

SUSTAINABILITY TRENDS EF- FECTING MODERN BUSINESS PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

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Currently, one of the most popular and out-there subjects is sustainability – but what is it and how can we reach it? This bachelor's thesis will look at the concepts within sustainability, its development and trends, and uses the gained knowledge to give recommendations for modern business on how to take advantage of the current sustainability trends in their business practices.

The theoretical framework and concepts used in this research consist of literature study, PESTEL analysis on the sustainability challenges and SWOT analysis on the sustainability trends.

The results of the research will give information to business looking to implement sustainable practices into their business strategies. The information is concluded at the end of thesis paper in the form of suggestions.

Key words: sustainability, sustainable development, business development

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	4
1.1	Thesis objective and research questions	5
1.2	Working methods and framework.....	6
1.2.1	Literature study.....	6
1.2.2	PESTLE analysis framework	7
1.2.3	SWOT analysis framework	8
1.2.4	Structure of the thesis.....	9
2	SUSTAINABILITY	10
2.1	Sustainability in business practises.....	11
2.2	Challenges of sustainable business development.....	13
2.3	PESTEL analysis on the challenges	14
2.3.1	Political	14
2.3.2	Economic.....	15
2.3.3	Social.....	16
2.3.4	Technological	16
2.3.5	Environmental.....	17
2.3.6	Legal.....	18
2.4	Sustainability trends	20
2.5	SWOT analysis of sustainability trends	22
3	LITERARY ANALYSIS.....	25
4	CONCLUSION	27
	REFERENCES	28

1 INTRODUCTION

Living in the year 2019, one of the most discussed subjects all around the world are global warming, climate change and how to tackle these matters with sustainable development. United Nations put together a program developed to cut down emission by the year 2030 called the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. All its member States in 2015 adopted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which are crucial actions to be made by all countries in a global partnership.



FIGURE 1. SDGs (United Nations 2015)

This thesis is put together based on the author's deep interests towards green businesses and sustainable development. One of the topics tackled is about why sustainability is important to business – especially in the corporate business world. Corporate business has a distinct legal existence from its owners that are a particular number of shareholders invested in the business' stock, sharing the corporation's profits and losses generated by the operations (United Consulting Group 2015).

Increased demands from a wide range of stakeholder groups including employees, government, society, shareholders and media, for companies to adopt and implement responsible management practises. Stakeholders are demanding growing economic performance by businesses being environmentally and socially sustainable. "The importance of sustainability and the implementation of social and environmental issues into core activities as a crucial part of developing business strategies" (Dr A. Acquaye 2007).

The main focus of this thesis is to find out which current sustainability trends affect businesses the most and how. Even though there is not a one agreed meaning and definition for sustainability it is usually considered to be: "Development that meets the need of present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Brundtland Report for the World Commission on Environment and Development, 1992). Since this report was conducted there have been many changes to help maintain ecological balance by the managing reduction of natural resources.

1.1 Thesis objective and research questions

As shortly mentioned in the previous chapter, the main objective of this thesis is the following:

- How to develop business practices to match current sustainability trends?

To answer this question, there is a need to research and analyse recent articles and previously established academic researches on the subject, which will give a broad idea of the current situation. To get the big picture a couple sub-questions are needed to support the main research question. The base is formed by the following list of questions, with "How to develop business practices to match current sustainability trends?" as the main objective and the following two supporting sub-questions:

1. What are the challenges and successes is the sustainability development?
2. What are the current sustainability trends?

The main research objective gives a guideline for general business to apply to their business strategies and it fills the demands of the criteria created by Stephen B. Hulley (2007) called FINER (Feasible, Interesting, Novel, Ethical, Relevant). Feasible includes having adequate technical expertise and manageable scope, Interesting includes getting the answer that intrigues the reader, Novel confirms, refutes and extends previous findings, Ethical stands for moral principles and

knowledge of dealing with them, and Relevant means that the answer will be appropriate to scientific knowledge and future research.

The purpose of the sub-questions is to help support the main objective. These two questions will offer information to be used to form the final hypothesis for the main objective. Obviously, the answers of these sub-questions will only offer partial information and won't offer the full big picture.

1.2 Working methods and framework

As the thesis is created without direct end-customer, the thesis is put together with help of one research method to gather data and two frameworks to give support – frequently used in similar researches. Combining these three will help the author to collect the needed data and information to provide a hypothesis and result. Following concept and two frameworks were chosen for this process as most suitable because they give a broad in-depth information on variety of different areas such as economic, social and environmental.

