requiring skilful distribution of power and authority [13] [14].

This brings us back to the topic of having the right human resources in the form of leaders who are proactive and aware of their environment and the responsibilities they must address [15]. Schools are under severe pressure to operate sustainably and meet the demands of stakeholders [16]. In such situations, Omani schools need employees who can take initiative and foster sustainable development. Therefore, it is imperative to ascertain the factors that can facilitate and encourage employees to support sustainable development efforts, which will ultimately influence the success of the school [17]. Previous studies have indicated that several researchers have reported mixed findings on the relationship between sustainable leadership and sustainable development, as well as between sustaina-

ble leadership and organizational commitment [17]. The majority of researchers have shown that the work environment and demographics significantly impact organizational commitment [18]. Additionally, sustainable leadership and organizational commitment also play a crucial role in promoting sustainable development [18] [19]. The purpose of this study is to identify the level of organizational commitment among teachers working in the school sector. The education sector has been chosen for this research because it is one of the most important and largest sectors in the Sultanate of Oman [20].

The educational process forms the foundation for building societies and individuals within an integrated system capable of effectively managing and leading education to achieve the hopes and aspirations of communities [15]. This requires the development of sustainable leadership capabilities and the work efforts of teachers. In summary, achieving sustainable development is one of the important challenges that impact education [20]. This study is to offer a leadership skills model that schools can adopt to promote sustainable development. Is sustainable leadership a quality that principals should possess in order to manage schools sustainably and achieve teacher commitment?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Sustainable Leadership

Oman places significant emphasis on environmental conservation as a cornerstone of its social and economic development [6]. In pursuit of its sustainable development goals, the country has fostered extensive community participation at both national and local levels [2] [21]. The Sultan Qaboos Award for Environmental Protection—the first Arab prize recognizing environmental achievements—exemplifies Oman’s commitment to this principle [22].

Schools play a pivotal role in advancing sustainable development, as they shape individuals and drive societal progress [4]. They serve as key institutions in equipping communities with the skills and initiatives needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) [3] [5]. Given that education is the foundation of societal and individual growth, developing strong leadership within schools is essential to managing the educational process effectively and fulfilling community aspirations [7].

Historically, leaders have been instrumental in driving positive societal transformation [23]. As Al Rusheidi and Supian note, Oman’s Vision 2040 and rapid scientific advancements demand a new, dynamic form of leadership to meet national development goals [1]. However, like many developing nations, Oman has yet to fully explore leadership as a critical success factor in its institutions, largely due to limited resources, knowledge, and experience [10] [24]. Recent initiatives, such as the Royal Academy of Management—a collaboration between the Omani government and international organizations—aim to address this gap by fostering leadership within a structured institutional framework [11].

Promoting sustainable development in educational institutions is crucial to

aligning with Oman's national vision and achieving the 17 SDGs [2]. Sustainable development has become a central agenda in change management and a key driver of organizational success [23]. However, implementing such change requires strong leadership, active stakeholder engagement, and effective power distribution [13] [14].

This underscores the need for proactive leaders who understand their environmental and social responsibilities [3]. Omani schools face increasing pressure to operate sustainably while meeting stakeholder expectations [16]. To succeed, they require employees who can drive sustainable initiatives. Thus, identifying factors that encourage teacher commitment to sustainable development is vital for school success [25].

Existing research presents mixed findings on the relationships between sustainable leadership, sustainable development, and organizational commitment [24]. While many studies highlight the influence of work environment and demographics on commitment, sustainable leadership and employee engagement remain critical to advancing sustainable development. This study seeks to assess the level of organizational commitment among teachers in Oman's school sector—a key area given education's central role in national development.

Ultimately, the educational process shapes societies and individuals, necessitating an integrated system with strong leadership and dedicated teachers [26]. Sustainable development remains a pressing challenge for education, and this study aims to propose a leadership model that schools can adopt to foster sustainability. Key Question: Should sustainable leadership be a core competency for school principals to ensure sustainable management and teacher commitment?

