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Visionary leadership and innovative mindset for sustainable business development: Case studies and practical applications

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the significance of visionary leadership and innovative leadership mindset on organizational sustainable development. The study investigates five case examples of business leadership to answer the research question of how the three-way interaction between visionary leadership, innovative leadership mindset, and business leadership approach may contribute to an organization's sustainable development. The main argument is that the three-way interaction is considerable for the continuous development of an organization. This study uses the purposeful sampling strategy that matches the aim of the study. Therefore, five case examples from five different industries (the technological industry, the airline industry, the mining industry, the banking industry, and the automotive industry) have been selected intentionally to understand the study argument and to gather information that will answer the research question. The analysis highlighted key qualities of visionary leadership, innovative leadership mindset, and the five leadership approaches. The study infers that the proper match between the performed leadership approach and the existing visionary leadership and innovative mindset can create a unique organizational identity that serves its differentiation and continuous development.

1. Introduction

In recent years, strong changes in the business environment have forced organizations to change their practices to serve the purpose of continuous development. Some changes, such as technological revolution, open the door for new types of business and new ways of competition. Today, digitalization and automation have brought new challenges, placing great responsibility on business leaders to operate within a changeable, dynamic, and uncertain environment. Operating in digital environments requires business leaders to adopt new technologies, promote innovation, and support learning cultures in order to enhance flexibility. Such flexibility allows leaders to handle changes to meet the market demand, which in turn supports the sustainability of their businesses (Adekanmbi & Ukpere, 2023). Indeed, critical changes have shaped business worldwide and created a demand for appropriate leadership to guide and lead businesses. According to Motsi et al. (2024), innovative and creative thinking are essential components to shape an organization's improvement and competitiveness. This study examines business leadership practices that are critical to preparing an organization for a new age of business that focuses on development and sustainability. This answers the question of how the three-way

interaction between visionary leadership, innovative leadership mindset, and business leadership approach may contribute to an organization's sustainable development. Further, according to Liu et al. (2022), leaders' characteristics and practices that followers observe can motivate employees to change their behaviours and performance. Moreover, leaders' ability to communicate to employees future development visions and plans can motivate them to improve their productivity. In this study, sustainable business development is identified as leadership practices that support the long-term competitiveness and economic sustainability of an organization. This study's key assumption is that, in an organization, sustainable economic development requires leaders to express their vision clearly, show their innovative mindset, and implement an appropriate leadership approach. The three-way interaction between these factors is considered as an instrument for improving long-term development at the organizational level.

To answer the research question, I review the literature of leadership theories and use five case examples of business leadership from different industries: the technological industry, the airline industry, the mining industry, the banking industry, and the automotive industry. Using this research method, I discuss the contemporary views of business leadership approaches. I also examine the contributions of visionary

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leadership, innovative mindset, and all potential leadership approaches to the development and sustainability of an organization. Furthermore, I use this analysis to investigate the implications of having a proper business leadership. I use this analysis to reach some conclusions about the assumption that the three-way interaction is strongly related to long-term development at the organizational level.

2. Literature review

Challenges in the business world change the way we work and operate, to some extent, faster than we even realize. Today's challenges reach beyond economic challenges to include social, technological, and health challenges as well. Indeed, these challenges have been changing business organizations' targets, driving many business leaders to act differently. For example, the FedEx leadership acted quickly to avoid the indirect effect of COVID-19 by implementing a strategy that protects its customers' information by training its remote team members to securely access critical applications (Wingard, 2020). Without a doubt, the market is changing faster than before, which requires business leadership to improve in fundamental ways in order to keep the organization as a leading player in the global market. Today, massive changes have affected businesses, forcing them more towards digitalization and automation. For example, technology and digital facilities help Netflix to develop its operation process and adapt quickly to help customers start watching content online (Profit&, 2019). Considering today's big changes in the business world, there is a need to adopt a new leadership system that requires innovation and creativity to survive and avoid worse situations. At the same time, operating in a changeable and challenging business environment influences business sectors and leaders' perspectives worldwide. For example, competition and change in the airline industry forced British Airways to act quickly to avoid bankruptcy and turn into a profitable business by restructuring the entire organization and changing plans and strategies (Profit&, 2019). Indeed, business leaders play a critical role in enhancing innovation, promoting sustainability practices, and meeting the market demand in changeable business environments (Afzal & Roksana, 2024). At the same time, sustainable leadership supports innovation and sharing creative ideas, focuses on learning and continuous improvement, and accepts errors in a non-punishing style (Piwowar-Sulej & Iqbal, 2023).

To contribute effectively to these changes and become key players in the business world, one can ask which type of challenges business leaders should overcome. There are challenges at the individual, organizational, and governmental levels. Challenges at the organizational level include having responsible leadership to deal with changes in the market and the industry, handle competition effectively, and understand the local and global economy around them. At the individual level, leaders must have the ability to improve their leadership capabilities to deal with the changes of local and global competition and contribute to their business and organizations. Challenges at the governmental level are related to changes in government legislation and regulations and the imposition of new policies. However, to deal with those challenges, business organizations are more likely to change, and there is a need to adopt a new leadership system that leans towards innovation and creativity. An organization faces the challenge of what leadership approach and leadership skills should be employed to help keep its position in the current and future market—how can an organization develop and differentiate itself to serve its competitiveness and future sustainability? According to Fitri et al. (2024), business leadership practices play a key role in both management development and sustainable competitive advantage, which in turn have a significant positive effect on an organization's performance. Piwowar-Sulej and Iqbal (2023) added that sustainable leadership is linked with sustainable performance through supporting organizational learning, sharing information formally and informally, and fostering empowerment that enhances employees' self-efficacy and feelings of power.

In this study, visionary leadership is a strategic tool for

organizational sustainability and development. Ismail et al. (2022) argued that visionary leadership creates a vision that shows a sense of direction, organizes a change, and implements plans through employees' actions. Westley and Mintzberg (1989) identified visionary leadership as a process of vision, communication, and action to effect a change. Westley and Mintzberg (1989) suggested that there are five types of visionary leadership: the creator (originality and improvisation of the vision), the proselytizer (development and forethought of the future potential of the product), the idealist (perfect dream, ignoring the conflict of the real), the bricoleur (uses social ability to recognize situations and put things together to develop future purposes), and the diviner (insights focus on the process). However, visionary leaders can easily motivate and engage employees in their work and enhance their commitments towards the vision (Cheema et al., 2015). For example, Steve Jobs of Apple, as a visionary leader, discussed his vision with Apple engineers and inspired them to create products that could be used by millions of users with the potential to save people's lives in the future (Liang et al., 2020). Indeed, a clear description of visionary leadership can help in recognizing the importance of having a vision, since great leaders must have a clear vision and know how to lead followers and guide their action to achieve it (Bushe & Marshak, 2016). Sibeko and Barnard (2020) explained that visioning involves creativity and is seen as a key for organizational success and survival, and being a visionary leader is needed for business leadership. Cheema et al. (2015) explained that "visionary leadership is considered as a type of transformational leadership, it has the ability to quickly achieve the task to meet the company standards" (p. 141). Visionary leadership can "give meaning to important information in order to create a picture of the future" (Almog-Bareket, 2012, p. 432). This is to help subordinates know strategies and actions regarding what they should do to reach an organization vision and how to do it.

