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INTEGRATING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INTO THE BUSINESS MODEL THROUGH SUSTAINABLE CORPORATE STRATEGIES

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Abstract. In the context of globalization and the growing pressures of climate change, the integration of sustainable development into business models has become a key condition for the long-term competitiveness and legitimacy of enterprises. This study explores how sustainability-oriented corporate strategies enable the embedding of economic, social, and environmental principles within organizational practices. Building on a qualitative and conceptual approach, the paper formulates two working hypotheses emphasizing that integrative and proactive sustainability strategies enhance corporate competitiveness, and ethical leadership and responsible governance serve as enablers of sustainable transformation. The paper introduces the “Facets of corporate sustainable strategies” model, a multidimensional framework designed to assess sustainability maturity and guide managerial decision-making. An illustrative analysis of Moldovan companies representing key economic sectors like finance, energy, telecommunications, and manufacturing, highlights emerging best practices in ESG integration and corporate responsibility. The study concludes that the coherence between corporate actions and public sustainability policies is essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. It provides both a conceptual foundation and policy insights for advancing sustainable management and fostering a responsible and innovation-driven economy.

Keywords: *sustainable strategy, corporate governance, ESG, circular economy, organizational culture, stakeholder engagement.*

JEL code: *Q01, Q56.*

1. Introduction

Sustainability has become an essential paradigm for forecasting and shaping the future, integrating environmental, social, and economic dimensions with the objective of improving the quality of life, particularly for future generations. This concern is increasingly reflected in contemporary corporate strategies, demonstrating a growing alignment between the business environment, sustainable development requirements, and societal expectations.

Integrating sustainability into corporate activities has become a fundamental prerequisite for maintaining competitiveness and credibility in the marketplace. An increasing number of organizations are adopting sustainable principles in response to mounting pressures from society, consumers, and investors, who demand transparency, ethical conduct, and accountability toward the environment and the community.

Simultaneously, international and national legislation impose stringent standards on environmental protection, efficient resource utilization, and non-financial reporting, compelling companies to adhere to sustainable development requirements.

Implementing sustainable practices is not merely an obligation but also a strategic opportunity, as it enhances operational efficiency, reduces costs, and fosters product and process innovation. Moreover, a strong commitment to sustainability contributes to strengthening corporate reputation, attracting investors, and building long-term customer loyalty. Sustainability thus becomes an integral component of corporate strategy, through which companies reaffirm their role as responsible societal actors and actively contribute to the well-being of future generations.

Adopting sustainability as a central principle of business strategy reflects an acknowledgment of the interdependence between long-term economic success and the well-being of society and the environment [1].

This paper aims to explore how companies operating in post-transition economies integrate the principles of sustainable development into their strategic models. The study seeks to (1) identify the main types of sustainable corporate strategies, (2) analyze the level of alignment between public policies and corporate actions, and (3) propose an integrative conceptual model that reflects the evolution of sustainability maturity in organizations.

In order to provide conceptual coherence and guide the analytical direction of this study, two working hypotheses are proposed. These hypotheses are not intended for statistical testing but rather to establish a logical framework for the theoretical and applied discussion:

1) Integrative and proactive sustainability strategies enhance the long-term competitiveness and resilience of enterprises by fostering innovation, stakeholder trust, and responsible value creation.
2) Ethical leadership and responsible corporate governance act as key enablers of sustainable transformation, ensuring the alignment between strategic objectives, organizational culture, and societal expectations.

These hypotheses reflect the assumption that sustainability-oriented management practices represent both a strategic necessity and a determinant of organizational performance in contemporary business environments.

2. Literature review

Sustainability represents a central pillar of the modern corporate development paradigm, reflecting the transition from an exclusively economic orientation to an integrated approach that encompasses the environmental and social dimensions of organizational performance. Recent studies confirm that sustainability functions as a strategic driver of adaptability and competitiveness in contemporary enterprises, grounded in the “triple bottom line” model – people, planet, and profit.

Research indicates that concerns regarding environmental protection, resource efficiency, and social engagement are increasingly embedded within corporate strategies as defining components of organizational identity and reputation.