2.2. Organizational Commitment

Establishing and maintaining an effective scientific and educational system is a fundamental pillar for developing a sustainable economy in any organization [27]. Additionally, a loyal, satisfied, and committed workforce enhances revenue, reduces costs, and strengthens local economies in today's highly competitive environment [20] [25].

Organizational commitment emerges when employees perceive their organization's dedication to supporting their growth and achieving shared objectives, creating a mutually beneficial relationship [20]. Ha & Lee define organizational commitment as the mindset of individuals who work diligently, maintain their employment, and embrace their organization's values and goals [28]. Similarly, Al Balushi *et al.* describe it as the driver of mutual respect between employees and their organization [29]. In the education sector, teacher commitment is empirically proven to be crucial for retention, job satisfaction, adaptability to new teaching methods, and long-term institutional success [19]. A committed teacher not only fosters better student performance but also demonstrates sustained dedication to the school's mission [18].

Research [29]-[31] identifies three key dimensions of organizational commit-

ment that influence teacher engagement:

1) Affective Commitment: The emotional attachment employees feel when they identify with their organization's values, enjoy their work, and desire to remain [27].

2) Continuance Commitment: The perceived necessity to stay due to limited alternatives or financial constraints [12] [25].

3) Normative Commitment: The sense of obligation stemming from loyalty or concern that leaving might burden colleagues or create institutional gaps [25] [27].

To foster these commitments and enhance job satisfaction, schools must implement supportive policies and positive work conditions [9] [18]. Improving teachers' quality of work life is essential not only for their well-being but also for creating an attractive, sustainable learning environment.

2.3. Sustainable Development

The concept of sustainable development gained global prominence following the landmark 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro [31]. With 170 governments participating, this pivotal event demonstrated strong commitments to environmentally responsible economic growth [2], significantly amplified by a coalition of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) championing this agenda. A key outcome was the mandate for nations to develop national sustainable development plans to implement Agenda 21 effectively [7].

Abbasa *et al.* define sustainability as a process or state capable of indefinite maintenance [23]. Expanding on this, Ambu-Saidi characterizes sustainable development as progress that respects current and future social, economic, and environmental constraints [11]. In educational contexts, sustainable development represents an integrated framework built on three core dimensions—environmental, social, and economic—each contributing to clearly defined learning outcomes [31]. These interconnected aspects foster a comprehensive understanding of how knowledge, skills, perspectives, and values collectively shape a sustainable future.

Environmental sustainability encompasses three fundamental functions: resource provision, waste absorption, and direct utility [31]. Social sustainability emerges when systems and relationships support healthy, livable communities for present and future generations, emphasizing well-being through responsive living and working environments [4] [13]. The economic dimension, as a subsystem of sustainable development, depends on environmental resources while recognizing that economic growth and environmental protection are mutually reinforcing objectives [28].

Al-Yahmadi and Al-Manwari, and Abbasa *et al.* emphasize that sustainable development applies universally across all life stages [18] [21], highlighting:

- The necessity of lifelong learning.

- The value of diverse educational environments (formal, non-formal, and informal).
- The critical role of schools as sustainability exemplars [14].

Researchers further stress that a holistic approach is indispensable for schools to integrate and implement sustainable practices consistently and effectively [23].

2.4. Study Hypotheses

Relationship between sustainable leadership and organizational commitment

Sustainable leadership fosters strong, positive relationships with staff by demonstrating commitment and support. When such leaders request assistance, employees are consistently willing to respond [31]. This leadership approach not only empowers employees but also significantly influences their engagement and dedication [20].

Teacher commitment is shaped by multiple factors, with the school principal's leadership style being particularly crucial [19]. Research by Flippo and Chen *et al.* supports this conclusion, demonstrating that leadership directly impacts staff commitment to their institution. While limited studies have examined how sustainable leadership affects teachers across different levels of organizational commitment, existing research confirms its positive and significant influence [32] [33].