2.1. Visionary leadership

This study considers the description of visionary leadership as "creating an overall picture of a desired future" (Choi, 2006) that leads organizational development. Having a vision of the future can contribute to changing the status quo, as well as to organizational differentiation (Elenkov et al., 2005). This study respects visionary leadership as a strategic tool for development, since scholars such as Bennis and Nanus (2003) confirmed that it is a vital force for organizational success, which is essential to creating and applying a new vision. According to Liang et al. (2020), visionary leaders focus on business development as a main target. Visionary leadership involves practices that include inspiring, challenging, and encouraging (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Cheema et al. (2015) considered visionary leadership as a transformational form of leadership because the vision is achieved through people, and there is no chance to achieve the vision without people's support. Transformational leaders improve a vision and create innovative work environments that motivate employees' creative mindsets and practices (Afzal & Roksana, 2024). According to Vedula and Agrawal (2024), transformational leadership must be inspiring and visionary; such leadership shows spiritual and visionary practices and forms organizational visions to inspire employees' mindfulness of reaching beyond organizational visions and goals. Vision requires leadership to guide it and act proactively by examining the vision's strengths and weaknesses, as well as its future potential and threats (Sibeko & Barnard, 2020). Sibeko and Barnard (2020) discussed different types of vision, including tactical short-term vision, strategic long-term vision, expansionary vision to extend accomplishments, and specialist expertise vision to continuously improve.

According to Rowe (2001), visionary leadership is future-oriented, risk-taking, proactive, and more willing to invest in innovation. Visionary leadership cares about changing the way people observe needed things as urgent and important (Rowe, 2001) and looking for shared norms, values, and beliefs. For example, in 1961, President John

F. Kennedy believed strongly in his long-term, unrealistic goal of landing an American man on the moon within a decade (Benjamin, 2020). This is an example of a visionary leader who uses the visionary goal to inspire others to move from individual interest to organizational interest and from individual achievement to group achievement (Taylor et al., 2014). The key features of visionary leadership are emotional intelligence, open communication, and the ability to set an inspiring vision (Ismail et al., 2022). Visionary leadership creates visionary goals that show the meaning and purpose of the organization's work (Taylor et al., 2014). Visionary leaders can create successful outcomes, produce long-lasting desired outcomes, provide encouragement and motivation, and become an instrument that activates the vision and affects an organization's practices and procedures (Taylor et al., 2014). Ismail et al. (2022) also noted that the positive effect of visionary leadership on organizational performance was strongly related to the presence of a clear vision and to clear communication of that vision. Together, those elements can increase employees' awareness of their roles in achieving that vision. Indeed, visionary leader develops his/her own individual vision then influence others to conduct it as their shared vision in an organization (Taylor et al., 2014, p. 567). For example, Huawei founder Zhengfei Ren shared his vision of how Huawei can contribute to the progress of modernizing China's telecommunications network through technology. As a visionary leader, he shared his vision of enhancing Huawei's employees' standards of living in the future through technology, which moves towards a shift to a telecom equipment manufacturer; it became a shared vision among Huawei's employees, and all worked to achieve it (Liang et al., 2020). Indeed, visionary leadership can influence employees' views and change their behaviours, which in turn influences the effectiveness of an organization and its performance (Ismail et al., 2022).

Furthermore, visionary leadership focuses on the future of an organization by engaging in multifunctional tasks and development (Rowe, 2001). Visionary leaders pursue creativity and innovation, and their vision drives them to make a change and improve their long-term sustainability (Rowe, 2001). According to Taylor et al. (2014), visionary leadership provides opportunities to develop an organization that can meet its needs in creative ways. It is about having a long-term goal and believing strongly in the goal (Benjamin, 2020). Vedula and Agrawal (2024) added that having an exciting organizational vision can encourage employees' creative communication and innovative thinking. Similar to visionary leaders, sustainable leaders focus on setting a shared vision and long-term thinking, but they differ from visionary leaders in that they focus on succession planning, value employees, and manage change (Iqbal & Piwowar-Sulej, 2023). Taylor et al. (2014) provided evidence that visionary leadership can improve an organization by encouraging innovation and policy change to assure development and improvement. Taylor et al. (2014) confirmed that visionary leaders have the ability to communicate visions to their subordinates, inspire them to be engaged, create high levels of trust and motivation, and encourage them to work together with commitment. The best example of this is Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech that inspired hundreds of thousands of people to take action (Martin Luther King Jr. Biographical, n.d.).

2.2. Innovative leadership mindset

Innovative leadership mindset is a critical tool for enhancing an organization's competitiveness and survival in a changeable competitive market. Adewumi (2021, p. 75) identified an innovative mindset as an "innovative way of thinking out for opportunities with energetic actions and willingness to create [...] opportunities." According to Motsi et al. (2024), innovative and creative-thinking behaviour has a positive effect on an organization's performance and its ability to overcome challenges and to sustain. Additionally, Afzal and Roksana (2024) argued that sustainable leadership requires adopting organized innovation to enhance customers' loyalty and to improve employees' competencies

and engagement. This is to say that sustaining and developing a business requires an innovative mindset that helps leaders to be creative and see business opportunities in an innovative way. The development of an innovative mindset can improve creativity and proactive thinking (Lindberg et al., 2017). An innovative mindset is considered here as a valuable asset in organizations since it involves looking for new opportunities and observing things from optimistic perspectives. Furthermore, an innovative leadership mindset looks at all trends as a means to an end, which can be seen as chances to create business opportunities that serve organizational development and innovation. Trends include economic forces, social forces, technological advances, and political and regulatory trends. Timotius et al. (2018) identified a mindset as a way of thinking that affects an individual behaviour and attitude, it is also influences an individual way of thinks, feel, and acts. Arguably, an innovative leadership mindset reflects leaders' values, styles, and practices that strengthen their ability to lead and achieve, and also to inspire an innovative mindset within employees, which in turn strengthens the position of their business. According to Caniëls et al. (2018), "employees with a growth mindset are characterized by an eagerness to continuously develop themselves" (p. 50), which arguably could contribute to their organization's improvement and development. In addition, boosting an innovative leadership mindset highlights the need for information regarding customers' needs, wants, expectations, and preferences, as well as the competitors' capabilities and the organization itself.

