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Adoption of Sustainability Practices and Their Impact on SMEs: A Mysore Based Study

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Abstract

This study examines the interrelationships between environmental sustainability efforts (ESE), corporate social practices (CSP), lack of awareness barriers (LAS), and employee performance (EP). The research is based on a dataset of 57 valid responses, with no missing values, ensuring methodological reliability. Descriptive statistics reveal strong agreement with sustainability practices such as community development initiatives (M = 4.33) and reducing environmental pollution (M = 4.30). Ethical practices, including fair wages and safe working conditions, also scored highly (M = 4.23). Conversely, green innovation practices to reduce environmental impact showed limited adoption (M = 2.57). Standard deviations around 1.0 indicate moderate variability in responses. High kurtosis values suggest clustering of responses at the higher end, reflecting strong consensus on sustainability practices. Crosstabulation analysis highlights a gender imbalance, as all respondents were male. Age distribution shows 21 respondents below 25 years and 36 between 25–35 years. Educational qualifications varied, with undergraduate degrees being most common (n = 18). Income distribution indicates 23 respondents earning 1–3 lakhs, 18 earning 3–5 lakhs, and 16 earning above 5 lakhs annually. Younger respondents were concentrated in lower education and income categories, while older respondents showed greater diversity.

Correlation analysis demonstrates strong positive relationships among all four constructs. EP correlates significantly with ESE ($r = .718$, $p < .01$), confirming that sustainability enhances workforce outcomes. EP also correlates with CSP ($r = .754$, $p < .01$), indicating that socially responsible practices improve performance.

EP's correlation with LAS ($r = .689$, $p < .01$) suggests that reducing awareness barriers positively influences employee outcomes. The strongest correlation is between ESE and LAS ($r = .855$, $p < .01$), emphasizing the role of awareness in sustainability adoption. CSP also shows a strong link with LAS ($r = .758$, $p < .01$), reinforcing the importance of knowledge in social responsibility. The statistics table confirms alignment of mean, median, and mode across constructs, indicating symmetrical distributions. Percentile values show clustering at higher ranges, especially for CSP and LAS, reflecting positive perceptions of sustainability. Moderate standard deviations across variables indicate variability without extreme dispersion. Frequency distribution of EP highlights concentration around higher scores, with 40 being the most common value.

These findings collectively validate the hypotheses derived from correlation and descriptive statistics. Enterprises adopting sustainability practices demonstrate improved employee performance and stronger social outcomes. The study concludes that awareness-building is a critical driver for enhancing sustainability adoption and organizational performance.

Keywords: Sustainable Entrepreneurship, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Sustainability Practices, Environmental Sustainability, Social Sustainability, Economic Sustainability and Green Innovation

Objectives:

- To identify key entrepreneurial practices that contribute to environmental, social, and economic sustainability.
- To measure the level of adoption of sustainable practices among entrepreneurs.
- To evaluate the challenges faced by entrepreneurs in adopting sustainable practices.

I. INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development has emerged as a central concern for economies across the world, particularly in the context of increasing environmental degradation, social inequality, and economic uncertainty. Traditional growth-oriented business models are being questioned for their long-term viability, leading to a growing emphasis on sustainability-driven approaches. In this evolving landscape, entrepreneurship is increasingly viewed not only as a driver of economic growth but also as a potential catalyst for addressing broader societal and environmental challenges. (Shepherd & Patzelt, 2011)

Sustainable entrepreneurship represents a shift from profit-maximization alone towards value creation that balances economic, social, and environmental objectives. Entrepreneurs adopting sustainable practices seek to create ventures that

are economically viable while simultaneously contributing to social well-being and environmental preservation. This approach aligns closely with the principles of sustainable development, emphasizing responsible resource use, ethical business conduct, and long-term impact rather than short-term gains.

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) play a crucial role in this transformation due to their numerical dominance, employment generation capacity, and close interaction with local communities. In many developing economies, SMEs form the backbone of industrial and service sectors, making them significant contributors to inclusive growth. Their flexibility, innovation potential, and adaptability allow them to integrate sustainability-oriented practices more organically compared to larger corporations. However, SMEs often operate under resource constraints, which influences the nature and extent of their engagement with sustainability initiatives.

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a comprehensive framework for addressing global development challenges by 2030, encompassing economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection. Entrepreneurial activities aligned with SDGs have gained scholarly attention, particularly in relation to how business practices can contribute to goals such as decent work, responsible consumption, innovation, and climate action. Despite this growing interest, empirical evidence on how SMEs adopt and implement SDG-aligned sustainable practices remains fragmented and context-specific.

Existing literature largely focuses on large enterprises, policy frameworks, or conceptual discussions of sustainability, leaving a relative gap in understanding the practical dimensions of sustainable entrepreneurship within SMEs. Moreover, there is limited exploratory research that captures the diverse range of sustainability-oriented practices adopted by SMEs and examines how these practices align with specific SDGs. This gap highlights the need for empirical investigation grounded in primary data to better understand real-world entrepreneurial behaviour.

Against this backdrop, the present study aims to explore sustainable entrepreneurship practices adopted by SMEs and examine their alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals. By using primary data collected through a structured questionnaire, the study seeks to provide insights into how SMEs integrate sustainability into their business operations and decision-making processes.

The findings are expected to contribute to the growing body of literature on sustainable entrepreneurship and offer practical implications for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers interested in promoting SDG-aligned entrepreneurial development.

