UNSDGS AND FUTURE QUALITY MANAGEMENT - SOCIAL POLICY FOR DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT MINDSET

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to review different ways of promoting a sustainable development (SD) mindset to engage employees and management to explore, to explain, to elaborate and to evaluate to become future sustainability leaders. After reviewing literature on sustainable development mindsets, sustainable development goals (SDGs), corporate social responsibility (CSR) and analysis of social dimension policy of 10 China-based listed companies (2006 to 2017) in Bloomberg database with members in UN Global Compact (2004 to 2017), it has been found that employee CSR training policy and consumer data protection policy are not common in selected organizations, except two communications related organizations. And, policies on equal opportunities, health & safety, and human rights are mostly in place. Among 10 selected organizations, Petro China and China Mobile Communications are found with these three policies in place in past 11 years (2007 to 2017). It is suggested that individual employee attributes, knowing and being in relation to social policy, need to be strengthened; perception of tasks, implementing CSR and consumer policies with inspirations on sustainability, need to be maintained in the organizational core activities; and value creation, realising the importance of consumer data protection with design thinking and system thinking in product/service innovations, need to be enhanced for sustainable development. The findings provide insights for management in developing sustainable development mindset for employees and brand-building for organizations. The ultimate output of the paper is a model for promoting a Sustainable Development Mindset with employee CSR policy/consumer data protection relayed social policy for advancing quality management (QM). Therefore, academics, industry practitioners, NGOs and policy makers shall consider these findings when exploring the applications of UNSDGs related tools to advance quality outputs with brand-building effect in an innovative way.

Keywords: Sustainable Development (SD) Mindset, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), CSR, Consumer Data Protection Policy.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Facilitating organisational change via innovations for sustainable development continues to be one of the major challenges in corporations of different natures. The phrases of sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR) have been used interchangeably in the past few years. Organisations of different natures are seeking ways to enhance business growth, for example, designing innovative
products and services, re-visiting the operations flow management system, and re-examining outsourced business partners for quality. The United Nations’ (UN) Rio+20 outcome document, The Future We Want, asserted that people are the centre of sustainable development; and Rio+20 promised to strive for a world that is just, equitable, inclusive and committed to work together to promote sustained and comprehensive economic growth, social development and environmental protection to benefit all. However, it has been found that little research has been done on the best methods for achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), most relevantly, SDG 4 ‘Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all’; SDG 8 ‘Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable growth, full and productive employment’; and SDG 17 ‘Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development’. In 2009, Wirtenberg uncovered seven qualities for building a sustainable enterprise: management support, centrality to business strategy, values, metrics, stakeholder engagement, systems alignment and organisational integration. From the findings of Wirtenberg, it was found that systems alignment and organisational integration were the weakest dimensions of most enterprises. Hence, it is worthwhile to explore how to integrate professional development into organizational systems with an innovative sustainable development mindset for achieving the SDGs of the UN. Employees are assets to an organization. Human-based policy can be considered as a crystallizer for employees to remain loyal to the organization and to be productive in their jobs assigned. The emergence of brand of an organization is the outcome of these two elements for organizational sustainable development. Under ISO 10668: 2010 standard, it highlights the methods to evaluate brand in a comprehensive manner with reporting results to excel competitors. With the implementation of UNSDGs and human-based policy in organizational culture, a branding effect can be attached to the identity of an organization. However, the use of UNSDGs and effectiveness of human-based policy have to be communicated to the community.

Besides, Kavadias et al. (2016) defined a business model has to be attached with value that a company has created. “The features of the model define the customer value proposition and the pricing mechanism, indicate how the company will organize itself and whom it will partner with to produce value, and specify how it will structure its supply chain. Basically, a business model is a system whose various features interact, often in complex ways, to determine the company’s success” (Kavadias et al., 2016, p. 92). With the proper use of UNSDGs, for example, SDG 3 well-being, SDG 9 innovation, SDG 12 responsible consumption and production, and SDG 17 partnership in any given industry, the business model will reflect the inputs of brand-building – people, policy, culture, use of resources for sustainable development and transformation. Based on the idea of Kerul et al. on sustainability mindset (2016), four dimensions (Ecological Worldview, Systems Perspective, Emotional Intelligence and Spiritual Intelligence) have to be incorporated into an organization with values (being) that they believe with interconnectedness, and with competency (doing) in identifying feasible and innovative solutions for new problems.