1.2.1 Literature study

A literature study is also known as a literature review. The study consists of four main objectives:

- It surveys the chosen literature in the chosen area
- It combines and summarises the current knowledge
- It critically analyses gathered information by recognising inconsistency in current knowledge by defining areas for further research
- It presents the research material in an organised way

Literature study shows the readers that the author has an in-depth knowledge on the subject, and that there is added knowledge to existing information.

The literature study method will cover all aspects of research, criticism or interpretation of literary works. Data analysis in literary studies, is argued, should combine classified and verbal indicators, seek control and make use of electronic data processing (H. Schnelling 1989).

1.2.2 PESTLE analysis framework

PESTLE analysis is described by Oxford College of Marketing (2016) as followed: " A PESTEL analysis is an acronym for a tool used to identify the external forces facing an organisation. The letters stand for Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal."

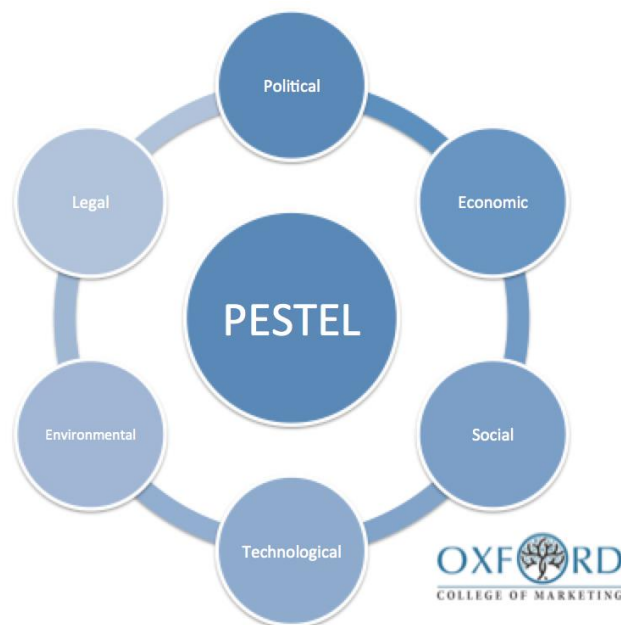


FIGURE 2. PESTEL analysis (Oxford College of Marketing 2016)

The reason of use for PESTEL analysis framework in this thesis is to support the literature study with providing more in-depth information on the current situation of sustainability trends in the business sector and mainly get the answer to the first sub-question "What are the challenges and successes in sustainability development". The analysis gives a broader view into different factors from diverse parts of the macro-environment.

As mentioned before all the factors of PESTEL framework will be used in this research; Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and legal.

1.2.3 SWOT analysis framework

SWOT analysis is one of the most common and well-known frameworks in business researches and development plans – it stands for: Strengths: Weaknesses, Opportunity and Threats. Many times, SWOT analysis is used to help founding a business, but this framework is believed to be flexible to be implemented in other business-related researches, while stretching all the way to other areas of life e.g. personality development exercises (Business News Daily 2018).

According to Business News Daily (2018) SWOT analysis is a planning process that allows your company to face challenges and conclude what new experiences to go after.

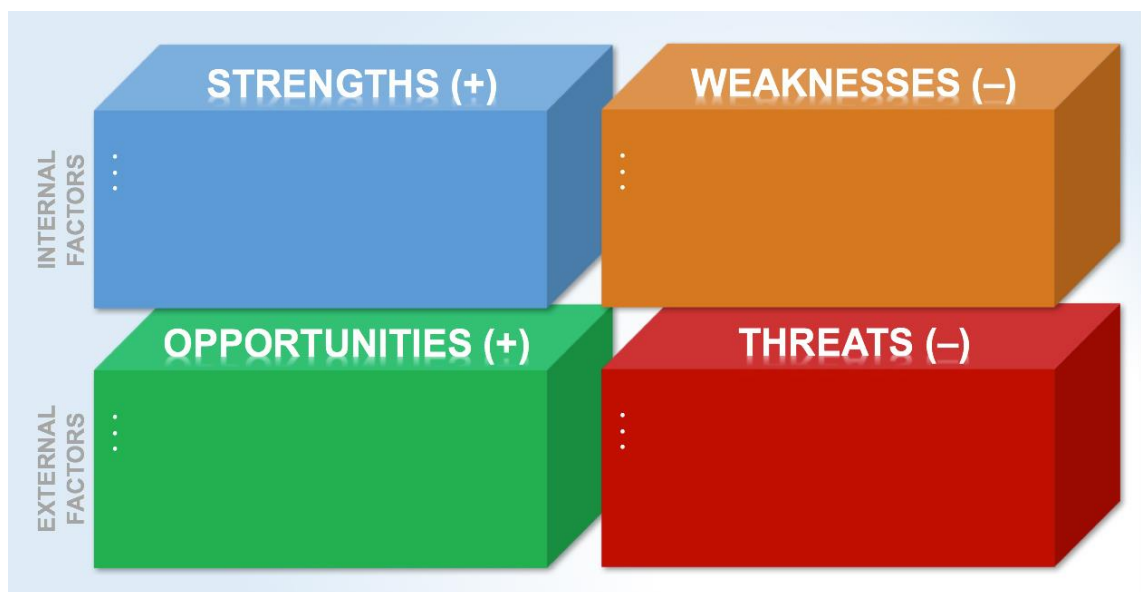


FIGURE 3. SWOT analysis (Smartsheet n.d.)