Review of Literature

1. Naranjo et al. (2025) conducted a study focusing on sustainable decision-making in textile SMEs, primarily analyzing global research with strong representation from countries such as India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. The main objective was to identify the types of decisions in textile SMEs that integrate environmental, social, and economic sustainability dimensions, along with methodologies, practices, and barriers influencing such decisions. The study reviewed 83 peer-reviewed articles published between 2018 and 2024, selected from Web of Science and Scopus databases. The key variables examined included sustainability dimensions (environmental, social, economic), decision-making methodologies, sustainable practices (circular economy, cleaner production, life cycle assessment), and barriers faced by SMEs. The research adopted a systematic literature review methodology supported by bibliometric and content analysis using tools such as VOSviewer and Biblioshiny. The findings revealed that environmental sustainability dominates decision-making processes, with Life Cycle Assessment (LCA), circular economy models, and green supply chain management being the most frequently applied practices. Multi-attribute decision-making methods, especially the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP), were widely used, while mathematical programming models were comparatively limited. The study concluded that structured and integrated decision-making frameworks are essential for textile SMEs to transition toward sustainable business models, though resource constraints and knowledge gaps remain significant barriers.
2. Verma and Nema (2019) conducted their study in India to examine the role of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The main objective of the study was to analyse the concept of sustainable development and evaluate how MSMEs contribute to the attainment of the 17 SDGs formulated by the United Nations. The study is conceptual and descriptive in nature and is based entirely on secondary data collected from government reports, UN websites, journals, and official publications. Since it is a secondary study, no specific sample size was used. The major variables discussed include MSME activities (employment generation, operational efficiency, CSR initiatives, and legal compliance) and Sustainable Development Goals. The methodology involved categorising MSME contributions under different activity attributes and linking them with specific SDGs. The findings revealed that MSMEs directly and indirectly contribute to poverty alleviation, employment generation, innovation, environmental sustainability, and inclusive growth, but face challenges such as lack of finance, infrastructure, and policy support. The study concluded that

strengthening MSMEs through government support and sustainable practices is essential for achieving SDGs by 2030.

3. Sathish and Rajamohan (2019) conducted a conceptual study in **India** focusing on the role of MSMEs in promoting sustainable development through entrepreneurial strategies. The main objective of the study was to identify the various strategies and assistance initiatives offered by the Ministry of MSME to foster entrepreneurship and achieve sustainable development. Since the study is conceptual in nature, it is based entirely on **secondary data** collected from official reports of the Ministry of MSME, RBI publications, government documents, research journals, and Shodhganga theses. The key variables discussed include MSME policies, government schemes, financial assistance, skill development initiatives, and sustainable development outcomes. The methodology adopted was descriptive and analytical, relying on policy analysis and document review. The findings reveal that the Ministry of MSME plays a significant role in entrepreneurship development through subsidies, institutional support, Start-up India, Make in India, export promotion programmes, and financial incentives. The study concludes that MSMEs significantly contribute to employment generation, GDP growth, and socio-economic development, thereby acting as a strong pillar for sustainable development in India.
4. Ike (2025) conducted a systematic literature review to examine the emergence and development of sustainable entrepreneurship as a distinct sub-field within entrepreneurship research. The study was published in *Sustainable Development* and analyzed peer-reviewed articles from ABDC-ranked A and A* journals. A total of 71 research articles published between 2005 and 2023 were selected using databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. The major variables/themes examined include sustainable development opportunities, individuals and teams, forms of organizing, environmental setting, business models, sustainability orientation, ecosystem, CSR, innovation, and competitive advantage. The study adopted a domain boundary intersectional framework based on Shane and Venkataraman (2000) and Busenitz et al. (2003). Findings reveal that the field is growing but lacks clearly defined theoretical boundaries, leading to conceptual permeability and fragmentation. The author categorizes themes under three core constructs—sustainable development opportunities, individuals/teams, and forms of organizing within environmental context. The study concludes that clearer theoretical boundaries and stronger empirical testing are required to enhance legitimacy and future theoretical advancement in sustainable entrepreneurship research.

5. The study by Kononova et al. (2025) was conducted across European manufacturing SMEs under the EU-funded green SME project to examine how small and medium enterprises move from sustainability goals to practical implementation. The main objective was to analyze how SMEs prioritize sustainability dimensions and how these priorities evolve from self-assessment to funded project execution. The sample consisted of 179 SMEs for self-assessment, 167 Advanced Sustainability Action Plans (ASAPs), 147 Open Call project proposals, and 12 semi-structured interviews. The key variables included sustainability goals (economic, social, environmental), adoption of Advanced Technologies (ATs), Social Innovation (SI), and Environmental Services (ES), along with implementation ratio (IR). The research adopted a mixed-method approach combining quantitative analysis of project data and qualitative interview insights. Findings revealed that worker skills and training (105%) and Life Cycle Assessment (85%) had the highest implementation ratios, indicating a shift from initial technological interest to human-capacity and compliance-driven actions. Resource management (42%) and Internet of Things (39%) were also significantly implemented, while advanced fields like nanotechnology saw negligible adoption. The study concludes that structured sustainability pathways and policy-supported programs significantly help SMEs translate sustainability ambitions into actionable outcomes.

Theoretical Framework

Sustainable entrepreneurship has emerged as a significant theoretical construct within the broader domains of entrepreneurship and sustainable development. Rooted in the integration of economic, environmental, and social objectives, sustainable entrepreneurship extends beyond traditional profit-oriented frameworks to incorporate long-term value creation for multiple stakeholders. Early theoretical foundations were shaped by scholars such as Dean Shepherd and Holger Patzelt (2011), who conceptualized sustainable entrepreneurship as the process of identifying, evaluating, and exploiting opportunities that generate economic gains while simultaneously addressing environmental and social challenges. This dual-purpose orientation distinguishes sustainable entrepreneurship from conventional entrepreneurial models.

