

Indigenous Leadership and Entrepreneurial Capability Development: A Capability Perspective on Leadership Development and Sustainable Human Resource Architecture



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Abstract:

Human resource development requires more than ethical intent to be sustainable; it depends on institutional architecture that supports long-term capability formation. Although value-based leadership research often assumes that morally grounded leaders directly create sustainable organisational systems, the mechanisms through which leadership philosophy translates into structured HR sustainability remain underexplored. At the same time, entrepreneurship research highlights that sustainable venture performance, innovation, and firm growth depend on the development of underlying organisational capabilities rather than leadership intent alone, yet the integration between leadership capability and entrepreneurial outcomes remains underexplored. Drawing on the Resource-Based View and Knowledge-Based View, this study conceptualises Indian Knowledge System-inspired Leadership Practices (IKSLP) as a higher-order leadership capability encompassing ethical stewardship, service orientation, spiritual purpose, and reflective self-regulation. Using survey data from 250 managers and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling, the study examines whether IKSLP influences Sustainable Human Resource Development (SHRD) directly or through Leadership Development Effectiveness (LDE). The model is further conceptually extended to link sustainable HR capability with entrepreneurial outcomes such as innovation, firm performance, and long-term venture sustainability. The findings reveal full mediation: IKSLP significantly influences LDE, LDE significantly influences SHRD, and the direct effect of IKSLP on SHRD is not significant. From an entrepreneurship perspective, the findings suggest that entrepreneurial success emerges through institutionalised capability-building systems supporting innovation, adaptability, and scalable growth, particularly in SME and emerging economy contexts.

Keywords: Indian Knowledge System, Leadership, Sustainable Human Resource Development, Entrepreneurship, Innovation, Knowledge-Based View

1. Introduction

Sustainability no longer remains as an outlying corporate dream, but it has become a systemic organisational necessity (Hu et al., 2024). In this change, the Sustainable Human Resource Development (SHRD) has been raised as an important field of interest, which focuses on long-term capability building, ethical management, and the continuity of the human resource between generations (Jia & Hou, 2024). Although the SHRD scholarship focuses on stable systems of talents and conscientiousness in the HR architecture, the theoretical basis of what such institutional sustainability relies on is still underdeveloped. The current body of literature often holds that ethical or value-based forms of leadership orientations will inherently develop sustainable HR outcomes (Chreif & Farmanesh, 2022). The conceptual gaps

identified in the preceding literature also indicate that there is a deficiency of integrative frameworks that bridge employee-related constructs in a single theoretical perspective, implying that there is a necessity for multi-variable frameworks that go beyond single relationships (Satpathy and Jeswani, 2021). Despite the increased significance of SHRD initiatives in organisations, the assumptions have not been adequately tested, which has created some gaps in theory.

Simultaneously, the entrepreneurship literature has been focusing more on the ability architecture that allows firms to maintain continuous learning, innovation, and adaptability, as the critical factor in long-term venture success, not only based on opportunity recognition or market positioning (Teece, 2016; Soares and Perin, 2020). Entrepreneurial activities, especially startups and

small and medium enterprises (SMEs), exist in uncertain conditions where the ability to lead is a fundamental component in defining the ability of the firms to be resilient, innovative, and sustainable growth paths. Nevertheless, the combination of leadership capability frameworks with sustainable human resource systems has not been researched in the field of entrepreneurship.

The contemporary literature on leadership is full of constructs of value-based leadership, like ethical leadership, servant leadership, spiritual leadership, and self-aware or authentic leadership, that can be traced to the positive organisational outcomes (Udin, 2024). Although these streams are conceptually similar, they have developed rather independently of each other (Sokolic et al., 2024). What is more important, they are frequently analysed with references to the attitudinal or short-term behavioural results instead of structural sustainability (Lee & Kim, 2022). The unofficial reasoning that has been running through a good part of this is the normative: morally based leaders generate morally based systems. The question that is not answered is: will the leadership philosophy suffice to produce a sustainable institutional architecture, or is it based on some intermediate capability structures?