The reason of use for SWOT analysis framework in this thesis is to support the literature study with providing more in-depth information on the current situation of external and internal factors of business environment and mainly dig into the second sub-question: “What are the current sustainability trends?”.

1.2.4 Structure of the thesis

The process or structure of this thesis is structured as following: After the introduction the author moves on to explaining in more detail the concepts sustainability and sustainable development. After getting to know the concepts the research explains what sustainability mean in business practises, what are the current sustainability trends in business and what are the challenges. The trends will be explained more in detail through SWOT analysis while the challenges will be analysed in a PESTEL analysis.

Carrying on from data collection chapters, the author analyses two previously conducted articles with the discoveries made by SWOT analysis and PESTEL analysis in literary analysis chapter and pieces information together to create new valid data on how businesses can develop their practises based current sustainability trends.

At the end of the thesis the discovered data will give an answer to the main object that is “How to develop business practices to match current sustainability trends?”

2 SUSTAINABILITY

To understand sustainable development, there is a need to understand the concept of sustainability. Sustainability can easily be shortened to reaching a set goal in the present time without endangering the set goals of the future generations. Sustainability is about fairness in a community where there is equal access to global resources for every generation. (Brundtland Report 1987)

Generally, sustainability can be divided into three main categories: social, environmental and economic. If one of the categories falls, the whole systems turns unsustainable. Social sustainability is a community creating a process that maintains a healthy community to meet current members needs and the future generations. To ensure environmental sustainability communities needs to cut down resource reduction, maintain on a long term the use of renewable energy and the quality of the environment. Economic sustainability comes from communities' abilities to support a specified level of economic production endlessly.

After understanding what lies within sustainability, the other broad concept to be mentioned multiple times in this distinct research is sustainable development. According to the Global Development Research Centre sustainable development is a subtle balance between keeping up with a need to increase lifestyle and well-being and preserving natural ecosystem with generations existing and to come.

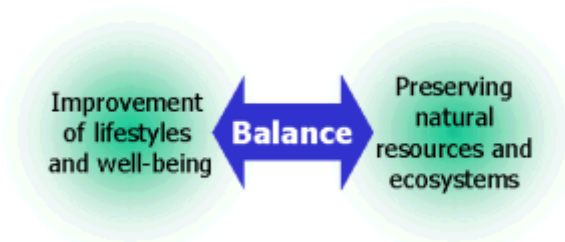


FIGURE 4. Sustainable development (The Global Development Research Centre n.d.)

Sustainable development indicates growth in the economic sector with the preservation of environmental quality, both emphasizing each other. The significance of sustainable development is a balanced relationship with the environment and the people's actions which does not reduce the future generation's expectations to enjoy their life at least as good as the current generation does. (I. Mintzer 1992).

2.1 Sustainability in business practises

There are a lot of sustainability concepts and ideas to achieve the goal of calling the business or company sustainable. For this research the most important concept is corporate philanthropy. Corporate philanthropy is an act which allows company to carry out acts of voluntary financial donations through charities, as well as working next to non-profit organizations and charities to allocate their financial offerings. How companies have implemented this into their businesses, is not only through financials but with employee charity hours, donations of company produced goods or free use of company's solid assets such as facilities. (Sustyvibes 2016).

The other important concept for this research is CSR, an acronym for Corporate Social Responsibility. This is a concept that has many different definitions since depending on the industry or the organization, the concept might differ slightly. The common themes arising in CSR is business being aware of the social issues in their communities, staying ethical, and contributing positively in to their community. CSR is considered to go as far as the company goes. (Sustyvibes 2016).

Many companies are actively integrating sustainability concepts into their businesses according to McKinsey survey conducted in 2012 – survey that received responses from 3203 executives from a wide range of regions, industries and company sizes concerning why and how companies are addressing sustainability and to what range executives believe it affects their companies. Companies are managing sustainability to better processes, fasten growth and to add value to their business rather than keeping the focus solely on the reputation, and this is done by e.g. saving energy, developing green products and motivating employees.

Integration of sustainability is widespread.