This paper starts with theories related to sustainability, many research papers have been written on sustainable development (SD) in the higher education sector. Different institutions have their own interpretations of sustainable development. In general, sustainable development is related to the economic, social and environmental impacts of global growth, promoting responsible decision making to allocate the resources necessary to meet the present and future needs of a society. This connects to how management defines and interprets sustainability when setting and implementing their short- and long-term strategic goals with total involvement of academic and administrative staff. Buying into the concept of sustainable development is the first and the most significant step in implementing sustainability-related actions in an institution, as the perception of staff on SD related actions affects their understanding of and exposure to sustainability ideals.

According to the definition of the Brundtland Commission (1992) of the United Nations,
“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Basic economic sustainability requires that the current activity of businesses be supported in the short term, and that new products, services, processes and people are supported in the long term. In the global initiatives of the “United Nations (UN) Decade of Education for Sustainable Development” (DESDE) 2005-2015, the mission of the DESD outlined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is to meet the needs of the present without compromising those of future generations. Hence, the ESD is relevant to all nations and all higher education institutions. Management in higher education institutions need to keep practising the rationale of ESD beyond 2015 through integrating ESD into their institutional operational level in setting strategic goals and performance indicators; and school/programme levels in re-visit the curriculum for the benefit of learners and the community.

As mentioned by the UNDESD, quantitative and qualitative ESD indicators need to be incorporated into different aspects of education for regular monitoring and reviewing purposes. This paper is going to analyze the six principles of UNPRME and 17 UNSDGs, along with the CSR guidelines of ISO 26000, to present the capacity of a video production project to build learners’ creativity, team spirit, and communication skills, as well as enhance teachers' ability to be innovative in assessing a learner’s competency to become a future leader with a sustainable development mindset.

2. FROM SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (SD) TO A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT/SUSTAINABILITY MINDSET

In recent years, the higher education sector has started to address the issues of sustainable development in their operations and curriculum design. This has created a dramatic need for educators, especially curriculum designers, with a mindset of sustainability and social responsibility (SR) and who possess the skills to write sustainability-related reports to communicate with stakeholders for accountability and transparency. This led to a need for further study of the elements of sustainable development and a sustainability mindset to align with the UNPRME principles and UN SDGs to help developing learners become future leaders who possess an SD mindset for economic, social and environmental impacts.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the application of the Sustainability Mindset Model of Kerul et al. (2016) with the seven dimensions of ISO 26000 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Guidelines will identify the steps involved in designing relevant sustainability-related activities to assess employees’ knowledge (thinking), values (being) and competency (doing) in the dimensions of ecological worldview, systems perspective, emotional and spiritual intelligence to fill the gaps between academics and industries in terms of developing talents with relevant knowledge, skills, attitudes and values for the future.

According to the information released on the HK government website, the concept of sustainable development is adopted from the World Commission on Environment and Development, stating that sustainable development is that which “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987, “Our Common Future”, Part 1, Chapter 2). Based on information from the Hong Kong government website, it seems the government’s focus is more on UN SDG 11 ‘sustainable cities’, SDG 3 ‘Good Health and Well Being’, SDG 6 ‘Clean Water’, SDG7 ‘Clean Energy’ and SDG13 ‘Climate Action’, stating that “Building Hong Kong into a world-class city and making Hong Kong a clean, comfortable and pleasant home would require a fundamental change of mindset” to make progress in the following three main areas:

- finding ways to increase prosperity and improve the quality of life while reducing overall pollution and waste;
- meeting our own needs and aspirations without doing damage to the prospects of future generations;
- reducing the environmental burden we put on our neighbours and helping to preserve common resources (“1999 Policy Address”).

Though the actions taken by the Hong Kong government are noble, they will not be enough to make significant progress towards these goals. More efforts are needed in the private sector to engage employees and management build a SD mindset to achieve results in the above three main areas.

3. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WITH RESILIENCE SKILLS AND TRUE DATA FOR DECISION MAKING

Extending beyond transactional and transformational leadership to lead organization for excellence under globalization and demanding needs of corporate social responsibility in business management for accountability, sustainable servant leadership is a new topic that adds value to the organizational performance.

The skills of resilience, building self-awareness and self-confidence in sustainable servant leadership have not been covered comprehensively. The author has identified the key elements for sustainable servant leaders via analyzing 13 relevant journal papers related to sustainable organizations and servant leadership (2009-2015). Through N’vivo qualitative and quantitative analysis, three major constructs are found – commitment, service/humility and impacts. Moreover, two rounds of survey on resilience skills have been collected from Indonesia, Malaysia and Hong Kong during the Q2 of 2018. It has been found that self-confidence is related to resilience skills, learning from experiences adapting to new developments, solving problems, being flexible, and being non-judgmental.

