



Exploring Organizational Perspectives on Sustainable Development: A Comparative Study of Companies in Dubai and Istanbul

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Abstract

This research presents the findings of a study on the perceptions of sustainable development among companies in Dubai and Istanbul. It starts by providing an overview of the definitions, objectives, benefits, and requirements of sustainability, also highlighting some examples of best practices in this area. Then presents the results of a questionnaire survey that has been conducted to gather the views of companies on sustainable development and compare them. The main point of this research is to acknowledge the perspectives of companies in Dubai and Istanbul on sustainable development. This study aims to identify the sustainable development challenges that companies are currently facing and may face in the future, from an organizational perspective. It also aims to examine how companies can address these challenges in a way that benefits both their own operations and the larger society by contributing to sustainable development. The focus of the research is on understanding how companies can address these challenges from within their own organizational structures and practices. The survey results reveal similarities and differences in sustainability practices between Istanbul and Dubai. Istanbul-based companies prioritize customer-focused sustainability, while Dubai-based companies excel in sustainable operations. Istanbul ranked first in ethics and safety, while Dubai focused more on environmental impact. Both cities prioritize a safe work environment, but Istanbul focuses on employee engagement, while Dubai prioritizes energy efficiency and ethical sourcing. Common barriers include a lack of awareness, difficulty finding sustainable suppliers, and regulatory restrictions. Dubai companies perceive the higher implementation of sustainable strategies and measurable results. Regular evaluation, sharing of best practices, and alignment of sustainability priorities can drive improvements. Companies need to consider their unique context and challenges to effectively integrate sustainability into their business strategies, and overcome barriers. Collaboration, education, and stakeholder engagement are crucial for fostering a more sustainable future in both Istanbul and Dubai.

1. INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development is a vital concept in the realm of business, involving a responsible approach to meeting present requirements while safeguarding the preservation of the capacity for future generations to fulfill their own needs. For companies, incorporating sustainable development entails taking into account the social, environmental, and economic ramifications of their operations across the entire lifespan of their products. By striving to achieve these objectives, companies can not only contribute to sustainability but also improve their competitiveness [1]. In the business world, this means balancing economic, social, and environmental concerns to create long-term value for stakeholders. As such, sustainable development has become a central focus for many organizations around the world.

There are many different drivers for sustainable development in organizations, including regulatory requirements, the increasing desire of consumers for products and services that prioritize social and environmental responsibility, and the desire to improve operational efficiency and reduce costs. Some companies have also embraced sustainable development as a way to improve their reputation and attract and retain employees [1]. Implementing sustainable development practices in an organization necessitates a comprehensive approach that considers the needs and perspectives of all stakeholders. It also requires the development of clear goals and targets, as well as the implementation of strategies and systems to track progress and continuously improve performance [1].

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Sustainable Development Background

One widely accepted definition of sustainable development is “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to develop” [1]. This idea gained significant recognition during the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro, but its origins go back further in history.

The concept of sustainable development is often linked to the "triple bottom line" of economic, social, and environmental performance. It involves maximizing the benefits and minimizing the negative impacts of economic activities on people and the planet. This includes efforts to reduce pollution, minimize waste and resource consumption, and protect natural ecosystems [2].

Sustainable development also involves addressing social issues such as poverty, inequality, and access to education, healthcare, and other basic needs. It requires a long-term perspective and an understanding that economic, social, and environmental goals are interconnected and must be addressed in a holistic way [3].

2.2 Objectives of Sustainable Development

Sustainable management of the planet's natural resources requires addressing two key concepts. Firstly, meeting basic human needs like food, shelter, and work is important, particularly for those who are currently unable to meet these needs, such as the world's poor. Ignoring these needs can lead to ecological disasters and perpetuate poverty. Furthermore, the constraints on development are yet to be fixed but rather depend on technological and social structures, their effects on the environment, and the Earth's ability to absorb the impacts of human activity [1].

The sustainable development concept aims to create a society that fairly distributes natural resources, willingly accepts ecological constraints, and strives for economic efficiency [1]. Essentially, this approach to development seeks to achieve social goals while also respecting the environment and being economically feasible. As shown in Table 1. These three objectives form the structural pillars of sustainable development.

Table 1. The three pillars of sustainable development

Sustainable Development		
Economy	Environment	Social
Profit & Economic Growth	Resource Conservation	Basic Human Needs
Cost Savings	Pollution Prevention	Equity and Education
Market Expansion	Carrying Capacity	Community Participation

From an economic perspective according to United Nations (1992), another goal of sustainable development is cost savings, which can also be viewed as a benefit in terms of conserving energy and reducing waste. from an environmental standpoint [4]. In order to meet basic needs and promote human development, economic growth is necessary for certain areas. However, this growth must be less destructive to the environment and should involve a shift in existing patterns of consumption and production to yield substantial advantages [5].

Community participation is essential for achieving well-being and sustainable progress at the community or regional level. It offers numerous advantages of community participation extending to individuals, communities, organizations, and society at large. For example, it can help to more effectively and efficiently target resources and can also help to build skills and competencies within communities. Additionally, it can serve as a way to extend the democratic process, open up governance, and address inequalities in power [6].