% of respondents, n = 2,956



FIGURE 5. Statistics from McKinsey on Sustainability & Resource Productivity Summer 2012

The results of the question above from the McKinsey 2010 survey shows that a lot of companies are taking strategic actions with sustainability as well as implementing sustainable ways of working into the office culture. By adding these factors into their missions and values, the ways will concern everyone in the organization – no matter what function and where they are based. Companies are not doing too much to implement sustainable factor into internal communications or into direct employee obligations such as they are in the strategic planning. Sustainability is attracting and keeping employees, and keeping the clients, customers and consumers engaged.

According to Sheila Bonini, a consultant at McKinsey, going after sustainability has replaced reputation management to growth opportunities and improvements. She also mentions in the article that most companies are struggling to implement sustainability in to the hard areas of business, such as set budgets and supply chain (2012).

2.2 Challenges of sustainable business development

This chapter will focus on the challenges in sustainable business development and provide insight and answers to the first sub-question “What are the challenges and successes in the sustainability development?”

Sustainable business development is easier said than done. You hear people constantly criticizing companies on using plastic, not using natural resources, and generating unnecessary waste. The fact is that many companies want to do all of these and more and are looking to establish sustainability in to their business in the future. The challenges that companies face in situations like these can vary greatly.

2017 Edelman Trust Barometer disclosed that trust is in crisis all around the world. Especially trust in business had dropped in 18 out of 28 surveyed countries and from the individual responses, only 52% showed trust in business to do right without guidance. Due to media visibility, corporate scandals across all sectors and countries continue to arise to the headlines. Seeing even few top companies accused of fraud, bribery or price-fixing has caused a domino-effect in trusting any companies. (Edelman 2017).

Transparency has become one of the biggest assets – for the companies that have it. When it comes to sustainable business, if the company wants the people’s trust and support, they need to be able to show what is happening behind the curtains. Especially for bigger corporations’ transparency is not necessarily an obvious concept but the growing pressure on companies to openly report their activities is creating challenges for some companies. (Corporate Citizenship 2017).

The challenges are turning into successes. Society must change and evolve. Old habits are disappearing and turning into what consumers and clients expect and demand. Businesses are being recognized for creating positions of influence to bring change for the future. The biggest challenge for the companies is to respond to the demands and get involved in a central role towards sustainability, as well as focus on the near-term rather than long-term thinking. Business tend to focus

more on short-term concerns which easily cripples the dealing with long-term since it does not seem immediate. This is really a big factor of slowing sustainable business development as that is built over time, not over-night. (Corporate Citizenship 2017).

2.3 PESTEL analysis on the challenges

In today's world, the population stands around 7.7 billion people and it keeps growing. Economies are having to move in insane speed while emerging markets progressively drive the economic growth. With all of this still to this day, most people cannot access fully the goods and services that could advance their quality of life. While all of this is happening, our ecosystem and environment is under great stress caused by the people.

In this sector, the analysis of sustainable business development challenges will be presented with before-mentioned PESTEL framework.

2.3.1 Political

When it comes to political perspective, the businesses must follow and consider laws and regulations set in their countries. In the recent years political uncertainty has grown larger and the future seems volatile in that sector (CISL 2018). Companies are coming across social-political issues in their home markets, and are made to adapt new investment plans, growth plans and allocate resources to deal with it. The corporate strategies need to be adapted to evaluation of the nature of the uncertainty within the country where they function. In case of extreme uncertainty, e.g. Brexit – British exit of the EU, the business threats can be fateful to companies without capital and presence on dismissive markets (B. Laker, T. Roulet 2019).

One of very on-going subjects in the business markets is the technological development that can face a lot of political restrictions. On the political side of things, it has created somewhat issues for international companies. For example, as a cloud business would be distributed over the internet with up-to-date current data, the access and use has created some borderless jurisdiction in the cloud. This

has come to organizations having to separate its business dealings and functions from its legal associations. (Sustainable Business Strategies and PESTEL Framework 2010).

The biggest political challenges currently come from the governmental level. specially the younger generations are waiting for the politicians to cerate national regulations all over the world to speed the sustainable development, to cut down emission, plastic use and slow down climate change. The Sustainable Development Goals and targets have taken into consideration the different cultures, nationalities, and capabilities to reach the goal but the challenge lays in the implementation. Many nations have already included these in their future strategic plans but the how and when can these aspirations be transformed in to implementation, and how can local and national governments speed up hitting the targets? (R. Kattumuri 2019)

2.3.2 Economic

Economic factor is affected by the cost related factors for the business which is why sustainable business development must be created with credible and selected providers. (Witcher and Chau 2010).