The literature highlights leadership as a key motivational factor for organizational commitment across various cultural contexts. Studies in Pakistan [23] and Oman [17] emphasize how leadership practices shape employee commitment. For instance, research in Oman's Ministry of Education revealed high levels of organizational commitment among employees [34]. However, contrasting findings suggest a need for specialized training programs to help school principals develop organizational commitment strategies [35]. Based on this comprehensive literature review and recognizing the study's significance, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

H1: Sustainable leadership has a significant positive effect on organizational commitment.

Relationship Between Sustainable Leadership and Sustainable Development

To achieve sustainable development in education, we must support Omani school principals in addressing sustainability challenges and implementing educational reforms [21]. While research examining the relationship between sustainable leadership and sustainable development in school organizations remains limited, schools in developed countries place significant emphasis on principals' leadership skills [4] [36].

Existing literature primarily examines sustainable leadership implementation through two lenses: sustainable leadership practices and their relationship within the school environment [5] [16]. Some studies, such as [37], have assessed sustainable leadership practices among high school administrators in Western

Dammam from teachers' perspectives, analyzing variables including qualifications, school type, and years of experience.

Notably, research on sustainable leadership in Omani education remains scarce, presenting both a unique organizational context and an opportunity to explore this approach's potential within the sector. As studies by [22] [24] indicate, leading sustainable schools in Oman requires administrators to both develop sustainable institutions and integrate sustainable practices. Based on this literature review and recognizing the study's significance, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

H2: Sustainable Leadership has a significant positive effect on Sustainable Development.

The Organizational Commitment as a Mediator Between Sustainable Leadership and Sustainable Development

Schools serve as ideal environments for sustainable development, particularly when they cultivate a culture of commitment and social connection among sustainability-focused individuals [28]. By integrating sustainability into school infrastructure, institutions create environments where both administrators and staff proactively seek to improve environmental and social performance beyond their standard responsibilities [14]. Effective leadership should encourage staff to internalize sustainability initiatives to the point where such efforts become an inherent part of teachers' professional expectations, as demonstrated by research [21] [38].

Current literature emphasizes that organizational commitment plays a vital role in developing and maintaining sustainable growth [25]. However, limited research has examined how sustainable leadership influences teachers through various levels of sustainable development. Studies by [19] and [30] reveal significant positive correlations between principals' sustainable leadership and school effectiveness through teacher engagement [1] [4] [13]. Additionally, [18] found that organizational commitment mediates the relationship between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and leadership, strongly influencing the adoption of sustainable practices. Further supporting this, research [17] demonstrated that teacher commitment mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and sustainable teaching performance. Based on this comprehensive review, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

H3: Organizational commitment mediates the relationship between sustainable leadership and sustainable development.

Sustainable development requires sustained commitment and focused attention to become fully integrated into a school's operations and its surrounding community [39]. Effective leaders must demonstrate: 1) dedication to relational and collaborative strategies for change, 2) deep knowledge of their field, 3) willingness to take calculated risks, and 4) passion for overcoming obstacles to drive meaningful development [1] [18]. These requirements present significant challenges for educational institutions, necessitating fundamental reconsideration of institutional missions, curricular structures, research orientations, and commu-

nity engagement strategies.

This study utilizes Social Exchange Theory [40] as its theoretical framework, which posits that employees reciprocate organizational support through sustainable performance, emotional attachment, and organizational identification [41]. Within educational contexts, sustainable leadership empowers teachers to acquire new competencies and improve their professional practice, thereby advancing institutional sustainability [6]. Focusing on Oman's sustainable schools, this research examines the interplay between sustainable leadership, sustainable development, and organizational commitment to deepen understanding of leadership development in sustainability-focused educational settings. The study addresses three key research questions:

- 1) What is the extent of sustainable leadership's influence on sustainable development in Oman's sustainable schools?
- 2) How significantly does sustainable leadership affect organizational commitment in these schools?
- 3) Does organizational commitment function as a statistically significant mediator between sustainable leadership and sustainable development in Omani sustainable schools?

“Figure 1” presents the conceptual framework of the study, outlining the three key variables and their interrelationships.

