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Involvement Culture and Corporate Sustainability of Oil and Gas Firms in South-South, Nigeria

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between involvement culture and corporate sustainability in oil and gas organizations in the South-South region, Nigeria. The study population consisted of 54 oil and gas exploration and production (E&P) organizations working in the South-South region. 270 sets of questionnaires were distributed to five functional managers at each E&P organization, and 257 questionnaires were returned promptly and appropriate for analysis. Spearman rank-order correlation coefficient was utilized to test our hypotheses using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0. The findings indicated that employee involvement culture has a strong positive relationship with indicators of corporate sustainability. As a result, it was determined that involvement is critical for maintaining social, environmental, and economic sustainability. Thus, we suggest that management must start programs that are focused on effective delegation of power; in turn, this action will engage workers in achieving economic sustainability.*

Keywords: *Involvement Culture, Corporate Sustainability, Social, Environmental and Economic Sustainability*

Introduction

Rapid technical advancements, global and local competitiveness, capital flight, and high societal expectations have all posed serious difficulties to managers and their organizations (Nwaeke & Obiekwe, 2017). To guarantee business sustainability, managers must successfully handle and deal with these difficulties (Khattak, Igbal & Khattak, 2012). In the current day, corporate sustainability is arguably one of the most important issues of the business. A worldwide mandate to maintain and replicate productive potential has elevated the idea to much more than a phrase or term (Kuhlman & Farrington, 2010). Sustainability is defined by Hamson (2010) as long-term management of the environment, people, economy, and society. In this context, it is reasonable to claim that sustainability efforts may significantly reduce pollution and poverty in many developing nations. For businesses, Deloitte (2018) defines Corporate Sustainability as a holistic strategy for long-term economic, social, and environmental value creation. Montiel and Delgado-

Cebellos (2014) proposed social, economic, and environmental sustainability as corporate sustainability metrics. The literature inspired this research to use social, environmental, and economic sustainability as indicators of business sustainability. According to Nwaeke and Obiekwe (2017) workers are the sole means of moving a company forward. Across the globe, individuals with strong technical, professional, and conceptual abilities are driving organizations' vision, goals, and objectives. The study shows that successful organizations empower and engage their employees, create teams, and enhance human potential at all levels (Block, 1991; Katzenbach & Smith, 1993; Lawler, 1986; Spreitzer, 1995; 1996; Buckingham & Coffman, 1999).

While over 75% of CEOs globally believed that corporate sustainability was economically beneficial, fewer than 40% attempted to incorporate it into their company operations (Mirvis, Googins & Kinnicutt, 2010). An example in point is the Niger Delta, where approximately 11 million gallons of oil was spilled annually for the last five decades in Nigeria's oil-producing area (Murphy, 2013). Although 60% of the population is reliant on agriculture, environmental restoration may take 30 years (Nwonwu, 2010; UNEP, 2011). The ongoing environmental degradation has decreased the economic worth of land and water, resulting in poverty and hostility, jeopardizing the livelihood of residents and oil corporations working in the area (Adekunle, Igbuku, Oguns & Shekwolo, 2013; Imobighe, 2011). The connection between involvement culture and corporate sustainability has developed in the last decade (e.g., Linnenlueck & Griffiths, 2010). However, these publications tended to be more theoretical, with little empirical support or proof. Enough said. Previous researches, mainly done in wealthy nations, may not be applicable in a country as varied and dynamic as Nigeria.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

This research undertaken aims to examine the relationship between involvement culture and corporate sustainability of oil and gas firms in South-South, Nigeria. Whereas, the objectives were to;

- Evaluate the relationship between involvement and social sustainability.
- Examine the relationship between involvement and environmental sustainability.
- Investigate the relationship between involvement and economic sustainability.

Research Questions

i. What is the relationship between involvement culture and social sustainability?
ii. What is the relationship between involvement culture and environmental sustainability?
iii. What is the relationship between involvement culture and economic sustainability?

Research Hypotheses

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between involvement culture and social sustainability.

Ho_2: There is no significant relationship between involvement culture and environmental sustainability.