In the economic point of view the uncertainties have significant impacts to the economic conditions, such as the biggest matters; the cost of workforce and resources as well as customer behaviour. These conditions can easily threaten the business progression and the simple capabilities to execute their daily actions. Processes might come to an end because the goods are unable to cross the boundaries and result in service arrangements becoming impossible. (B. Laker, T. Roulet 2019). Many emerging market segments are progressively growing but the asset driven growth that many nations have experienced, has not created stable development.

The economic observations include financial barriers and currently, the sustainable development goals are to make sure that financial progress generates proper and equal-paying jobs while protecting the environment. Right now, in the

minds of economists, the development models tend to focus on ranking the economic growth higher than people's equal rights and preserving the natural environment. To change this, it would mean a shift in the actions to change the view from seeing the environment part of the economy to seeing the economy part of environment. (J. Morales Pedraza 2014)

2.3.3 Social

Social sustainability is about the negative and positive impacts affecting people identified by managing business impacts. The quality of work and relationship management is demanding. Whether it happens directly or indirectly, businesses actions have a massive impact on their employees, customers, and consumers within local communities, and it is important to keep the social status on certain level. (L. Karbassi n.d.)

Sustainable development challenges in the social sector come from the rapid population growth joined with unsustainable actions and production processes. If the people do not change their views, sustainable development won't be promising. This obviously is not the only social challenge within the sustainable development because of the significant difference in knowledge between poor and entrenched people limits the awareness of sustainability, insufficient interaction between the civil society and the political influencers, and incompetent encouragements for the private sector to pursue sustainable development. (J. Morales Pedraza 2014).

Lack of social development can affect sustainability attempts in negative ways while actions to achieve social sustainability with fighting poverty and gaining equality can unlock new possible market sectors by drawing in new partners or creating innovation in the business products and services. As for now many businesses are still struggling with bringing in fully equal social development, mostly seen in gender inequality and poverty management to create jobs for every group. (L. Karbassi n.d.)

2.3.4 Technological

Basically, the current generation is a technological generation which makes the challenges depended on our possibilities and knowledge to develop them. The main challenge during the financial slide in economy is how we can assemble long-term investments in people and world's needs because there is a danger that people trust in technology too blindly. (N. Robins 2012).

Technology in sustainable development has mainly focused on creating new practises and processes to cut down emission and reduce urban pollution. Fast pace in the technological development introduces big policy challenges, creating inequal gaps in societies and creating new moral and ethical difficulties. Nevertheless, many of these challenges with relevant policies and internationally mutual effort can tackle the leading technologies to reach a goal od sustainable development while reducing conflicts in their economic and social aims and results. (United Nations, 2018)

The biggest challenge that technological development is the sustainability is creating is job reduction. While technological processes are being automated and Artificial Intelligence is developing further, the labour markets have changed. Technology is being somewhat responsible for many job losses in developed economies which creates an issue in the employment market. Unemployment may lead to situations where doing the environment-conscious decisions is impossible. (United Nations, 2018)

2.3.5 Environmental

Every single human action has a negative impact on our environment. People consume more than the planet can offer us, while damaging the ecosystems with growing emission and pollution. The biggest challenges for the environmental development in sustainability come from single person and their actions. As companies and businesses can carry on their part in the economic world, it is the people within in that need to get the mindset right. As of this moment, the five environmental challenges within sustainable development are: desertification, soil exploitation, food waste, loss of biodiversity and pollution. (Ilaria D'Ambrosi 2017).

All these five challenges can be fought at a personal level but how it will be implemented into everyone's lives is the challenge. When it comes to people build challenges the soil exploitation comes in the picture with overbuilding and pollution. Building and constructions are harmful to the earth and the natural soil is being damaged while at the same time we take transportation decision on our everyday journeys and cause plenty of greenhouse gasses, especially with private transportation and not using the public options.

Desertification can be under taken with sustainable agriculture produced foods. The awareness is being raised on the environmental impacts of food we eat and the ways of food production that harm our environment, and with food waste. Biodiversity is taking a hit from people not being conscious about their purchase choices and lack of support to national parks and national reserves. Out of these the five the biggest global challenge is the food waste with one third of the produced food is thrown away by the consumers. (Ilaria D'Ambrosi 2017)

2.3.6 Legal

"Private and administrative norms, including customary law, are also important. Evaluation of the implementation of legal principles that are not clearly specified in authoritative documents poses additional challenges for defining the principle and asserting that it has legal status." (P. Martin, B. Boer and L. Slobodian 2016).

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and international environmental law is affected by governance functions. The legal challenges for sustainable development at a starting point comes from the fact that SDGs cannot be reached without active participation of the international legal society. The establishment of effective legal systems has demonstrated commercial benefit and is necessary to the growth of developing economies. (Advocates for International Development n.d.). Private and governmental models are important and the implementation evaluation of legal processes that are not fully explained or available in legal documentation withhold extra challenges for interpreting the principles. (P. Martin, B. Boer and L. Slobodian 2016).