The theoretical underpinning of sustainable entrepreneurship is strongly linked to the concept of sustainable development popularized by the United Nations through the Brundtland Report (1987), which defined development as meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own. This perspective laid the groundwork for integrating ecological balance and social equity into economic decision-making. In entrepreneurial theory, this

integration necessitates a shift from short-term opportunity exploitation to long-term systemic thinking and responsible innovation.

The Triple Bottom Line (TBL) framework, introduced by John Elkington in 1997, provides another critical theoretical base. The TBL approach emphasizes three dimensions of performance: people, planet, and profit, encouraging firms to measure success beyond financial returns. Within SMEs, this framework supports the evaluation of entrepreneurial practices that contribute to environmental conservation, social welfare, and economic resilience. The alignment of SME activities with TBL principles strengthens their contribution to sustainable value creation.

Opportunity recognition theory also plays a central role in sustainable entrepreneurship. Drawing from the work of Scott Shane and S. Venkataraman (2000), entrepreneurship is viewed as the discovery and exploitation of opportunities. In the sustainability context, opportunities arise from market failures such as pollution, resource scarcity, and social exclusion. Entrepreneurs who identify these gaps can design innovative solutions that simultaneously generate economic returns and address societal needs, thereby contributing to sustainable transformation.

Institutional theory further explains the adoption of sustainable practices within SMEs. It posits that organizational behaviour is influenced by regulatory, normative, and cognitive pressures. Government regulations, industry standards, and societal expectations increasingly compel SMEs to integrate sustainability into their operations. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted in 2015, serve as a global institutional framework guiding entrepreneurial actions toward inclusive growth, responsible production, climate action, and decent work.

Resource-Based View (RBV) theory provides an internal perspective on sustainable entrepreneurship. According to RBV, firms achieve competitive advantage through unique and valuable resources. Sustainable practices such as eco-innovation, ethical branding, stakeholder engagement, and green supply chain management can become strategic resources that enhance long-term competitiveness. For SMEs, the effective utilization of limited resources through innovation and adaptability can facilitate sustainability integration despite financial constraints.

Stakeholder theory, proposed by R. Edward Freeman (1984), further enriches the background theory. It argues that businesses must create value for all stakeholders, including customers, employees, suppliers, communities, and the environment. Sustainable entrepreneurship aligns closely with this view by promoting inclusive decision-making and responsible governance. SMEs, due to their close interaction with local communities, are particularly positioned to implement stakeholder-oriented sustainable practices.

Innovation theory also intersects significantly with sustainable entrepreneurship. Eco-innovation and social innovation are mechanisms through which entrepreneurs address environmental and social issues. The diffusion of cleaner technologies, circular economy models, and energy-efficient production systems reflects the application of innovation theory within sustainability contexts. SMEs, characterized by flexibility and responsiveness, can rapidly adopt such innovations when supported by appropriate institutional and financial mechanisms.

From a behavioural perspective, sustainability orientation theory highlights the role of entrepreneurial values, ethics, and motivation. Sustainable entrepreneurs often demonstrate intrinsic motivation to create positive social or environmental impact. This normative orientation influences strategic choices, risk-taking behaviour, and long-term investment decisions. The integration of ethical considerations into business models reflects a shift from purely economic rationality toward moral responsibility in entrepreneurial action.

In summary, the theoretical background of sustainable entrepreneurship in SMEs is multidisciplinary, integrating sustainable development theory, Triple Bottom Line framework, opportunity recognition theory, institutional theory, Resource-Based View, stakeholder theory, and innovation theory. Together, these perspectives provide a comprehensive foundation for understanding how SMEs adopt sustainability-oriented practices and align their operations with the Sustainable Development Goals. This theoretical synthesis supports the exploratory investigation of entrepreneurial practices that contribute to environmental protection, social inclusion, and economic sustainability.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the present study is grounded in the integration of sustainable development principles with entrepreneurial theory, particularly drawing from the Triple Bottom Line approach proposed by John Elkington and the sustainable entrepreneurship perspective advanced by Dean Shepherd and Holger Patzelt. The framework assumes that sustainable entrepreneurship within Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) is reflected through the adoption of environmental, social, and economic sustainability practices, which collectively influence the enterprise's alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) formulated by the United Nations.

Within this framework, environmental sustainability practices include activities such as waste reduction, energy efficiency, eco-friendly sourcing, and pollution control measures. Social sustainability practices encompass fair labour policies, employee welfare, skill development, gender equality, and community engagement initiatives. Economic sustainability practices refer to long-term financial planning, ethical governance, innovation, responsible investment decisions, and competitive resilience. These three dimensions function as independent variables

that represent the core components of sustainable entrepreneurial behaviour in SMEs.

The dependent variable in the framework is the level of SDG alignment, which indicates the extent to which SMEs integrate sustainability considerations into their strategic and operational decision-making in accordance with global development goals. It is assumed that higher adoption of environmental, social, and economic practices enhances the degree of SDG alignment and overall sustainable performance.

Furthermore, the framework recognizes that SMEs often operate under various constraints, including financial limitations, lack of awareness, inadequate technical expertise, and regulatory challenges. These challenges may act as moderating factors, influencing the strength of the relationship between sustainability practices and SDG alignment. Thus, the conceptual framework proposes that while sustainability-oriented practices positively contribute to SDG alignment, the extent of this contribution may vary depending on the internal and external challenges faced by SMEs.

Research Methodology

The present study adopts a descriptive research design to examine sustainable entrepreneurship practices among Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and their alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) proposed by the United Nations. Descriptive research is appropriate for this study as it aims to systematically describe the existing level of adoption of environmental, social, and economic sustainability practices without manipulating any variables.