The integration of sustainability principles into business strategies requires the alignment of economic objectives with social responsibility. Muhammad Ardiansyah and Alhamzah Alnoor [2] emphasize that adopting a sustainable vision generates value through innovation, risk mitigation, and the strengthening of stakeholder trust, thereby transforming corporate social responsibility (CSR) from a mere image-building tool into a mechanism for creating sustainable value.

In the same vein, Pérez Estébanez and Sevillano Martín [3] empirically demonstrate that firms with strategically integrated sustainability policies achieve superior financial performance, thereby confirming the positive correlation between sustainability and profitability.

At the level of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the implementation of sustainability practices is shaped by a combination of internal and external factors. Moursellas et al. [4] identify among the key enablers legislative support, growing demand for green products, and a supportive organizational culture, whereas the main barriers include limited financial resources, lack of expertise, and a predominant short-term orientation. These findings confirm that, for SMEs, the successful transition toward sustainable business models depends on multi-stakeholder collaboration, access to green financial instruments, and the development of appropriate managerial competencies.

Sustainable leadership emerges as the primary catalyst for organizational transformation. According to Simionescu et al. [5], modern leaders must integrate managerial competence with an ethical and responsible vision oriented toward sustainable development. An organizational culture founded on trust, transparency, and employee engagement in Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) initiatives fosters collective commitment and internal innovation. Research further suggests that participative leadership, clear communication of objectives, and recognition of employee contributions contribute to the development of a long-term sustainability-oriented culture.

Crucerescu [6] emphasizes the complementarity between the concepts of lean, green, and circular economy, which together provide the operational framework for the transition toward sustainable business models. These approaches promote energy efficiency, waste prevention, and resource reuse, thereby enhancing competitiveness while reducing environmental impact. Their integration into corporate strategies transforms sustainability from a moral ideal into a tangible management instrument.

The reviewed literature highlights that sustainability represents the responsible commitment of contemporary business. It transcends the status of a passing trend and has become a strategic prerequisite for organizational survival, shaping how companies define their mission, culture, and engagement with society. The coherent integration of economic, social, and ecological dimensions reinforces not only financial performance but also the reputational capital and social legitimacy of enterprises.

3. Materials and methods

The present study is based on a qualitative methodological approach, aiming at the critical analysis of the specialized literature and the integration of the author's own observations on sustainability as an expression of the responsible commitment of contemporary business. The methodology was structured in two complementary directions: theoretical analysis of academic sources and applicative interpretation based on the author's professional experience and empirical research.

Initially, a systematic and selective review of academic sources published in the period 2020-2025 was carried out, with a focus on works from international journals indexed in scientific databases. The articles were selected according to their relevance to the topic of corporate sustainability, the integration of social responsibility into business strategy and the role of leadership in promoting sustainable development. The analysis aimed to identify convergences and divergences of perspective, the main conceptual models, as well as the enabling factors and barriers documented in the specialized literature.

Subsequently, the study incorporated the author’s own research, derived from professional consulting experience in the field of organizational development and the implementation of sustainable management systems. This research enabled a comparative analysis between academic theories and the practical realities observed in the contemporary business environment, particularly within small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The empirical findings were interpreted through the lens of existing theoretical frameworks, offering a critical perspective on the extent to which ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) principles are integrated into managerial processes.

The methodological approach adopted is predominantly qualitative, exploratory, and analytical, characteristic of both theoretical and applied research in the economic and managerial sciences. The comparative analysis of sources and interpretative evaluation of data facilitated the formulation of coherent conclusions regarding the manifestation of responsible business commitment within the broader context of sustainability.

4. Results and discussions

4.1 Types of Sustainable Strategies

As sustainability becomes an increasingly integral component of corporate strategic vision, the identification and classification of sustainable strategies acquire particular significance. Such classification serves as a valuable managerial instrument, enabling the business community to better comprehend the diversity of strategic options available and their implications for organizational performance.

An examination of existing models in the literature offers a structured perspective on how organizations can integrate the principles of sustainable development in accordance with their objectives, resources, and managerial maturity. In this context, the classification of sustainable strategies constitutes a necessary foundation for formulating coherent, ethical, and future-oriented business policies.

The review of specialized literature reveals that sustainable strategies can be classified according to several criteria reflecting the degree of strategic maturity, the scope of impact, and the typology of corporate commitment. Recent studies [7,2,3,4,5,6], complemented by seminal works [9,10,11,12] provide a comprehensive perspective on how organizations can incorporate sustainability principles into their strategic development processes.