Scholars have discussed the link between being visionary and the need to have an innovative mindset (Bennis, 1997; Bennis & Nanus, 1985, 2003; Kouzes & Posner, 2002), characterizing visionary leaders as those who are creative, ambitious, passionate, hopeful, open, empathetic, trustworthy, competent, and brave. Arguably, an innovative leadership mindset goes hand in hand with visionary leadership that motivates followers and directs them to achieve. This is because an innovative mindset sees areas that are suitable for new business and sets priorities to reach desired outcomes. Further, Adekanmbi and Ukperu (2023) added that the revolutionary leadership style has strong obligations and enthusiasm that requires innovative mindsets to influence an organization's learning, innovation, development, and performance. Iqbal and Piwowar-Sulej (2023) noted, "Innovation is extremely dependent on the availability of knowledge; the first major role that knowledge management plays in innovation is to enable the sharing of knowledge" (p. 656). Such knowledge sharing is strongly supported by sustainable leadership. This study believes that an innovative mindset has low uncertainty avoidance; that is, an innovative mindset is free to think and run with creative visions, regardless of the outcome. Sibeko and Barnard (2020) highlighted the link between having a vision and innovation, stressing that organizations with a long-term market vision, for example, should innovate to reach their target by employing all available resources to reach their future potential. One example of how the vision of being global news and leading the market can inspire creativity and innovation is when, in 1980, CNN implemented strategies that focused on creating value instead of competing with other news networks in the market to achieve their vision (Sibeko & Barnard, 2020).

3. Methodology

This study aims to investigate the three-way interaction between visionary leadership, innovative leadership mindset, and business leadership approach by reviewing literatures, documents, and using five highly performing business organizations as case examples. This study uses multiple case study design and the purposeful sampling strategy that match the aim of the study. According to Creswell (2012), "There are many different purposeful sampling strategies, and qualitative researchers need to select one or more based on their intent of the sampling" (p. 233). Therefore, five case examples have been selected intentionally to understand the study argument and to gather information that will answer the research question. Each case is analyzed, and

detailed discussion of data from other sources such as documents and literature are conducted. As discussed by Creswell (2012), “the qualitative researcher purposefully or intentionally selects individuals and sites.... It can lead to information that allows individuals to learn about the phenomenon” (p. 206). I used within-case analysis followed by cross-case analysis to identify common and different themes of the three factors under investigation among all of the cases. In the first stage, I defined the five selected cases and analyzed the most relevant information from the documents in order to develop a deeper understanding of information offered by the selected five cases. I collected data directly from official documents released by the selected cases and from their official websites that contained rich and comprehensive information. I then analyzed the collected data first via a within-case analysis. This analysis helped me to identify, by examining each case separately, major components and general elements related to visionary leadership, the innovative leadership mindset, and the business leadership approach. This analysis also allowed me to examine how these three elements’ interactions may contribute to an organization’s sustainable development. In the second stage, I used a cross-case analysis to identify varieties among these factors. This stage of comparison also served the purpose of identifying themes based on differences.

This study is a form of applied research using case examples to examine the three-way interaction in business sectors, which has not been examined in the literature. This study addresses this gap and offers new insights for leaders and managers alike. In different business organizations, leadership approaches differ between visionary and innovative leaders. Therefore, the qualitative case examples are suitable for the purpose of my research aim. Using this method, I propose a theoretical framework (Fig. 1) that shows how visionary leadership and innovative mindset are means of an organizational leadership approach that both contribute to sustainable business development. I investigate the three-way interaction for its contribution to sustainable development in an organization. I argue that examining the role of having visionary leadership and innovative mindsets can help organizations enhance their competitiveness to be sustainable in the market by implementing an appropriate leadership approach. Applying the leadership theories of the human assets leadership approach, the expertise leadership approach, the box leadership approach, the change leadership approach, and the strategy leadership approach helps examine how to reach the goal of sustainable development and success. This study develops the following theoretical framework as a guide for analysis.

3.1. A new theoretical framework for sustainable business development

In order to foster sustainable growth, the proposed framework points to the need for a clear vision and, for those who can, the development of an innovative mindset. When having a visionary goal, an innovative mindset has a function in implementing a specific leadership style that contributes to sustainable organizational development. Visionary goals and ambitious goals are used here to mean the same thing: the visions that are critical to lead the business and build the sustainable development that an organization wants to achieve. Arguably, a visionary goal gives life to an organization’s long-term growth. Sibeko and Barnard (2020) described vision as a guideline for leaders’ actions; their actions are driven by their visions. They confirm that the behaviour of top leaders contributes to the success and failure of the vision. Benjamin (2020) suggests that ambitious goals, or visionary goals, require more focus, more effort, more support, and more resources to make it realistic and achievable. According to Almog-Bareket (2012), having a clear, solid, and motivating vision for the future can give organization members something to aspire for.

The proposed theoretical framework that can be used as a guide for analysis (Fig. 1) is shown below.

The following paragraphs explain the research assumption and how it is related to sustainable organizational development through discussing and analyzing five case examples, and conclude by showing the roles of visionary leadership and an innovative mindset in sustainable organizational development.

4. Findings and discussions

The analysis of this study and the findings will be discussed throughout the paper. This analysis starts with investigating the five cases of business leadership that illustrate the three-way interaction framework at the business leadership level (Fig. 2). In this section, I discuss the within-case and the cross-case analysis to identify common elements within and major variations across the three factors. I examine the theoretical framework by analyzing visionary leadership and innovative mindset with respect to the human assets leadership approach, the expertise leadership approach, the box leadership approach, the change leadership approach, and the strategy leadership approach.

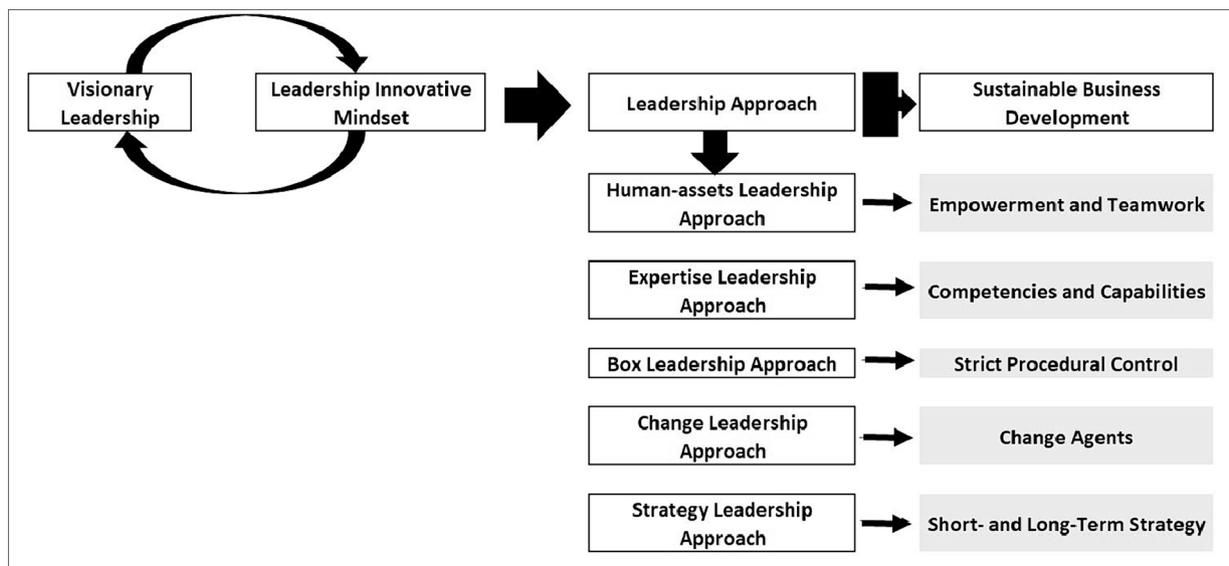


Fig. 1. A New Theoretical Framework for Leadership in Sustainable Business Development.