This finding is useful for organizations to improve employees’ capabilities under unexpected economic and social changes in this dynamic world. Besides, blockchain content distribution with true data of CEO stories of building self-confidence and self-discipline, overcoming life and study challenges can help employees to build positive mindset. This is of practical value in terms of developing influence and impacts with positive organizational outcomes.
4. WOMEN ATTRIBUTES AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT SKILLS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Based on the study of Orser (2011) on feminist attributes expressed within entrepreneurial identity, the key attributes are 1) participative leadership, 2) action-oriented, and 3) creative thinker/or 4) problem solver. According to the information provided by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) in September 2017, there is an unparalleled global resource professional and commercial network platform in the Asia Pacific region and beyond. Yeung (2018) mentioned that it is time to implement UNPRME - responsibility, values, goals, research, methods, dialogue and partnerships to make an impact - Responsible Reproduction and Consumption (UNSDG 12) and Innovation (UNSDG 9) and Transferable Skills (UNSDG 4). The One Belt Road (OBR) initiative has been applied into the projects of movie production on entrepreneurial opportunities (UNSDG 4, 8, 9, 17, 2017, HK), inter-disciplinary knowledge creation in Malan Lake, Inner Mongolia (UNSDG 4, 9, 15, 17, 2018, China) and coding competition for transformative learning (UNSDG 4, 9, 17, 2018, HK) are examples of sustainable projects with feminist attributes. The proposed steps to develop a compliance standard for UNSDG project management with feminist attributes are:

1) Establish project charters with project owners and stakeholders from different backgrounds to consider different perspectives (participative leadership).
2) Communicate matters of mutual interest to relevant members and communities to fine-tune standards at an acceptable level (action-oriented).
3) Engage subject experts in the evaluation criteria to improve their feasibility and practicality (creative-thinker/problem solver).
4) Inviting public comments or incorporating standards into selected industries for trial operation (participative leadership and action-oriented).
5) Completing the standards and highlighting the differences between the old and new standards to reflect the dynamics of the business world (action-oriented/creative-thinker/problem solver).
6) Seek to approve the recommended standards of the professional body (action-oriented/problem-solver).

This paper is of practical and managerial values for public and private sectors for implementing local, regional and global UNSDGs related projects with impacts. The concepts of sustainable development, resilience skills, content distribution of blockchain, awareness of women attributes and innovative project management skills are of great importance in developing organizational policy for future quality management.

5. DESIGN THINKING FOR SUSTAINABLE ORGANIZATION

Problems that we come across in the future will likely be different from those faced in the past. Hence, a new perspective for problem-solving is needed for sustainable development. Mootee (2013) put forward the idea of design thinking, a natural and inherent thinking, which was an approach to inquiry and expression that complemented and enhanced existing skills, behaviours, and techniques. He mentioned that design thinking was a data-driven type of analytical thinking with its own mode of analysis - one that focused on forms, relationships, behaviour, and real human interactions and emotions. He recommended that design thinking could be applied in the following ways, all of which are relevant for sustainable development in organizations:

1) How a product, service, system, or business currently lives in an ecosystem;
2) How people interact with the above and the nature, frequency, and attributes of that interaction;
3) How the different elements in the ecosystem relate to one another and if any systems-level impact exists;
4) What other ecosystems exist adjacent to your ecosystem;
5) How new insights may be gained by looking broadly at communicative events within these ecosystems and how they fit together from a systems perspective;
6) What the key characteristics and patterns of behaviour of new relationships are when viewed from a system level;
7) What the patterns of people's information behaviours are and how to map them visually to make sense of them (Mootee, 2013).

From the above, it is clear that design thinking can empower organizations and individuals to better understand their competitive and operational environment for perceiving and solving problems with realization of behavioral patterns, values attached to systems-level and processes of meeting challenges.