Given the diversity of existing approaches, classifying sustainable strategies according to criteria such as temporal orientation, area of impact, strategic purpose, level of integration, source of initiative, and scope of applicability offers a holistic understanding of how sustainability evolves from a compliance-oriented practice to a driver of strategic transformation, ultimately becoming a central pillar of competitiveness and corporate responsibility:

1) By Temporal Orientation. A fundamental criterion for classifying sustainable strategies is temporal orientation, which distinguishes between reactive and proactive strategic approaches [7]:
   - Reactive strategies are implemented in response to external pressures such as legislation, environmental regulations, or non-governmental organizations. Their main objective is to minimize negative environmental and social impacts. These strategies correspond to the compliance stage, in which organizations primarily seek to avoid sanctions and mitigate reputational risks [6].
   - Proactive strategies, by contrast, embody an anticipatory and innovative orientation. They involve sustained investments in green technologies, the development of sustainable products, and the adoption of circular business models. Proactive organizations aim to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage by integrating long-term environmental and social objectives into their core strategy [5,11].
2) By Area of Impact – The “Triple Bottom Line” Model. Elkington [9] introduced the “Triple Bottom Line” model as a conceptual foundation for assessing sustainable performance, emphasizing the integration of three key dimensions: economic, environmental, and social. Accordingly, sustainable strategies may be classified as follows:
   - Economic strategies, which focus on enhancing efficiency and profitability through environmentally responsible and resource-efficient practices [3].
   - Environmental strategies, which aim to reduce the carbon footprint, improve waste management, and promote the transition toward renewable energy sources [6].
   - Social strategies, which prioritize employee well-being, equity, inclusion, and active community engagement [7].

Organizations with a higher degree of strategic maturity tend to integrate these three dimensions within a unified framework, thereby reinforcing their overall sustainable value creation.

3) By Strategic Purpose. Porter and Kramer [10] identify three levels of strategic intensity in the integration of sustainability:
   - Defensive strategies, which focus on protecting corporate image and ensuring minimal compliance with environmental and social requirements.
   - Competitive strategies, which position sustainability as a source of differentiation and innovation, thereby contributing to long-term profitability.
   - Transformative strategies, which generate shared value by integrating economic and social objectives within a unified model of sustainable development.

Ardiansyah and Alnoor [2] corroborate this typology, demonstrating that sustainability becomes a genuine vector of performance when it is fully integrated into business strategy rather than treated as a peripheral or philanthropic activity.

4) By Level of Integration in the Value Chain. The literature identifies three main levels of integration of sustainability within the corporate value chain:
   - Functional level – the application of sustainability principles in specific operational areas such as production, marketing, and human resource management.
   - Organizational level – the incorporation of sustainability into the overall corporate strategy and management systems, including ESG frameworks, sustainability reporting, and governance mechanisms.

- Network level – the coordination of partners, suppliers, and customers within a broader sustainable ecosystem [4,11].

This classification underscores that sustainability becomes truly effective only when it is systematically integrated across all levels of the value chain.

5) By Source of Initiative. Simionescu et al. [5] emphasize that participative leadership plays a decisive role in the adoption and implementation of sustainable strategies. Accordingly, two main approaches can be distinguished:
   - Top-down strategies, initiated by senior management, grounded in strategic vision, formal planning, and long-term organizational objectives.
   - Bottom-up strategies, emerging from employees or operational teams, which foster innovation, engagement, and cultural transformation [12].

The balance between these two approaches determines the authenticity and depth of an organization's commitment to sustainability, as well as its capacity to embed sustainability within the organizational culture.

6) By Scope of Application. Crucerescu [6] and Bocken et al. [11] distinguish among three main categories of sustainable strategies according to their scope of application:
   - Corporate strategies, which aim to implement ESG principles across the entire organization, embedding sustainability within all managerial and operational processes.
   - Sectoral strategies, which are adapted to the specific characteristics and requirements of particular industries (e.g., sustainable agriculture, green construction, clean manufacturing).
   - Territorial strategies, which are developed in partnership with public authorities, academic institutions, and local communities to promote sustainable regional and local development..

These categories illustrate the progressive extension of sustainability from internal organizational processes to the broader social and economic ecosystem in which the organization operates.