Ho_3: There is no significant relationship between involvement culture and economic sustainability.

Literature Review

This study's theoretical foundation is stakeholder theory. An increasing number of academics and practitioners have been experimenting with ideas and models that help us comprehend today's business problems. Stakeholder theory, or “stakeholder thinking,” is a new narrative that connects ethics and capitalism. “Any group or person who may influence or is affected by the accomplishment of the organization's objectives,” said Freeman (1984). Stakeholders include customers, suppliers, workers, financiers, and communities (Dunham, Freeman & Liedtka, 2006, p. 125). An important part of stakeholder theory is that connections with external stakeholders help a company succeed. Sustainable business practices include global impacts like climate change or cultural changes brought on by marketing and advertising that affect everyone. It's a well-known fact This concept seeks to help companies in strengthening their ties with other groups, giving them an advantage in the marketplace. The stakeholder theory may benefit from the addition of commercial arguments on why companies should aim for sustainable development. A business's best economic interest is said to be served by working toward improving stakeholder relationships, which in turn helps the firm accomplish its commercial objectives. In order for a company to survive, it has to understand how connections work and change through time. To optimize value generation for stakeholders and maintain control over value distribution, the CEO must manage and build these relationships with the workforce (Harrison, Bosse & Phillips, 2010). It's a moral task to manage stakeholder relationships since it includes a large group of people's values, choices, potential harm, and benefits (Phillips, 2003).

Empirical Review

The idea of employee involvement was originally introduced in the academic study by Kahn (1990) in his paper "Psychological Conditions of Personal Involvement and Dis-involvement at Work" in an Academy of Management Journal (Junghoon 2012; Kular et al., 2008; Simpson, 2009). Meaningfulness, safety, and long-term viability were all significantly linked with Kahn's (1990) notion of employee engagement in the first empirical research (Chang, 2011; Kular et al., 2008).

The authors of Harter et al., (2002) used a large database to demonstrate that higher levels of employee engagement were linked to better business unit results, including increased corporate sustainability (Chang, 2011; Shuck & Wollard, 2010, p. 269). To them, engagement was defined as the degree to which a person was personally involved in their work and was pleased with it as well as excited about it. By focusing on the relationship between managerial self-efficacy, the perception of effective management practices, overall sustainability, and employee engagement, Luthans and Peterson (2002) built on Harter et al., (2002) model to produce their own findings. Employee engagement and manager self-efficacy were shown to be positively correlated when managers assessed employee effectiveness and supervisees appraised the degree of effectiveness of their manager. Employees in the most effective work units, according to Luthans and Peterson (2002) are doing what they do well, with colleagues they like, and with a strong sense of psychological ownership. First academic research in 2006 looked at the causes and consequences of employee engagement at Saks Fifth Avenue. With the use of the social exchange model, Saks identified the emergence of several types of employee engagement, such as job participation and organizational participation. The relationship between antecedent and outcome variables was mitigated by employee engagement, according to Saks (2006). The supporting atmosphere, work characteristics, and justice were all important antecedent factors. When people are emotionally and intellectually involved, it leads to long-term economic success, expanding the Schaufeli et al., (2002a) paradigm (Brad & Shuck, 2011). They discovered that work engagement moderated the connection between value congruence and perceived organizational support, core self-evaluation, and the two outcome variables, task performance and organizational citizenship behavior (Kahn, 1990) in an empirical research performed following Kahn (1990). On the basis of Kahn's (1990) theory, researchers Rich et al., (2010) investigated the extent to which participation serves as an important mechanism via which engagement' antecedents affect organizational sustainability. Shuck, Reio and Rocco (2011) found a connection between high performance and employee commitment, as well as employee engagement in their study of the dependent variables of performance and turnover intention. Six scales were provided to a wide range of companies in the service and technology sectors using an Internet-based survey battery. Engagement of employees showed a high connection with excellent performance, emotional commitment, and psychological environment, while employee involvement also had a significant correlation with both discretionary effort, and a desire to quit the organization. For Fairlie (2011) engagement and other outcomes like burnout, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover have an effect on these domains. However, cognitive and meaningful work characteristics had the strongest connections to employee outcomes, whereas other employment attributes showed minimal association. Furthermore, the existence of important work skills was the most important individual predictor of participation. Sardar, Rehman, Yousaf, and Aijaz investigated the participation of employees in Pakistan's banking sector (2011). When comparing the results to a non-significant connection, a strong correlation was discovered between employee engagement and decision making/coordination, incentive schemes, and staff involvement.. Concentration, activation, and positive affect are all required for work role participation. Kahn, (1990) Psychological circumstances for personal engagement and dis-involvement in the workplace theory was further developed by Soane et al., (2012) based on their findings. Intellectual, social and emotional aspects were operationalized with the use of an instrument called the ISA Involvement Scale (ISA Involvement Scale). This has resulted in positive associations between job performance, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), and desire to turn over. According to research, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and counterproductive work behavior (CWB) are both associated with employee engagement (Ariani, 2013). However, employee engagement had a significant negative association with CWB and OCB, with no meaningful relationship between the two. As a result, the research found no gender disparities in employee engagement.

