

LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: A STUDY OF SELECTED PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) remains a major challenge for many developing countries, largely due to institutional weaknesses, governance deficiencies, and ineffective policy coordination. Recognizing the importance of leadership in addressing these challenges, this study examined the influence of leadership effectiveness on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in selected public institutions in Nigeria. Specifically, the study investigated the effects of transformational leadership, strategic leadership, ethical leadership, and leadership communication on SDG implementation. A quantitative survey research design was adopted. Data were collected from employees and management personnel involved in SDG planning, coordination, monitoring, and implementation across selected federal and state public institutions. Using a multi-stage sampling technique, 434 questionnaires were administered, of which 392 valid responses were retrieved and analyzed, representing a response rate of 90.3%. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, and multiple regression analysis with SPSS Version 29. The findings revealed that leadership effectiveness had a significant positive influence on Sustainable Development Goal implementation. Among the leadership dimensions examined, transformational leadership emerged as the strongest predictor of SDG implementation ($\beta = 0.44$, $p < 0.001$), followed by strategic leadership ($\beta = 0.38$, $p < 0.001$), leadership communication ($\beta = 0.33$, $p < 0.001$), and ethical leadership ($\beta = 0.27$, $p < 0.001$). The regression model explained 71% of the variation in SDG implementation ($R^2 = 0.71$), indicating that leadership effectiveness plays a substantial role in improving development outcomes within public institutions.

The study concludes that effective leadership is fundamental to strengthening institutional capacity, enhancing stakeholder engagement, improving policy implementation, and accelerating progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria. It recommends sustained investment in leadership development, strategic governance practices, ethical standards, and effective communication systems to improve public-sector performance and support the achievement of national sustainable development objectives.

Keywords: Leadership Effectiveness, Transformational Leadership, Strategic Leadership, Ethical Leadership, Leadership Communication, Sustainable Development Goals, Public Institutions, Nigeria.