It has been argued that the main challenge in the legal sector lays in the lack of cooperation and integration between international environmental law and the national government with focus points on trade laws and human rights laws. The progress of sustainable development as a legal truth should be able to adjust with the evolution of international law. There lays a challenge in strengthening the implementation within international environmental law with focus on ecosystem-based approach to natural reservation and increase in consideration towards ecosystem damage. (Dario Piselli 2016)

2.4 Sustainability trends

This chapter will talk about sustainability trends and dive down deeper to their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats while providing the answer to the second sub-question “What are the current sustainability trends?”

In 2019 it is expected that the world will witness exceptional leadership and innovation driven cities, regions and corporations, rising levels of activism, support for matters, and fast-growing awareness about plastic pollution and such by Millennials and Generation Z. There are the changes to generate progress on important social and environmental issues in 2019. (SustainAbility 2019).

It was discovered by University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL), eight business sustainability trends. CISL was established to empower corporates and policy leaders to develop their businesses, industries and economic systems towards a more sustainable direction by joining multidisciplinary and influential researchers and policy practitioners across the world. CISL’s strength is the ability to include and join businesses, government and finance. (University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership 2018).

The trends were discovered with the help of international network of approximately 8000 leaders and practitioners from all different fields of business on all global regions:

1. Unpredictability is the new norm
2. Sustainability being the face of business
3. Suffering loss and damage from volatile weather
4. Emerging technologies in development
5. Economic shift to the east and precisely China
6. Reduction of plastic waste
7. Turning point in establishing transparency
8. Reduction of coal as resource

Recent development in technology, products and processes composed with global environmental issues such as climate change, and economic issues such

as wealth inequality has made the leadership gap with businesses for responding to the fast-moving challenges public.

Younger generations are seeking out the jobs that will match their mindset and beliefs – companies are pressured to adjust their commercial interest with the social and environmental factors to keep up with the trends. Also, being involved in the potential new technology including everything from AI (Artificial Intelligence) to renewable energy is generating new opportunities within the employment sector as well as greener business and better safety. (University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership 2018).

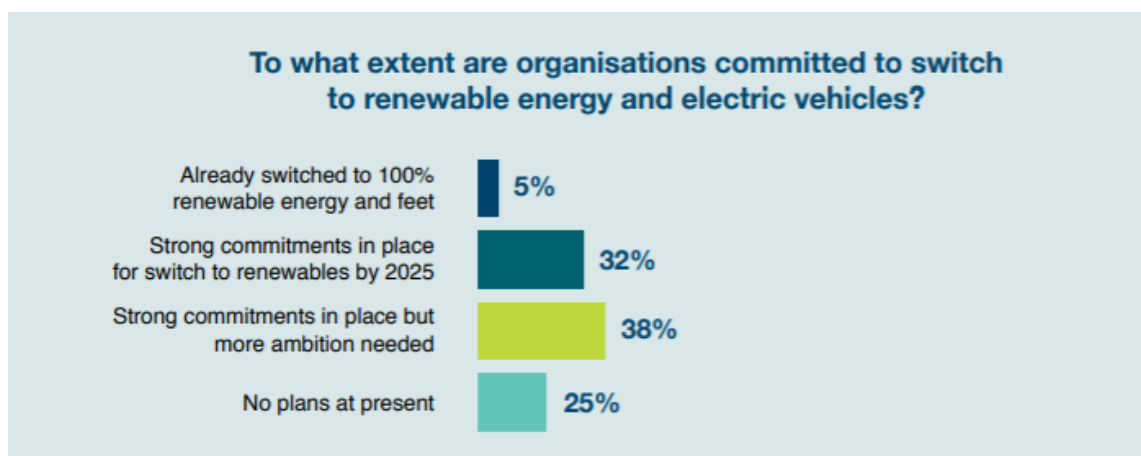
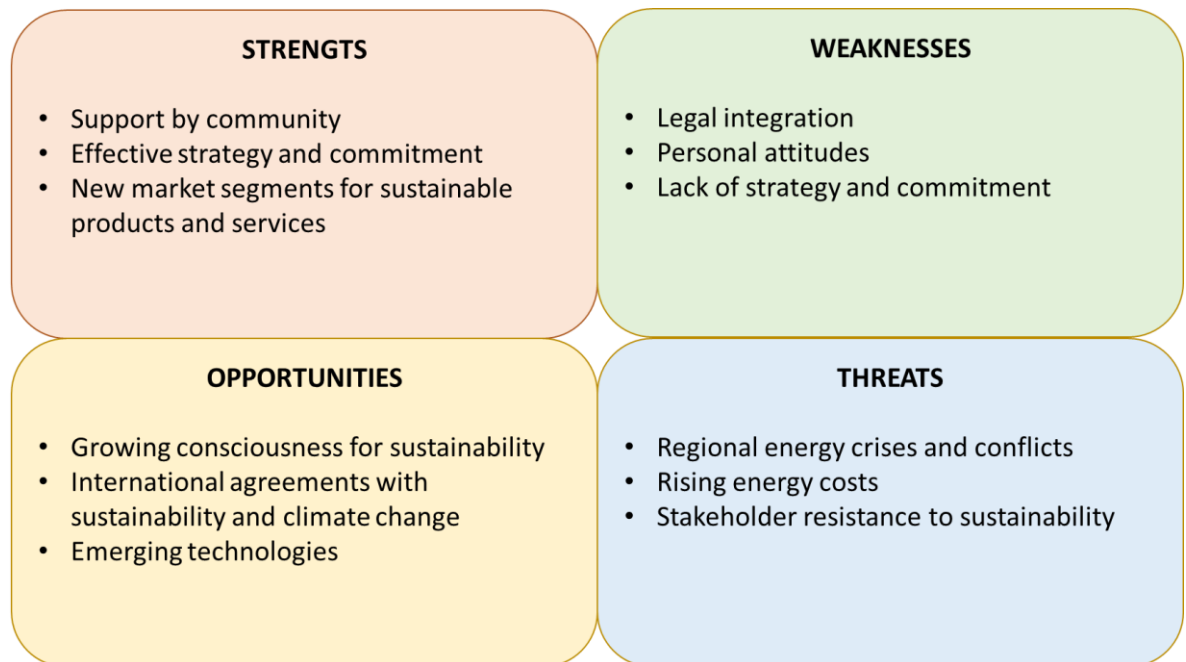