Therefore, sustainable strategies cannot be defined univocally; rather, they represent a strategic continuum between conformity and transformation. Their configuration varies according to managerial intent, the level of integration, and the socio-economic context in which organizations operate.

By combining the criteria of temporal orientation, impact area, strategic purpose, and level of integration, a multidimensional and evolutionary model of sustainable strategies emerges. This model can be applied both in academic research and in managerial practice to support the design and implementation of future sustainability-oriented strategies.

The multidimensional model outlines six interdependent dimensions of strategic evolution, where the transition from reactive to transformative approaches is conditioned by several key factors: the integration of sustainability principles into organizational culture, cross-functional alignment along the value chain, coherence among economic, social, and environmental objectives, and the exercise of responsible and ethical leadership.

Figure 1. Facets of corporate sustainable strategies

Source: developed by the author

This model enables the diagnosis of an organization’s sustainability maturity and assists managers in selecting the most appropriate type of strategy in accordance with both internal and external contextual factors. Thus, sustainability is conceptualized as an evolutionary and multidimensional process that transcends mere regulatory compliance and becomes an expression of a responsible and strategic commitment within contemporary business practice.

The “Facets of Corporate Sustainable Strategies” model (see Fig. 1) integrates the principal dimensions that characterize sustainability-oriented approaches at the organizational level: temporal, strategic, impact, integration, initiative, and applicability. This model provides a unified analytical framework for understanding how organizations can design, implement, and evaluate sustainable strategies in relation to contextual variables. In doing so, it contributes to the consolidation of a corporate culture grounded in responsibility, innovation, and sustainable performance.

Although the proposed model provides a comprehensive and useful analytical framework for understanding sustainability-oriented corporate strategies, its practical applicability is influenced by several contextual and organizational factors. The effectiveness of the model largely depends on the availability and reliability of ESG data, the organizational size and resource capacity, as well as the commitment of leadership to embed sustainability principles into strategic decision-making and daily operations.

Furthermore, the model’s diagnostic and comparative potential could be enhanced through its application to a broader sample of enterprises, enabling the identification of patterns of sustainability maturity across industries and regions. Future refinements may include quantitative validation and cross-sectoral analyses, particularly in economies undergoing structural transition, where the integration of sustainability into business models is still at an emerging stage. Such developments would contribute to consolidating the model as both an academic tool for analysis and a practical instrument for corporate strategy formulation and policy design.

4.2 National policies and programs supporting corporate sustainability in the Republic of Moldova

The “Facets of Sustainable Corporate Strategies” model underscores that achieving genuine sustainability maturity at the organizational level cannot occur in isolation but requires close interconnection between corporate actions and the public policies promoted by the state. Corporate sustainability becomes truly effective only when supported by a coherent national framework that provides strategic direction, economic instruments, and incentives for integrating green principles across all sectors of activity.

In this context, the role of the state extends beyond the development of the legislative framework to encompass the creation of an ecosystem conducive to innovation, partnerships, and sustainable investment. The state thus plays a fundamental role in enabling the green transition through the adoption of regulatory measures, economic tools, and support programs designed to encourage business sector engagement in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) [13].

In the Republic of Moldova, this support framework has been significantly consolidated in recent years through the launch of integrated programs aimed at transforming small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) into active participants in the green economy. In a national economy where over 98% of enterprises are classified as SMEs, these entities have become key drivers of innovation, social responsibility, and adaptation to the requirements of the green transition [14].

Recent developments in Moldova’s environmental policy reflect a coherent strategic vision regarding the role of SMEs in advancing sustainable development. The country’s connection to the European energy system (ENTSO-E) in 2022 has accelerated the transition toward renewable energy sources and created favorable conditions for integrating resource efficiency principles into production processes (IEA, 2022). Within this context, SMEs are increasingly encouraged to adopt green transformation measures, ranging from the use of clean technologies to the implementation of environmental management systems [14].