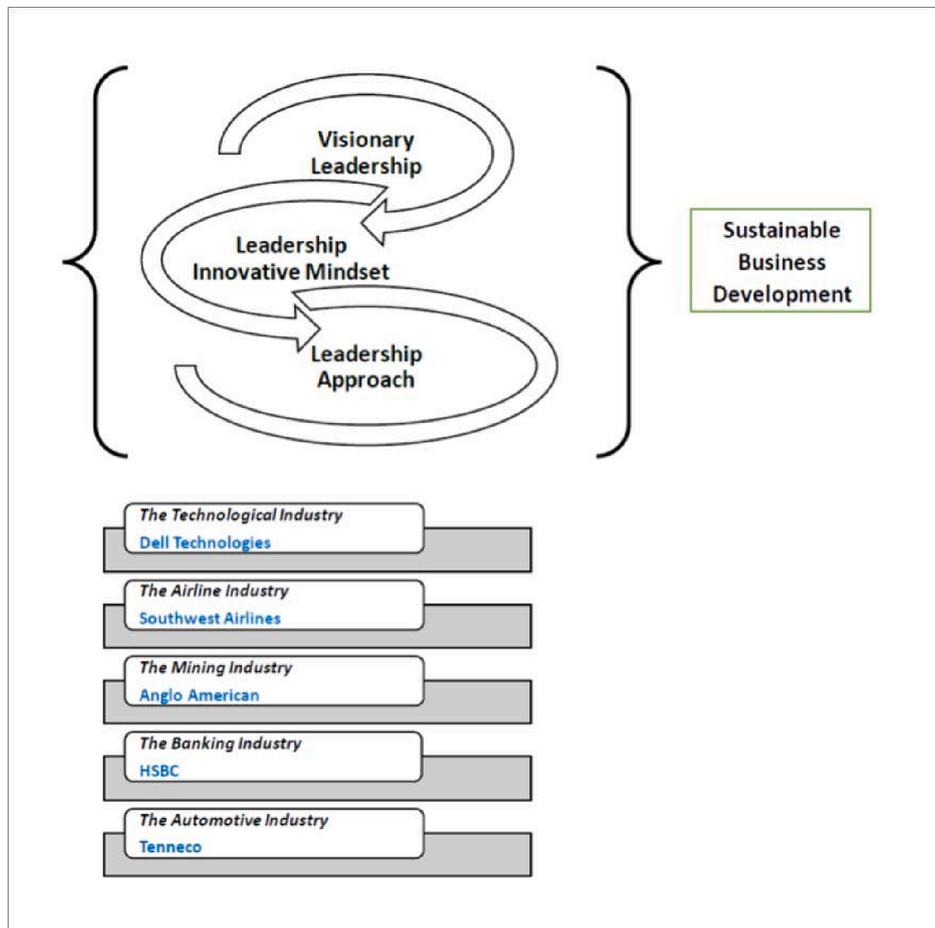


Fig. 2. Cases Under Study.

4.1. Within-Case analysis

I Analyzed each of the five cases separately, as shown below

4.1.1. The first Case: Examining the Three-Way interaction between visionary Leadership, innovative leadership Mindset, and the human assets leadership approach

To investigate the theoretical framework, the analysis uses Southwest Airlines as a case example that is selected from the airline industry.

Visionary Leadership. The leadership of Southwest Airlines explains their vision to be the world’s most loved airline as well as the most efficient and profitable. (Southwest, 2022a). Southwest Airlines follows the strategy of helping people find what is important in their lives by flying in friendly, reliable, and low-cost air travel (Southwest, 2022b). According to *Almog-Bareket (2012)*, visionary leadership builds a strong reputation for an organization and can identify and differentiate it from competitors, which enhances its competitiveness. Moreover, the innovative mindset of Southwest Airlines has been shown through its citizenship culture: “It’s about connecting people and championing communities because distance shouldn’t keep us from being neighbors. Whether in the air or on the ground, we believe community is more than a place – it’s at the heart of what brings us together” (Southwest, 2022c).

Innovative Mindset. At Southwest Airlines, innovative leadership mindset is also shown in how they highlight the priority of employee and customer personal safety (Southwest, 2022d). In addition, its innovative mindset goes beyond safety towards values such as teamwork, efficiency, discipline, honesty and transparency, accountability, and integrity and humility (Southwest, 2022e). As its leadership describes:

within every of these categories are specific behaviours to help us be a safe, profitable, and an exciting place to work (Southwest, 2022d). Furthermore, following the Golden Rule is part of its innovative mindset: we treat each other the way we would like to be treated, which is doing the right thing by our stakeholders is so essential to who we are as an organization (Southwest, 2022d). The innovative leadership mindset expresses the innovative culture of Southwest Airlines in developing and improving an innovative environment that encourages the ideas of innovative drivers as part of its success (Southwest, 2022f). Part of its innovative mindset is also its commitment to innovative research that focuses on global challenges such as climate change and finding solutions to reducing emissions and atmospheric carbon, for example with its \$10 million to Yale University’s School of the Environment. Stacy Malphurs, Vice President of Supply Chain Management & Environmental Sustainability, said, “we recognize the importance of supporting initiatives that take a holistic approach to de-carbonization in the long-term, which aligns with the U.S. government’s goal for the aviation industry to be carbon neutral by 2050” (Southwest Media, 2021).