The study is based on primary data collected through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5), to measure respondents' perceptions and level of agreement regarding sustainable practices adopted in their enterprises. The instrument was divided into sections covering demographic details, environmental sustainability practices, social sustainability practices, economic sustainability practices, and challenges faced in adopting sustainability initiatives.

A total of 56 SME entrepreneurs constituted the sample for the study. The sampling technique adopted was convenience sampling, considering accessibility and time constraints. The selected respondents represent various sectors within SMEs to obtain a broad understanding of sustainability-oriented practices.

For data analysis, descriptive statistical tools such as percentage analysis, mean, and standard deviation were used to interpret the responses. The mean score was used to determine the level of adoption of sustainable practices (low, moderate, or high), while standard deviation measured the consistency of responses. The findings are presented in tabular form with interpretation to provide a clear understanding of sustainability adoption patterns among SMEs.

Thus, the methodology enables a systematic assessment of sustainable entrepreneurship practices and provides empirical insight into the degree of SDG alignment within SMEs.

H1: There is a significant positive relationship between environmental sustainability efforts (ESE) and employee performance (EP), indicating that enterprises adopting environmental practices experience improved workforce outcomes.

H2: Corporate social practices (CSP) are positively correlated with employee performance (EP), suggesting that socially responsible initiatives enhance organizational performance.

H3: Lack of awareness barriers (LAS) are strongly associated with environmental sustainability efforts (ESE), meaning that reducing knowledge and awareness gaps facilitates greater adoption of sustainability practices.

Descriptive Statistics							
z	**N**	**Minimum**	**Maximum**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Kurtosis**	
	Statistic	**Statistic**	**Statistic**	**Statistic**	**Statistic**	**Statistic**	**Std. Error**
my enterprise actively adopts green innovation practices to reduce environmental impact.	57	1	5	2.57	1.248	-1.619	.628
Sustainable use of natural resources is integrated into my business operations. .	57	1	5	3.88	1.255	-.049	.623
My enterprise follows effective waste management and recycling practices	57	1	5	3.98	1.061	.761	.623
My enterprise follows effective waste management and recycling practices.	57	1	5	4.23	.945	2.933	.623

Renewable energy sources (solar, wind, etc.) are used in business activities.	57	1	5	4.21	1.013	2.192	.623
Environment-friendly technologies improve the long-term sustainability of my enterprise.	57	1	5	4.21	.977	2.171	.623
Ethical business practices are strictly followed in my enterprise.	57	1	5	4.16	1.146	.493	.623
My enterprise ensures fair wages and safe working conditions for employees.	57	1	5	4.23	1.210	1.554	.623
Employee welfare and inclusiveness contribute to better organizational performance.	57	1	5	4.26	1.188	2.085	.623
My enterprise actively participates in community development initiatives.	57	1	5	4.33	.932	3.997	.623
Sustainable practices adopted by my enterprise help in reducing environmental pollution.	57	1	5	4.30	.886	5.062	.623
My enterprise sustainability initiatives	57	1	5	4.00	.926	2.027	.623

enhance social well-being.							
Adoption of sustainable practices improves the financial performance of my enterprise.	57	1	5	3.81	1.187	.564	.623
Sustainability-oriented practices increase my enterprise	57	1	5	3.86	1.202	.140	.623
High initial investment costs discourage the adoption of sustainable practices.	57	1	5	3.60	1.033	-.187	.623
Limited access to financial support or credit restricts sustainability initiatives.	57	1	5	4.04	.944	1.854	.623
Lack of knowledge and awareness is a major barrier to sustainable entrepreneurship.	57	1	5	4.21	1.098	1.128	.623
Government policies and regulations make sustainability adoption difficult.	57	1	5	3.79	1.235	.464	.623
Limited access to green technologies affects sustainability implementation.	57	1	5	3.84	1.207	.109	.623
Low customer demand for sustainable products	57	1	5	3.67	1.185	-.164	.623

discourages adoption.							
Market uncertainty reduces my willingness to invest in sustainable practices.	57	1	5	3.84	1.115	-.305	.623
My enterprise has adopted eco-friendly production methods.	57	1	5	3.88	1.119	-.017	.623
Energy-efficient processes are widely implemented in daily operations.	57	1	5	3.96	1.017	.877	.623
My enterprise follows sustainable supply chain practices.	57	1	5	3.98	1.061	.761	.623
Corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities are regularly undertaken.	57	1	5	4.19	1.076	1.091	.623
My enterprise complies with environmental standards and regulations.	57	1	5	4.23	1.000	1.853	.623
Valid N (listwise)	56						

Descriptive Statistics Table

This table summarizes responses on sustainability practices. Most items have high mean scores (around 4.0), indicating strong agreement with statements such as community development initiatives (M = 4.33), reducing environmental pollution (M = 4.30), and fair wages and safe working conditions (M = 4.23). These reflect enterprises' commitment to ethical and social sustainability. However, green innovation practices to reduce environmental impact scored much lower (M = 2.57), showing limited adoption of innovative eco-friendly methods. Standard deviations around 1.0 suggest moderate variation in responses, while high kurtosis values (e.g.,

5.062 for pollution reduction) indicate clustering of responses at the higher end, meaning many respondents strongly agreed with these practices.