Education is also a crucial element in the pursuit of equitable and sustainable relationships and global order. Education for sustainable development seeks to equip individuals with the necessary knowledge, and attitudes needed to make well-informed choices that benefit themselves and others, in the present as well as in the future, and to proactively act upon these decisions [7].

2.3 Business Benefits of Implementing Sustainable Development

An organization's sustainable strategy, based on integrity, strong values, and a long-term perspective, can provide significant business benefits and make an optimistic influence to culture. Corporations that adopt an advanced sustainable method can reap a number of advantages including: Improved brand value and status, customer acquisition, differentiation, Lower operating costs and increased revenue, risk management improvement, talent retention and attraction and discovering new opportunities [8].

Adopting sustainable development principles within a company can bring numerous advantages, including an improved reputation and brand value, increased customer attraction and retention, a competitive edge over other firms, lower operating costs and increased revenues, better management of risk, and the identification of new opportunities. These benefits not only benefit the company itself but also contribute to a confident insight into the business within society and between customers. Implementing sustainable development strategies within the company can therefore be beneficial for the lasting achievement of the enterprise [9].

2.4 Sustainable Performance Measurement

The world is perceived as a holistic global system in which all components are interrelated. The term "sustainable development" refers to a process that takes into account the impact of economic, ecological, and social factors on a system over time [1].

To measure the progress toward sustainable development, it is essential to consider several aspects of a company's environmental performance. This includes using metrics that address sustainability issues in a comprehensive manner. Measuring the success of sustainability initiatives allows decision-makers to assess the benefits and drawbacks of current processes. To do this effectively, it may be required to develop novel methods for tracking performance, conducting financial assessments, and managing costs [10].

2.5 Requirements for Achieving Sustainable Development

Companies can be expected to meet certain requirements in terms of economy, ecology, and society. The economic requirement refers to a company operating in a financially viable way. The ecological requirement involves integrating environmental goals and actions into the company's strategy and implementing environmentally friendly practices. The social requirement involves considering the interests of stakeholders and implementing strategies for managing these stakeholders [11].

To build a sustainable enterprise, it is important to consider several key elements related to the environment and economy, including reducing waste and emissions, minimize energy usage in the production of goods and services, using sustainable and renewable energy sources, the incorporation of recycled components and materials into products and processes to the greatest extent possible, evaluation of the environmental impact of business operations and products, measures and standards that can be used to assess sustainability performance, and the entire organization must have a culture that is deeply aware of and concerned about the environment [12] [13].

2.6 Sustainable Practices

Implementing the requirements discussed in the previous section can help companies not only develop sustainability but also increase their effectiveness. It is known as a sustainable competitive benefit. Product manufacturing holds a crucial role in achieving this advantage, as it involves integrating environmental requirements throughout the entire lifecycle of a product [14]. Sustainable manufacturing involves developing technologies that allow for the transformation of materials without the usage of materials that are not renewable or toxic, releasing pollutants, or generating wastage. Consideration should be taken at all stages of the product lifecycle [15].

2.7 Sustainable Supply Chain Management

Supply chain management (SCM) contains the coordination of activities and information related to the movement and conversion of products from start to end, with the goal of achieving a sustainable competitive advantage. SCM integrates common business tasks and tactics among the organization and businesses in the supply chain to enhance the lasting performance of all involved parties [16].

A sustainable supply chain model integrates sustainability factors such as minimizing the production of CO₂, energy usage, and traffic congestion, alongside with common measures like availability, cost reduction, and financial performance. This model can lead to reduced handling and transportation costs per pallet, shorter delivery times, reduced carbon dioxide emissions, and enhanced availability of products at the point of purchase [17].

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research project is a comparative study conducted in Dubai and Istanbul to evaluate companies' sustainability practices in the two cities. The study was conducted in two phases.

The first phase involved conducting a literature review to identify the relevant theories and concepts related to sustainability and its practices, to identify key concepts and theories related to sustainability practices. This included reviewing academic and industry journals, reports, and books on the topic. The second phase involved collecting primary data from companies in Dubai and Istanbul using a questionnaire survey. The data were presented in two formats, the background information was conveyed using percentages, detailing the company size, current function, and title. The sustainability-related data obtained from questions rated on a 1 to 5 scale was presented by calculating the arithmetic mean of each question in the questionnaire.

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The study utilized a survey questionnaire to collect data from a sample of employees in each city, with 30 respondents from each city completing the survey. The survey was distributed to approximately 150 people in each city, resulting in a response rate of 20%. The questionnaire comprised 11 questions divided into two sections. The questions in Section A aimed to collect background information about the company, while the questions in Section-B aimed to collect data about sustainability-related issues.

The following tables provide a comprehensive overview of the data obtained from the survey and present the results as arithmetic means, allowing for a comparative analysis between the two cities.

Table 2. Implemented claims and issues in organization (1 – Not realized or implemented / 5 – Fully realized and implemented).

