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Derleme Makale/ Review Article

### Gender Equality and Ethical Leadership as Catalysts for Sustainable Organizational Performance

*Sürdürülebilir Örgütsel Performans İçin Katalizörler Olarak Cinsiyet Eşitliği ve Etik Liderlik*

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#### ÖZ

Bu çalışma, cinsiyet eşitliği, sürdürülebilir performans ve etik liderliğin iş dünyasındaki tamamlayıcı rollerini incelemektedir. Araştırmanın temel amacı, iş yerindeki cinsiyet ayrımcılığının sürdürülebilir performans süreçleri ve liderlik uygulamaları üzerindeki etkisini ortaya koymaktır. Özellikle kadınların liderlik pozisyonlarına erişimini engelleyen unsurların, sürdürülebilir performansla uyumlu örgütsel yapılar üzerindeki olumsuz etkileri vurgulanmaktadır. Literatürde cinsiyet eşitsizliği ve etik liderliğe dair çalışmalar bulunmasına rağmen, bu değişkenlerin sürdürülebilir performansla olan ilişkisini derinlemesine ele alan çalışmalar sınırlıdır. Bu boşluk, çalışmanın temel motivasyon kaynağını oluşturmaktadır. Ayrıca, etik liderlik ve cinsiyet eşitliğinin sürdürülebilir performans hedeflerine ulaşmadaki rolünü daha etkin şekilde açıklamak da çalışmanın hedefleri arasındadır. Araştırmada yöntem olarak kapsamlı bir literatür taraması kullanılmış ve güvenilir veri tabanlarından güncel kaynaklar incelenmiştir.

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#### ABSTRACT

This study examines the complementary roles of gender equality, sustainable performance, and ethical leadership in today's business world. The main aim is to explore the impact of gender discrimination on sustainable performance processes and leadership practices in the workplace. In particular, it highlights how barriers that prevent women from accessing leadership positions negatively affect organizational structures aligned with sustainable performance. While there is existing research on gender inequality and ethical leadership, studies that deeply investigate their connection with sustainable performance are limited. This gap serves as the primary motivation for the study. Another objective is to provide a deeper understanding of how ethical leadership and gender equality can be more effectively implemented to achieve sustainable performance goals. The elimination of gender discrimination is emphasized not only as an ethical necessity but also as a key factor for sustainable success. A comprehensive literature review has been used as the research method, drawing on up-to-date and credible sources from major academic databases to support the analysis.

## Introduction

Gender parity, sustainable performance, and ethical leadership are becoming more essential in the current business world for organizational effectiveness and long-term viability. Specifically, gender discrimination in the workplace is not only seen as an ethical issue but also as a significant determinant that adversely affects business process performance (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Ethical leadership in this scenario can be considered a fundamental governance variable for ensuring gender parity and fostering sustainable performance. Ethical leadership refers to the decisions of a leader based on ethical and moral standards, just and equitable treatment of employees, and steering organizational values in terms of an ethical code (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Ethical leaders not only adhere to rules and regulations but are also role models for employees, promote ethical behavior, and establish trust, transparency, and justice within organizational culture (Resick et al., 2006). The key elements of ethical leadership include honesty, fairness, accountability, respect for employees, and social responsibility (Yukl, 2013). Ethical leaders are transparent in communication to allow employees to make the right decisions when faced with ethical dilemmas and develop policies that promote ethical behavior.

This study examines the impact of workplace gender discrimination on sustainable performance processes and leadership behaviors. It also explains how obstacles that deter women from assuming leadership positions damage the organizational framework that supports sustainable performance. Although numerous studies examine workplace gender imbalance and ethical leadership, the interaction between these two elements and their impact on sustainable performance remains underexplored in depth (Northouse, 2021). To this end, the primary goal of the research is to fill this gap and provide an exhaustive overview of how gender equality and ethical leadership can be applied more effectively with the objective of achieving sustainable performance goals in the contemporary business environment.