Leadership Approach. At Southwest Airlines, a human assets leadership approach is shown through the focus on empowerment and teamwork, as well as areas of personnel management such as training, incentives, career planning, and programs to increase retention. Southwest Airlines implements a human assets leadership approach through its employee-first culture (putting people first) and its unique record of no involuntary leave or layoffs. A human assets approach is also evident in its commitment to empowering its 54,000 employees to serve stakeholders, which enhances the loyalty of 130 million customers a year (Southwest Media, 2021). Furthermore, the Southwest Airlines slogans of “our people,” “putting people first,” and “we are a company of

people” indicates that employees, customers, and communities are members of the Southwest Family and that the company aims to serve them with respect, empathy, and kindness (Southwest, 2020). A human assets leadership approach believes that success depends on excellent performance, which the leadership of Southwest Airlines emphasizes:

We provide them with great jobs and benefits, and a world-famous Culture where they are encouraged to draw on their unique perspectives, skills, and experiences in their day-to-day jobs. Because authentic, empowered Employees make great ambassadors, and that positively affects Customers, the world around us, and the success of our business. It’s no wonder we’ve always said Employees are the Heart of Southwest. (Southwest, 2020)

A human assets leadership approach helps Southwest Airlines reach its vision: as we see the future, we believe our method will assist us proceed to enact our vision: to be the world’s most respected, most competent, and most profitable airline (Southwest, 2020). In addition, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Gary Kelly stated, “Our people are our single greatest strength and most enduring long-term competitive advantage” (Southwest, 2022). Also, the announcement that the company provides employees with opportunities for learning and personal growth represents the core target for a human assets leadership approach (Southwest, 2022). Indeed, the human assets leadership approach at Southwest Airlines is clearly evident in its values, which emphasize acting like an owner, telling the truth, being honest and a team player, and following the Golden Rule (Southwest, 2022 g).

4.1.2. *The second Case: Examining the Three-Way interaction between visionary Leadership, innovative leadership Mindset, and the expertise leadership approach*

From the mining industry, I investigate Anglo American as a case example to examine the three-way interaction framework.

Visionary Leadership. Visionary leadership focuses on creating one’s own competitive advantage within an organization (Almog-Bareket, 2012). This requires visionary leaders to create a vision and show respectful efforts to reach the targeted outcomes (Taylor et al., 2014). At Anglo American, visionary leadership creates a clear vision that provides meaning to the work of the organization. As a leading global mining company, Anglo American has a vision of improving people’s life and moving the world towards a sustainable future (Anglo American, 2022a). Its specific focus is on mines as valuable raw materials, essential for people’s sustainable modern life (Anglo American, 2022a). People need metals as essential parts, for example, in their traditional and smart homes, smartphones, and traditional and electric cars. Anglo American utilizes innovation and creativity to achieve their vision by using new technology and finding new methods to mine and develop their products for billions of people worldwide. It focuses on sustainable business by developing better products and better jobs, as well as by considering the health and well-being of their employees and their families at work and at home, and communities and customers worldwide (Anglo American, 2022a).

Innovative Mindset. An innovative mindset is one of Anglo American’s tools for creating opportunities to transform the business. Anglo American’s innovative mindset values collaboration among stakeholders to achieve their vision (Anglo American, 2022a). Also, Anglo American encourages empowerment and makes choices that give people the opportunity to learn from their own experience, provide new ideas and solutions, and search for new ways to do business. Anglo American is part of people’s lives, requiring it to show its fair and ethical acts, and its respect and care for all people. Anglo American uses an innovative mindset as a strategic tool to achieve the vision of providing sustainable business by making a positive contribution to both the economy and community development. (Anglo American, 2022b). Indeed, it considers innovation as a key instrument for its sustainable business:

Innovation-led pathway to sustainable mining. It is our blueprint for the future of our business. A future in which broad, innovative thinking, enabling technologies, and collaborative partnerships will shape an industry that is safer, more sustainable and efficient, and better harmonized with the needs of our host communities and society.” (Anglo American, 2022b, para. 6)

Leadership Approach. An expertise leadership approach considers creating capabilities that allow an organization to differentiate itself from its competitors and shape organizational competencies (Farkas & Wetlaufer, 1996). It focuses on building an organization’s competency, sending a clear message about an organization’s priority, and creating unique capabilities that allow an organization to build its sustainable advantage (Farkas & Wetlaufer, 1996). At Anglo American, executives with an expertise leadership approach create a system that strengthens their organizational competencies and capabilities:

We are developing a replicable model of differentiated practices and capabilities that is designed to deliver superior value to all our stakeholders from assets that are in our hands. [...] For our people, we create working environments and an inclusive and diverse culture that encourages and supports high performance and innovative thinking [...] Our Organisation Model ensures we have the right people in the right roles doing the right value-adding work at the right time, with clear accountabilities minimising work duplication and increasing organisation capability and effectiveness. (Anglo American, 2022c)

The expertise leadership approach at Anglo American is strongly evident in its focus on innovative practices and technologies as a strategy to reach its goal of offering diversified and high-quality products, which sends a clear message to customers regarding the company’s target (Anglo American, 2022d). This organization emphasizes its expertise leadership approach through its consideration of improving products, finding new technology, designing procedures, and hiring experts with innovative mindsets to meet stakeholders’ demands (Anglo American, 2022d). Expertise leadership considers people’s ideas and techniques (Farkas & Wetlaufer, 1996), which Anglo American explains that we benefit from creating and the usage of world-class expertise and main technologies; we have a group that helps mining responsibility in each and every section of our business; placing standards, imparting expertise, sharing creative ideas and developing talents (Anglo American, 2022d). Furthermore, an expertise leadership approach focuses on finding a way to sustain competitive advantages and differentiating an organization’s business from that of its competitors, leading it to a position of sustainable advantage (Farkas & Wetlaufer, 1996). This is shown in the case of Anglo American: “our geologists and engineers work together using virtual mine planning systems to design the most effective, cost-efficient, environmentally sound construction and operational mine plan” (Anglo American, 2022d, para. 8).

An expertise leadership approach also focuses on the brand–consumer relationship by establishing policies that enhance an organization’s competencies, which directs leaders at Anglo American since it outlines a set of policies that help the organization meet its commitments to its stakeholders (Anglo American, 2022e). An expertise leadership approach designs recruitment policies to hire talented expert candidates, and Anglo American’s expertise leadership welcomes diversity and its potential to bring diverse ways of thinking, experiences, and mindsets. Their recruitment policies also have a long-term view and use objective data that focus on candidate skills and capabilities, which represents the key activity of expertise leaders (Anglo American, 2022f). Expertise leaders spend large amounts of their time improving their expertise and designing promotion programs that enhance employees’ competencies, hiring people based on their expertise and flexible mindsets, and rewarding those who are trained and show their expertise (Farkas & Wetlaufer, 1996).

4.1.3. *The Third Case: Examining the Three-Way interaction between visionary Leadership, innovative leadership Mindset, and the box leadership approach*

The Hong Kong Shanghai Banking Company (HSBC) is used as a case example from the banking industry to examine the three-way interaction framework.

