

Organization As a Living Organism: From Ecological Leadership Perspective for Sustainable Development

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ABSTRACT

In this era of climate crisis, population explosion, reduction in natural resources and increased need a transition from traditional organizational structure is a necessity to combat these changes. Adaptability and resilience are important to build a sustainable solution that aids the organization to run long term.

Ecological leadership offers to view Organization as a living organism, expanding its scope beyond its visible identity of being a legal entity with artificial personality. It also empowers the employees with green practices allowing the organization to grow in all avenues and help it to use its resources to the optimum level and enhance productivity. The organization in this way thrive to sustain in the market by making itself adaptive with the changing legal framework.

Ecological leadership connects the organization to the social and natural surroundings recognizing the need of interconnectedness necessary to sustain and survive. It fosters a culture of collaboration, adaptability and shared responsibility by promoting diversity and inclusion for optimum use of resources at the rate in which ecosystem can survive. This does not merely pose the organization as an economic actor but also position it to be an adaptive and socially conscious entity providing it an upper hand to win in the corporate race. This paper explores the ways in which ecological leadership contributes in building a resilient workforce with the inbuilt capability of preparedness in combating unprecedented circumstances.

KEY WORDS: Organization, ecological leadership, sustainable development

INTRODUCTION

The 21st century call for a fundamental shift in our understanding of leadership and organizational life due to the increase in ecological, social and economic challenges. The positional leaders of traditional management models rooted in industrial pattern highly emphasise hierarchy, control and efficiency treating organization as machine driven. This mechanistic worldview which was effective in the past, is now struggling to address the contemporary global complexities in the arena of climate change, biodiversity loss and resource depletion.

This requires the shift which call us to view organization as a living organism as an alternative to compete with emerging issues. This paradigm recognizes the organizations as an adaptive, interdependent and open system that strive to survive through continuous learning and feedback loops. The organization in this way can enhance its sustainability in the market by fostering diversity of perspectives, collaboration across levels, and being responsive to environmental and social contexts in the similar way in which an ecosystem depends on diversity and symbiosis for resilience.

At this point of transition, ecological leadership becomes vital. Ecological leadership unlike the other do not confine to a single authority, rather it emphasizes on distribution, participation, shared stewardship and process that arises through relationships and coordination. Here, leaders act more as facilitators than as controllers and nurture the conditions

necessary for organizational adaptability, and long-term resilience. This transition reframes the traditional form where leadership was considered a property of individual to now where it is considered to be a systematic function embedded in networks of interdependence.

Most important point of consideration here is that organizations are not only social entities but also are powerful ecological actors who can control and contribute to the environment. It is their choice which shapes resource utilization, supply chains and consumer behaviours on a global scale. This view is also supported by various research findings, which says that an organization can directly influence climate outcomes, biodiversity protection and pollution reduction and advance sustainability more quickly and ambitiously than governments.

Thus, considering organizations as living organisms under the light of ecological leadership provide a strong and strategic framework for sustainable development. It helps us to go beyond the existing fragmented-mechanistic approach and built a more holistic vision where organizations walk in harmony with natural surroundings and contribute to the UN Sustainable goals and secure long term ecological and social well-being.

ORGANIZATION AS A LIVING ORGANISM

Organization when conceptualized as a living organism make its very component of people, process, culture and structure to function together in a more dynamic and interconnected system. This concept from ecological leadership perspective makes the leaders to act beyond the simple controlling operation and act as nurtures who facilitate growth, adaptability, and resilience in the organization. The organization in the same way as of a living organism must adapt to its environment to survive and continuously adjust to the dynamic external conditions to ensure long term sustainability and effectiveness.

This approach of perceiving organization as a living entity highly emphasises the significance of balance between socio economic and environmental aspects. This framework fosters sustainable development by promoting diversity, innovation and ethical practices, in same way how ecosystem maintains through biodiversity and resource cycling. Static management must be transformed to adaptive management to crucially aid organization to run in dynamic and challenging environments, as flexibility and continuous learning help them to adapt to the situation and respond unforeseen challenges quickly and evolve effectively and efficiently which is much similar to nature's process of evolution.

This perspective also underlines the systemic nature of organizations, where change in one part of the system affects the whole. The leaders are prompted to consider both internal and external surroundings and make decisions that promote the health, wealth, welfare and sustainability of the organization. Viewing the organization as a living organism provide us with a holistic understanding of their growth, resilience and undermining potential for sustainable development while critically emphasising the crucial role of ecological leadership in nurturing long term success.