FIGURE 6. Survey (The University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainable Leadership 2018)

As seen in the graphic above, many organisations in different fields and continents have at least made plans towards renewable energy and sustainable actions. Only 5% by 2018 had already made the change but the truth is that the change for many corporations cannot happen quickly. Sustainability trends need to be carefully implemented into business strategies and practises to avoid any falls in the current business stage. For example, if new technology is established and implemented into the systems and business incorrectly, the risk of accidents and unfortunate impacts such as unemployment and growing inequality arises. That being said, 70% of the companies are already taking action with sustainability trends by committing to new strategic direction. (University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership 2018).

2.5 SWOT analysis of sustainability trends

As mentioned before, SWOT analysis helps to understand the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in a certain subject. Here the data is mainly gathered from the information provided in the previously conducted PESTEL analysis as well as some external research.



Information collected from; Importance of Corporate Governance for Energy in Sustainable Development and Evaluation with Quantitative SWOT Analysis 2015 & Integrating sustainability into SME strategy 2015

FIGURE 6. SWOT analysis table created by the author

There are changes to sustainability trends on yearly base, but it does not mean that they change completely. What was discovered is that especially Millennials and Generation X have become so aware of the current global crises that they are getting more involved in the politics on both local and national level. As the awareness grows the support for sustainable trends and actions grow. The support of the community can also be seen on corporate level. As organizations develop more effective strategies and commit to sustainable actions the more support they have gained whether it's on an employment level or just from a consumer point of view. The last point in the strengths is mainly based on consumer behaviour. When people are more aware it effects their decision making, when decision making changes the companies react and create new products and services to meet the new trends. Businesses have reacted well on the current trends

and have turned it into a strength – more environmental products are on the markets, plastic is being fast reduced, and recycling has grown.

This does not mean that there are not weaknesses. Many corporations are still struggling with their weakness points that comes mainly from political processes, people's personal attitudes and lack of commitment to strategies. As discovered in the PESTEL analysis there is a visible lack of integration within the cooperation with international environmental law and the national level governments and legal factors. Sustainable development is still not fully integrated and adopted to legal actions which in many cases can affect processes in harmful and slowing way. It is not just about legal and national level weaknesses, people as individuals create the biggest weakness points. Even though strategy and commitment are seen as a strength it is also a weakness coming from creating a sustainable business strategy to match the trends and how people see the issues personally. If individuals are not reacting to the current situation and following the trends or committing to strategic implementations, this will carry on being a weakness in the future.