Cross tabulation

Case Processing Summary						
	Cases					
	Valid		**Missing**		**Total**	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
gender * age	57	100.0%	0	0.0%	57	100.0%

The Case Processing Summary table provides important insights into the quality of the dataset. First, it shows that all 57 cases were valid, meaning every respondent's data was successfully recorded. Second, there were no missing values, which eliminates concerns about incomplete responses that could weaken the analysis. Third, a complete dataset ensures that statistical tests and descriptive measures are more reliable. Fourth, it enhances the credibility of the findings because no assumptions or imputations were required to fill gaps. Fifth, the absence of missing data reduces the risk of bias in the results. Sixth, it allows for stronger generalizations since every participant's input is represented. Seventh, this completeness supports accurate cross-tabulations and correlation analyses without distortions. Eighth, it also improves the robustness of measures like mean, median, and standard deviation. Ninth, researchers can be more confident in interpreting patterns and relationships because the dataset is intact. Finally, the summary confirms that the study's foundation is solid, making subsequent analyses trustworthy and meaningful.

Gender * Age Crosstabulation				
Count				
		Age		**Total**
		Below 25	25-35	
Gender	Male	21	36	57
Total		21	36	57

The Gender * The Age Crosstabulation table reveals several important insights about the composition of the sample. First, all 57 respondents were male, which immediately highlights a lack of female representation in the study. Second, the respondents are divided into two age groups, with 21 individuals below 25 years and 36 individuals between 25–35 years. Third, this distribution shows that the majority of participants are slightly older, falling into the 25–35 age bracket. Fourth, the dominance of younger age groups overall suggests that the study primarily reflects the perspectives of young male entrepreneurs. Fifth, the absence of female respondents points to a gender imbalance, which may limit the generalizability of the

findings. Sixth, the higher number of participants in the 25–35 group could indicate that sustainability practices are more actively adopted or understood by individuals with a bit more experience. Seventh, the smaller group of respondents below 25 may represent early-stage entrepreneurs or those just entering the workforce. Eighth, this age distribution provides useful context for interpreting sustainability perceptions, as younger entrepreneurs may face different challenges compared to slightly older ones. Ninth, the skew toward males also raises questions about inclusivity and whether female entrepreneurs encounter different sustainability barriers. Finally, the table emphasizes that while the dataset is complete and reliable, it is not fully representative in terms of gender diversity, though it does capture valuable insights from young male participants across two distinct age ranges.

Gender * Educational Qualification Crosstabulation							
Count							
		Educational Qualification					Total
		10th/Puc	**UG**	**PG**	**Professional Qualification**	**Below 10th**	
Gender	Male	17	18	10	10	2	57
Total		17	18	10	10	2	57

The Gender * Educational Qualification Crosstabulation table provides a detailed view of the respondents' academic backgrounds. First, it shows that all 57 participants are male, which again highlights the absence of female representation in the study. Second, the largest group consists of 18 respondents with undergraduate (UG) qualifications, making UG the most common level of education. Third, 17 respondents have completed 10th/PUC, which indicates a significant portion of the sample has only basic schooling. Fourth, 10 respondents hold postgraduate (PG) degrees, suggesting that a smaller but notable group has advanced academic training. Fifth, another 10 respondents possess professional qualifications, which implies specialized skills that may influence their approach to sustainability. Sixth, only 2 respondents fall into the category of below 10th, showing minimal representation of very low educational attainment. Seventh, the spread across categories demonstrates diversity in educational backgrounds, which enriches the dataset by capturing varied perspectives. Eighth, the presence of professional qualifications is particularly important because such training often equips individuals with practical knowledge relevant to sustainable business practices. Ninth, the balance between UG, PG, and professional qualifications suggests that the sample includes both academically trained and skill-oriented entrepreneurs. Finally, this distribution highlights that education plays a crucial role in shaping awareness and adoption of sustainability practices, with higher qualifications likely contributing to deeper understanding and stronger implementation.

Gender * Income Crosstabulation					
Count					
		Income			**Total**
		1L-3L	3L-5L	More Then 5L	
Gender	Male	23	18	16	57
Total		23	18	16	57

The Gender * Income Crosstabulation table provides valuable insights into the financial distribution of the respondents. First, it shows that all 57 participants are male, which again highlights the absence of female representation in the dataset. Second, the largest group of respondents, 23 individuals, fall into the 1–3 lakh annual income bracket, indicating that a significant portion of the sample earns at the lower end of the spectrum. Third, 18 respondents earn between 3–5 lakhs, representing a middle-income category that balances affordability with moderate financial stability. Fourth, 16 respondents earn more than 5 lakhs annually, showing that a smaller but notable group belongs to the higher-income segment. Fifth, this spread across income levels suggests a balanced distribution, though slightly skewed toward lower-income earners. Sixth, the presence of respondents in all three categories ensures that the dataset captures perspectives from diverse financial backgrounds. Seventh, income levels may directly influence the ability of entrepreneurs to adopt sustainability practices, as higher-income groups may find it easier to invest in eco-friendly technologies. Eighth, lower-income respondents may perceive sustainability as costly or challenging, which could explain barriers like high initial investment costs. Ninth, the middle-income group provides a transitional perspective, balancing affordability with aspirations for sustainable growth. Finally, this distribution highlights that financial capacity is an important factor in shaping attitudes toward sustainability, with income differences potentially driving varied levels of adoption and commitment.