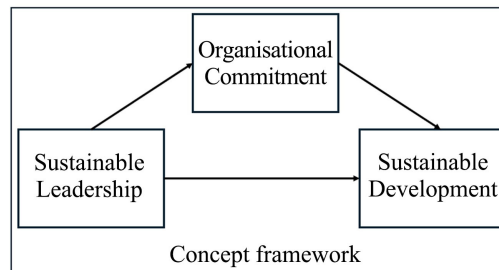


Figure 1. Concept framework.

3. Research Methodology

This study adopts a cross-sectional research design with a quantitative approach [42], selected for its suitability in assessing the prevalence and extent of sustainable leadership practices among school administrators in Oman's sustainable schools. The descriptive survey method was employed to achieve the research objectives [43], utilizing questionnaires as the primary data collection instrument.

3.1. Population and Research Sample

Eligibility criteria were established to define participant selection parameters, ensuring research validity and reproducibility. The study utilized purposive sampling to select participants based on predefined criteria aligned with research objectives. The target population consisted of 1611 educators from sustainable schools across Oman, as identified through Ministry of Education records [44].

Sample size determination was conducted using G*Power software to ensure adequate statistical power. Participants met the following inclusion criteria:

- 1) Current employment at an Omani school actively implementing sustainability initiatives.
- 2) Demonstrated understanding of sustainable development principles.
- 3) Direct participation in institutional sustainability programs.

While the sampling approach was purposive to target relevant expertise, randomization techniques were incorporated during data collection to minimize selection bias within the identified cohort [42] [45], as **Table 1** shows. This dual-strategy approach maintained methodological rigor while addressing practical constraints, ensuring optimal alignment between research goals and implementation [43].

Table 1. Number of sustainable schools and strength of teachers.

| GOVERNORATE | SCHOOL NUMBER | MALE | FEMALE | TOTALE |
|-----------------|---------------|------|--------|--------|
| MUSCAT | 7 | 61 | 364 | 364 |
| MUSANDM | 2 | 50 | 35 | 85 |
| ALBURIMI | 2 | 83 | 63 | 146 |
| DOFAR | 2 | 64 | 90 | 174 |
| ALBATENA SOUTH | 3 | 82 | 122 | 204 |
| ALBATENA NORTH | 2 | 69 | 136 | 205 |
| ALSHARQIA SOUTH | 2 | 53 | 40 | 93 |
| ALSHARQI NORTH | 2 | 59 | 58 | 117 |
| ALDAKHLIA | 5 | 57 | 45 | 102 |
| ALDAHERA | 2 | 45 | 32 | 77 |
| ALWASTAA | 1 | - | 26 | 26 |
| TOTEL | 29 | 677 | 934 | 1611 |

Note. Source: (Ministry of Education, 2023).

3.2. Study Instrument

The data collection tool for the study, a questionnaire, was developed following a comprehensive review of the literature and previous research. An online self-structured questionnaire was created using Google Forms for data collection. The design of the questionnaire was guided by the study's objectives, research questions, hypotheses, and methodology, ensuring its relevance to the specific context of the study and its target population. Although the questionnaire was initially constructed in English, it was subsequently translated into Arabic to accommodate participants who may face language barriers. The study adopted a double translation protocol during this process. Based on the literature review, an adapted version of the questionnaire was utilized, with certain items modified to better align with the research focus and the Omani context. The final instrument comprised 19 items, organized into three key variables: sustainable leadership (7

items), organizational commitment (6 items), and sustainable development (6 items). A five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), was employed to assess participants' responses to the questions.

3.3. The Pre-Test

To assess the face validity of the questionnaire and ensure it accurately measures the intended constructs, three faculty members reviewed the survey form. Additionally, two subject matter experts from Sultan Qaboos University, the Ministry of Education, and Nizwa University were presented with the original version of the questionnaire. They were asked to evaluate the questionnaire's effectiveness in measuring the intended constructs. Furthermore, they provided recommendations for potential modifications, deletions, or additions to enhance the clarity and appropriateness of the questionnaire items [43]. This process ensured that the instrument was both valid and aligned with the study's objectives prior to its final administration [44].