Concept of Involvement Culture

Organizations are today earnestly looking for ways of achieving their "going concern" cravings, and gaining competitive advantage in the game of business since the business arena is full of uncertainties (Nwaeke & Obiekwe, 2017). Effective organizations put a high value on involving their workers in achieving their objectives. In today's business world, skilled and informed workers are more important than ever before, as they are the heartbeat of every company and serve as its engine for growth and production (Nwaeke & Obiekwe, 2017). To motivate their workers and create a competitive advantage, companies are implementing rules that let them participate in specific operations (Khattak, Igbal & Khattak, 2012). Different writers have characterized involvement in different ways. When workers take part in management decision-making and enhance activities that are appropriate to their job levels, it implies that the company has an involvement culture (Kumari and Kumari, 2014). Employee participation was seen by Price (2004) as a process that connects involvement, communication, and decision-making, leading to industrial democracy and motivation among workers. He said that including staff in running of a company encourages and empowers them to efficiently and profitably contribute meaningfully. It means enabling workers take part in choices that impact them, gives them greater power and responsibility. It also increases employees' commitment, motivation, and satisfaction with their employment. Joint decision-making is defined by Locke and Schweiger (1979) as decision-making that involves both supervisors and subordinates. It's the way people are organized and directed that determines how much they can give to their company (Khattak et al., 2013). Employer involvement is viewed as allowing workers to contribute continuously to the success of the company (Agyeman, 2012). Similarly, a low-level employee's simple idea may show a company the path to innovate or reduce expenses and produce an increase in sales. To guarantee the success and achievement of choices that directly impact them, workers must be given a chance to take part in the formulation and execution of decisions, even if this is done through delegation of authority.

Employees that are emotionally invested have a strong connection to their company and work tirelessly to ensure its success. They will go above and beyond to help their company succeed. Anyone who has been carried along puts in a lot of effort to see that those decisions are carried out successfully. Utilizing employees' private information can also lead to beneficial results for the company by way of - increase employee zeal in identifying with corporate goals, improve decision quality, and increase willingness to accept authority, reduce resistance to change and receptivity to change, improve organizational productivity (Preuss & Latham, 2010; Williamson, 2008; Muindi, 2011; Helms, 2006). A positive company culture is characterized by active participation from all employees. A positive company culture always results in policies that increase the effectiveness of the firm (Apostolou, 2000). Amah, (2014) discovered a link between company performance and organizational culture. A culture that fosters participation anticipates environmental changes and, as a result, offers workers the opportunity to participate actively in organizational operations (Chen, 1999).

