Sustainability Leadership in Saudi Non-profit Organizations: A Qualitative Insight Governance

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Abstract

Leadership in Saudi Arabia is one of the major objectives of Vision 2030, which is aimed at developing the country's private, public and nonprofit organizations (NPOs). Leadership therefore needs to incorporate key issues that are emerging in the context of preparing necessary skills to lead such organizations in the future. This research provides qualitative insights into leadership practice by measuring the impacts on achieving sustainability leadership by gaining a full understanding of the processes nonprofit sector leaders use to encourage sustainability and change in their organizations. Encouraging sustainability requires specific competencies, and strong leadership is critical to the process of ensuring that governance becomes sustainable. In this study a qualitative methodology was designed, and fifteen Executive directors CEOs from NPOs took part in semi-structured interviews as well as one focus group containing six professionals from non-profit corporate sectors including education, health, environmental clubs, foundations and human resources. Thematic analysis was applied to analyse critical elements that governed individuals' ability to contribute to institutional results. The findings demonstrated eight areas of results-based functions and activities of sustainable nonprofit leadership to identify insights into leadership. These are governance arrangements, leadership as a dynamic role, teamwork empowerment, strategy and procedure processes, control and governance resources, collaboration and network relationships, encouraging social investment, and social value results. The findings suggest that leaders of various NPOs have to overcome external and internal challenges effectively in order to succeed in their mission focusing on financial and social purposes. Exploring the nature of sustainability leadership competencies in Saudi NPOs will result in learning, innovation and change in terms of outcomes by helping leaders to add social value as a core factor of their mission.

Keywords: sustainability leadership, dynamic capability, challenges, governance, nonprofit organizations NPOs, Saudi Arabia

1. Introduction

Sustainability-led organizations have been identified across various industries, sectors, countries, institutional contexts and markets (Avery & Bergsteiner, 2011). The construct of sustainable development has a history of driving change, but gained more attention worldwide after the UN produced its Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 (Hasanov & Jahangirli, 2018). Sustainable social and economic development reform agendas must be addressed across a spectrum of different sectors in order to explore innovative solutions, which means that organizations can no longer function without considering the interdependence of the environment and society as well as variations in economic goals (Thakhathi et al., 2019). Sustainable development represents a major organizational change, and partnerships have been formulated to achieve goals by helping to develop relationships between actors in order to foster sustainability (Kassem et al., 2020). All sectors and industries are now working together towards the goal of sustainability (McKim & Goodwin 2021).

The third sector involves NPOs, and they too must focus on achieving the UN's SDGs through their own specific social missions and institutions, with the help of technological innovations and practices (Kassem et al., 2020). This means that there is plenty more to charity and voluntary work than fundraising and campaigning, as the charities, NPOs and NGOs that make up the third sector are central to the health and wellbeing of society (Gee et al., 2023).

Collaboration in partnerships is one the most effective strategies available to encourage companies to support sustainability in order to improve the community or the environment. Partnerships have become one of the main

approaches through which industries and society work together to achieve sustainability and good governance, and there is now a large canon of literature on social and environmental sustainability. However, holistic partnerships and collaborative arrangements to create added value in terms of resources also include finance, human, knowledge and specialist skills (Brusca et al., 2022), which are often difficult to develop in collaboration.

The private sector is fundamental to the promotion of sustainable development, but to contribute positively to sustainable development they must change and become sustainable themselves. This complex process is often accompanied by disagreement and concern, thus creating an excellent opportunity for suitably trained individuals, teams and companies to reinforce and lead the change towards corporate sustainability, even if they are comparatively unimportant in global terms (McKim & Goodwin, 2021). The goals they set will determine how companies will gain and manage human and financial resources and leadership skills which are critical for the survival of both non-profit and for-profit firms, and differences in these goals will shape leadership structures and attitudes to governance. These in turn guide the ways in which NPOs formulate and implement strategies (Gee et al., 2023).

Sustainable leadership involves the development of strategies to meet social, economic and environmental goals. Relational leadership, sustainability-oriented leadership and relational social capital are three key concepts and practices that can help companies and partnerships address mutual alignments that will foster positive outcomes for non-profit firms (Kassem et al., 2020). Sustainable leadership offers organizations opportunities for innovation, continuous development, sustained competitive advantage and long-term success, and developing sustainable organizations will depend on strategic leadership that includes vision, motivation and risk-taking (Avery & Bergsteiner, 2011; Phipps & Burbach, 2010).

In Saudi Arabia, NPOs include three main types of social service organizations: Associations, foundations and endowments. The majority of NPOs face various challenges, such as aligning goals with longer term missions using the right methods, resources, cultural mindsets and institutional structures and functions. Lack of funding means that NPOs must earn public trust and network more extensively with the private sector (Kassem et al., 2020). The non-profit sector is not considered attractive in corporate terms because the path of NPOs is often not clear and the work within them is not institutional. One of the biggest challenges is that today, young people with ambition and intelligence do not want to work in the sector because of the way it is considered in comparison to the private or government sectors, as there is little financial stability or job security in it. Our knowledge of NPOs' future development remains limited, making it harder to find ways in which to manage such organizations and help them grow.

1.1 Problem Statement

TO help achieve Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 goals, the third sector needs to increase its share from the current 1% to 5% of the country's GDP. While some CEOs run small companies that only have a small workforce, the directors of bigger firms have more employees. In order to work towards becoming a good CEO, leaders must understand the necessary work demands that will facilitate improvement and sustainability in their organizations and learn how they can better practice it (Choi, 2021). This is also the case when determining the approach to leadership that NPO leaders should possess, and there is a great deal of academic debate suggesting various leadership theories.

This study responds to the increasing role of NPOs in the social and economic system and calls for the adoption of a more behavior-oriented approach in order to understand what boards do as well as the nature of corporate governance activities. The goal is to gain a better understanding of leadership by identifying the knowledge capabilities that are needed to address a variety of interrelated problems and challenges (Spyridonidis et al., 2022).

1.2 Importance of the Study

The COVID-19 pandemic provided a dramatic example of how rapidly change can occur in society and how the different approaches of NPOs reacted to it. Focusing on what boards and their members do helps us to understand the ways in which important decisions are reached in times of prosperity as well as crisis (Gee et al., 2023; McKim & Goodwin, 2021; McMullin & Raggo, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic allowed scholars to analyse management and leadership in various sectors to understand the implications of governance, and debate continues on the practical application of leadership strategies to the present extreme context in order to explore leadership behavior (Buchanan & Hällgren,2019). Leadership for sustainability is one way of framing leadership in a way that emphasizes the roles of disequilibrium and individual action within the process of change. In the wake of the pandemic, current leadership perspectives advocate leadership for sustainability as an emerging focus across the discipline of management. The objective of this research is to analyze the social value added by integrating leadership governance into NPOs to work towards sustainability as framed within Complexity Theory. This will help us to evaluate how leadership is conceptualized, resulting in new approaches to the practice and development

of leadership.