	Customer-focused sustainability	Sustainable operations	New business opportunities	Sustainable materials and packaging	Comprehensive sustainability
Dubai	3.40	3.36	3.34	3.46	3.50
Istanbul	3.70	3.16	3.50	3.46	3.16

Table 3. Practices of sustainability in organizations (1 – Not at all / 5 – Completely established).

	Ethics and safety	Employee engagement	Environmental impact	Sustainable partnerships	Sustainability integration
Dubai	3.46	3.43	3.50	3.46	3.36
Istanbul	4.34	3.56	3.16	3.50	3.43

Table 4. The importance of sustainability-related issues (1 – Not at all / 5 – Very important).

	A safe and healthy work environment for employees.	Energy efficiency and conservation	Waste reduction and recycling initiatives	Ethical sourcing and responsible supply chain management	Employee engagement and well-being	Development and marketing of sustainable products and services.	Sustainable transportation and logistics
Dubai	3.73	3.43	3.50	3.56	3.63	3.40	3.40
Istanbul	4.63	3.73	3.36	3.66	4.10	3.56	3.06

Table 5. Qualities for establishing sustainability in organizations (1 – Not at all / 5 – Very important).

	Value	Management support	Centrality	Alignment	Metrics	Engagement	Integration
Dubai	3.13	3.36	3.20	3.23	3.20	3.26	3.26
Istanbul	4.43	4.13	3.93	3.90	3.63	3.83	3.76

Table 6. Practiced sustainable qualities in organizations (1 – Not at all / 5 – Extremely)

	Value	Management support	Centrality	Alignment	Metrics	Engagement	Integration
Dubai	3.26	3.26	3.33	3.13	3.20	3.23	3.30
Istanbul	3.83	3.56	3.43	3.43	3.30	3.40	3.26

Table 7. Items to influence the business decisions in organizations (1 – Not at all / 5 – Very important).

	Ensuring worker health and safety.	Addressing regulatory restrictions	Providing products/services that are good for the world	Improving brand image with stakeholders/public	Ensuring proper employee treatment among suppliers
Dubai	3.70	3.63	3.50	3.60	3.46
Istanbul	4.66	4.13	4.16	4.30	4.10

	Improving employee morale/engagement	Securing needed energy resources	Reducing pollution/toxic chemical use	Enhancing customer satisfaction/loyalty through sustainability initiatives	Reducing/managing risks/impacts of climate change
Dubai	3.56	3.70	3.46	3.53	3.40
Istanbul	4.03	3.30	1.93	2.96	1.80

Table 8. Factors to obstruct moving toward sustainability in organizations (1 – Not at all/ 5 – Extremely).

	Lack of financial resources for sustainability initiatives	Difficulty in finding sustainable suppliers or materials	Regulatory barriers or restrictions	Lack of awareness or education about sustainability among employees or management
Dubai	2.86	2.93	2.86	2.93
Istanbul	2.96	3.50	3.00	4.13

	Lack of clear sustainability goals or strategies	Competing priorities or limited resources for sustainability initiatives	Limited access to technology or innovation for sustainable practices	Lack of metrics or standards to measure sustainability progress.
Dubai	2.90	2.70	2.86	2.90
Istanbul	3.36	3.00	2.95	3.00

Table 9. Sustainable performance of the organization (1 – Very low extent/ 5 – Very high extent).

	Is the company implementing a sustainable strategy?	Does the company provide and review information used to develop sustainability metrics?	Is the company seeing measurable results from its sustainability initiatives?
Dubai	3.33	3.30	3.23
Istanbul	2.90	2.66	2.30

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings from the survey comparing sustainability practices between companies in Istanbul and Dubai, it is evident that there are differences in the implementation of sustainability claims and issues in these two cities, these differences suggest that benchmarking and sharing best practices can enhance sustainability efforts and aligning sustainability priorities and strategies can contribute to addressing global sustainability challenges; Companies in Istanbul and Dubai can learn from each other's strengths and best practices to further enhance their sustainability efforts and contribute to a more sustainable future.

These results highlight the importance of considering city-specific contexts and priorities when developing sustainability strategies for businesses in these regions. Therefore, aligning sustainability priorities and strategies in both cities can collectively contribute to addressing global sustainability challenges and fostering a more sustainable future.

It is crucial for companies to align their sustainability priorities and strategies, taking into consideration factors such as customer-focused sustainability, new business opportunities, sustainable operations, comprehensive sustainability, and sustainable materials and packaging. Additionally, addressing areas that need improvement, such as waste reduction and recycling initiatives, can contribute to a more sustainable future.

Furthermore, it is important for companies to invest in education and awareness programs for employees and management to overcome the barrier of lack of awareness or education about sustainability. Collaboration with stakeholders, including suppliers, regulators, and the public, can also help overcome challenges such as regulatory restrictions and limited access to technology or innovation. By considering these recommendations, companies in Istanbul and Dubai can contribute to sustainable business practices and help create a more sustainable future for their cities and beyond.

There are several suggestions for future work that can further enhance sustainability efforts and contribute to a more sustainable future including establishing a Sustainable Business Network to facilitate knowledge sharing, collaboration, and regular meetings between companies, and conducting in-depth case studies on companies with exemplary sustainability practices to identify success factors and challenges.

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