ECOLOGICAL LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVE

Sustainable development requires a shift from traditional industrial models of leadership which highly focuses on hierarchy and positional authority towards a more ecological leadership pattern which could view an organization as an adaptive living system embedded in a complicated socio – economic and environmental ecosystem. A leadership which emphasizes on sustainability can evolve only from collaborative participatory process where leadership is dynamic, with active interactions of members and by aligning to their environment. Ecological leadership fosters sustainable development by enhancing ethical responsibility, systematic and strategic thinking, diversified decentralised decision making, and continuous adaptive learning aimed at balancing the triple bottom line of economic, social, and environmental outcomes.

This kind of leadership integrates mindfulness, reflexivity, inclusiveness and adaptive capabilities to address complicate challenges like limitation of resources and climate change. Learning from day to day actions, a committed leadership, and creation of an enabling environment that promote innovation, connectivity and stakeholder engagement are some of the organization practices that can support ecological sustainability. Fostering ethical commitments, creating feedback

mechanisms and enabling organization to adapt flexibility in the uncertain and fast changing worldly context helps organizations to cross the hindrances like lack of understanding, insufficient management focus and perceived costs.

Consequently, ecological leadership creates balance between structure and process, individual and collaborations, and short-term actions aligned with long term planetary well-being. This view reframes the system by perceiving organization as a living structure whereby the leadership focuses in collective intelligence and cooperative competencies of all members and supports resilience and fosters the organization to march towards a regenerative future.

SUSTAINABILITY AND ORGANIZATIONAL ECOLOGY

Organizational ecology views organization as a living system having embarkment in socio-environmental context, helping us to clearly draft sustainability within organization. Ecological leadership perspective underlines that the interactions among diverse organizational members and their environments can only render justice to sustainable practices not the mere positional leadership. Organization as a living organism make it an open adaptive system that continuously depend on uninterrupted inflows and outflows of resources, information ad feedbacks that allows them organize on their own and evolve through adaptation in response to the dynamic challenges posed by the environment.

Organizational ecological approach thorough ecological leadership emphasizes on how it enables and maintains sustainability through systematic adaptation than static compliance of policies by emphasizing the interdependence, feedback loops and resource cycling. A participatory structure that fosters diversity of input and distributed decision-making balancing industrial efficiency with ecological responsiveness can be facilitated when ecological leadership is adopted. This leadership strategy aids in co-evolution of organizations and their environments, whereby sustainable development goals are organically integrated into day-to-day practises, ethics and learning of organization.

This complex interplay fosters social renewal and promotion of well-being within and beyond the organizational setup crossing broader environmental responsibility and position sustainability as a relational and emergent property of the organization. Thus, through ecological leadership approach the organization is vested with the capability of continuous growth, adaption and contribution to larger socio-ecological system, promoting sustainable development in its working. Considering organization as a living organism subjected to evolution helps characterizing organizational sustainability as an ongoing journey of adaptation rather than a fixed outcome.

LEADERSHIP PRACTICES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Aligning the conceptualization of organization as a living organism with a leadership perspective for sustainable development emphasize on ecological leadership that transcends the traditional industrial pattern and focus on positional authority in a mechanistic structure. This ecological perspective perceives the organization as a complex, adaptive and interconnected living system where leadership not vest with a sole formal leader rather emerge from dynamic interactions among all the members. Ecological model that underlines participative process, adaptability and systematic interconnectedness must be balanced with already established industrial model of hierarchical control to create an effective leadership for sustainable development.

From the ecological organization point, leadership can be perceived as an emergent process run by the complexities of relationships, feedback loops and interdependencies with the organizational ecosystem and its broader environment. Organization can thrive and sustain only when they embrace diversity, decentralized decision-making, and a shared, ethical commitment towards long-term environmental and social goals. Complex and evolving challenges of sustainable development can be resolved only when there is access to diverse perspectives and genuine involvement from the side of all organizational members which in turn enhance adaptability, innovation and foster growth. This kind of leadership is less about command and control and more of providing conditions where innovation, collaboration and learning can flourish organically, mirroring the co-evolutionary nature of living system.

Continuous collective organizational learning and reflexivity are two pillar necessities beyond authoritative expertise to respond to global environmental limits, integrating new scientific knowledge, and navigating social complexities in order

to achieve sustainability. A feedback rich environment, with access to experimentation and maintenance of continuous tension between the need for structure and flexibility to respond the ever - emerging environmental signals can enhance resolving issues hindering sustainable growth. Leaders are the stewards facilitating the organization's capacity to sense, adapt and evolve sustainably within the ecological context. This not only help the organization to positively contribute to their internal health but also to the ecosystems and communities they belong to.