However, most theories are primarily developed in the context of profit firms, including Agency Theory, resource-based approaches to corporate structure and competitive dynamics, which might not be equally applicable to NPOs. Management scholars should work on identifying emerging driving forces, as well as outcomes and contingencies that can supplement or replace the more well-established findings or arguments by exploring organizational culture, processes, structures, and routines that specifically guide the operation of NPOs. CEOs of non-profit organizations face more public scrutiny, have shorter journeys to management roles and have leadership styles that are different than CEOs of for-profit organizations, and such differences should drive new viewpoints in research. Strong management capabilities are necessary to building and success. According to Teece et al. (1997), organizational abilities encourage firms to develop more varied abilities "to build, integrate, and reconfigure internal and external competencies." However, by focusing on firm-level issues, the framework of dynamic capabilities perspectives overlooks the critical role of individual leaders. The dynamic managerial capabilities theory was introduced to demonstrate the role of individual-level dynamic capabilities in bringing strategic change, thereby addressing a major limitation of the theory (Foss et al., 2023; Heubeck & Meck, 2023). As a result, this research contributes to specific leadership competencies that are best suited to NPO insight governance (Masoud & Basahal,2023). The paper begins by examining literature on management strategies for organizational change and sustainability as well as the sustainability of leadership. In particular, it looks at sustainability in the performance of leadership as well as sustainable social value. The paper goes on to describe the methods used in the case study to learn how to scale the impact of initiatives to achieve broader social values in a real-life context.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Organizational Change and Sustainability

The third sector is not run to help a profitable economy, but instead looks towards a developmental economy, meaning that there are other aspects of the economy that have to be considered, including non-profit or charitable institutions. Changing a company's purpose from a shareholder-oriented corporation to a high-performing contributor to society is difficult, especially for large corporations where culture, processes, systems, procedures, investor and employee expectations and other elements of the leadership system have all been pre-aligned (Avery & Bergsteiner, 2011). Through sustainable leadership, firms and their group members can create a sustainable future. Meanwhile, sustainable leadership can be re-focused onto those who take responsibility for understanding and acting upon complex sustainability challenges, and such people qualify as sustainability leaders who can calculate risks and share their learning with other company members (Thakhathi et al., 2019). Leaders in NPOs can also focus on achieving the UN's SDGs through specific social missions as well as institutional and technological innovations and practices.

There is an overlap between the leadership practices of for-profit and non-profit organizations. The two sorts of companies are distinguished by whether the firm can develop its products or services with the intention of achieving social value or making money (Osula & Ng, 2014). This distinction will have a significant impact on organizational leaders' management practices. Meanwhile, goal measurement is complicated and achieving social goals in various dimensions entails addressing a wide range of issues in society that are as diverse as the existing number and variety of social phenomena. While capturing performance outcomes and theorizing is a difficult process at all levels of strategy research, it is particularly difficult for NPOs because there is no readily identifiable Triple-Bottom-Line (The TBL concept includes profit, people and plant) for this type of organization. Today, for-profit organization leaders face increasing pressure from stakeholders to be socially responsive and must also manage the various interests of these stakeholders, a process that is becoming increasingly difficult. Balancing social responsibilities against maximizing profits is difficult for such organizations, as they are used to developing strategies to achieve their economic ambitions. In this respect, the ways in which NPOs use their resources to reach their multifaceted goals will have implications for the sector (Brusca et al., 2022; Gee et al., 2023). As a result, nonprofit leaders can help with the diffusion of control and accountability. With increasing demand and competition for accountability, the nonprofit sector is under pressure to present its effectiveness through a variety of performance metrics in the human social services sector, where most service performance outcomes take long time to become measurable and visible (Osula & Ng, 2014; Gee et al., 2023).

2.2 Sustainable Organization and Leadership

The literature on organizational sustainability leadership should be examined from three different perspectives. These are organizational culture, strategic orientation and human resources development (Avery& Bergsteiner, 2011). Firstly, in terms of the culture of organizations, sustainable management is the primary approach to promoting an organizational culture which prioritizes sustainability and innovation. Meanwhile, the culture of an

organization is an important factor when looking to develop long-term leadership skills, and an organization's long-term development goals can be met as a result of their relevant interaction and by matching aims with abilities (Liao, 2022; Gee et al., 2023). Secondly, through the lens of strategic alignment, sustainable leadership needs to consider the complex interrelationships that exist between social communities, individuals, market demand and the natural environment as well as the enterprises' value chains based on decision-making strategies to achieve long-term goals as well as taking notice of social welfare and the protection of ecosystems (Liao,2022; Ateş et al., 2020) Thirdly, by looking at human resource development, we can see that companies implement the development of their human resources using sustainable leadership. This involves all aspects of person-centered management, seeing staff as an enterprise's major stakeholder and then taking responsibility for cultivating a highly invested and loyal staff team (Liao, 2022; Terpstra-Tong et al., 2020). As a result, it can be debated that leaders in today's non-profit sectors require a greater range of skills, as well as qualities and character in relation to values and moral vision as well as collaboration in terms of the ability to work with diverse stakeholders. However, the importance of these two characteristics is emerging and becoming more necessary today.