This issue is even more decisive in the case of entrepreneurship, as a founder and entrepreneurial leaders have the direct task of creating a strategic direction and internal ability systems of the company. Entrepreneurial leadership goes beyond impact to the capability building where the leaders have to be able to identify opportunities, draw in resources and institutionalise learning processes that facilitate innovation and the ability to scale ventures.

This problem that goes unresolved is more dynamic in the area of sustainability. Sustainable HR systems entail institutional entrenchment, development pipelines, succession planning systems and long-term capability investment (Holloway, 2024). They are structural and not behavioural climates (Kafetzopoulos and Gotzamani, 2022). A leadership orientation may possibly inspire the employees, yet it needs long-term HR structure and organisational translation. Lack of a clear theoretical explanation between leadership philosophy and institutionalised sustainability is a major gap in both leadership and SHRD scholarship (Alhmod & Al-Kasasbeh, 2024).

This is more so in SMEs and in emerging economy settings like India, where organisations tend to be less formalised in terms of their development systems but are highly dependent on leader-driven leadership by owners. Under these conditions, the skill of converting leadership philosophy into systematic developmental processes is a decisive factor in the performance of an entrepreneur,

innovation potential, and the sustainability of the firm in the long term (Urban & Kanguwe, 2024).

Meanwhile, Western traditions of epistemology have managed to take control over the sphere of leadership research (Gwerevende & Mthombeni, 2023), often being depersonalised, according to culturally-based philosophical traditions. In the case of the traditional theory of management, the traditions of indigenous knowledge remain under-theorised as stable models of leadership (Slikkerveer & Gellaerts, 2024). The leadership qualities in Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), one of the oldest and ongoing intellectual traditions in the world, have been defined as ethical stewardship (dharma), self-mastery, common good and intentional action (McGregor, 2021). These values echo with modern constructs of value-based leadership, but they are more than conceptual validity (Nordlöf et al., 2021). These are a group of inculcated epistemological dispositions, and leadership is described as disciplined moral custodianship in the context of social responsibility. From an entrepreneurship perspective, such indigenous leadership philosophies may serve as foundational drivers of entrepreneurial capability formation by embedding ethical decision-making, long-term orientation, and collective value creation into the core of venture development. This is particularly relevant for responsible and inclusive entrepreneurship aligned with sustainable development goals (SDGs) (Castillo-Villar et al., 2025).

Instead of addressing ethical, servant, spiritual, and reflective leadership as independent constructs, this paper defines them as facets of a higher-order capability, Indian Knowledge System-Inspired Leadership Practices (IKSLP). This re-conceptualisation moves the analysis not on disjointed behavioural typologies but on an integrated philosophy of leadership, based on the ethics of civilisation. The main theoretical question at that point would be the following: how does such a leadership capability translate into sustainable HR architecture? Additionally, the study raises an extended question within entrepreneurship research: how does this leadership capability contribute to entrepreneurial outcomes such as innovation, firm performance, and sustainable venture growth through institutional capability development?

2. Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses Development

2.1 Reframing Leadership as Capability Activation

Traditional leadership scholarship has been focused on behavioural power, relationships, and performance of followers (Marquardt et al., 2021). Although attitudinal implications like trust, engagement, or commitment have been considered

to a large extent, even value-based streams, such as ethical, servant, spiritual, and authentic leadership, have explored attitudinal implications. Even though such contributions are massive, they do not answer a structural question: How do leadership philosophies translate into long-standing organisational systems? Sustainable Human Resource Development is not a climate variable in terms of attitudinal climate (Udin, 2024). It demonstrates institutional architecture, institutionalised development practices, track of succession, long-term investment of capability, and moral embedding in HR governance (Sharma et al., 2022). To explain SHRD, it is necessary to pass beyond the behaviour of leaders to the formation of capabilities (Zhang et al., 2025). This research thus reactivates the leadership theory to shift the theory to activation rather than influence.