Eliminating gender discrimination is not just a moral imperative but also a strategic necessity for sustainable business success (Heilman, 2012). This study was conducted using a literature review strategy, examining available and reliable scholarly research published in prestigious databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and Web of Science. Against this backdrop, the literature in workplace gender discrimination, sustainable performance, and ethical leadership was reviewed critically with the aim of identifying gaps in these areas and guiding future studies.

The aim of the study is to analyze the impact of gender discrimination on sustainable performance processes and leadership practice in the organizational context. It further elucidates how factors hindering women from reaching leadership positions damage an organizational system that complies with sustainable performance. The significance of the study is to come up with a general perspective on the relationship between gender discrimination in the workplace and sustainable performance and the moderating role of ethical leadership in this relationship. Although there are several studies on gender inequality in workplaces and ethical leadership in the literature, a review that clarifies the interaction of the two constructs and sustainable performance is lacking. This study is expected to fill this gap. This observation forms the foundation of the research. Furthermore, providing a complete understanding of how gender equality and ethical leadership can be more effectively utilized to achieve sustainable performance goals in the contemporary business context also serves as the justification for the research. Putting an end to gender discrimination is not only an ethical imperative but also a driver for sustainable performance. This study was conducted through a literature review. Through the literature review, current and valid literature published on gender discrimination, sustainable performance, and ethical leadership was examined. The key databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and Web of Science were searched for articles and books published in leading journals. Literature related to gender discrimination in the workplace, sustainable performance, and ethical leadership was examined thoroughly.

## 1. Conceptual Framework

Gender discrimination refers to the differential treatment of individuals based on their gender, leading to unequal access to opportunities and discriminatory practices in the workplace (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015). Gender discrimination in the workplace is of many forms, ranging from recruitment processes to career development opportunities, wage differentials, and terms of employment (Eagly & Carli, 2007). The obstacles to women's entry into leadership positions and the "glass ceiling syndrome" are obvious examples of such discrimination (Morrison et al., 1987).

Sustainable performance can be defined as companies creating long-term value with respect to economic, environmental, and social factors (Elkington, 1999). According to one of the most significant principles of sustainable performance, it is that businesses should operate not only for profitability but also for considering their social responsibilities and ecological impacts (Dyllick & Hockerts, 2002). Ensuring equality between genders at the workplace is promoting the social component of sustainable performance, with the outcome of a more integrated and productive working environment (Kiron et al., 2017).

Ethical leadership means that leaders act honestly, justly, and in a responsible way towards their employees (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Ethical leaders develop a trusting environment at work by making respectful, transparent, and fair decisions (Yukl, 2013). Employing an ethical leadership style at work can increase the motivation and morale of the employees, doing away with unethical practices like gender discrimination (Kalshoven et al., 2011).

Gender discrimination, being an ethically unacceptable workplace behavior, may adversely affect employee motivation and organizational commitment, eroding sustainable performance. Ethical leadership style could avert such discriminatory behaviors, resulting in the creation of a more just work environment. Precisely, when ethical leaders guide the organizational culture in fostering gender equality, the satisfaction and productivity levels of the employees enhance, enabling better achievement of sustainable performance goals.

## **2. Research Methodology**

In this study, a classical literature review methodology was employed, focusing on a comprehensive and systematic gathering of relevant academic articles. The databases used included Google Scholar, Scopus, and Web of Science, covering publications from 2010 to 2024. Key search terms were “gender discrimination,” “ethical leadership,” and “sustainable performance,” along with their synonyms and related phrases. Initially, titles and abstracts were screened for relevance, followed by full-text review of selected articles. Inclusion criteria prioritized peer-reviewed journal articles and high-impact conference papers published in English. This approach ensured a rigorous and representative selection of studies to analyze the interplay between gender discrimination, ethical leadership, and sustainable organizational performance (Snyder, 2019; Webster & Watson, 2002).