2.3 Leadership Theories and Models

Leaders can foster relational social capital by engaging in proactive communication, sharing knowledge and resources, building personal relationships and creating a positive culture based on alliances and shared goals. To manage strategic leadership alliances and networks, organizations adopt various frameworks and approaches. Systems Leadership represents a set of capacities and skills that any individual or organization can use to enable, catalyze and support the process of systems-level change. It is comprised of three interconnected elements, the first of which is the individual element: Collaborative leadership skills enable learning and trust-building and empower action among stakeholders with a common goal. The second is the community element. Coalition-building and advocacy tactics can be used to develop alignment and mobilize action among stakeholders both within and between organizations in strategy research (Mintzberg, 1994), and is seen as positive on many levels. However, any strategic implementation failure is often due to the team not being aligned with strategy commitment. Visionary CEO leadership is crucial to effective strategy implementation leadership, because as defined by the strategy process it entails communicating a strategic vision with the idea of encouraging employees to contribute to the realization of that strategy (Ateş et al., 2020). The third is the system element, which entails an understanding of the complex systems that shape the problem that needs to be solved (Dreier et al., 2019). Nonlinear and dynamic systems are highlighted by the complexity of challenges identified at the nexus between social and environmental systems, which necessities a new understanding of leadership guided by the revolutionary thinking of complexity theory. Sustainability suggests that systems are composed of dynamic environmental and social relationships in which each action contains an opportunity to disrupt the system. Change emerges through system disruption as relationships across the system seek new patterns of equilibrium. In leadership for sustainability, everyone within the system should have the capacity to change (McKim & Goodwin, 2021; Phipps & Burbach, 2010). Change helps to encourage all individuals, giving them the capacity to collaborate across differences, learn continuously and build relationships towards a more social, environmental and economically sustainable future.

The theory could be extended to add governance and control of resources. Meanwhile, teamwork has been added as the fourth element, and accountability and control represent the fifth element (Dreier et al., 2019; Gee et al., 2023). The concept of accountability, which is defined as "having to answer for one's behavior" (Gee et al., 2023) is an essential process in accomplishing social goals.

The complex and interconnected issues that lie at the heart of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) require innovative approaches in order to mobilize widespread and meaningful action. One of these approaches is Systems Leadership (Gee et al., 2023; Dreier et al., 2019). The Systems Leadership approach is well-suited to complex challenges that require collective action in situations where no single entity is in control. The approach involves building and mobilizing alliances of diverse stakeholders around a shared vision for systemic change, empowering widespread collaboration, innovation and action and enabling mutual accountability to help systems move toward sustainability. Systems Leaders, at individual and institutional levels, serve as catalysts and enablers of this process – a role that requires optimism, flexibility and endurance together with the ability to understand and empower stakeholders with very different viewpoints and incentives (Dreier et al., 2019). The assurance of sustainable development in action should be a dynamic process that results in balance between different social groups and communities (Heubeck & Meck, 2023; Kumar, 2020).

2.4 Sustainability Leadership

As a concept, sustainability refers to the continued use of program components and activities to achieve desired goals and population outcomes. In general, the likelihood of sustainability increases firstly when problems are

recognized in the external organizational environment or community, secondly when they are recognized in the program in question, and thirdly when internal organizational objectives and capacities are aligned, convergent or compatible. This orientation suggests a multilevel system of programs implemented by individuals and embedded into an organization that operates over time within a community context or an inter-organizational network (Kumar, 2020).

Leadership in sustainability presents an emerging opportunity for positive leadership practice to empower individuals to work collectively toward environmental, social and economic sustainability (McKim & Goodwin, 2021). The concept of sustainable leadership has undergone several changes within management and organizational literature, and scholars have come to the conclusion that sustainability leadership must be considered in top management positions (Thakhathi et al., 2019). Six schools of thought exist within sustainable leadership scholarship, all of which focus on how leadership contributes to organizational sustainability and long-term value for stakeholders. These schools of thought are sustainable leadership, leadership for corporate sustainability, managerial leadership, responsible leadership, ethical and transformational leadership and leadership for sustainable change. Firms that implement the principles of sustainable leadership are more likely to achieve long-term resilience and greater levels of stakeholder satisfaction (Haider et al., 2023).

In a study by Buchanan & Hällgren (2019), their analysis emphasizes that the role of leadership configurations in extreme context research poses methodological challenges, particularly in the field of exploring leadership behavior. Leaders with a long-term perspective tend to prioritize future-oriented actions and outcomes over short-term goals. However, in order to ensure that organizations successfully anticipate and respond to the complex and dynamic challenges that are associated with sustainability and resilience, long-term orientation necessitates various sustainability leadership competencies such as strategic and systematic thinking, as well as strong degrees of foresight (Haider et al., 2023; Kumar, 2020). Leadership for sustainability requires the capability to think through complex approaches and multi-dimensional problems and engage subordinate teams in dynamic organizational change (Thakhathi et al., 2019). One of the challenges leaders face here is engaging in commercial activities, and there has been a shift in non-profit leaders to bring in profit-based principles of management to build revenue (Gee et al., 2023;). Scholars have discussed how commercial activity by non-profit organizations may have a negative impact on donations, and some researchers have noted that non-profit organizations that generate revenue through their activities frequently experience mission drift, in which service delivery takes second place to the generation of revenue. Non-profit leaders and executives should serve society at large and the communities they represent, and need to provide public benefits (Gee et al., 2023), which means that as organizations oriented towards utility, the primary goal of an NPOs is to maximize its social value.

Sustainable leaders believe that a change towards sustainability will bring new benefits to their companies and stakeholders. This study builds on the idea that sustainable leadership is a management approach that is designed to deliver optimum sustainable returns as well as accelerating innovation. Participants in this research are considered to be sustainability leaders if they are CEOs in NPOs in Saudi Arabia. The characteristics of sustainability leaders are discussed in theoretical detail in the literature, but little is known in practice about what such leaders do within their firms, especially in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. The strategy of practical theoretical frameworks calls attention to understanding the practices that underpin the influencing strategies of sustainability leaders in greater depth, so the strategy-as-practice view serves as a valuable lens for inquiry. In the following section, the main theoretical framework that informs the study will be discussed.

2.5 The Need for Governance and Sustainability Leadership

Governance in NPOs has received a great deal of attention in recent years. Governance is the process by which an organization is controlled and managed (Valente et al., 2015). The concept of governance was initially associated with investigations into how to achieve greater levels of transparency and accountability. This early work assumed that good governance could be prescribed in terms of legitimacy, participation, transparency, efficacy, and efficiency influenced by the belief that clear causal relationships could be established between conditions and consequences (Renz, 2016; Valente et al., 2015). Some non-profit organizations have self-perpetuating boards of directors, which means that the directors elect their successors, while members of non-profit organizations that have been formed as membership entities typically elect the organization's directors (Renz, 2016). Nonprofit leaders can act as managers of an organization by establishing decision-making structures and monitoring the work of the CEO, or they can act as leaders by developing a strategic vision for the organization and guiding the CEO's work (McMullin & Raggo, 2020).

One of the goals of governance is to identify the role of governance in creating value, and this includes aspects such as the organization's leadership structure as well as the specific processes it uses to make strategic decisions.