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

A cross-sectional survey design was implemented to examine the study's hypotheses through an online self-administered questionnaire [42]. This methodological approach was selected to gather quantitative insights from a defined population at a single temporal juncture, aligning with the study's pragmatic objectives under time and resource constraints [44] [45]. While cross-sectional designs are recognized for their efficiency in data acquisition, the authors acknowledge their inherent limitations in establishing causal relationships [43].

To ensure methodological rigor, the questionnaire was distributed via a Google Form link, which was initially disseminated through the Ministry of Education's official communication channels and subsequently forwarded to 175 school-administered email addresses. Following a three-week data collection period, 135 responses were received, of which 133 met the validity criteria for inclusion in the final analysis. This process prioritized minimizing researcher interference and participant burden while maintaining data integrity.

3.5. Data Analysis

Based on the nature of the data and the design of this research, the appropriate statistical techniques have been employed to analyze the data [42]. In this study, the data were analyzed using the SPSS software package. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized in the analysis [42]. Descriptive statistics included the calculation of the mean, standard deviation, and percentages to characterize the variables. Additionally, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was conducted in the second phase to assess the relationships among three latent variables [45]. The first phase focused on validating the instrument through convergent validity, composite reliability, discriminant validity, and overall reliability. The PLS-SEM method is considered the most appropriate approach for exploring the relationships between the targeted variables [44].

3.6. Reliability

It is evident from **Table 2** that the reliability coefficient is high, reaching 0.960. This aligns with the dimensional reliability coefficient, indicating that the questionnaire possesses a high degree of reliability, making it suitable for application in the field of the study.

Table 2. Reliability of measurement models.

| Reliability Statistics | Cronbach's Alpha | N of Items |
|------------------------|------------------|------------|
| | 0.960 | 19 |

4. Results

Table 3 presents data from 142 respondents, of whom 85 were male (60%) and 57 were female (40%). This indicates that the responses were predominantly from men across seven schools. Minion Pro Capt.

Table 3. Demographic characteristics of sample (N = 133).

| | Demographic variable | # | % |
|----------------------|----------------------|----|-----|
| Gender | Male | 65 | 49% |
| | Female | 68 | 51% |
| Age | 25 - 35 | 60 | 45% |
| | 36 - 40 | 40 | 30% |
| | 41 - 45 | 24 | 18% |
| | 46 and over | 9 | 7% |
| Qualification | Diploma | 3 | 2% |
| | Bachelor's | 98 | 74% |
| | Master | 32 | 24% |
| Experience | 1 - 5 | 26 | 20% |
| | 6 - 10 | 13 | 10% |
| | 11 - 15 | 18 | 13% |
| | 16 - 20 | 58 | 44% |
| | 21 < | 18 | 13% |
| Missing values in: 0 | | | |

Note. This table "**Table 3**" demonstrates the age distribution of respondents reveals that 9 individuals (7%) were aged 46 and over, 24 respondents (18%) were between 41 and 45 years old, 40 respondents (30%) were aged 36 to 40 years, and 60 respondents (45%) were between 20 and 35 years old. The educational background of the respondents ranged from diploma holders to those with master's degrees. Specifically, there were 3 respondents (2%) with diplomas, 98 respondents (74%) with bachelor's degrees, and 32 respondents (24%) with master's degrees. The data indicates that the majority of undergraduate respondents were civil servants in sustainable schools, accounting for 54.22%, followed by those

with master's degrees at 24%. In terms of work experience, 26 respondents (20%) had 1 to 5 years of experience, 13 respondents (10%) had 6 to 10 years, 18 respondents (20%) had 11 to 15 years, 58 respondents (44%) had 16 to 20 years, and 18 respondents (13%) had over 21 years of experience.