Age * Educational Qualification Crosstabulation							
Count							
		Educational Qualification					**Total**
		10th/Puc	**UG**	**PG**	**Professional Qualification**	**Below 10th**	
Age	Below 25	9	6	4	2	0	21
	25-35	8	12	6	8	2	36
Total		17	18	10	10	2	57

The Age * Educational Qualification Crosstabulation table provides a deeper understanding of how education levels vary across different age groups. First, younger respondents (below 25 years) are more concentrated in lower qualifications, with 9 having completed PUC and 6 holding undergraduate degrees. Second, only 4 of them have postgraduate qualifications, and 2 possess professional qualifications, showing limited advanced education among the younger group. Third, none of the respondents below 25 fall into the "below 10th" category, which indicates that all of them have at least basic schooling. Fourth, older respondents (25–35 years) display a more balanced distribution across all educational categories. Fifth, this group includes 8 with PUC, 12 with UG, 6 with PG, 8 with professional qualifications, and 2 below 10th, reflecting greater diversity in academic attainment. Sixth, the higher representation of PG and professional qualifications among older respondents suggests that advanced education is more common with age and experience. Seventh, this pattern may imply that older entrepreneurs have had more time to pursue higher studies or specialized training. Eighth, the younger group's concentration in lower qualifications could be linked to their early career stage, where they are still building academic and professional credentials. Ninth, the distribution highlights that education plays a significant role in shaping sustainability awareness, with higher qualifications likely correlating with deeper understanding and stronger adoption of sustainable practices. Finally, the table emphasizes that while both age groups contribute to the dataset, older respondents bring more varied and advanced educational perspectives, which may influence their approach to sustainability initiatives.

Age * Income Crosstabulation					
Count					
		Income			**Total**
		1L-3L	3L-5L	More Then 5L	
Age	Below 25	11	6	4	21
	25-35	12	12	12	36
Total		23	18	16	57

The Age * The Income Crosstabulation table highlights how income levels vary across different age groups. First, respondents below 25 years are mostly concentrated in the lower income bracket, with 11 earning between 1–3 lakhs annually. Second, only 6 of them fall into the 3–5 lakh category, and just 4 earn more than 5 lakhs, showing limited financial advancement among younger participants. Third, this distribution reflects the early career stage of younger entrepreneurs, who are still building experience and financial stability. Fourth, in contrast, respondents aged 25–35 are more evenly spread across all income categories. Fifth, 12 of them

earn 1–3 lakhs, another 12 earn 3–5 lakhs, and 12 earn more than 5 lakhs, suggesting balanced representation across income levels. Sixth, this even spread indicates that older participants have had more time to establish themselves financially. Seventh, the data suggests a positive association between age and income, as older respondents are more likely to reach higher income brackets. Eighth, this financial capacity may directly influence their ability to adopt sustainability practices, since higher income groups can better afford eco-friendly technologies and investments. Ninth, younger respondents may perceive sustainability initiatives as costly, given their limited financial resources. Finally, the table emphasizes that age and income together play a crucial role in shaping sustainability adoption, with older and higher-income entrepreneurs better positioned to overcome financial barriers to sustainable practices.

Statistics					
		Avg_EP	**Avg_ESE**	**Avg_CSP**	**Avg_LAS**
N	Valid	56	57	57	57
	Missing	1	0	0	0
Mean		40.0000	15.9649	26.9825	20.2456
Median		40.0000	16.0000	28.0000	21.0000
Mode		49.00	20.00	35.00	25.00
Std. Deviation		8.38614	3.73671	6.32029	4.73317
Minimum		12.00	4.00	7.00	5.00
Maximum		49.00	20.00	35.00	25.00
Percentiles	25	35.5000	14.0000	22.5000	18.0000
	50	40.0000	16.0000	28.0000	21.0000
	75	47.0000	20.0000	31.5000	25.0000

The Statistics Table provides a comprehensive overview of the central tendencies and variability of the four constructs: employee performance (EP), environmental sustainability efforts (ESE), corporate social practices (CSP), and lack of awareness barriers (LAS). First, the mean values show EP at 40.0, ESE at 15.96, CSP at 26.98, and LAS at 20.24, reflecting generally high scores across all dimensions. Second, the median values closely align with the means, suggesting that the distributions are fairly symmetrical. Third, the mode values (EP = 49, ESE = 20, CSP = 35, LAS = 25) indicate that the most frequently occurring scores are at the higher end, reinforcing positive perceptions of sustainability and performance. Fourth, the standard deviations are moderate (ranging from 3.73 to 8.38), showing variability among respondents but not extreme dispersion. Fifth, the minimum values (EP = 12, ESE = 4, CSP = 7, LAS = 5) highlight that some enterprises scored very low, indicating gaps in sustainability adoption. Sixth, the maximum values (EP = 49, ESE = 20, CSP = 35, LAS = 25) confirm that several respondents achieved the highest possible scores, reflecting strong sustainability practices. Seventh, the

percentile values (25th, 50th, 75th) show clustering around higher ranges, especially for CSP and LAS, which suggests that most enterprises lean toward stronger sustainability and awareness. Eighth, the alignment of mean, median, and mode across variables indicates consistency and reliability in the dataset. Ninth, the spread of scores demonstrates that while many enterprises are performing well, there is still a segment lagging behind in sustainability efforts. Finally, the overall statistics reinforce the conclusion that sustainability practices and awareness are positively perceived and widely adopted, though variability across enterprises points to opportunities for further improvement.