Organizations should provide more information about their leadership system, the role of their leaders and how these relate to each organization's strategic objectives. This shows the importance of governance in NOPs and the need for greater transparency in terms of how decisions are made. To display the process of value creation, the resulting social business model should include information about the inputs used and how they converted into outputs to highlight how non-profit organizations show sustainability in their use of environmental resources (Brusca et al., 2022; Renz, 2016; Valente et al., 2015). Disclosure statements and reports, for example, are currently used primarily for upward accountability from NPOs to donors and boards, with a focus on reporting on annual or quarterly performance and finances. Meanwhile, evaluation and performance assessment tools are mostly aimed at meeting funders' demands for assessing performance, although they also have a tremendous and as yet underutilized potential for downward accountability by making nonprofit organizations more accountable to communities, and funders more accountable to the non-profit sector as a whole. Challenges in sustainability force organizations in a variety of industries to take on governance as a tool to direct change and control.

Leaders are critical of the concept and the processes involved in becoming more sustainable, but leading the change for sustainability necessitates new skills (Osula & Ng, 2014; Haney et al., 2020). Risks and opportunities identify corruption as the most significant risk and make plans to control it. Meanwhile, complaints can be made to non-profit organizations which can improve management and control (Brusca et al., 2022). There is also a great deal of pressure on nonprofit organisations to include aspects of new technology in its operations (McMullin & Raggo, 2020). The nonprofit sector faces formidable challenges in this area because the capital requirements for technology investment are significant, and there are risks associated with the effective use of any new technology (Osula & Ng, 2014). One of most crucial roles of leaders lies in accepting responsibility for their organization's accountability. Accountability, or "having to answer for one's behavior" (Gee et al., 2023) is an essential factor when looking to accomplish social goals. A clear framework of governance can improve values such as communication, shared goals, and power sharing, destination stewardship, as well as balancing power relations and spending more time constructively aligning local activities with the lead organization (Valente, et al., 2015). Leadership sustainability is therefore a process, a concept and an outcome that investigates how NPOs define leadership in the context of governance and is associated with the ability of leaders to produce results, mobilize followers, articulate communication of goals and actions, and clearly articulate roles and responsibilities (Holmes Jr. et al., 2021).

2.6 Research Questions

Sustainability requires CEO leaders to possess specific competencies and strong leadership skills in governance to become sustainable in the position. This study aims to answer following research question:

RQ: What roles of leadership are required for governing leaders' performance in NPOs?

RQ: How the governance process can improve the sustainability leaders' performance in NPOs?

4. Method

A qualitative interpretive research design was used to investigate sustainability leadership competencies and the focus on which they are used in NPOs in the context of Saudi Arabia. The study therefore required an understanding of the participants' perspectives on the governance process required by their organization. More specifically, the study deploys a phenomenological study design. Phenomenology analyses lived experiences and discusses the view of the individuals who are experiencing the phenomenon (Clarke & Braun, 2017). This type of research was considered the most effective choice, as the focus of the research is on exploring the lived experiences of CEOs who have leadership positions in different Saudi NPOs. To enable the research, face-to-face interviews allowed the author to inquire about the lived experiences of leaders.

4.1 Data Collection

CEOs were chosen for this research based on two criteria: firstly, their prospect of the concept of Governance, and secondly their leadership contributions to their NPOs at the local and global level. These interviewees were chosen for two main reasons. Firstly, because their leadership position necessitated the use of a set of leadership competencies that were best suited to specific leadership roles and duties, and secondly because the interviewees were best suited to explaining how and why their organizations required governance, based on their experience in various leadership roles.

The study used a semi-structured interview protocol and a two-part interview process. The first part of the interview used introductory questions to strengthen the relationship between the participant and interviewer (Clarke & Braun,2017). The overall format of the interview – which included a set of prepared questions as well as overall topics for the interview – was prepared by the author in advance. Follow-up and further questions were added if

required on an ad hoc basis as the interviews progressed (Sekaran & Bougie,2016). After each interview, the author wrote down key themes and ideas. Based on these notes, the researcher decided that after fifteen interviews, no further interviews would yield any more useful insights as theoretical saturation had been reached. It is worthy noting that the author avoided contacting interviewees who had no leadership experience to prevent any divergence in opinions between those with no experience and those who had experience. This is because the aim of the study was not to compare competencies between different leadership roles based on experienced and inexperienced leaders, but to understand the most prominent leadership competencies and the purpose of their use in NPOs. This needed to be based on evidence from leaders who worked in different leadership positions in the nonprofit sector to demonstrate a clear picture of the required governance competencies of leaders to be sustainable.

4.2 Participant Characteristics

Data were collected during the months of January and May 2023 through semi-structured interviews with 15 leaders. These participants were ten males and five females who have CEO experience in leadership within NPOs. Table 1 shows the important participant demographics. The focus group consisted of 6 leaders, namely the President and the members of the Board of Directors, the Executive Director, The Vice president of the Association and three department managers (Marketing, Human Resources and Operations). They contributed to sessions lasting 1.5 hours in May 2023. The focus group questions were: 1) How do you measure social value? 2)What are the benefits of measuring the social value?

Table 1. Participant demographics

Participant Number	Gender	Position	Qualification	Experience
1	Female	Executive Director of the Association	Master's degree	10 years
2	Male	Executive Director Of the Foundation donor	Master's degree	15 years
3	Female	Executive Director Of Holding Groups	Master's degree	11 years
4	Male	Chairman of the Board of Directors	Surgery Doctor	13 years
5	Male	The Vice president of the Association currently	Master's degree	15 years
6	Male	Executive Director of the Foundation	Master's degree	14 years
7	Female	Executive Director of the Association	Master's degree	8 years
8	Male	Operational Executive Director of the Association	Master's degree	6 years
9	Male	The Board of Directors the Holding Company	Master's degree	10 years
10	Female	Executive Director of the Academy institution	Ph.D	8 years
11	Male	Executive Director of the Foundation	Master's degree	9 years
12	Male	Executive Director of the Association	Ph.D	11 years
13	Male	The President and the members of the Board of Directors	Ph.D	10 years
14	Male	The President and the members of the Board of Directors	Ph.D	15 years
15	Female	Executive Director of Association	Master's degree	10 years

5. Results

Eight overarching themes were identified to ensure that NPOs were achieving a sustainable impact. These were Governance arrangements, Leadership as a key Dynamic role, Teamwork Empowerment, Strategy and Procedure processes, Control and Governance Resources, Collaboration and network relationships, Insulating Social Investment, and Social value results. To protect the participants' identity, each interviewee was assigned a number, and whenever a direct quote from a participant is provided, the participant's number will be shown in brackets to signify who the quote was from.