Apart from a system level, a process of levels in programme/module design with sustainable development and social responsibility also need to be addressed. At the 17th International Conference on Teaching and Learning organised by UNESCO-APEID, Bajunid (2014) argued that any radical turning points in professional policy shifts required mind-set changes in teachers with respect to their beliefs, assumptions, outside-the-box thinking, time management, creativity, edupreneurship and wethanschaung: "The emerging of basic literacies and new literacies demand continuous learning by teacher as perennial leaner". Bajunid (2014) also quoted the code of practice for quality assurance in public universities in Malaysia developed by the Quality Assurance Department of the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education (2008), which stated that the key foci of programme quality were: conceptual framework, knowledge, skills, content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, pedagogical and professional knowledge and skills, professional disposition and assumption system with evaluation, field experience and clinical practice, diversity, faculty qualifications, performance and development, unit governance and resources. Moreover, he highlighted that all programme objectives should align with the following learning outcomes:

1) Knowledge;
2) Practical Skills;
3) Social Skills and Responsibilities;
4) Communication, Leadership and Team Skills;
5) Problem-solving and Scientific Skills;
6) Information Management and Life-long Learning Skills;
7) Management and Entrepreneurship Skills.

Yeung (2014) echoed the ideas of Bajunid (2014) in stating that the following four characteristics were desirable for a socially-responsible teacher in the digital age. Teachers need to develop techniques to cater to a diversified group of students through traditional and non-traditional classroom settings, for example, blending in-person learning and virtual learning environments to motivate students as co-producers in the creation of meaningful and relevant curricula. The four characteristics are:

1) Knowledge and Intellectual Skills - Multi-disciplinary knowledge and multi-thinking with a mindset of change;
2) Processes - Value creation and waste reduction via curriculum review and revision;
3) Autonomy, Accountability and Application - Acceptance of professional responsibility with people, respect and continual improvement;
4) IT, Numeracy and Communication - Using technology in information consolidation for environmental friendliness.

Fisher (2010) argued that corporate sustainability/social responsibility was of utmost importance for the survival of organisations and their future generations of employees: “Organisations’ product/service offerings and vendor networks are interconnected globally and are being recognised on a global scale”. If educators can visualise the sustainable development goals of UNESCO, crystallise the manpower projection into curriculum design, and realise the ways of implementing the 4Cs into designing community development-related programmes, the institution can work towards becoming a sustainable organisation for the benefit of learners, the industries, and the community as they can develop awareness of sustainability and social responsibility among their peers and influence students to learn in a sustainable way. Based on the literature enumerated above, a model of sustainable institutions is recommended (see Figure 1).

6. METHODOLOGY

This paper selects 10 listed organizations representing the East to analyze for social responsibility performance. The companies chosen from China are signatory members of UN Global Compact namely in Table 1. Little research has explored UN Global Compact (UNCG) members’ commitment in CSR for sustainable development. The present research adopted a quantitative trending approach to explore the key elements committed in social policy performance of these chosen companies.

Research Objectives (RQs):
• to explore commitment of social policy for selected China-based listed organizations with UN Global Compact membership;
• to identify areas needed to be improved for total commitment on the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

After reviewing literature on sustainable development mindsets, sustainable development goals (SDGs), corporate social responsibility (CSR) and analysis of social dimension policy of 10 China-based listed companies (2006 to 2017) in Bloomberg database with members in UN Global Compact (2004 to 2017), it has been found that employee CSR training policy and consumer data protection policy are not common in selected organizations, except two communications related organizations. And, policies on equal opportunities, health & safety, and human rights are mostly in place.

Among 10 selected organizations, Petro China and China Mobile Communications are found with these three policies in place in past 11 years (2007 to 2017). It is suggested that individual employee attributes, knowing and being in relation to social policy, need to be strengthened; perception of tasks, implementing CSR and consumer policies with inspirations on sustainability, need to be maintained in the organizational core activities; and value creation, realising the importance of consumer data protection with design thinking and system thinking in product/service innovations, need to be enhanced for sustainable development.

Table 1. China-based Organizations listed as UN Global Compact Members and Bloomberg Database

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Joined On</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Inner Mongolia Yili Industrial Group Co., Ltd.</td>
<td>Company</td>
<td>Food Producers</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>11/27/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Orient Overseas (International) Limited</td>
<td>Company</td>
<td>Industrial Transportation</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>9/5/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Link Asset Management Limited</td>
<td>Company</td>
<td>Real Estate Investment Trusts</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>9/26/2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the exception of China Mobile Communications, all the others did not have a mature policy on employee CSR training and consumer data protection. Commitment to establish and maintain CSR policy should be in place in all its forms.
6.1. Overall findings

Research Questions 1: What steps are required to help learners build a sustainable development (SD)/sustainability mindset with the four dimensions of Kerul et al. (2016)?

The followings are the steps required to help students build an SD mindset with the four key dimensions of Kerul et al. (2016):

Step 1) Setting up an SD with the Innovations Working Group:
- Engaging management and employees from different departments to discuss ways of establishing employee CSR training policy and consumer data protection policy for sustainable development.