Avg_EP					
		Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Valid	12.00	2	3.5	3.6	3.6
	26.00	2	3.5	3.6	7.1
	30.00	2	3.5	3.6	10.7
	32.00	2	3.5	3.6	14.3
	33.00	2	3.5	3.6	17.9
	34.00	2	3.5	3.6	21.4
	35.00	2	3.5	3.6	25.0
	37.00	4	7.0	7.1	32.1
	38.00	2	3.5	3.6	35.7
	39.00	2	3.5	3.6	39.3
	40.00	8	14.0	14.3	53.6
	42.00	2	3.5	3.6	57.1
	43.00	2	3.5	3.6	60.7
	44.00	2	3.5	3.6	64.3
	45.00	2	3.5	3.6	67.9
	46.00	2	3.5	3.6	71.4
	47.00	4	7.0	7.1	78.6
	48.00	2	3.5	3.6	82.1
	49.00	10	17.5	17.9	100.0
	Total	56	98.2	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.8		
Total		57	100.0		

The Frequency Distribution – Avg_EP table provides a clear picture of how employee performance scores are spread across enterprises. First, the mean score of 40 indicates that overall performance levels are relatively high. Second, the mode value of 49 shows that the most frequently reported score is at the upper end, suggesting strong employee outcomes in many enterprises. Third, the clustering of scores around higher values reflect a general trend of positive performance. Fourth, the distribution demonstrates that sustainability practices may be contributing to these elevated performance levels. Fifth, the presence of multiple scores in the 40–

49 range reinforces the idea that enterprises are consistently achieving strong results. Sixth, the cumulative percentages show that a majority of respondents fall into higher categories, further confirming this trend. Seventh, the relatively small number of lower scores (such as 12, 26, and 30) indicates that only a minority of enterprises are struggling with performance. Eighth, the spread of values across the distribution highlights that while most enterprises are performing well, there is still some variation among them. Ninth, the alignment of mean and mode at higher values suggests that strong performance is not an exception but rather a common outcome. Finally, the overall distribution underscores the positive impact of sustainability practices on employee performance, with most enterprises reporting outcomes that lean toward the higher end of the scale.

Avg_ESE					
		Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Valid	4.00	2	3.5	3.5	3.5
	9.00	2	3.5	3.5	7.0
	12.00	3	5.3	5.3	12.3
	13.00	6	10.5	10.5	22.8
	14.00	2	3.5	3.5	26.3
	15.00	8	14.0	14.0	40.4
	16.00	8	14.0	14.0	54.4
	17.00	6	10.5	10.5	64.9
	18.00	4	7.0	7.0	71.9
	20.00	16	28.1	28.1	100.0
	Total	57	100.0	100.0	

The Frequency Distribution – Avg_ESE table highlights how enterprises are adopting environmental sustainability efforts. First, the clustering of scores at the upper end, with 28.1% achieving the maximum score of 20, shows strong commitment to environmental practices. Second, the mean value of 15.96 reinforces that most enterprises are performing well in this area. Third, the mode of 20 indicates that the most frequently reported score is the highest possible, suggesting widespread adoption of sustainability measures. Fourth, this concentration at the top end reflects positive attitudes toward environmental responsibility. Fifth, however, the presence of lower scores such as 4.00 and 9.00 reveals that not all enterprises are equally engaged. Sixth, this variability suggests that while many organizations are leaders in sustainability, some are lagging behind. Seventh, the distribution demonstrates that environmental practices are not uniformly adopted across all enterprises. Eighth, the clustering at higher values indicates that sustainability is becoming a norm rather than an exception. Ninth, the lower scores highlight potential barriers such as cost, lack of awareness, or limited resources among certain enterprises. Finally, the overall distribution confirms that environmental

sustainability efforts are strongly embraced by the majority, but there remains room for improvement among those with weaker adoption.

Avg_CSP					
		Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Valid	7.00	2	3.5	3.5	3.5
	19.00	4	7.0	7.0	10.5
	21.00	4	7.0	7.0	17.5
	22.00	4	7.0	7.0	24.6
	23.00	4	7.0	7.0	31.6
	25.00	2	3.5	3.5	35.1
	26.00	2	3.5	3.5	38.6
	27.00	6	10.5	10.5	49.1
	28.00	6	10.5	10.5	59.6
	30.00	7	12.3	12.3	71.9
	31.00	2	3.5	3.5	75.4
	32.00	2	3.5	3.5	78.9
	33.00	2	3.5	3.5	82.5
	35.00	10	17.5	17.5	100.0
	Total	57	100.0	100.0	

The Frequency Distribution – Avg_CSP table highlights the level of engagement enterprises have with corporate social practices. First, the clustering of scores at the higher end, with the mode at 35, shows that many respondents report strong CSR involvement. Second, several enterprises scored between 27–30, reinforcing that social sustainability initiatives are widely adopted. Third, the mean value of 26.98 supports the conclusion that overall CSR engagement is above average. Fourth, the alignment of high mode and mean values suggests consistency in respondents' commitment to social responsibility. Fifth, the distribution indicates that CSR is not limited to a few enterprises but is a common practice across the sample. Sixth, the clustering of scores in the upper ranges reflects positive perceptions of CSR's importance. Seventh, this pattern suggests that enterprises recognize the value of social sustainability in enhancing reputation and employee satisfaction. Eighth, the relatively fewer low scores demonstrate that only a minority of enterprises are lagging in CSR adoption. Ninth, the spread of values shows some variability, but the concentration at higher levels confirms strong overall engagement. Finally, the distribution underscores that CSR initiatives are a central part of sustainability strategies, with most enterprises actively participating in socially responsible practices.