5.1 Governance Arrangements for NPOs

The Saudi National Centre for the nonprofit sector was created in 2020, and its aims are to organize and activate the role of NPOs, expand the sector in the field of development and work to integrate government efforts in providing licensing services to these organizations. The independent centre is also responsible for financial and

administrative supervision of the sector and increasing support and coordination (Ncnp.gov.SA). According to the interviewees, the independent board of directors is the group of trustees who are accountable for leadership and governance of the NPOs.

> *The committees are part of the hierarchical structure; the Board of Directors and the Board of Trustees, and under it the committees, and under them the Executive Director* [14]

New systems and knowledge of governance includes rules that are adapted to control functioning activities by leaders.

> *Now, the ministry has even requested that it be part of a committee. With the confidence of the board of directors, this will be a governance committee. The request to submit financial statements has been announced and is available on the association's website so that any members of the General Assembly or any donor who wants to provide support can see it* [5]

The accountability and professionalism with which these tasks are executed generates respect amongst members. Meanwhile, the efficiency of governance arrangements to use resources efficiency and provide the capacity to produce results is an essential dimension of governance in the ministry.

> *The audit system must be witnessed. The system is useful in governance and must be followed up and monitored for the leader and the team* [2]

Reform rules to correlate and measure the impact of sustainability and good governance are linked to determining the characteristics of the people who work in the field according to the direction of the institution, whether it is preserving the environment, preserving the treatment of patients, or preserving education.

> *The first development centers began in government, but today they are central to the non-profit sector. They are there to set and follow regulations and to organize specific dates and meeting times as well as to monitor financial statements for public scrutiny. Good leadership means that staff and stakeholders will respect leaders and work with them, meaning that their position is safe* [1]

A good leader should be someone who can demonstrate deeper knowledge that spreads and lasts without doing any harm and assures a positive impact. Transformation of the way of thinking of each level starts with individuals and continues to include other levels – namely teams, the organization itself and society. The role of leadership in organizing work, organizing structures, setting strategies and all management elements are then presented to the board of directors.

> *The ability to offer, discuss, reach the decisions and present them to the board of directors, and not fall into the trap as an official of the board of directors is that the director presents all the basic things that help the organization in making decisions and works to achieve a balance between the strategic part of the council and the organization* [6]

The committees have strong indicators for inspection

> *As an establishment, we must have a strong financial management, as well as performance indicators and a board of directors to which all results are presented. All accounts and decisions should be made collectively* [10]

The National Center requests applications for governance and regulation and sets governance regulations to be transparent

> *This requires internal organization and is an external challenge at the same time. The requirements of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Human Resources and the National Center and the demands of donors are part of our external challenges, and the development of work has made it more transparent* [5].

Leaders should publish writing report on the website with the contribution to the social value

> *We release our reports at the end of the year based on the development paths. It has a specific model, it has indicators and initiatives, and it is measured* [15]

5.2 Leadership as a Dynamic Role

According to the participants, the leaders of non-profit organisations demonstrate the attributes of motivation and passion to serve their organisation and society, and this is the basis of good leadership.

> *Today, the existence of this foundation of passion and desire to serve, and the existence of this motive, is the basis for choosing any leader, and this is what differentiates this sector from others. Today the sector needs leaders who have passion and self-motivation* [9].

In the past, leaders were selected based on basic competencies. Now that these associations no longer exist, new leaders must be aware of the reality of the beneficiaries and survey studies should be done. Associations are now more strongly based on the activities of the family, orphans and economic programs.

> *Leaders should be prepared to manage mutual commitments, relationships and social processes, enabling shared team vision and allowing others to see the big picture and their role in it* [2]

Leaders have gained experience and leadership abilities to help them lead and develop more responsibility for their teams and their community.

> *It is the role of empowerment to enhance the positives of the team, motivating members towards the goal, developing capabilities, building and designing projects* [11]

The role of leadership capabilities related to financial management needs to be prepared for dynamic projects to take risks and learn processes in routine and strategic organizational skills to influence results and achievements.

> *The leader must be qualified and able to understand the need, develop strategies, measure performance, measure results and develop programs, plans and initiatives that serve the community and to properly assess the reality of the situation* [9]

New tools, methods, procedures and knowledge need to be used in order to sustain the leadership positions.

> *We find that workers in this sector have a certain characteristic, so leaders must have an understanding and an ability to manage financial resources and projects and strategic planning* [5]

By learning the nature of new capabilities, leaders will enable the formation of a culture at the workplace that makes the necessary investment to present rules to govern the relationships that need to be a more urgent priority in NPOs.

> *The culture of mixing comfort and seriousness at work is very important. The internal culture of building relationships with employees is also very important. The advantages of work will be more readily recognized if employees love the workplace, they love the team spirit and they love the work they do* [3]

Leaders should be aware of the rules and policies of the sector and be prepared to deal with them. Understanding this fully can be one of the challenges that they face. Meanwhile, they should also be aware of the needs of donors, charities and supporters as they themselves have changed and their expectations have risen.

> *Other external challenges include changes in regulations and laws, and this is a challenge that must be dealt with. You must adopt to changes in regulations; some of them will be good and positive changes, some of them will result in personal changes* [8]

5.3 Teamwork Empowerment

Leaders must have powers, and they must accept the participation of all those who are capable, empowered and experienced in their field. They must be aware of their responsibilities and delegate expertise to others who may be more capable of performing specific roles.

> *Recent developments in the culture of work are for leaders, the institution, the work team, and all employees, and leaders must follow up on developments and rapid changes that occur in the sector* [15]

This suggests that for non-profit organization a leader cannot work alone. Participants expressed that it is important for a leader to empower the team. Trust is essential to any relationship, especially between leaders and their team.

> *Any lack of trust in others and lack of confidence in their performance is evidence of weakness in personality and in the work of the official leader* [4]

Dependence on employees with high-quality relationship Leader Member exchange (LMX) means that leaders are more likely to consider strong task performance as a way of meeting supervisors' requirements and expectations to involve the receipt of rewards and benefits from the leader (Wong & Berntzen, 2019). In order to succeed in NPO sector, leaders need to work on continuous development, selecting the appropriate work team, and efficient management of the work team to provide sustainable results.