Concept of Corporate Sustainability

The lifestyles of industrialized nations and economic development throughout the 1960s and 1970s exacerbated a severe imbalance in the planet's ecological, economic, and natural security systems (Blewitt, 2008). In response to these problems created by poor resource management, the word "sustainability" was developed and is now widely accepted (McKenzie, 2004). An increasing number of people are becoming aware of environmental degradation and the human impact on it. The establishment of limitations in this area was the result of many important events. Rachel Carson's book Silent Spring from 1962 shows clearly that despite people's belief that natural resources were unlimited, human activity can cause serious and long-lasting damage to the environment (Hardisty, 2010). It's possible to view business sustainability as a new and evolving paradigm of company management. The phrase 'paradigm' is deliberately employed since traditional growth and profit maximization are not synonymous with long-term company sustainability (Friedman, 2000). The significance of corporate growth and profitability is recognized, but corporate sustainability also demands the company to achieve societal objectives, especially those linked to sustainable development, such as environmental preservation, social justice and equality, and economic development. Because the idea of business sustainability is so complicated, there isn't a widely accepted definition (Valor, 2005; Dahlstrud, 2008). An illustration of this idea is Dylick and Hockerts (2002, p. 13), who state that it is "fulfilling the requirements of a firm's direct and indirect stakeholders without compromising the firm's ability to meet future stakeholder demands." This definition is criticized by Wijen (2014) because it fails to take into consideration the three major parts of the construct. Sustainable development is interpreted in a political sense, at best. Despite this, a comprehensive review of the relevant literature on CS shows that the construct is based on three more well-established ideas: sustainable development, corporate social responsibility, and accountability for corporations (Bjorn & Ropke, 2018). The advancement of CS follows closely with the advancement of these concepts. Environmental preservation, social justice and equality, and economic growth are all part of sustainable development, which defines the performance areas on which companies should focus their efforts. Sustainable development also contributes to the corporation's vision and societal goals. Stakeholder theory provides economic reasons for businesses to work toward these goals, while corporate social responsibility provides ethical ones (Korten, 2001). Why Businesses Should Report Their Performance to Society on These Issues is explained by Corporate Responsibility.

Social Sustainability

The sub-concept of social sustainability was downplayed in comparison to environmental and economic sustainability in the first decade after the introduction of the concept of sustainable development in 1987 (Weingaertner & Moberg, 2014). Environmental and economic issues appeared to predominate in the discussion, with social issues taking a backseat. Until the late 1990s, social sustainability was considered essential to the sustainability agenda. It gained traction as a result of this (Jaeger et al., 2011). There has been a great deal of investigation on social sustainability, but no comprehensive definition has yet been established (hman et al., 2013; Jaeger et al., 2011; Littig and Griebler, 2005; Weingaertner & Moberg, 2014). In other words, social sustainability may refer to the need of maintaining particular institutions in societies and communities or it can be viewed as an imperative for sustainable growth by some (Sachs, 1999).

Some academics believe that sustainable development is primarily concerned with social issues. Cuthill (2010) asserts that sustainability has three facets: economic, environmental, and social. Rather of focusing on nature as a whole, he views environmental problems as social issues because of the human impact on it. In addition, he claims that economics serves people, not the other way around, which is especially important when it comes to equitable resource distribution. Three sub-categories of the concept of social sustainability were identified by Vallance, Perkins, and Dixon (2011) in their framework. In order to have a sustainable development, it must meet fundamental social demands such as equality (both inter- and intra-generational), employment, education, justice, freedom, and access to influential decision-making. Bridge Sustainability focuses on behavioral change as the only way to accomplish biophysical environmental goals. This is a term that describes how people react to change, including whether they embrace or reject its socio-cultural features and how they maintain their sustainability in the face of changing (Vallance et al., 2011). Because of the expansion of civil society, social sustainability refers to growth that may and will lead to a more prosperous environment, as outlined by Polèse and Stren (2000). Moreover, social integration, cultural variety, and equality were all emphasized by the authors as critical components of their vision of social sustainability. When we talk about urban culture, we're mostly talking about things like social integration, civic society, cultural diversity, and the economy. Social sustainability has been defined with more specificity for the built environment and housing. Sustainability in society is described by Caistor-Arendar (2011) as the process of creating a prosperous society by fully comprehending the needs of the people who live in it. Before trying to design such spaces, one must first understand what people desire and need from the areas where they live and work.