Visionary Leadership. The ambitious vision of HSBC is that of “opening up a world of opportunity [...] bringing together the people, ideas and capital [...] helping to create a better world – for our customers, our people, our investors, our communities and the planet we all share” (HSBC, 2022a, para. 1). According to Taylor et al. (2014), visionary leadership activates an organizational vision by improving the ability to understand the external environment, which helps for reacting quickly and influencing an organization’s procedures, practices, and products. At HSBC, the visionary leadership is able to understand the external environment and react quickly by setting a vision that aims to create opportunities and a better world, not just for its customers but also for investors, communities, and the environment (HSBC, 2022a). Visionary leadership inspires others for the effectiveness of the business, and it has the ability to guide, direct, and support others through innovation and policy change (Taylor et al., 2014). At HSBC, visionary leadership drives its business and helps achieve its vision of succeeding together:

Together, we make possible what we cannot do alone” (HSBC, 2022b, para. 4); this stresses the importance of trust and support between customers and HSBC as an organization. At HSBC, visionary leadership sets high standards and takes them seriously, reporting that HSBC operates and competes today for tomorrow; HSBC prevails solely with the aid of taking the lengthy view, with the aid of focusing on the sustainable interests of our customers, investors, and the earth we all share (HSBC, 2022b).

Innovative Mindset. HSBC’s innovative mindset is shown through how it builds a “global bank with a digital-first mindset” (HSBC, 2022c, para. 1). This creates value for its customers and investors worldwide. HSBC’s innovative mindset takes seriously the responsibility and commitment it has to people, communities, and the natural environment. Its innovative mindset focuses on the future as a key for sustainable development by taking customer and investor interests seriously. HSBC aims to serve customers, offer leading services, and provide investors with ample returns (HSBC, 2022c). Furthermore, HSBC’s innovative mindset is evident in its partnership with the World Resources Institute to address the problem of climate change (HSBC, 2022d). HSBC tries to address the problem of climate change and take it seriously, especially in Asia, by building global partnerships—both HSBC and Temasek invested \$150 million to show willingness to work with others to overcome limitations and speed up the low carbon transition in new and innovative methods (HSBC, 2021b). Moreover, HSBC offered \$100 million in charitable funds with the aim of increasing climate innovation projects that support renewable energy in Asia (HSBC, 2022d).

Leadership Approach. Together, HSBC’s vision and innovative mindset lead the business and highlight the leadership approach. The box leadership approach is most dominant in the banking industry because of the financial control and strict clear procedures required. HSBC uses a strict control system to get things done by making good choices and taking courageous actions (HSBC, 2022b). A box leadership approach aims to add value to the organization by having a strict culture of conformity (i.e., employees should conform) and by setting a clear control system that provides good risk free experiences for customers (Farkas & Wetlaufer, 1996). A box leadership approach is evident at HSBC; as digital banking helps customers complete their everyday banking activities more easily. Jen Flowers, Head of ASP Partnership & Innovation, Wealth and Personal Banking, stated that HSBC understands how clients lead very busy lives and have more than one competing priorities for their time, so, HSBC is committing to offer simply effortless transactions to create greater enticing experiences (HSBC, 2021a). In

addition, the serious commitment demonstrates HSBC’s box leadership approach in setting high standards and being accountable for their actions. HSBC serves more than 39 million customers worldwide and focuses on providing risk-free experiences through technology and artificial intelligence (Calvery, 2019). HSBC’s box leadership approach focuses on customers: “we have safeguards in place they are at least as strong as we have now to keep customers’ personal information safe and protect their privacy” (Calvery, 2019, para. 10). While a box leadership approach focuses on developing policies and procedures that support desired behaviours (Farkas & Wetlaufer, 1996), HSBC rewards customers in China for gaining financial knowledge by using a digital membership program. In addition, HSBC implemented gamification driven by artificial intelligence technology so that customers earn points for the knowledge they acquire by exploring areas like investment and retirement planning (HSBC, 2022e). Adopting a box leadership approach might enhance the competitiveness of an organization because of its strict procedural control, which might serve the purpose of performing consistently and creating positive experiences among customers.

4.1.4. *The Fourth Case: Examining the Three-Way interaction between visionary Leadership, innovative leadership Mindset, and the change leadership approach*

The case of Tenneco in the automotive industry is investigated to examine the three-way interaction framework.

Visionary Leadership. Tenneco’s visionary leadership sets the vision that addresses future needs and simultaneously creates Tenneco’s unique identity and reputation. Visionary leadership creates new realities through vision and transforms them into actions (Almog-Bareket, 2012). Visionary leadership “provides bridges from the present to the future” (Almog-Bareket, 2012, p. 437), and it should evaluate the current situation and decide the most important activities for the future. At Tenneco, the vision of “pioneering global ideas for cleaner air, and smoother, quieter and safer transportation” explains its important activities for the future (Comparably, 2022, para. 2). Tenneco’s visionary leadership has “Make Tomorrow Better” as an important target by addressing external demands (Tenneco, 2022a, para. 1). Tenneco’s visionary leadership looks to build a sustainable future through Tenneco’s commitment to customers, employees, and communities.

Innovative Mindset. Innovation at Tenneco is respected, creating culture of shared values; its culture is the foundation of its performance and its people performance (Tenneco, 2022b). Tenneco also innovates by using technology and providing valuable products. In this case, an innovative mindset considers diversity as an organizational competitive advantage that helps the business be the industry leader. An innovative mindset looks to employees as important assets that lead the change in the organization through their talents and innovative ideas. At Tenneco, an innovative mindset takes responsibility for developing employees’ experience and performance through training and coaching. Tenneco also commits to developing its employees’ capabilities and believes in preparing future leaders through a “learn-do-lead” process (Tenneco, 2022b, para. 3).

Leadership Approach. As an agent of change, business leadership at Tenneco has been guided by the target of becoming a high-performance company by having a high performance team. Former CEO of Tenneco Dana Mead wrote that the spirit of leadership is setting high standards, and making difficult decisions (Hagerty, 2018). Mead observed the true picture and concluded that, without a real change, the company cannot survive and sustain itself in the market. A change leadership approach was the solution; Mead created new policies and a new culture and also fired those who were unwilling or unable to adopt new ways of doing business (Farkas & Wetlaufer, 1996). Indeed, change agents give little attention to seniority and give more value to people who are open to new ideas and have irregular questions and plans that support the change, as well people who are enthusiastic, creative, and innovative (Farkas & Wetlaufer, 1996). However, Tenneco also reflects a change

leadership approach that focuses on the present and future by having a skilled, capable, and engaged workforce (Tenneco, 2022b, para. 1). Furthermore, a change leadership approach is reflected in Tenneco leadership's commitment to safety and health responsibilities, providing quality products and solutions for more performance improvement and developing solutions to meet environmental challenges at a global level.