> *Team competencies that leaders should know include the practical abilities of the team that they have. What are their competencies? What are their capabilities? And what are their merits? Employees may bring certain professional competencies, for example, but managers may not make the most of them* [5]

To sustain a job and control it, leaders know the continuous growth and continuous feedback for their team is an asset. As such, they must sustain team feedback to correct and enable the growth of the team in order to increase the capabilities of their team and restructure the system of appraisal based on job competency to sustain rules.

Participants express that the difference between manger and leader.

manager is what makes you grow up, while the leader develops their team, takes your hand, and gives their team space for innovation and self-affirmation. Therefore, the leader has a look at his employees, he gives them more opportunities and puts them in higher work experiences [14]

Leaders have to manage human and financial resources effectively and efficiently

It is better to have fewer employees earning higher salaries, as they will aspire to complete the required work with merit and efficiency. Managing human resources and managing financial resources efficiently is vital [2]

Leaders have to choose their own teams and employees

Each job has a job description and includes tasks that are based on employees' competencies, so when there is any polarization for any of the jobs in the institution, the job is based on competencies. Necessary competencies are put before us, and we form a committee and meet this employee who is nominated for this job based on their abilities [10]

5.4 Strategy and Procedures Process

It is important that the leader has a clear vision. Many organizations, even if they do not make up the majority of for-profit associations or institutions, have a vision, a mission, and goals. However, it is important that leaders make sure whom they use in each area of work.

Our organization has been developed for decades. We must look at it, to make sure it is appropriate to reality and the changes in reality. The leader makes sure there's a vision and strategy in place and either works to update strategies and visions or renew them. The problem may be that the association or institution has reached certain goals, and now it is time to set new goals [5]

Non-profit organizations must have leadership and a structure, and everything that follows from it. It is the role of leadership to organize work, organize the structure of the workforce, set strategies and look after all other management elements.

We set a legal structure and an internal structure, with boards of directors, committees and a strategic plan. After that we create procedures, policies and evidence of work done, then we create the right environment for the work and measure work outputs by reviewing errors and revising any shortcomings [14]

In some non-profit organizations the role of a good leader in establishing a full working structure includes setting up oversight committees to develop a strategy for how to disburse funds to orphans so that when they reach the legal age the disbursement is stopped. There must be a plans and goals beyond that point, so there must be priorities in the age, so all of these things are included as part of the overall strategy. The role of leadership is to structure this work within the establishment.

In order for the leader to succeed, he needs to empower others and strengthen the team. A good leader must consult and listen and should not make quick decisions. decisions should not be made before consulting other. Decisions made alone often result in failure. Achieving goals represents meeting the growth goals for success within the organization [10]

The law and the legal structure for charitable or non-profit work is most important, followed by the internal structure with administrative, executive and supervisory boards and committees and the financial structure to avoid financial and administrative corruption.

The association or non-profit institution must grow. It must grow and expand in terms of its financial input, whether this is done by investing, assets, endowments, or marketing to obtain more donors. This is the role of all leadership from the beginning, and it is important to develop a strategic plan [14]

Requirements are not necessarily there to achieve outputs, but rather to measure them as effectively as possible. This is all part of the leadership role from the beginning of the structure and development of the strategic plan to reaching its goals.

One of the tasks of the administrative leadership is to measure the impact, and the indicators for the success of the goals measure the impact because it is one of the important things. And this is what they lack [5]

5.5 Control and Governance Resources

Good governance systems are linked to oversight and performance, and governance is the most important aspect of how leaders manage their work. The performance of leaders depends on the leader's ability to effectively manage

and control resources.

> *A shortage of cadres in the non-profit sector means that the need for cadres must be clarified as well as the connection between the cadres and leadership patterns* [2].

The correlation between the impact of leadership and its performance measurement is linked to determining the characteristics of those people who work in this field according to the direction of the institution, whether it is preserving the environment, preserving the treatment of patients or preserving education.

> *Meanwhile, the issue of merit has become a prerequisite for achieving the requirements of leadership so that the organization can play the role for which it has been designed. The recruitment of leaders is often based on need and the merits available within the staffing system* [11]

Continuous justification to support decisions to provide, and continuous communication also comes under the umbrella of leadership governance. Knowing how to protect effectively subordinates from any risk is vital, as is disclosure and transparency, as financial statements are prepared, and company reports are available for anyone to see on the company's website.

> *When evaluating an association, if the employees are there without training courses or the necessary awareness and if there are no policies in place to prevent crimes such as combating money laundering and terrorist financing, it becomes much harder for leaders to clarify their approach to governance* [15].

Progress monitors and shared responsibility leadership will be responsible for success or failure. Failure will be the responsibility of the leader and will challenge his or her position.

> *Of course, feedback is important, and in the final analysis, the leader bears the responsibility. Decisions may be based on opinion, but failures may still exist, and the fault for such failures must lie with the leadership of the company of non-profit organizations* [13].

5.6 Collaboration and Network Relationships

Coordination, integration and partnerships are the basis for working in leadership positions. It is necessary to know where leaders can achieve the greatest impact, and whether integration should be with the government or the private sector.

> *The partnerships are within the same sector in the fields operating today, such as the orphan service organization. How can you integrate with them so that leaders can maximize or improve service models or improve the mechanism for dealing with orphans in care and integration? This is an important aspect* [9]

Merchants must have an entity, as the association sees what the needs are and what the desires of the supporters and donors are, and coordinates between them. Therefore, the CEO has the ability to assess the need and the ability to have relationships with merchants.

> *How did he reach the merchants? How did he first for the electronic platforms the issue of relationships and partnerships and the network of relationships consisting of the CEO is very important and building the internal team starting from recruiting cadres and has a role in the subject of development and development* [11]

A successful leader in this sector must be present to work as a network. Understanding how networks work is important because only then can we better understand why networks produce certain outcomes, regardless of whether they are bottom-up or top-down processes or are the outcomes of strategic decisions made by network participants or government officials.

> *Leaders can build successful relationships because today we all strengthen each other, and no single person has everything we need. We all grow together, learn new things and adjust the inputs, variables, and expectations for the vision of Saudi Arabia 2030. New dimensions have been introduced into the challenge, and the network of relationships is very important for leaders. Their ability to understand others, their ability to learn and develop themselves is very important and may lead to creativity and innovation* [7].

5.7 Insulating Social Investment

Leaders should be creative in the field of investigating services provided, and the ideas put forward for investment in the field must be achieved

> *If a leader has the characteristics of an executive director and creativity, then we call him a leader, since he is a CEO and he cannot be creative. To be a CEO, he or she must be creative* [14]

The goal of NPOs is to support the public need, and to do this they should employ people who know most about

that need.