The research design used in the study is a literature review. Literature review is a research approach which systematically identifies, gathers, and examines studies on a particular issue, summarizing existing knowledge (Snyder, 2019). Such articles rigorously review existing literature and establish existing relations and gaps between theories, concepts, methodologies, and findings in a discipline. The purpose of a literature review is to understand previous research on the topic, contribute to previously existing knowledge, and guide future research. This method has thus been preferred for the study. Literature reviews are conducted to summarize existing knowledge on a research topic, reveal the state of the art, identify knowledge gaps, and guide future research (Webster & Watson, 2002). The review of the literature provides an opportunity to evaluate systematically research in this field and examine different facets of the topic (Okoli & Schabram, 2015). Additionally, a comparison of the findings obtained from different studies is necessary in order to identify the implications of new management styles on economic independence and sustainable growth. The review method also allows for having a general perspective of the subject and comparing different scholarly directions. For literature review, recent and genuine scholarly materials available in renowned databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and Web of Science have been reviewed. In this, the existing literature on workplace gender discrimination, sustainable performance, and ethical leadership has been critically analyzed to ascertain the loopholes in these areas and to support future research. The key terms used in the course of the study were: Gender Discrimination, Sustainable Performance, Ethical Leadership, Gender Equality, Leadership, and Organizational Sustainability.

## **3. Findings**

The interplay between ethical leadership, gender discrimination, and sustainable performance fundamentally contributes to cultivating a fairer and more inclusive organizational culture. Gender discrimination creates disparities in opportunities among employees, depletes organizational justice perceptions and lowers motivation of the individuals, having a negative impact on long-term performance (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015). Ethical leadership helps curb discrimination by adopting a justice-based management approach that promotes equality among employees (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Ethical leaders shield female and male employees from discrimination by promoting equal opportunities, hence fostering the trust, commitment, and creativity necessary for long-term performance (Neubert et al., 2013). On the other hand, sustainable performance is not limited to financial performance but is also concerning long-term employee productivity and the organizational standards of ethics (Eccles et al., 2014). Gender discrimination is seen as an obstacle to sustainable performance, yet it is ethical leadership that can overcome this obstacle. Through ethical leadership, equal opportunity is encouraged, diversity management is effective, and the workplace is fostered to be inclusive. Therefore, work culture grounded in ethical leadership is the cornerstone of sustainable performance by eradicating gender discrimination. Studies addressing the intersectionality of gender discrimination, ethical leadership, and sustainable performance are explicated here.

It is important to note that much of the existing literature is predominantly grounded in Western contexts, which may limit the generalizability of findings. Cultural variations significantly influence gender roles, leadership

expectations, and ethical standards in organizations (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Therefore, integrating studies from diverse cultural backgrounds, including Eastern, Middle Eastern, and developing countries, can enrich the understanding of how gender discrimination and ethical leadership interplay with sustainable performance. Such multicultural perspectives are essential to developing globally relevant frameworks and tailored organizational policies.

Bilen-Green, Froelich, and Jacobson's (2008) study examines the capability of women in upper-level academic administration to propel organizational transformation and enrich the recruitment, retention, and advancement of women into faculty positions. The research verifies extant literature that holds institutional gender systems, which prevent women from advancing in universities, give rise to an equitable but non-conformist competitive environment through organizational working practices, interpersonal relationships, and existing attitudes to serve men's advancement. Increased presence of women in strategic leadership positions is likely to prompt more balanced women's participation in academia by allowing the understanding of practical barriers in work policies, increasing networking opportunities, and displaying changing organizational cultures. The analysis examines evidence for the percentage of women occupying chief academic leadership positions in U.S. doctorate-granting institutions and measuring its impact on the prevalence of women as faculty members. It also captures variations between variables such as institutional size, public versus private status, land grant status, and the effect of ADVANCE funding. The outcomes suggest potential mechanisms for change that would accelerate the advancement of female scholars within academic institutions.