Table 4. Means, std, skewness and kurtosis statistics.

| | N | Mean | Std | Skewness | | Kurtosis | |
|-----------|-----|--------|---------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|
| | | | | Statistic | Std. Error | Statistic | Std. Error |
| SD | 133 | 3.0727 | 0.45752 | 0.955 | 0.210 | 1.869 | 0.417 |
| SL | 133 | 4.0172 | 0.55301 | 0.915 | 0.210 | 0.884 | 0.417 |
| OC | 133 | 4.2143 | 0.57683 | 0.298 | 0.210 | -0.358 | 0.417 |

Note. This table “**Table 4**” demonstrates the Means, Std, Skewness and Kurtosis Statistics. Skewness and kurtosis criteria were employed to assess the normality of the data [44]. Data is considered normally distributed when skewness and kurtosis values range from -3 to +3 [42]. The findings of this study indicated that the skewness values ranged from 1.041 to 0.360, while the kurtosis values ranged from 0.627 to 1.257 (see **Table 4**). Therefore, the data exhibited normality in this analysis. According to Creswell and Hair *et al.*, mean values of 2.99 or lower are classified as low, values between 3 and 3.99 are considered moderate, and values greater than 4 are regarded as high on a five-point Likert scale [42] [44]. **Table 4** reveals that the average value for sustainable development is 3.0727. The employees' strong agreement with organizational commitment (mean = 4.2143) and sustainable leadership (mean = 4.0172) suggests that they hold a positive view of these factors.

Table 5. Convergent validity.

| Construct | Items | Indicator | Cronbach's Alpha | AVE | CR |
|--------------------------------|-------|-----------|------------------|-------|-------|
| Sustainable Development | SD1 | 0.878 | 0.577 | 0.582 | 0.801 |
| | SD2 | 0.722 | 0.575 | | |
| | SD3 | 0.619 | 0.553 | | |
| | SD4 | 0.689 | 0.569 | | |
| | SD5 | 0.834 | 0.579 | | |
| | SD6 | 0.796 | 0.561 | | |
| Sustainable Leadership | SL1 | 0.784 | 0.535 | 0.641 | 0.820 |
| | SL2 | 0.764 | 0.553 | | |
| | SL3 | 0.812 | 0.555 | | |
| | SL4 | 0.802 | 0.574 | | |
| | SL5 | 0.671 | 0.568 | | |
| | SL6 | 0.807 | 0.562 | | |
| | SL7 | 0.767 | 0.552 | | |

Continued

| | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | OC1 | 0.832 | 0.577 | | |
| | OC2 | 0.749 | 0.561 | | |
| Organization Commitment | OC3 | 0.812 | 0.588 | 0.687 | 0.935 |
| | OC4 | 0.901 | 0.576 | | |
| | OC5 | 0.770 | 0.562 | | |
| | OC6 | 0.911 | 0.572 | | |

Note. This table “**Table 5**” demonstrates the indicator loadings, Cronbach’s Alpha, AVE and CR. All CR and AVE of the constructs exceed the threshold, with significance at 0.001, **Table 5** shows the outer indicator loadings for sustainable development (SD) with six items, sustainable leadership (SL) with seven items, and organizational commitment OC (six items) is between 0.619 to 0.911. The CR values for SD, SL, and OC are between 0.787 to 0.820 and 0.899, Furthermore, the adjusted R² value of 0.413 exceeds the 0.26 threshold, indicating a substantial model according to Cohen (1988) [42]. The AVE for these dimensions’ ranges from 0.582 to 0.687. All constructs remain valid as their CR and AVE values have met the required thresholds.

Table 6. Hypotheses test (Reflective Constructs Result).

| Hypotheses | Std Beta | SD | β | T-value | p-value | Result |
|--------------------------|----------|-------|---------|---------|---------|-----------|
| <i>H1</i> (SL > SD) | 0.445 | 0.089 | 0.307 | 3.398** | 0.003 | Supported |
| <i>H2</i> (SL > OC) | 0.316 | 0.034 | 0.490 | 7.807** | 0.004 | Supported |
| <i>H3</i> (SL > OC > SD) | -0.251 | 128 | 0.224 | 2.541 | 0.012 | Supported |

*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01.