A good understanding of the need and the actual understanding of the beneficiary, in the sense that there are families whose need is to secure a job and not to find food or a food basket. Here, the need must be measured. The service has changed and has taken the direction of development in terms of securing supplies [7]

Measuring the impacts of social intervention is vital so that management and leaders know where the service or the contribution could be added to contribute and control

To measure work outputs, review errors and revise shortcomings, we have key performance indicators (KPIs) and we have outputs, each of which has specific factors that measure the impact. We sponsored 1,000 orphans at the end of the 5-year strategic period. We looked at the reports on the performance of the orphans in the study. We want them to be good members of society. We want them to be educated and superior in their studies. The strategic plan and its outputs depend upon the CEO [14]

In addition, Volunteer management could be added to contribute and coordinate.

It is also important to know how to manage a large number of volunteers and improve the quality of performance as well as the quality of experience from the point of view of the volunteers as well as the beneficiaries [2].

Leaders are guided by the social solution

Meanwhile, leaders should also change their overall mindset. the whole mindset has changed, just as the organization mindset has changed in that everything is guided by social value [8]

5.8 Social Value

As soon as their goals and objectives are achieved to, the leader also has the competence to know how to communicate and commit with the stakeholders, including the direct beneficiary, the donor, the staff providing the service and the supervising authority.

If a leader has the characteristics of an executive director and the creativity, then we call him a leader. To be a CEO, he must be creative. Creativity is part of sustainability, its existence and its challenges and in creating solutions. In this post there must be a creative person [14]

To serve and sustain, it is essential to meet with internal boards to assess indicators for social contribution. The goal is to produce evidence to support families, so the percentage of female employees in this service should be considered.

In the non-profit sector, our plan is to support women to work when we met with the Board of Directors and the owners. We need to keep records of how many female employees we have and how many jobs were made available to women, and how much the jobs cost, as out aim here is to provide jobs for a product [10]

Successful leaders must demonstrate good organizational performance by winning awards from independent bodies after their report shows transparency and good governance

Winning the King Khalid Award for Excellence in Organizations three times under the leadership of Tamkeen was good for us. By empowering our audit systems and working with the ministry we empowered the organization. For the current employees of the organization the record is new, representing new strategies, programs of vision, mission and goals, and also for the institution and others, we will depend on ourselves to diversify the sources of income [1]

Sustainability leaders means successful leaders who can build and sustain financial resources.

The existence of Endowments for a specific asset and spending from its sale underscores the idea of continuity and self-reliance. Therefore, our convictions must allow us to establish Islamic Endowments in Germany and in Europe, which means that we rely on fixed income and spending from this income, which also guarantees the independence of the institution in its decisions, because our activities are always dependent on the source of money, so if the source is external, the work must be related to this external source, good or bad [4]

Sustainable business models are created by Successful Leaders

The non-profit leader, for example Sheikh Al-Rajhi, endowed $28 billion so he established an endowment for these assets. He developed a strategy for them. Now the wealth has reached $60 billion. The value of the assets followed the endowments, and under them he founded companies (a holding company) for investment, real estate, education and universities. He created an integrated entity, a successful model, all operating under the same sustainable approach. The commercial business in which he worked at Al-Rajhi Bank enabled

the profitable pattern and I say the commercial business is non-profit. It is profitable, but the difference between them is the profit that is in the pocket of the owners, and here the profit goes to the beneficiaries [14]

6. Discussion

This research provided a qualitative insight into leadership governance practice by measuring the impact of achieving sustainability leadership through gaining an understanding of the characteristics of nonprofit leaders to encourage sustainability and change in their organizations. The analysis showed that the dynamic capability of CEOs and leaders in relation to managing human, social and financial resources and cognition are critical to pursuing innovation in social values. As a result, Eight areas of sustainability leadership are based on results in areas of governance arrangements, leadership as dynamic role, teamwork empowerment, strategy and procedure process, control and governance resources, collaboration and network relations, instilling social investment, and social value results. These areas are used to develop dynamic leadership behavior such as building, designing, regrouping, integrating and reconfiguring sources, structure and processes through continuous feedback, consultation and implementing new approaches.

One of critical role of leaders to prepare for having answer of taking responsibility for the accountability of their organization. in this regard cooperate governance related to society investment, transparency and accountability and assure of achieving results and progress. For NPOs, governance is the process of providing strategic leadership to an organization. The process of governance begins by ensuring that leaders make informed choices about why the organization exists, what it wants to accomplish and how best to achieve these results, as well as identifying the resources needed and how to go about securing them. It is also imperative to know whether or not the work is actually making a difference. The functions of an effective leader include setting direction, making policy and strategy decisions, overseeing organizational performance and ensuring overall accountability (Renz, 2016; Provan & Kenis, 2008). Effective cooperative governance and goal-directed networks with aligned strategies are critical to a non-profit organization's long-term viability and effectiveness in today's complex and competitive world. These practices, along with influence which constitute are shown in figure 1.

In recent years there has been a shift in the public's view of the non-profit sector, insofar as it participates in the process of development as well as other goals such as employment or rehabilitation, and government support for services and increasing the number of volunteers and workers means that NPOs require certain competencies as well as groups and employees that are capable of carrying out these tasks and roles. Simple and unqualified cadres will not be able to perform such roles, especially as governmental associations have reduced the level of support they provide. The role of the leader here is to make an impact for positive change, but he or she cannot do it alone. The leader must have the necessary personal characteristics as well as the ability to take on new challenges and lead others through the experience by setting up effective teams and effective strategies through collaboration and governance control. Feedback and continuous development are required at all times. In order to achieve its goals, the non-profit association must have a staff to bring in the revenues and spend them wisely. In this setting, the need for leadership competencies is what opens horizons for the association, enabling it to work in the community to study its needs and progress. This is very important, and NPOs must have their own resources in order to engage in social investment. NPOs also need legislation to control rather than to manipulate. Most successful associations find their board of directors supportive and effective, but the leadership of the CEO must be strong. Associations that are creative because their board of directors is creative need to be interested in appointing an executive director with good qualifications. Any lack of such availability in the Board of Directors and in the Executive Director will lead to the failure of the NPO as much as it would for private institutions.