Step 2) Arranging awareness training for involved stakeholders:
- Providing on-going (e.g. quarterly) training on sustainable development mindset, innovations, and consistent implementation strategies on equal opportunities; health & safety ; and human rights for CSR practices in core business
- Inviting external parties to comment on potential improvements in SD mindset and innovations.
- Engaging the community as a whole to increase the awareness of SD mindset with innovations in developed and developing countries.

Research Questions 2: How can management assess their employees’ understanding of CSR?

Step 3) Using sustainability related principles to engage stakeholders:
- Identify relevant sustainability issues based on the six principles of the UNPRME and 17 UNSDGs to create action plans to increase awareness of these issues and/or to solve these problems using innovations in order to assess the level of responsibility and SD mindset of learners and their ability to foster positive economic, social and environmental impacts.

Step 4) Communicating with stakeholders about SD Mindset and innovations to promote opportunities for engagement and partnership:
- According to Kerul et al. (2016), a Sustainability Mindset is intended to help individuals analyse complex management challenges and generate truly innovative solutions. The Sustainability Mindset breaks away from traditional management disciplinary silos by integrating management, ethics, entrepreneurship, environmental studies, systems thinking, self-awareness and spirituality within the dimensions of being (values), thinking (knowledge) and doing (competency). Kerul et al. (2016) highlighted that multi-disciplinary knowledge for developing a sustainability mindset was crucial. Additionally, Kerul et al. (2016) provided a framework for a “Sustainability Mindset” that includes these elements:
  1) How individuals view the world and their role/place in it?
  2) How individuals view connect with their assumptions, beliefs, and values?
  3) How individuals incorporate the sustainability mindset systematically to understand the ecosystem of a society?

The definition of Sustainability Mindset put forward by Kerul et al. (2016) involves content areas, dimensions, and components. The goal of this paper is to build on the framework of Kerul et al’s Sustainability Mindset Model through four dimensions: Ecological Worldview, Systems Perspective, Emotional Intelligence and Spiritual Intelligence. These four dimensions will be incorporated into seamless and innovative assessments designed to help learners build a sustainability mindset with knowledge of the society in which they live, with values (being) that they believe with competency (doing) in identifying feasible and innovative solutions for new problems.

With the goal of applying an inquiry-action learning approach to nurture management and employees le to use technology to convey stories of personal values with a deep understanding of UNPRME and UNSDGs, this paper proposes a model for a Sustainable Development Mindset with Innovations to highlight the key areas of learning through innovative assessments for building the CSR capabilities of management and employees. They are:
- a framework of sustainable development mindset with innovations (Figure 1) needs to promote CSR-oriented social policy to management and employees via enhancing their understanding of global initiatives like UNPRME and UNSDGs to instill worldview and system perspectives in them;
- a framework of sustainable development mindset with innovations needs to build upon on multi-disciplinary knowledge to support management and employees’ deeper understanding of local issues and encourage them to exercise self-awareness in ways of seeing things, creativity in ways of solving problems via ethical thinking, system thinking, and entrepreneurial spirit in emotional intelligence development;
- a framework of sustainable development mindset with innovations needs to incorporate a critical self-evaluation process that promotes management and employees to reflect and engage stakeholders in emotional intelligence development;
- a framework of sustainable development mindset with innovations needs to apply design thinking and innovations for integrating different perspectives for developing transferable skills to help management and employees become future sustainability leaders and enable them to bridge the gap between developed and developing countries.
7. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Based on the UNPRME principles, UNSDGs and ISO 26000 CSR guidelines, supporting the growth of sustainable development mindset with innovations through the use of sustainable development mindset with innovations model in local contexts can help an organisation achieve the objective of building a sustainable development mindset, to convey personal values, to facilitate management and employees to use technology to convey stories of CSR policy and consumer data protection policy with UNSDGs.

Moreover, steps 1-4 have been used to illustrate how to foster a sustainable development mindset with innovations, a learning process involving applying the 4Cs of Kivunja (2015) - critical thinking skill, communication skill, collaboration skill and creative skill - to matters of sustainability, in addition to the design thinking concept of Moore (2013).

Building a sustainable development mindset by promoting the growth of management and employees intelligence in understanding their business through economic, social and environmental lenses is a challenge in responsible management education. Hence, it is recommended that CSR social policy should be built on the model of sustainable development mindset with innovations going forward (Figure 1).

REFERENCES