A change leadership approach focuses on the process of getting to a specific point of arrival (Farkas & Wetlaufer, 1996); at Tenneco, it depends on people's integrity and teamwork for innovation and evolution to make a better future. A change leadership at Tenneco provides its global workforce with clear information about its goals and how they will reach those goals (Tenneco, 2022b). Indeed, achieving a shared goal and making a change, as a core responsibility for change leadership, require working together to identify and solve problems. At Tenneco, the change leadership considers talented employees as innovators who depend on them to solve problems, since the critical role for change leaders is to create a culture that focuses on continual reinvention and uses innovative tools to achieve the target and communicate and motivate employees to adopt the change (Farkas & Wetlaufer, 1996). Considering the importance of being a leading organization, Tenneco's change leadership provides business team members with unlimited support to solve critical global challenges. Tenneco's change leadership creates an environment of continual reinvention by encouraging business team members' enthusiasm to develop hybrid and electric engines to achieve the goal of innovating the driving experience, as well as improving vehicle performance and lowering CO2 emissions. While a change leadership approach focuses on continuous renewal, achieving the target, and overcoming uncertainty (Farkas & Wetlaufer, 1996), Tenneco change leadership invests in thousands of patents that lower emissions and improve performance, and offers solutions to meet changing regulations (Indeed, 2021).

4.1.5. Fifth Case: Examining the Three-Way interaction between visionary Leadership, innovative leadership Mindset, and the strategy leadership approach

The three-way interaction framework is investigated by using Dell Technologies as a case example that is selected from the technology industry. Dell Technologies describes its own business leadership as innovative, devoted to leading the era revolution forward, and all ideas, concepts and created solutions are driven by customers (Dell Technologies, 2022a). As an innovator, Dell's business leadership allows for innovation through its unique structure (Dell Technologies, 2022b) and its "on-demand and flexible consumption models. You can easily do automating, abstracting, and innovating" (Chakraborty, 2019, para. 3). The three way-interaction framework analysis is shown below.

Visionary Leadership. Since the enormous majority of CEOs observe themselves as the corporation's chief visionary, liable for placing short- and long-term strategy (Farkas & Wetlaufer, 1996), Dell's 2030 vision of "sustainability, cultivating inclusion, gender equality [50 % of global workforce by 2030], and one-for-one recycling" is a clear indication of Dell's visionary leadership (Chakraborty, 2019, para. 4). In addition, Dell's visionary leadership focuses on making technology easy to use and access, which strongly contributes to transforming people's lives worldwide, with sustainability and a large social impact (Dell Technologies, 2022c). Chairman and CEO Michael Dell underlined Dell's visionary leadership:

Unlocking the power of data will advance humanity more than any other force over the next decade [...] We are committed to making that power broadly available to communities around the world so we can all move forward together [...] We are looking at data to help build a much better world in the future. (Chakraborty, 2019, para. 6 & 10)

Innovative Mindset. At the same time, an innovative mindset has been shown by how Dell's leadership fosters a culture of innovation that enables it to create technology that guarantees extensive accessibility

and improvements to people daily life (Dell Technologies, 2022d). Dell's innovative mindset believes in innovation and action as instruments to achieve positive change (Dell Technology, 2022f). It is also shown in Dell's effort to affect the economy, society, and the environment (Dell Technology, 2022f). For example, Dell is working to achieve goals such as using 100 % recycled material in its products by 2030, reducing emission by 60 % by 2030, hiring and training women to count for 50 % of Dell's global workforce by 2030, and encouraging 75 % of Dell's team members to be active in charitable giving and volunteerism in societies by 2030 (Chakraborty, 2019).

Leadership Approach. Dell's leadership approach is considered by this analysis as a strategy approach. A strategy leadership approach is dedicated to creating a long-term strategy and designing an approach for how to achieve long-term goals (Farkas & Wetlaufer, 1996). At Dell Technologies, short-term and long-term strategic goals direct Dell's decisions and actions. Dell's strategy leadership approach depends on data and aims to collect a large amount of data to set strategies that help in achieving strategic goals.

4.2. Cross-Case analysis

Themes or key elements of visionary leadership and the innovative leadership mindset were common to all five cases whereas themes of leadership approaches varied across all cases.

Based on the cross-case analysis, the human-assets leadership approach shown in the first case differentiated itself by considering people as a key asset; showing fairness, empathy, and respect through applying the golden rule; and employing empowerment and teamwork. Next, the expertise leadership approach shown in the second case differentiated itself by having unique competencies and capabilities, showing innovative practices and mindsets, considering people's ideas, setting high standards, and highly valuing diversity. Third, the box leadership approach differentiated itself by setting high standards, strictly controlling procedures, and establishing a culture of conformity. This approach is also inflexible in terms of accountability, risk-free experiences, and placing customers first. Fourth, the change leadership approach presented in the fourth case functioned as a change agent who was open to new ideas, had clear goals, and focused on continual reinvention and continuous renewal. Finally, in the fifth case, the strategy leadership approach differentiated itself by focusing on short- and long-term strategy, setting strategies based on facts and real data, and achieving strategic goals through effective planning and vision-setting.

Based on the analysis, I identified common qualities of visionary leadership including creating a vision, building a strong reputation for an organization, identifying and differentiating an organization from competitors, utilizing innovation and creativity to build a sustainable future, considering the well-being of employees and inspiring them, understanding the external environment and reacting quickly, directing, supporting others through innovation and policy change, and implementing short- and long-term strategy. Likewise, I identified the common qualities of the innovative leadership mindset including creating a culture of shared values and innovation; fostering a culture of innovation; committing to innovative research that focuses on global challenges; creating opportunities to transform the business; valuing collaboration among stakeholders; encouraging empowerment, teamwork, efficiency, and discipline; encouraging honesty, transparency, accountability, integrity, and humility; searching for new ways to do business; respecting people; considering diversity; and preparing future leaders. Figure 3 summarizes the results and shows the key common qualities of visionary leadership, the innovative leadership mindset, and the major variations among the five leadership approaches.

5. Conclusion

In the business world, business sustainability and development become a challenge that requires creativity and flexibility. The roles of