Following these findings, Ho, Li, Tam, and Zhang (2015) studied the impact of the gender of the CEO on accounting conservatism and how the leadership traits of female CEOs are responsible for enhancing the financial reporting process. The scholars find that the processes involved in top-level management have been extensively studied under the period of male-dominated leadership, which by nature involves male prejudice. Despite psychological and biological differences, female CEOs' leadership traits have not been studied well. The study confirms that female leaders' ethical sensitivity and risk-aversion orientation are associated with financial reporting procedures being conservative and firmly resistant to fraud. The findings reveal a positive relationship between CEO gender and accounting conservatism, with the relationship being more pronounced in firms exposed to greater lawsuit and takeover threats. The study contributes to the body of research on ethical leadership by identifying gender diversity as an important factor in guaranteeing honesty in financial reporting.

Park, Kim, and Song (2015) examined the impact of ethical leadership on employees' in-role performance in a South Korean public-serving agency context. They also examined the mediating role of employees' psychological ownership between the two. The research, using 202 responses based on structural equation modeling (SEM), showed that ethical leadership had a positive effect on employees' psychological ownership and that the effect of ethical leadership on in-role performance was mediated by employees' psychological ownership. The results support the theoretical idea that employees' psychological ownership mediates the link between ethical leadership and in-role performance.

Similarly, Glass, Cook, and Ingersoll (2016) performed research examining the role of women leaders in environmental strategies in organizations. The research examines the effect of gender leadership on environmental strategy, applying a dataset of CEOs and boards of Fortune 500 organizations over a period of ten years. The study specifically looks at the female CEO presence, the proportion of women on boards, the number of female board members' contacts, and the combined and collective effects of female CEOs and gender-diverse boards. The findings reveal that companies with gender-diverse leadership teams are more effective at instituting environmentally friendly strategies than other companies. This study contributes to the corporate governance and environmental performance literature by emphasizing how leadership gender composition shapes corporate practice.

Glass, Cook, and Ingersoll's (2016) study shows that gender-diverse board leadership in companies perceives environmental sustainability strategies more effectively. Based on the results, one can say that reducing gender discrimination in business can contribute directly to sustainable performance. Female leadership can influence not only environmental strategies, but also ethical decision-making systems and CSR initiatives in a positive manner. Ethical leadership is also critical to combating gender discrimination since it promotes equality and justice in the workplace. In this context, a management approach that supports gender diversity can promote ethical standards in companies while promoting sustainable and long-term success.

Kim and Thapa (2018) presented a study to examine the effect of the top management's ethical leadership on corporate social responsibility (CSR) and organizational performance for the food services industry. The study was conducted based on 196 South Korean food service franchise firms' data and tested empirically against a conceptual model. According to the results of the study, the ethical leadership had a significant impact on CSR and operational performance. In addition, CSR was also shown to have a positive impact on operational and commercial performance. Furthermore, operation performance was proven to improve commercial performance,

and commercial performance improved economic performance in a positive manner. All these findings conclude that ethical leadership practiced by the top management in the food services sector promotes CSR activities and improves business performance in various dimensions. The study has significant contributions to academic research and business practices.

Kim and Thapa (2018) research indicates that ethical leadership encourages corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities, which have a positive impact on the operational, commercial, and economic performance of a company. Here, in assessing the role of gender discrimination, sustainable performance, and ethical leadership in the workplace, it can be stated that ethical leadership is an important role in facilitating CSR policies that are gender-friendly. Ethical leaders can create a fair working environment by adopting measures that counteract discrimination, promote inclusive policies, and enhance career opportunities for women workers. Such practices enhance employee motivation and job satisfaction, supporting organizational sustainability as well as contributing to operational and commercial performance. Therefore, adopting an ethical leadership approach can be viewed as a vital factor that guarantees the implementation of gender equality-based sustainable policies for the benefit of sustainable long-term business success.

In a Miotto, Polo López, and Rom Rodriguez study (2019), the role of gender equality in the sustainability reports of business schools was examined. The authors analyzed the content of the world's top 50 business schools' sustainability reports and assessed to what extent the top 50 business schools emphasized gender equality policies and initiatives in their reporting. The study focused particularly on "Goal 4: Quality Education" (with regard to the distribution of scholarships and grants) and "Goal 5: Gender Equality." Furthermore, correlations were examined between the quantity of these codes and the ranks of the schools, MBA program fees, the percentage of women MBA students, female faculty members, and women on management boards. The research concluded that gender equality issues are a valuable source of legitimacy and power for leading business schools.