This capability-based change applies to research on entrepreneurship as well, where venture formation and development do not simply occur through the opportunity discovery, but also through the capacity of the entrepreneur to establish lasting organisational systems. Leadership in entrepreneurial firms, in particular, startups and SMEs, is not simply a relational influence process, but a formative mechanism by which routines, systems of learning, and structures of capability are formed (Teece, 2016). Thereby, the issue of leadership activation goes beyond domestic governance and takes centre stage in entrepreneurial performance, innovation, and sustainability of the venture over the long term.

The Resource-Based View (RBV) states that sustained advantage is based on valuable, rare, inimitable and non-substitutable resources (Gibson et al., 2021). Such an intangible resource is leadership philosophy. However, RBV also means that having resources is not enough to be advantageous and that they should be implemented and integrated into organisational practices. This argument is further advanced by the Knowledge-Based View (KBV) that points to the knowledge creation, integration and the institutionalisation of knowledge as the basis of sustained performance differentials (Sahibzada et al., 2020). KBV leadership values only gain organisational meaning where they are converted into knowledge systems (Riaz et al., 2023). This argument redefines leadership as a more advanced capability whose impact is subject to institutional conversion processes. Under this reasoning, sustainable results are never directly brought out by the value-based leadership. It preconditions the design and performance of the systems that do.

In the context of entrepreneurship, this reasoning can be found in the perspective that the success in ventures can be attributed to the consistent arrangement of intangible resources into routines that can be scaled. Founder intent alone is not likely

to sustain entrepreneurial orientation, the exploitation of opportunities, and the results of innovation; it is determined by the presence of entrepreneurial values implemented into firm-level developmental and knowledge systems. Thus, the contribution of RBV and KBV to explaining internal sustainability is undeniable, and it will help explain the role of leadership ability in enterprise development and innovation based on the institutionalised formation of capabilities.

2.2 Indian Knowledge System-Inspired Leadership Practices as an Integrated Capability

The modern theory of leadership has regarded the ethical, servant, spiritual, and reflective leadership as parallel but distinct streams in most cases (Franco & Antunes, 2020). The consequence of conceptual fragmentation has been incremental testing of more or less similar normative constructs without theoretical consolidation (Qawasmeh et al., 2025). This separation restricts the explanatory value in the context of sustainability, where it should be integrated and not isolated. The Indian Knowledge Systems provide a coherent epistemological premise that incorporates moral duty (dharma), self-discipline, collective well-being, and pursuit act as a coherent group concept of leadership (Domínguez-Escrig & Mallén-Broch, 2021). Leadership in this tradition is not episodic influence but disciplined stewardship that is entrenched in social responsibility (Fry & Egel, 2021). There is no ethical clarity, no service orientation, no spiritual purpose, no self-regulation that is independent, and all the dimensions mentioned are dependent parts of a consistent ethical architecture (Cullen, 2020). Based on this reasoning, this paper conceptualises Indian Knowledge System-Inspired Leadership Practices (IKSLP) as a leadership proficiency of the second order that encompasses: Ethical leadership as normative governance, Servant leadership as developmental stewardship, Spiritual leadership as purposive meaning construction, Self-awareness/self-regulation as disciplined internal mastery (Adams et al., 2025).

From an entrepreneurship perspective, IKSLP can also be understood as a foundational entrepreneurial leadership capability. In founder-led firms, leadership is deeply embedded in venture identity, strategic intent, and organisational culture. Ethical stewardship supports trust and legitimacy, servant orientation strengthens people development, spiritual purpose shapes mission-driven enterprise building, and self-regulation supports disciplined decision-making under uncertainty. Together, these dimensions make IKSLP particularly relevant to entrepreneurial capability formation in startups and SMEs (Castillo-Villar et al., 2025).