Environmental Sustainability

'Sustainable development' or 'corporate sustainability is now often described in terms of 'environmental sustainability. It is a logical error to assume that the present global growth pattern is faulty due to environmental destruction. However, this is a nave view that fails to take into account business interests as well as societal injustices that contribute to environmental degradation. For Moldan, Janouková, and Hák (2012) sustainability was formerly described as social and economic progress that did not harm the environment before the concept of the three pillars was put into place. Before this idea, social and economic sustainability were seen as separate yet interdependent pillars of sustainable development. Each of these sustainability concepts must thus be defined and discussed separately. As well as this, they emphasized the need of differentiating between environmental and economic sustainability. Morelli (2013) recommends a hierarchical model since economic and social sustainability is strongly reliant on environmental sustainability. This equilibrium, resilience, and connectedness allows human civilization to satisfy its requirements without depleting the ecosystems that sustain it or decreasing biological diversity needed to do so (Morelli, 2013, p. 5). A former Victorian State

Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability, Sutton (2004) emphasized the need of preserving natural support systems in her work. A'suitable degree' of protection of natural resources and natural services is defined by Moldan et al., (2012). Goodland's (1995, p. 10) wide notion of "natural capital maintenance" is comparable to this idea. He went on to say that input-output concepts are at the core of this idea.

These environmental sustainability criteria lead us to believe that this concept can be defined as the upkeep and improvement of all-natural support systems and services for current and future generations of humans as well as all other living creatures at intergenerational levels for all living things.

Economic Sustainability

Goals serve as internal benchmarks for companies, allowing management to monitor their progress over time. Nevertheless, the company's financial resources and social responsibilities must limit these milestones. This requirement ties the business's operations to societal norms. Long-term financial and social value strategic plans are often used by companies to define their goals. Economic sustainability, broadly defined, refers to a system's ability to continue operating properly even under unfavorable environmental conditions (Haffar & Searcy, 2015). Economics defines sustainability as a company's capacity to remain solvent at a certain point in its life cycle, and how those resources are then utilized to provide high-quality financial results. A company's goals for economic sustainability assist to define the acceptable level of risk and the warning signals of excessive risk tolerance that may lead to a liquidity crisis for the business. Unrealistic growth targets may cause companies to overshoot their supply capacity. Because of this, these organizations would cease to exist and stop using sustainable practices. Bankruptcy is a natural outcome of taking a big risk, and doing so breaches sustainability requirements (2019). Strategic planning requires management to make an educated guess about future development potentials. As a result, all stakeholders in the company should work towards a realistic objective. If the organization's goal-setting process excludes other stakeholders, it is the management's responsibility. When purchasing and marketing are tied to long-term goals, organizations avoid the pitfalls of poor decision-making that may lead to failure. Setting financial sustainability goals requires familiarity with relevant theories that explain the probable consequences of pursuing a specific sustainability component.

The capability of an organization to fulfill all of its financial obligations, such as those owed to its employees, other organizations and the government, in light of current economic circumstances is referred to as its economic sustainability. There are a few ways to measure a company's bankruptcy risk. One way is to look at the difference between its net income and its net spending, or as an excess of net income over costs. When revenues consistently exceed expenditures, the economy is considered sustainable. You can shift money around with ease, which encourages a never-ending manufacturing and sales cycle. In order to be really sustainable, a company must establish economic sustainability across all aspects of its production and commercial activities. The analysis of the economic sustainability of the organization should begin with a look at its capital structure and competitiveness in the market for financial resources. When compared to other organizations, the financial stability of this one is regarded as superior. A bank loan and other outside financing are considerably easier to come by for a company like this. A financially sound company has an advantage when it comes to recruiting and choosing suppliers. Several factors influence the category of financial sustainability, which may be found in a variety of assessed indicators of a company's financial well-being.

Methodology

This study endeavored to conduct a cross-sectional survey of the 54 oil and gas exploration and production companies operating in South – South, Nigeria, as identified by the Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR, 2018). The research included five managers from each company on a random basis. Since the researcher could accommodate the target population, no sampling technique was used. This research included both primary and secondary data, with primary data collected through a well-structured questionnaire. However, of the 270 devices distributed, only 257 were suitable for data analysis. SPSS was used to evaluate the hypotheses using the spearman rank order correlation (version 22.0).