In Miotto's research study, Polo López's, and Rom Rodriguez's (2019) work, it demonstrated how business schools address gender equality in sustainability reports and established the importance of this issue with respect to institutional legitimacy. It is the same in the business environment where gender equality policies boost motivation among staff members, improve organizational loyalty, and stifle talent drain. Ethical leadership, in accordance with principles of justice and equality, supports the career progression of women staff, and inclusive policies within the workplace assist organizations to attain sustainable competitive advantage. Therefore, embedding gender equality in sustainability approaches is a necessary imperative for ethical as well as business success.

Romano, Cirillo, Favino, and Netti (2020) studied the impact of gender diversity on Board of Directors' corporate sustainability practices. Gender equality is top in social development, boosting economic growth, and improving business performance in accordance with the 2030 Agenda. Many studies suggest that higher female representation on management boards will impact financial performance positively, but the effect of gender diversity on sustainability performance has not yet been studied sufficiently. The authors examined the interaction between board gender composition and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) performance and tested the moderating effect of CEO duality in their interaction. The study utilized the Bloomberg Data Service's ESG index for ESG performance and the Blau index as a measure of board gender diversity. Empirical analysis of 128 observations of non-financial companies listed on Italy's Mercato Telematico Azionario (MTA) revealed that board gender diversity positively influenced ESG performance, yet CEO duality negated its effect.

Romano, Cirillo, Favino, and Netti (2020) study shows that board of directors' gender diversity positively affects sustainability performance. The finding suggests that reducing gender discrimination in the workplace and enhancing gender diversity can help organizations achieve better sustainability performance. Keeping in view ethical leadership, it is arguable that gender diversity in boards helps decision-makers adopt more ethical and inclusive management styles. However, the finding that CEO duality is detrimental to this relationship confirms the necessity for moral and effective leadership to improve sustainable performance. Situations where the CEO holds dual roles (CEO and chairman) can undermine the control and balancing mechanisms necessary to guarantee organizational sustainability. Therefore, through the achievement of gender balance in the workplace, other ethical leadership approaches and sustainability performance goals can be achieved.

Campopiano, Gabaldón, and Gimenez-Jimenez (2023) conducted a systematic review of the literature on the impact of female board members on corporate social performance (CSP). The authors surveyed the literature at hand, from CSP's underlying assumptions, theories, and conceptualizations, and observed that the gender diversity theory and its operationalization, particularly in quantitative empirical research (which dominate the discipline), were inconsistent. While bringing together conceptual and empirical studies in their synthesis, they established three main theoretical dimensions that are sensitive to the level of the organizational and board. Based on their framework, scholars are invited to develop new queries and innovative study designs to inquire

into the responsibilities women undertake for CSP, as well as additional theoretical assumptions relating to women as board members.

Şeker (2025) conducted research on the impact of ethical leadership on Generation Alpha and the leadership styles that generation needs in order to enjoy a greener future. Ethical leadership was interpreted as following oneself responsibly towards social and environmental sustainability considering the very sensitive nature of Generation Alpha towards the environment and the consciousness defined by the digital world. The study argues that this generation's leadership will be based on ethics so they can make decisions for a sustainable future. The study, on the basis of extensive literature reviews with the use of databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, focuses on the key words like ethical leadership, environmental awareness, sustainability, and green future. The study shows Generation Alpha is ready to adopt moral and green approaches to leadership for a greener future.