Opportunities for sustainability trends arise from the growing consciousness for sustainability and the current climate situation. As mentioned in the PESTEL analysis, especially Millennials and Generation X have become more climate conscious and are participating more actively in the political elections to drive the change they think is necessary to create sustainability and fight the global warming. The biggest opportunities for sustainable development come from international legal agreements to fight the climate change. These include the SDGs by United Nations and the Paris Agreement from 2015 where 195 countries adopted the first global legally binding climate deal to fight the climate change and cut down emissions. And as said before, economies are having to move in insane speed while emerging markets progressively drive the economic growth. There still lies opportunity in the emerging technologies and progress, new technology solutions are created on daily basis while AI is developing even further. Solutions for sustainability growth is within technological development to help cut down the resource usage levels we are at.

Finally, the threats that sustainability trends face is a lot coming from regional energy crises and conflicts, rising energy costs and stakeholder resistance. Parts of the Earth are heading to an energy crisis in regions where energy infrastructure is unreliable and unsustainable, while in different parts of the globe people are facing the need to reduce external sources and to implement global and EU climate and pollution regulations. The energy crisis is mainly affecting the Southeast Europe where the energy system has suffered from underinvestment and is in fast need of modernisation. (Tim Yeo 2018). What comes to the rising energy costs, as usage of fossil fuels is run down it allows more space for renewable energy. But to create new renewable energy more expensive technology is needed which is creating a peak in the prices for consumers and the developers.

3 LITERARY ANALYSIS

In this chapter main points from two literary articles will be analysed with the discoveries made by PESTEL and SWOT analysis. The two literary pieces are as followed:

- 10 Actions for Business in 2019 by Corporate Citizenship written in 2019
- Five ways for businesses to integrate sustainable practice into their operations and strategy by M. Datta in 2016

In 10 Actions for Business in 2019, the author believes that responsibility will be the new responsibilities in corporate boardrooms. 2019 is the year of business ethics where companies come out as a key driver for the future business development. Corporations have the possibility and ability to perform change to fight the largest socioeconomic and environmental challenges. Businesses need to respond to the major trends of 2019. (Corporate Citizenship 2019).

Where as in five ways for sustainable practises, Munish Datta, the facilities manager for M&S (Marks & Spencer) revealed why sustainability needs to be put in the heart of business strategies. M&S is a growing business in fifty-nine international regions promoting efficiency and sustainability in their business functions like logistics, waste and plastic reduction, and energy utilization while generating positive impacts on business markets and consumer especially in the environments it performs in. (M.Datta 2016).

As discovered in the SWOT analysis, the strengths and opportunities for sustainable business trends come largely from community support and consciousness for sustainable matters. Businesses need to implement the sustainability trends and strategies into their practises through significant change in products, services, business models and cultural impacts. The change requires thought-through targets and goals while developing technology into responsible actions to focus on the safety issues and priorities processes. (Corporate Citizenship 2019).

As discovered in the sustainability trends section of the thesis, volatility is the number one trend in fast moving and emerging markets and letting the sustainability be visible in the public side of the business. Datta mentions that to reach these goals the strategic plans need to involve everyone from customers to suppliers all the way to stakeholders, and to aim higher with innovative communities while creating new partnerships to form valuable alliances. (M. Datta 2016)

Business practices can be developed to match current sustainability trends by putting emphasis on the strategic planning. Including the sustainability trends into decision making within the company is essential. Maintaining positive atmosphere within the business is important. As the before conducted researches and articles clearly say there is a lot of action we need to take and implement in to business strategies for sustainable future. But what is the most important thing is this development? The important factor is people, it's the employees, its consumers, it's how they are treated and listened to. Businesses can create new processes after processes but if the employees are not committed to the fact and the goals, the business cannot reach them. If consumers see companies in negative light they will lose support, lose business and end up losing revenue.

Implementing sustainable actions into business practises can be costly. Let's say company like M&S decides fully to stop plastic packaging and move to biodegradable packaging, considering the size of their warehouses and production lines, this is a big investment from a company. But with big investments like this the business can generate more positive appearance and perhaps even gain more customers and profit more.

All in all, sustainability comes from people, even in the business world. To develop the practises to match the sustainability trends it should always start with people. Starting from listening to employees, getting them involved. Listening to customers and consumers, following the trends and getting people excited in it.

4 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this thesis was to discover how businesses can develop their practises based on current sustainability trends while discovering the challenges of sustainable development and the current sustainability trends.

The information used in this thesis was mainly secondary information, as the author decided to conduct the thesis as a literary study. Information was collected from multiple sources over the internet, including eBooks, research papers and articles. Information collected was enough to conduct the thesis why there was not need for additional data collections by surveys or interviews.

Results of this thesis are limited due to already existing information, and for lot of sources being private or costly. It is still clear that the research shows the importance of people as individuals in this growing matter of sustainability in business world. Businesses should focus on creating well planned out strategic plans to cut down waste and help fight the climate change, and that all starts from including people and maintaining a positive face.

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