Note. **Table 6** demonstrates the hypotheses test **Table 6** outlines the distinct relationships between sustainable leadership, the independent variable of sustainable development, and organizational commitment. The findings presented in **Table 6** clearly show that sustainable leadership is a significant predictor of sustainable development ($\beta = 0.067$, t-stat = 1.819, p-value < 0.05). Furthermore, sustainable leadership also positively influences organizational commitment ($\beta = 0.067$, t-stat = 1.819, p-value < 0.05). According to Cohen (1988), an f^2 value above 0.35 indicates a substantial effect size [43]. Therefore, hypothesis *H2* is supported. Additionally, when sustainable leadership and sustainable development are both present, there is an expected increase in organizational commitment among employees by 0.43 units ($\beta = 0.43$). Thus, the proposed hypothesis *H3* is partially accepted.

Furthermore, personality traits and job experience emerged as significant predictors of sustainable leadership. However, age and educational level did not appear to be significant predictors of sustainable leadership. Age and job experience accounted for 69% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.69$) in the organizational commitment variable. The obtained findings suggest that an increase in age and job experience

will lead to enhanced sustainable development among employees.

5. Discussion

This study, encompassing twenty-two schools across eleven governorates in Oman, identified a statistically significant association between sustainable leadership practices and teachers' organizational commitment. Quantitative analysis revealed a moderate positive correlation between principals' sustainable leadership behaviors and teacher commitment levels ($r^* = 0.352$, $p^* < 0.001$), a finding consistent with prior scholarship on leadership dynamics in educational contexts [21] [23] [29]. These results corroborate theoretical assertions by How and Ishaq, who posit that sustainable leadership serves as a critical catalyst for fostering employee commitment [5], a relationship further validated in cross-sectoral studies [10] [25]. Within Omani school systems, sustainable leadership emerges as a pivotal driver of institutional efficacy, with principals acting as key agents in shaping educators' engagement and operational coherence.

The analysis further identified a moderate positive correlation between sustainable leadership and sustainable development outcomes ($r^* = 0.352$, $p^* < 0.001$), though this relationship is mediated by organizational commitment—a finding aligned with contemporary research on leadership-mediated institutional change [11] [16] [31]. This mediation effect underscores the complex, multi-layered nature of sustainability transitions, wherein organizational commitment functions as a conduit for translating leadership practices into tangible developmental outcomes. These insights resonate with [28] framework, which positions commitment as a critical intervening variable, a conclusion further supported by studies examining analogous constructs in diverse cultural settings [20] [32]. Notably, organizational learning emerged as an additional mediator in leadership-development paradigms, particularly within talent management [31] and lean operational models [1].

The conceptual plurality surrounding sustainable leadership and development necessitates contextual specificity [22]. Drawing on Hamersley-Fletcher's (2006) framework, this study emphasizes educational leaders' role in cultivating reflexive self-awareness and interpersonal competencies—skills critical for navigating the sociocultural complexities of Omani educational ecosystems. Such competencies enable leaders to align institutional strategies with localized sustainability priorities while fostering professional growth trajectories for stakeholders [40].

Notably, gender-based disparities emerged in leadership orientations: female leaders demonstrated higher levels of affective commitment and transformational leadership practices (e.g., mentorship, collaborative decision-making), whereas male leaders inclined toward transactional approaches, particularly in contexts emphasizing continuance commitment through reward-based systems.

5.1. Conclusions

This study aims to reveal the level of principals' sustainable leadership behavior,

perceived school sustainable development, and teachers' organizational commitment based on teachers' perceptions. Additionally, the study tested the mediating role of teachers' organizational commitment in the relationship between sustainable leadership and sustainable development. The current paper is one of the few studies that investigate the role of sustainable leadership on organizational commitment in Oman. The results assert that strong support from sustainable leaders inspires teachers to build and further expand their commitment to the school. Sustainable leadership is an effective leadership practice within the community, as it encourages and supports employees to share and incorporate ideas for learning and development (3). The study also found that sustainable leadership has a statistically significant effect on sustainable development. These findings suggest that sustainable leadership is essential for sustainable development within schools.