Based on the work of Şeker (2025), it is plausible to argue about the interaction between gender discrimination, sustainable performance, and ethical leadership within the workplace. From the study, it is noted that ethical leadership affects the environmental sustainability awareness and leadership styles of Generation Alpha. Workplace leaders who are adopting ethical standards and taking care of the environment are hence paramount in the improvement of sustainable business practices and performance towards this end. This is in line with research that contends female leaders, particularly in leadership teams with higher gender diversity, are more inclined towards sustainable behavior and ethically driven decision making. Therefore, promoting ethical leadership in the workplace can reduce gender discrimination and improve sustainable performance. Şeker's research suggests that environmentally responsible decision-making by leaders is likely to solidify not only gender equality but also environmental responsibility and ethics in the workplace.

While several studies underscore the positive influence of ethical leadership on employee engagement and motivation (Neubert et al., 2013), others highlight the role of gender diversity as an indirect contributor to sustainable performance outcomes (Romano et al., 2020). Nonetheless, a noticeable gap persists regarding how these dynamics operate across various cultural contexts. For example, leadership perceptions and gender norms may differ significantly between Western and Eastern societies, influencing the effectiveness of ethical leadership and gender equality initiatives. This indicates the necessity for future research to adopt a more nuanced, culturally sensitive lens to fully comprehend these complex interactions.

In summary, the reviewed literature demonstrates that gender equality, ethical leadership, and sustainable performance are deeply interconnected. Organizations with greater female leadership representation tend to achieve higher levels of ethical governance and sustainability. Future research should focus on culturally diverse contexts to deepen understanding and foster inclusive practices worldwide.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The aim of the research is to discuss how gender discrimination impacts sustainable performance processes and workplace leadership practices. It also describes how gender discriminatory factors that are barriers towards women's accessibility of leadership in the workplace may bring harm to an organizational design in accordance with sustainable performance.

The majority of the studies accessed from the literature suggest that increased women's leadership, particularly at the board and senior leadership levels, positively affects the sustainability performance and ethical conduct of companies. For example, Glass, Cook, and Ingersoll (2016) confirmed that female leaders are superior to male leaders in creating environmental strategies owing to the fact that women tend to possess higher risk perception and ethical awareness. Similarly, Ho et al. (2015) confirmed that CEOs who are females contribute positively towards accounting conservatism and financial reporting so that such leaders enable the firm to comply more effectively with ethical duties. The implication of the above findings is that firms will be more inclined to give consideration to their ecological and ethical commitments if they are led by females. Moreover, ethical leadership leaders can reduce gender discrimination within the workplace and contribute to an enduring future.

Bilen-Green, Froelich, and Jacobson (2008) illustrate how increasing women's representation in academic leadership facilitates their access to professorship and promotes gender equality in the workplace. This is evidence that workplaces with increased female leader representation advance more with gender equality and sustainability. Similarly, Romano et al. (2020) emphasized that as boardroom gender diversity rises, companies' ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) performance improves, moderated by factors like CEO succession.

Şeker (2025) examined the impact of ethical leadership on Generation Alpha and showed that the generation can accept more ethical and nature-friendly leadership. These findings reflect that the application of ethical

leadership strategies by future leaders may contribute to stronger sustainable workplace performance and gender sensitivity.

Finally, it is obvious that more women involvement as leaders is necessary in order to mitigate gender discrimination in organizations and optimize sustainable performance. Ethical leadership allows each leader, be he or she a male or female, to be aware of the environmental and social aspects of the business of the company, and this induces more equality and a feeling of sustainability into organizations. Here, more representation of women in leadership positions can improve the financial and sustainable performance of companies, improve gender equality, and promote ethical decision-making in workplaces. To this end, the following are recommendations to organizations and managers for promoting a more sustainable future.

#### 1. Greater Female Representation in Leadership Roles

The increased visibility of women leaders in board rooms and top executive positions has been shown to lead to positive effects on gender equality and sustainable performance. In this case, organizations need to establish policies that will allow the empowerment of women to assume leadership positions. Interventions such as mentoring schemes, training for leaders, and flexible working are able to assist women to move up in their careers.