This orientation is supported by a modern legislative and strategic framework, which highlights [16]:

- The National Development Strategy „European Moldova 2030", which promotes greening of business, eco-innovation, and green labeling.
- The Industrial Emissions Act (2022), which aligns industrial practices with the best available techniques in the European Union.
- The National SME Greening Program (2019), developed with the support of the EU4Environment initiative, which provides advice, training, and financial support for the green transition.
- Grant programs managed by the Organization for Entrepreneurship Development (ODA) – up to MDL 500,000 for resource efficiency projects and up to MDL 1,500,000 for investments in renewable energy equipment.
- Also, through the Law on Payments for Environmental Pollution, the state applies economic mechanisms that discourage the intensive use of natural resources and encourage pollution prevention.

However, several challenges persist. The absence of detailed statistical data on the environmental performance of SMEs – for instance, the number of green certifications or the extent of implementation of environmental management systems – limits the ability to accurately assess progress in this domain [15]. Consequently, there is a pressing need to strengthen monitoring and reporting mechanisms and to ensure closer alignment between national and European policies on corporate sustainability [16].

Moldova's efforts in advancing sustainability extend beyond the corporate sphere, reflecting an integrated national vision. Through the adoption of the Program for the Promotion of the Green and Circular Economy for 2024-2028 [16], the Government of the Republic of Moldova and its development partners have reaffirmed their commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the European Green Deal. This program [16] provides a clear strategic direction for transforming key economic sectors – industry, energy, transport, agriculture, and waste management – into fundamental pillars of sustainable development.

Thus, the corporate and public sectors are increasingly converging toward a shared objective: building a resilient, innovative, and environmentally responsible economy in which the principles of sustainability represent the tangible expression of the responsible commitment of both the state and the business community to the future.

4.3 Aligning corporate sustainability strategies with national policies

A particularly relevant strategic instrument for enhancing economic sustainability in the Republic of Moldova is the National Program for Promoting Entrepreneurship and Increasing Competitiveness for 2023–2027, approved by the Government and implemented under the coordination of the Organization for Entrepreneurship Development (ODA) [14].

The overarching objective of this program is to foster an environment conducive to the development of innovative, competitive, and sustainable entrepreneurship, in full alignment with the principles of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the European Green Deal [16].

Among its strategic priorities, a central position is held by Specific Objective 1.3 – Sustainable Economic Growth and Promotion of ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) Principles [14], which reinforces the integration of sustainability considerations into the management and development processes of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Through this objective, the Government of the Republic of Moldova seeks not only to align the national regulatory framework with European standards, but also to mobilize the business community toward concrete actions that advance the green transition and promote social responsibility.

The program establishes a set of measurable outcome indicators, which demonstrate the clear strategic orientation of public policies toward building a green, competitive, and equitable economy [14]:

- Reduction of total greenhouse gas emissions by at least 71% by 2025, compared to 1990 levels.
- Reduction of carbon emissions by 40% by 2025, compared to 2022 levels.

- Increase by 50% in the proportion of SMEs implementing energy efficiency principles through investments in alternative energy sources or modern technologies.
- Certification of at least 10% of SMEs in accordance with the SM SR EN ISO 14001 (Environmental Management Systems) and/or SM EN ISO 26000 (Social Responsibility) standards.
- Ecological self-assessment conducted by at least 60% of active SMEs through the digital platform managed by the Organization for Entrepreneurship Development (OED).
- Increase in the share of women-led enterprises from 30% in 2022 to 35% by 2025, thereby strengthening the social dimension of sustainability.
- Doubling of social enterprises, from 7 in 2022 to 14 by 2025, reflecting institutional support for inclusive business models.
- Increase in the share of SMEs led by young people, women, and migrants among the total beneficiaries of OED funding by 13 percentage points by 2025.

Through these strategic directions, the Program seeks to integrate ESG principles into the entrepreneurial culture, accelerate the adoption of circular production models, and stimulate green innovation, thereby strengthening the long-term competitiveness of the SME sector.

At the European level, the Regulation on the Disclosure of Financial and Sustainability Information establishes explicit reporting obligations for environmental, social, and governance (ESG) indicators, emphasizing the importance of transparency in sustainable development initiatives. This regulatory framework is further reinforced by the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), which entered into force in January 2023, extending sustainability reporting requirements to a significantly broader range of companies.

Consequently, Moldovan enterprises engaged in partnerships with European counterparts will need to adopt simplified ESG reporting mechanisms in order to comply with the sustainability disclosure requirements of their European Union partners.