Figure 1 illustrated that leadership for sustainability necessitates independence board and high-quality relationship between leader and teamwork to understand the challenges of the governance processes by which innovation, learning, and change emerge. Collaboration and network relationship, learning continuously, feedback reviewing and revising, and bringing together (McKim & Goodwin, 2021). Sustainability leadership emphasizes the idea that by combining governance with an NPO's organizational perspective and governance with an individual perspective, leaders can integrate their vision of sustainability into the development of the organization more easily, thereby promoting the transformation of the organization into a sustainable social investment that will help contribute to the construction of a sustainable economic system.The concept of interaction between individuals and organizations primarily holds that sustainable leadership encompasses not only the individual characteristics and organizational culture and strategy of leaders, but also some of the links between these factors
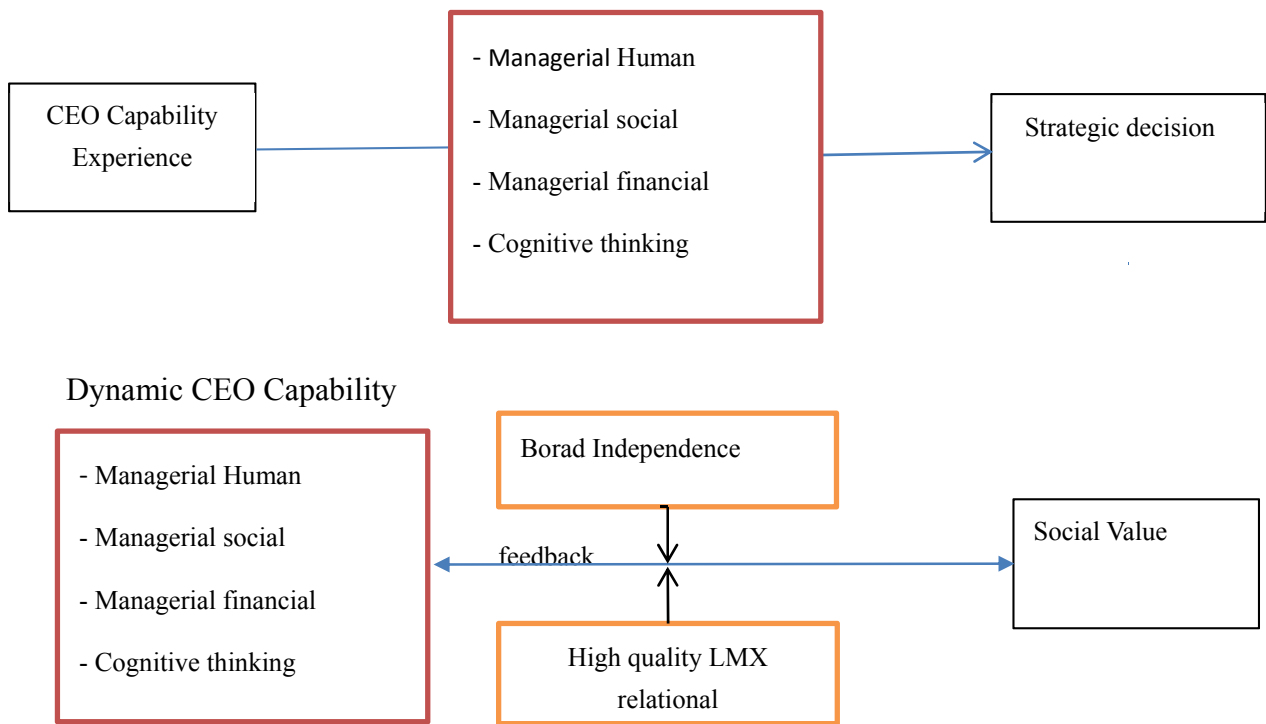
Figure 1. Conceptual framework governance for dynamic CEO capability to innovate social value

This research study responds to the call by Gee et al. (2023), Mohammed & Yaqub (2023); Vera et al (2022), Holmes Jr et al. (2021) and Ateş et al. (2020) for a need for research that is focused on the CEO and how that CEO responds to the demands of leadership and corporate governance. The search for a CEO as the top strategic leader has yielded a number of critical insights into governance. Ateş et al. (2020) showed that managers' ability to create strategic consensus and commitment in their teams is hampered by a lack of strategic alignment between managers and the CEO. Therefore, in nonprofit organisation, leaders who can rely on strategic alignment have a shared understanding of influencing followers by communicating with top management boards. Once a strategy is developed, efficient execution necessitates that organizational constituents share a common understanding of the strategy, making consensus desirable even in a potentially unstable environment.

7. Conclusion and Future Prospect

Dynamics and uncertainty and their results will necessitate an active facilitation of the balance between leadership and management activities by boards and their organizations. Both are required to ensure that organizations survive at all times. Scholars are now paying closer attention to the links between configurations of governance, CEO performance and organizational performance without exploring the fundamental governance activities required to direct organizational complexity in greater depth (Holmes Jr et al.,2021; McMullin & Raggo, 2020). This research provides insight the governance provide the future of leadership to stay that Sustainability leadership who link and bring altogether between all stakeholders internal and external with his performance to lead change, innovate and sustain.

The future outlook is that the nonprofit sector will grow, and the ramifications of horizontal and vertical growth will be horizontal in the sense of the size or forms of organizations and forms of interventions, and vertical in the sense of the number of organizations, additional complexities and contributions. What is the impact of these movements in terms of future developments? Fundraising often specializes in educational organizations, and this is a delicate area of specialization. This means that in the future the non-profit sector will need more specialized leaders. Today's leaders need to learn how to become more specialized.

7.1 Research Implications

The results of this study have different implications for practitioners and researchers. Firstly, the research highlights the important of eight groups of competencies mentioned above and would be applicable for similar context. Secondly, the research findings represent the significance of the governance process to deep in the

leadership skills in NPOs. Thirdly , the research result defines the sustainability leadership as its creativity, and its challenges, to create social solutions

7.2 Limitations of the Study

Although this research gains deep insight into the characteristic that determine leadership toward sustainability in Saudi NPOs, there are defiant limitations that require to be considered. The small sample of Saudi CEO leaders limits to generalizing the outcomes. There is a need for quantitative study to validate the result of this research and for more research to convince people that there are future career opportunities for leadership in NPOs. In addition, organizations need to learn how to preserve these leadership characteristics to develop new practical and new theories. Furthermore, there is a need to motivate more female leaders in the sector. Part of the role of the leader is to create leaders within the organization who will be substitutes for the future, whether inside or outside NPOs. Today, those who learn how to create an appropriate environment that stimulates work and creates benefits that may be material and moral should also work to retain competencies within the organization and the sector as a whole.

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No additional data are available.

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