#### 2. Raising Education and Awareness Programs

For the integration of feedback from women leaders into ethical considerations in the companies' sustainability policies, there should be regular training in ethics, leadership, and sustainability. The training will enable leaders to make ethical decisions more knowingly regarding environmental responsibility as well as gender balance. Corporate culture and vision should also be revised to foster ethicality and environmental responsibility in leaders.

#### 3. Supporting Diverse Board Structures

Romano et al. (2020) and other studies show that having gender diversity contributes positively to ESG performance. It is therefore important to make sure that boards are composed of individuals of different experience and intellect, apart from women. Through boards with diversity, companies can produce more innovative, sustainable, and ethical plans.

#### 4. Fostering Women as Role Models for Gender Parity and Ethical Leadership

Bilen-Green et al. (2008) highlight the contribution that women leaders must make as an example in order to sustain their position within the workplace. To this effect, it is crucial that women leaders adopt moral leadership values that will act as an example during communication with external and internal stakeholders. Through leadership in issues such as sustainability, environmental stewardship, and social justice, women leaders will spur reform in the workplace and in society.

#### 5. Internal Communication and Stakeholder Engagement Strengthening

Companies need to engage all the stakeholders in strategies that embrace gender diversity and sustainability goals. This should encompass not only the top management of the firm but also employees, suppliers, and other stakeholders. By improving internal communication, a more inclusive strategy can be developed in accordance with the firm's social responsibilities and sustainability goals.

#### 6. Promoting Policy and Performance Monitoring Mechanisms

Effective monitoring and evaluation systems should be established to track the performance of the company in terms of gender equality, ethical leadership, and sustainability. These systems will allow companies to continuously evaluate and improve their policies and also tell them how successful the company has been in addressing its ethical demands and sustainability targets.

#### 7. Generation Alpha's Rise in Interest in Ethical Leadership

As Şeker (2025) pointed out, the fact that future generations will be created with environmental and ethical consciousness means that companies ought to create leadership training programs for future generations, including Generation Alpha. This can allow companies to achieve their long-term sustainability goals.

#### 8. Work with Managers with Ethical Leadership Characteristics for Corporate Performance and Sustainability

Cooperation with managers who have ethical leadership traits helps companies improve not only their bottom line but also their public image, employee motivation, and long-term sustainability goals. Therefore, the

following recommendations explain how companies and institutions can become more successful and sustainable by cooperating with managers who are proficient in ethical leadership traits:

Ethical leaders are very concerned with transparency and accountability in decision-making. Therefore, companies can improve more transparent and fairer decision-making through the engagement of ethical leaders. This builds confidence between both internal and external stakeholders and improves the likelihood of the company's long-term success. Ethical leadership makes the employees feel valued. Ethical leaders can increase the motivation and participation of the employees through their fair and equitable attitude. This reduces the employee turnover and enhances the company's productivity. Ethical leaders take ESG-sensitive decisions. Institutions can develop sustainability-driven projects, maximize the utilization of resources, and adopt green strategies by collaborating with ethical leaders. This not only guarantees the immediate performance of the company but also guarantees its long-term operational sustainability. Ethical leaders are interested not only in economic prosperity but also in people's well-being. Working with such leaders encourages companies to spend more on corporate social responsibility, and they can then contribute positively towards society. Companies can better fulfill their obligations to society through the adoption of ethical leadership. Ethical leaders cultivate trustworthiness that allows workers to contribute new ideas. This encourages innovation in the company. Businesses with ethical leaders have creative problem-solving capabilities and an upper hand in business. Ethical leaders tend to be risk-averse and future-looking. Business organizations have fewer risks of failing in making key decisions if they have ethical leaders as part of their teams.

These recommendations are policy pointers for the business leadership, leaders, and researchers in creating a fairer, ethical, and sustainable corporate culture.

#### **AUTHOR STATEMENT**

**Research and Publications Ethics Statement:** This study was prepared in accordance with the rules of scientific research and publication ethics.

**Ethics Committee Approval:** This study does not require ethics committee approval as it does not include analyses that require ethics committee approval.

**Author Contributions:** Both authors contributed equally.

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