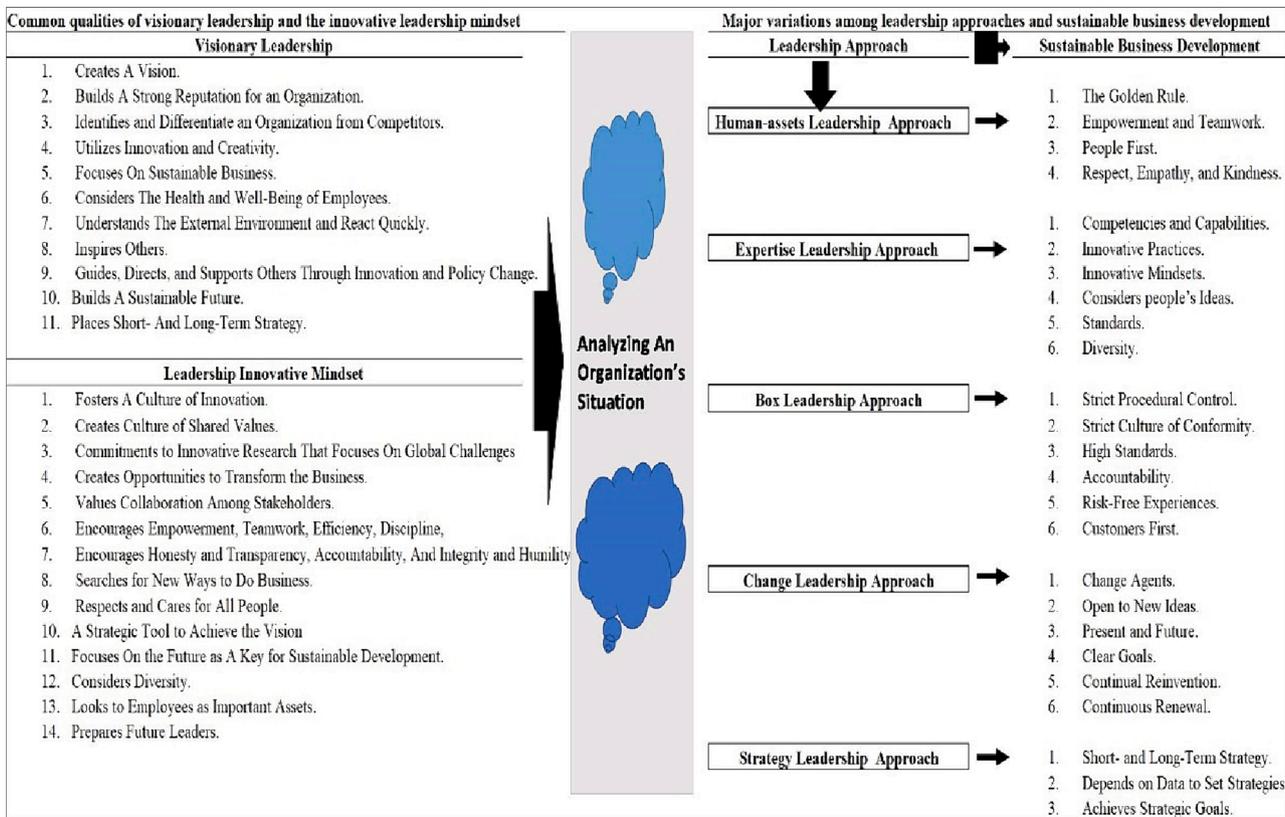


Fig. 3. Common Qualities of Visionary Leadership, Innovative Leadership Mindset, and the Major Variations Among the Five Leadership Approaches.

visionary leadership and an innovative mindset are critical to overcoming this challenge. Due to the acceleration of global competition, this study proposed a framework to answer the question of how the three-way interaction may contribute to sustainable business development. The analysis of five case examples from five different industries shows that business leadership approach is driven by an organization's leadership vision and innovation that lead to a new identity for the organization. Based on these case examples and analysis, there is evidence that the successful organizations in the business industry are those that integrate a strong visionary leadership with an innovative mindset to build a unique leadership approach for the organization. The above analysis supports the paper's argument, providing evidence that the business leadership approach (human assets leadership approach, expertise leadership approach, box leadership approach, change leadership approach, or strategy leadership approach) is driven by identifying an organization's vision and purposes of operation in the market, and by engaging in improving innovative mindsets across the organization. In addition, the paper provides thematic evidence that an organization can sustain its development in the long run by inspiring people inside the organization to become a target that visionary leaders should seek, spreading the culture of innovation and improving innovative mindsets.

As shown in the discussion section, the strategic direction of an organization is influenced by its vision and its leaders' innovative mindset. This study provides an evidence that adopting an appropriate approach requires evaluating the situation accurately and, the most important for the future, improving innovative mindset that allows risk-taking and successfully transforming vision into actions. Analyzing an organization's situation, its target, and the purpose of its existence leads to creating a new reality that takes into account the availability of visionary leadership and innovative mindsets. This is the basis for making a strategic choice regarding the proper business leadership approach, since organizations are looking for long-term sustainable

business development, which has a significant effect on an organization's success. I conclude by identifying three areas for sustainable development in an organization: having visionary leadership, improving innovative leadership mindsets, and adopting an appropriate business leadership approach. These are all strategic tools to enhance an organization's sustainable development.

6. Study implications and limitations

This study makes several contributions. First, I derive the link between being a visionary leader and having an innovative mindset. Second, I review the leadership literature for studies in which visionary leadership and innovative mindset have been implicated. Third, I link all five leadership approaches that are reviewed with visionary and innovative leaders. Fourth, I propose a theoretical model of leadership development, linking visionary leadership and innovative mindset to leadership approaches and practices to reach an organization's development and success. In this study, the findings outline the three-way interaction needed for business leadership. The theoretical framework is examined by using five case examples from five different industries; it shows that improving an organization's ability to innovate and sustain is necessary to enhance its competitiveness. The analysis of five case examples shows that the three-way interaction can affect an organization's leadership practices, procedures, and strategies, which help an organization reach beyond its expectations. This study focuses on business leadership and the roles of visionary leadership and innovative leadership mindsets on sustainable business development.

This study has direct implications for leadership competitiveness and effectiveness within an organization because it highlights a number of meaningful factors that work together to facilitate organizational development. The study also has implications for improving innovative mindsets and visionary leadership because they develop organizational leadership uniqueness. This study is limited to business organizations

from five industries. This provides a limited explanation for the observed three-way interaction between business leadership approach, visionary leadership, and innovative leadership mindset. In addition, this study investigates three factors (the three-way interaction model), which raises a question about the other factors that might influence an organization's sustainable development.

However, the study has several limitations, so caution must be exercised in generalizing my findings to other organizations. First, the current study relied partially on selected organizations' self-reports for their data, so some of those entities may have provided biased information in order to present their organizations in a positive way. Thus, future research could employ different data-collection methods. Also, this study's lack of random sampling coupled with a small sample size may significantly limit the generalizability of the findings. This limitation should be addressed in future research via larger and more randomized samples to help improve generalizability. Future inquiries could also investigate the three main factors by using methodologies other than a case study. Finally, all selected cases in this study centred on large organizations; therefore, results and findings of this study may have limited applications to small and medium-sized organizations. Consequently, future research could focus on several different areas of inquiry: other types of business organizations, different industries or sectors, various business sizes, domestic rather than multicultural organizations, and a variety of cultures and home countries of organizations. At the same time, future research could use the three-way interaction framework to investigate other industries and other business organizations. One approach may be to use the framework to study different leadership approaches, such as servant, authentic, and positive leadership. Comparative case studies of business leadership using the three-way interaction model in the business sector and in other sectors could expand understandings of strategic leadership that might affect organizations' development and sustainability. Future studies also need to consider other factors that might influence the development and economic sustainability of an organization, such as the culture, managerial practices, leaders' competencies and capabilities, and ethics and standards, which might have an impact on the success of the organization as a whole.

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Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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