Ecological leadership viewing organization as a living organism approach incorporates within itself a moral and ethical dimension deeply rooted with sustainable values and responsibility for long-term impacts. Ecological leadership unlike the industrial leadership focuses on a systematic understanding which recognizes the organizations roots in natural and social ecosystem rather than short term profitability and control. This approach encourages members to act beyond individual or departmental interests towards a more holistic well-being, by cultivating a culture of care, interconnectedness, and accountability. This ensures that the success of organization is measured by its positive contributions to the environment and society as well as economic performance, hence aligning to the sustainable developmental values. This ecological leadership perspective offers a strategic framework for creating organizations that are not just resilient and innovative but are also active contributors to a sustainable and regenerative future.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Creating a transformative approach to sustainable development by conceptualizing organization as a living organism from an ecological leadership highlight both significant opportunities and challenges for organizations in contemporary world. Living organization similar to the biological system is interconnected, adaptive, self-organizing and co-evolutionary being embarked within dynamic socio-environmental systems. This view emphasizes the importance of multiple interactions, feedback loops and diversity in fostering resilience and the capacity to reflect and respond effectively to dynamic, complex and ever evolving sustainability challenges.

Facilitation of a holistic organizational adaptability by emphasizing distributive leadership and enhancing participatory decision making is one of the key opportunities presented in utilization of ecological leadership paradigm. This leadership works beyond hierarchical, positional leaders of traditional industrial model of management by empowering inclusion of diversified organizational members to contribute to knowledge and innovation and collaboratively engage to be responsive towards the dynamic surroundings. Additionally, by promoting decentralization, the departments within organization having autonomous authority and responsibility is considered as “cells” as similar to the cells of a living body and thus promotes leveraging of continuous learning, creativity, and emerge diverse solutions critically necessary for sustainable development. Social equity and environmental stewardship beyond economic viability is possible through the promotion of systemic thinking and integration of ethical responsibility, thereby aligning the purpose of organization with the broader demands for sustainable development.

However, this transition of organization to be operated as living organism is never simple and has considerable challenges to overcome. The control of positional leaders and mechanistic structures are often overemphasized in persistent attributional biases and entrenched cultural paradigms which may lead to rigidity, inhibited adaptability, and constrained diversity of thought. Collaborative and ecological leadership models are further complicated by the evolutionary and psychological predispositions towards resource-hoarding and hierarchical dominance.

Centralized decision making often suppresses the crucial feedback loops in organization, undermining their ability to quickly detect and respond to critical socio-environmental signals crucial for sustainability. Moreover, balancing the tension between maintenance of efficient industrial control and creation of open, emergent ecological processes is a struggle upon the organization, where its excessive focus on either side can lead to disintegration or inertia.

Lack of comprehensive understanding of ecological sustainability throughout the layers of organization, improper and insufficient genuine commitment beyond rhetoric, and practical difficulties in integrating sustainable values into everyday mainstream practice amidst competing economic pressure adds weight to the existing baggage. To overcome these challenges the organization requires active leadership models with authentic commitment, which cultivate a culture of continuous learning, dialogue and experimentation, and prioritizes connectivity and feedback mechanism within and

beyond its limits. Navigating these tensions and fostering systemic conditions can only enable effective evolution of organization transforming it with the capability to contribute meaningfully to the goals of sustainable development.

Positioning organization as living being having adaptive system lensing through ecological leadership provides a robust framework for sustainable development. This approach while unlocking opportunities for resilience, innovation, and ethical responsibility demands a need to overcome deep-rooted industrial mindsets through fostering diversity and participation, and also requires to maintain a delicate balance between the existing structure and new emergence. Any organization that succeeds in this transition can not only enhance its own economic viability but also plays a crucial role in addressing the intricate complexities of global sustainability challenges of the 21st century.

CONCLUSION

Perceiving organizations as living organisms through the lens of ecological leadership renders a reformative framework to address the pressing challenges of 21st century. This ecological leadership unlike the tradition mechanistic model does not prioritize hierarchy, control, and short-term efficiency, rather it emphasizes the fundamental qualities for sustainable development such as adaptability, interconnectedness, diversity, and shared responsibility. This leadership structure redefines the traditional role of leaders from controllers to facilitators who paves a way to an environment where organizational goals align with broader ecological and social well-being through flourishing of innovation, collaboration, and resilience.

Organizations can balance balancing economic viability with social equity and environmental stewardship by promoting continuous learning, decentralization, and ethical responsibility making it capable of co-evolving with its environment. This approach on its way towards enhancing internal resilience, ensures meaningful contributions to global sustainability challenges. Nevertheless, the transition requires overcoming of ingrained industrial mindsets, centralized power structures, and cultural inertia that inhibits the organization's adaptability and diversity of thoughts.

Eventually, an organization in order to thrive in uncertain and complex contexts must equip itself with adaptive system which happens when it embraces ecological leadership and function as living entity. this approach positions organizations as vital forces in advancing a sustainable future through securing long-term survival of the organization and also help it emerge as a positively regenerative actors contributing to the health of societies and ecosystems in which it exists. In this way, ecological leadership is considered to be a strategic pathway to harmonize organizational success with planetary well-being.

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