Results and Discussion of Findings

Testing of Hypothesis one

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between involvement culture and social sustainability.

Table 1: Analysis on the relationship between involvement culture and social sustainability

Correlations

			Involvement Culture	Social_Sustainability
Spearman's rho	Involvement	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.324**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	257	257
	Social_sustainability	Correlation Coefficient	.324**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	257	257

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS 22.0 output on research data

Our first hypothesis revealed a significant relationship between involvement culture and social sustainability with a correlation coefficient of 0.324 and a p-value of 0.000 which is less than alpha of 0.05. With this result, we reject the stated null hypothesis. The finding translates that, the higher

employees are empowered and involved in the decision making process of the firm, the higher the level of social sustainability. The moderate relationship found implies that social sustainability can be averagely achieved when workers are involved in the operations of the firm. The overall implication of this result is that every employee has something to offer, and until they are provided with the opportunity to develop and showcase their skills and expertise, the social aspect of sustainability may not be actualized. This finding was supported by Sardar et al., (2011) who inferred from their investigation that there was a significant relationship between involvement and decision making in Pakistani banking sector.

Testing of Hypothesis Two

Ho_2: There is no significant relationship between involvement culture and environmental sustainability.

Table 2: Analysis on the relationship between involvement culture and environmental sustainability.

Correlations

			Involvement Culture	Environmental _Sustainability
Spearman's rho	Involvement	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	. 522**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	257	257
	Environmental_Sustainability	Correlation Coefficient	. 522**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	257	257

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Source: SPSS 22.0 output on research data

Our second hypothesis revealed a significant relationship between involvement culture and environmental sustainability with a correlation coefficient of 0.522 and a p-value of 0.000 which is less than alpha of 0.05. With this result, we reject the stated null hypothesis. It can be interpreted that, the more workers are relied upon to make decisions for their organization by virtue of permits from management, the greater the level of environmental sustainability. This entails that environmental sustainability can be highly achieved when staff are carried along to make decisions for the company. Furthermore, firms can hold on to or adopt employee involvement as part of its corporate culture so as to enjoy the dividends of environmental sustainability. This finding aligns with that of Dauly and Huang, (2011) who posited that an emphasis on involvement suggests that the firm invests in the development and capacity of its human resource, thus, is committed to pursuing environmental sustainability.

Testing of Hypothesis Three

Ho_3: There is no significant relationship between involvement culture and economic sustainability

Table 3: Analysis on the relationship between involvement culture and economic sustainability

Correlations

			Involvement Culture	Eco_Sustainability
Spearman's rho	Involvement	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.198**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	257	257
	Eco_Sustainability	Correlation Coefficient	.198**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	257	257

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS 22.0 output on research data

Our third hypothesis revealed a significant relationship between involvement culture and economic sustainability with a correlation coefficient of 0.198 and a p-value of 0.000 which is less than alpha of 0.05. With this result, we reject the stated null hypothesis. This outcome tells that the higher an organization involves its employees by empowering and training them to make good decisions for the firm, the higher it can likely attain economic sustainability. Our finding indicates that although expenditures on staff development may tend to adversely affect profits at the first instance, in the long run, these expenses result in compensating added value through increased quality of products and services for firms. This finding agrees with Super and Neivell (1986) who found that organizational culture plays a significant role and affect the managerial effectiveness in the organization.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to empirically investigate the relationship between involvement culture and corporate sustainability of oil and gas firms in South- South region, Nigeria. On the strength of our findings, we conclude that employee involvement can significantly bring about corporate sustainability. This implies that the more employees are empowered to contribute in the decision making process of their firms, the greater the chances of achieving corporate sustainability.

Recommendations

v) Oil and gas firms should create equal opportunities to empower their employees to enable them to be better involved in the decision making processes in order to enhance their social sustainability.
vi) The management of oil and gas firms should encourage the cooperation of staff across different parts of the organization so as to reduce the environmental impacts in order to achieve environmental sustainability.
vii) Management should initiate programs that are driven towards effective delegation of authority. In return, this action will serve as a means to involve employees in order to achieve economic sustainability.

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