Avg_LAS					
		Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Valid	5.00	2	3.5	3.5	3.5
	12.00	2	3.5	3.5	7.0
	15.00	6	10.5	10.5	17.5
	16.00	2	3.5	3.5	21.1
	18.00	4	7.0	7.0	28.1
	19.00	4	7.0	7.0	35.1
	20.00	7	12.3	12.3	47.4
	21.00	4	7.0	7.0	54.4
	22.00	6	10.5	10.5	64.9
	23.00	2	3.5	3.5	68.4
	24.00	2	3.5	3.5	71.9
	25.00	16	28.1	28.1	100.0
	Total	57	100.0	100.0	

The Frequency Distribution – Avg_LAS table provides important insights into awareness-related barriers to sustainability. First, the clustering of scores at higher values, with 28.1% scoring the maximum of 25, indicates that lack of awareness remains a significant issue. Second, the mean score of 20.24 reinforces that many enterprises face challenges in knowledge and understanding of sustainability. Third, the mode value of 25 shows that the most frequently reported score is the highest possible, suggesting widespread awareness gaps. Fourth, this concentration at the upper end highlights that barriers are not isolated but common across respondents. Fifth, the presence of lower scores such as 5.00 demonstrates that some enterprises have overcome awareness challenges. Sixth, this variability suggests differences in exposure, training, or resources among enterprises. Seventh, the clustering at higher values implies that awareness-building initiatives are urgently needed to support sustainability adoption. Eighth, the distribution shows that while sustainability practices are being implemented, knowledge gaps continue to hinder their effectiveness. Ninth, enterprises with high LAS scores may struggle to fully integrate environmental and social practices despite positive intentions. Finally, the overall distribution emphasizes that addressing awareness barriers is critical for strengthening sustainability outcomes and enhancing employee performance.

Correlations					
		Avg_EP	**Avg_ESE**	**Avg_CSP**	**Avg_LAS**
Avg_EP	Pearson Correlation	1	.718**	.754**	.689**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	56	56	56	56
Avg_ESE	Pearson Correlation	.718**	1	.795**	.855**

	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	56	57	57	57
Avg_CSP	Pearson Correlation	.754**	.795**	1	.758**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	56	57	57	57
Avg_LAS	Pearson Correlation	.689**	.855**	.758**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	56	57	57	57
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					

The Correlation Table provides strong evidence of the interconnectedness between employee performance (EP), environmental sustainability efforts (ESE), corporate social practices (CSP), and lack of awareness barriers (LAS). First, EP shows a significant positive correlation with ESE ($r = .718$, $p < .01$), indicating that when enterprises adopt environmental sustainability measures, employee performance tends to improve. Second, EP also correlates highly with CSP ($r = .754$, $p < .01$), suggesting that socially responsible practices directly enhance workforce outcomes. Third, EP's correlation with LAS ($r = .689$, $p < .01$) implies that reducing awareness barriers can positively influence employee performance. Fourth, ESE and CSP are strongly related ($r = .795$, $p < .01$), meaning that environmental and social sustainability often go hand in hand. Fifth, the strongest correlation in the table is between ESE and LAS ($r = .855$, $p < .01$), highlighting that awareness and knowledge are critical drivers of environmental sustainability adoption. Sixth, CSP also shows a strong link with LAS ($r = .758$, $p < .01$), reinforcing the idea that awareness influences social responsibility initiatives. Seventh, these correlations collectively suggest that sustainability practices are not isolated but mutually reinforcing. Eighth, the significance levels ($p < .01$) across all relationships confirm that these findings are statistically robust. Ninth, the results imply that enterprises focusing on awareness-building can simultaneously strengthen environmental, social, and performance outcomes. Finally, the table underscores the importance of integrated sustainability strategies, where improving knowledge and awareness acts as a catalyst for better organizational performance and responsible practices.

Result

H1: There is a significant positive relationship between environmental sustainability efforts (ESE) and employee performance (EP).

Result: Accepted. The correlation coefficient ($r = .718$, $p < .01$) shows a strong and statistically significant positive relationship, meaning enterprises that adopt environmental sustainability measures tend to see improved employee performance.

H2: Corporate social practices (CSP) are positively correlated with employee performance (EP).

Result: Accepted. The correlation coefficient ($r = .754$, $p < .01$) confirms a strong positive and significant relationship, indicating that socially responsible practices enhance workforce outcomes.

H3: Lack of awareness barriers (LAS) are strongly associated with environmental sustainability efforts (ESE).

Result: Accepted. The correlation coefficient ($r = .855$, $p < .01$) is the strongest in the table, showing a very high and significant positive relationship. This means reducing awareness barriers is critical for the successful adoption of environmental sustainability practices.

II. CONCLUSION

The study on Adoption of Sustainability Practices and Their Impact on SMEs in Mysore highlights that sustainability practices are not only being adopted but are also significantly influencing employee performance and organizational outcomes. High adoption of social and ethical practices: SMEs strongly agreed on initiatives like community development ($M = 4.33$), reducing environmental pollution ($M = 4.30$), fair wages, and safe working conditions ($M = 4.23$). These practices show that SMEs are prioritizing social responsibility and ethical conduct. Moderate adoption of environmental practices: Waste management, renewable energy use, and eco-friendly technologies scored positively, but green innovation practices were limited ($M = 2.57$), indicating a gap in advanced sustainability adoption. Barriers to sustainability: Lack of awareness ($M = 4.21$), limited financial support ($M = 4.04$), and high initial investment costs ($M = 3.60$) emerged as major challenges. These constraints hinder broader adoption of sustainable practices. Strong correlations with employee performance: Employee performance (EP) showed significant positive correlations with environmental sustainability efforts ($r = .718$), corporate social practices ($r = .754$), and reduction of awareness barriers ($r = .689$). This confirms that sustainability directly enhances workforce outcomes. Awareness as a critical driver: The strongest correlation was between environmental sustainability efforts and lack of awareness barriers ($r = .855$), emphasizing that knowledge and awareness are essential for effective sustainability adoption.

Final Insight:

The study concludes that SMEs adopting sustainability practices experience improved employee performance, stronger social outcomes, and better organizational resilience. However, limited awareness, financial constraints, and low innovation adoption remain key barriers. Building awareness, providing financial support, and encouraging eco-innovation are crucial for SMEs to fully align with the

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and achieve long-term sustainable growth.

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