Although the integration of ESG practices remains at an early stage in the Moldovan market, an increasing number of companies are recognizing their economic and reputational advantages. In particular, large enterprises with international orientations have begun to incorporate sustainability and social responsibility criteria into their governance frameworks and reporting processes [18].

In this context, the Republic of Moldova is demonstrating a gradual transition from reactive compliance-based approaches to proactive sustainable development strategies, in which environmental and social responsibility are becoming key determinants of economic performance and competitiveness.

To illustrate the practical application of sustainability principles within the national context, a sample of companies operating in the Republic of Moldova was analyzed. The selection of companies was based on the availability of public ESG information and their representativeness across key economic sectors: namely finance, energy, telecommunications, and manufacturing. These companies actively promote their achievements in sustainability, which motivated the authors to include them in the present research in order to highlight and elucidate best practices in the field. The analysis is illustrative in nature, aiming to showcase emerging sustainability practices, strategic orientations, and ESG integration patterns, rather than to provide statistical generalization. The identified examples reflect the growing commitment of Moldovan enterprises to align business strategies with the principles of sustainable development and responsible corporate governance.

Table 1. Sustainable strategies implemented by companies in the Republic of Moldova

Company name	*Main field of activity*	*Strategic sustainability directions*	*Strategy type*	*ESG Dimensions*
B.C. „Moldindconbank” S.A.	Bank activity. Category „C” investment services and activities	▪ Integrated ESG policy. ▪ Financial products for energy efficiency. ▪ Separate waste collection and equipment recycling. ▪ Social responsibility and professional training programs.	Proactive – Social and Governance	S, G

Company name	*Main field of activity*	*Strategic sustainability directions*	*Strategy type*	*ESG Dimensions*
B.C. „ProCredit Bank" S.A.	Bank activity	▪ Environmental management policy based on 3 pillars: internal management system, environmental risk management, green financing. ▪ Green credits for renewable energy and energy efficiency. ▪ Internal environmental education campaigns and reduction of resource consumption.	Integrative – Environmental and financial	E, G
S.A. „Moldcell"	Electronic communications activities via wireless networks	▪ Integrating sustainability into all operations. ▪ „Go Green" initiative. ▪ Digital inclusion and social innovation. ▪ Annual sustainability report.	Transformative-Systemic	E, S, G
Î.M. „Orange Moldova" SA	Electronic communications activities via wireless networks	▪ „Net Zero Carbon 2040" commitment. ▪ Photovoltaic panels on mobile networks. ▪ Electrification of the car fleet. ▪ Circular economy and device recycling.	Transformative-Technological	E
Purcari Wineries Group	Production and marketing of grape wines, sparkling wines and high-quality and collector's wines	▪ Own photovoltaic system. ▪ Sustainable water and energy management. ▪ CO_2 reuse in fermentation. ▪ Social projects through the „Purcari Foundation".	Proactive – Integrated	E, S , G
Î.M. „EFES Vitanta Moldova Brewery" S.A.	Brewing. Production of non-alcoholic soft drinks. Production of mineral and other bottled waters.	▪ Reducing water consumption. ▪ Own water treatment plant. ▪ Bottle recycling. ▪ Afforestation and gender equality campaigns.	Proactive – Environmental and social	E, S
S.R.L. „ECO DYNAMIC"	Offers photovoltaic systems from consultancy to complete installation	▪ National solar energy projects. ▪ Promoting renewable energy solutions. ▪ Expanding access to green technologies.	Transformative – Energetic	E
Combinatul de vinuri „Cricova" S.A.	Production and marketing of sparkling wines, divins and high-quality and collector's wines	▪ Planting organic vineyards. ▪ Installation of solar panels. ▪ Infrastructure modernization. ▪ Promoting organic wines.	Proactive – Environmental	E
S.C. Habsev Grup S.R.L.	Supply, storage and wholesale and retail of electrical equipment and goods for various needs	▪ Technological solutions for energy efficiency. ▪ Promoting electric mobility. ▪ Consulting for sustainable projects.	Integrative – Technological	E
"Coordinate" S.R.L.	Manufacturing and sale of clothing items	▪ Use of eco-responsible materials. ▪ Waste reduction and material recycling. ▪ Ethical and fair practices. ▪ Promoting sustainable design.	Transformative – Integrated	E, S
„IONEL" S.A.	Manufacturing and sale of clothing items	▪ Installation of photovoltaic panels to reduce grid consumption. ▪ Implementation and certification SM SR EN ISO 14001:2015 (environmental management system) . ▪ Annual social audits for compliance with ethical and labor standards.	Proactive – Environmental and social	E, S