The present study posits that the relationship between sustainable leadership and sustainable development can be partially mediated by organizational commitment. Based on social exchange theory, this research aims to investigate the indirect relationship between sustainable leadership and sustainable development, providing empirical evidence for practitioners seeking to enhance sustainable performance through organizational commitment. Overall, the findings of this study support social exchange theory. Consequently, school principals must pay particular attention to their actions, thoughts, and words to effectively influence teachers to work voluntarily. When teachers exhibit a high level of commitment, they experience greater job satisfaction and are more likely to voluntarily enhance their performance in pursuit of sustainable development goals.

5.2. Theoretical Contributions

This study reinterprets the direct and cross-hierarchical relationships between sustainable leadership and individual-level variables related to sustainable development. It aims to clearly present the influence of group power within organizations, thereby enhancing the existing literature on leadership and sustainability. This study's data analysis showed that by fostering capacity building, creating environmentally friendly projects, formulating long-term perspectives, and sharing a sustainability-based vision, sustainable leadership practices improve organizational commitment. This study is important since it confirmed that organizational commitment mediates the relationship between sustainable development and sustainable leadership. This study is significant because it verified the mediating effect of organizational commitment on the relationship between sustainable leadership and sustainable development. Additionally, it is important in terms of statistical methodology as it successfully identified this effect. This finding could help expand the scope of future research in this area.

5.3. Practical Contributions

The findings of this study underscore the imperative for organizations to institutionalize sustainable leadership practices as a foundational component of achiev-

ing sustainable development objectives. Empirical analysis indicates that institutions must prioritize awareness-building initiatives to ensure organizational members recognize the applicability of sustainable development goals (SDGs) within their operational contexts. To operationalize this, the development of targeted institutional strategies is recommended, including:

1) Capacity-building frameworks, such as training programs for personnel evaluation managers to integrate sustainable development metrics into performance assessments;

2) Participatory engagement mechanisms to incentivize employee involvement in sustainability-driven decision-making.

Training curricula should be structured around four core competencies, aligned with Oman's national sustainable development priorities:

- Sustainable leadership skills, emphasizing systems thinking, ethical decision-making, and environmental stewardship.

- Emotional intelligence, fostering affective commitment through trust-building and empowerment strategies for educators.

- Change management, equipping leaders to address resistance during organizational reforms.

- Contextual adaptation, enabling the customization of strategies to mitigate regional disparities (e.g., equitable resource allocation for rural schools).

These interventions aim to enhance employees' cognitive and behavioral alignment with sustainable development agendas. The study further identifies that empowering subordinates through problem-solving autonomy, resilience-building frameworks, and needs-based school evaluations can incentivize sustainable leadership practices within the Ministry of Education. Such an approach is posited to strengthen institutional accountability and cultivate higher levels of organizational commitment.

By elucidating the interplay between sustainable leadership, contextual adaptation, and participatory governance, this research provides actionable insights for human resource practitioners. Specifically, it highlights the role of individual difference factors, such as affective commitment and equity perceptions, in reducing turnover and fostering a culture of sustainable development.

5.4. Limitations of the Study and Future Implications

First of all, the data collection was challenging as the respondents were employees working in the Omani sustainable schools in all Omani governorates. As such, accessing the right respondents was very challenging. Another limitation of the present study is that the measurement of the variables is based on the subjective perceptions of the participants which may bring about some respondent bias. Moreover, this study is cross-sectional in design. A cross-sectional study lacks the ability to assess causal relationships.

In this study, the data were obtained from a study group which means the findings cannot be generalized to a population. In this sense, further studies can be

carried out with appropriate sampling methods to obtain generalizable findings. This data can be utilized by the related scholars to make some adjustments in their data collection mechanism. Additionally, the structural model tested in the study includes only three variables. Further studies can be carried out with a more comprehensive model. This study measured the level of sustainable leadership and teachers' commitment in schools by obtaining feedback from one source only, namely the teachers' perceptions towards the principals. For future studies, the measurement of sustainable leadership and level of commitment in schools can be improved by using multiple raters. As this study has been conducted only in sustainable schools, hence future study is needed to be conducted in other school settings.

Data Availability Statement

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

Ethics Statement

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by the Ministry of Education, Sultanate of Oman. Written informed consent was provided by the participants to participate in this study.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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