Company name	*Main field of activity*	*Strategic sustainability directions*	*Strategy type*	*ESG Dimensions*
NOVA NUT S.R.L.	Selection, cleaning, sorting of walnut kernels and walnuts in shell, packaging in PP/PE foil with or without vacuum	▪ Installation of photovoltaic panels to reduce grid consumption. ▪ Implementation and certification of IFS Food, Vers.08 (food quality and safety management system). ▪ Annual social audits for compliance with ethical and labor standards. ▪ Ecological certification.	Proactive – Environmental, quality and social	E, S

Source: developed by the author based on public information provided by the specified companies [19-29].

4.4 Policy and Managerial Implications

The findings of this study emphasize that the integration of sustainability into business strategy requires a concerted effort between corporate leaders, policymakers, and society as a whole. Corporate decision-makers must acknowledge sustainability not only as a moral or reputational commitment, but as a strategic determinant of competitiveness, resilience, and innovation. Therefore, companies are encouraged to embed sustainability principles into their strategic and operational frameworks by adopting measurable ESG objectives, implementing environmental and social management systems, and promoting transparent sustainability reporting.

Organizational transformation should also be supported by a strong sustainability-oriented culture, where employees at all levels are engaged in responsible practices and continuous learning. Leadership plays a central role in this process, ensuring coherence between vision, strategy, and stakeholder expectations. Integrating sustainability into performance evaluation and incentive systems can further consolidate this alignment and stimulate long-term value creation.

From a policy perspective, the advancement of sustainability in the corporate sector depends on the consistency and predictability of public programs designed to support the green transition. Policymakers should strengthen financial and institutional mechanisms that facilitate access to green technologies, renewable energy investments, and environmental certifications, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Moreover, the alignment of national sustainability frameworks with European Union standards and the 2030 Agenda is essential for ensuring policy coherence and international competitiveness.

Public authorities, in partnership with academia and the private sector, are also encouraged to develop knowledge platforms and capacity-building programs aimed at enhancing managerial competencies in sustainability and ESG reporting. Such collaborative initiatives can accelerate the diffusion of best practices, reduce information asymmetries, and foster a more inclusive and innovation-driven green economy.

5. Conclusions

Sustainability has evolved from an optional managerial concern into a fundamental prerequisite for corporate credibility and long-term performance. The integration of sustainable development principles into business strategy redefines the way organizations create value, combining economic efficiency with social responsibility and environmental stewardship.

The research confirms that integrative and proactive sustainability strategies strengthen corporate competitiveness and resilience by fostering innovation, stakeholder trust, and responsible governance. At the same time, ethical leadership and transparent decision-making represent decisive factors in translating sustainability objectives into tangible organizational practices and outcomes.

The proposed model, “Facets of Corporate Sustainable Strategies”, provides a coherent analytical framework for diagnosing sustainability maturity and guiding managerial decisions. Its multidimensional structure captures the interplay between temporal orientation, strategic purpose, impact area, integration level, initiative source, and application scope. However, the model’s practical applicability depends on the availability of ESG data, organizational size, and leadership commitment, suggesting the need for further refinement and potential empirical validation across sectors and countries.

The illustrative analysis of companies operating in the Republic of Moldova demonstrates that an increasing number of enterprises are implementing sustainability-oriented strategies, often promoted publicly through their ESG achievements. These examples showcase emerging best practices that reflect the progressive alignment of national businesses with European sustainability standards and the global green transition agenda.

At the policy level, national programs supporting entrepreneurship, competitiveness, and the circular economy provide an enabling environment for corporate sustainability. The coherence between public initiatives and corporate actions is essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and for consolidating a resilient, innovative, and environmentally responsible economy.

In summary, sustainability has become both a vector of competitiveness and a mechanism for long-term value creation, integrating ethical leadership, innovation, and social responsibility into the very fabric of corporate strategy. The study thus contributes to a deeper understanding of how sustainable development can be systematically embedded in business models and offers a conceptual and practical basis for advancing responsible management and policy-making in emerging economies.

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