This re-conceptualisation is progressive to the leadership theory. It initially changes the analysis to epistemological coherence rather than behavioural typology. Second, it positions the philosophy of leadership as an intangible capability bundle that is in line with RBV reasoning. IKSLP is an upstream strategic resource, as far as capability is concerned. The question of interest, which falls under critical theory, is whether and how this resource impacts Sustainable Human Resource Development. In addition, the same question can be extended to entrepreneurship research: whether and how IKSLP, as an indigenous and value-based capability bundle, contributes to entrepreneurial outcomes such as innovation, enterprise performance, and sustainable firm development through the creation of development-oriented organisational systems.

2.3 IKSLP and Sustainable Human Resource Development

Sustainable Human Resource Development is long-term institutional adherence to continuity of capabilities, ethical entrenchment, and performance- well-being architecture. This is an indication of systematic investment in human capital resilience but not cyclic training activity (Piwowar-Sulej et al., 2023). Value-based leadership literature tends to presuppose a straightforward connection between moral orientation and responsible results (Rihal et al., 2025, Kareem & Kummitha, 2025). These assumptions do not take into consideration the structural nature of sustainability. Ethical intent does not necessarily give rise to institutional architecture (Kaur, 2024). A leader can proclaim stewardship, but to have sustainable HR systems, there have to be routinised systems (Sohu et al., 2024). According to the RBV, leadership philosophy is only relevant to SHRD when it is integrated into organisational routines that can hardly be duplicated. Within the KBV thinking, sustainable HR structure relies on the manner in which the values of leadership influence the knowledge transfer, learning systems and codification of development. IKSLP, being an integrated leadership skill, is likely to impact SHRD by creating an ethical climate, development orientation, and long-term talent stewardship. Disciplined, moral, architecture-based leaders tend to put greater emphasis on generational capability formation and balanced HR governance. Accordingly:

H1: Leadership Practices oriented on the Indian Knowledge System positively influence Sustainable Human Resource Development significantly.

In entrepreneurial firms... development-oriented and ethically grounded HR systems can support innovation, team resilience, and capability renewal, thereby contributing indirectly to enterprise performance and long-term venture sustainability (Urban & Kanguwe, 2024). As firms grow, the

presence of development-oriented and ethically grounded HR systems can support innovation, team resilience, and capability renewal, thereby contributing indirectly to enterprise performance and long-term venture sustainability.

2.4 IKSLP and Leadership Development Effectiveness

Leadership Development Effectiveness (LDE) is a measure of how organisational development systems improve the leadership ability, quality of decisions, reflective maturity, and succession preparedness. Development systems under the KBV logic will be treated as knowledge-conversion mechanisms that can translate abstract values into operational competence. The architecture of development is the result of leadership philosophy. Ethical leaders who are based on clarity and reflective discipline have more chances of coming up with programs that are focused on stewardship and not on accelerating performance in the short term. Developmental meaning is incorporated in the form of servant and spiritual orientations, which enhance the level of engagement among the participants and the transfer of learning. Feedback integration and behavioural reinforcement are improved by self-regulation. IKSLP is the resource in terms of capability, and LDE is the mechanism of activation. Devoid of value alignment within the leadership level, development systems will be either compliance-oriented or episodic. Being aligned, they are organised vehicles of institutionalising the philosophy of leadership. Thus:

H2: Indian Knowledge System-Based Leadership Practices positively impact Leadership Development Effectiveness significantly.

This relationship is highly relevant in startups and SMEs, where founders often shape development systems informally in the early stages of growth. When entrepreneurial leaders embody IKSLP, they are more likely to create developmental routines that go beyond ad hoc training and become mechanisms for capability scaling, leadership succession, and knowledge transfer. In this sense, LDE becomes a bridge not only between leadership values and HR sustainability, but also between founder behaviour and venture capability development.

2.5 Leadership Development Effectiveness and Sustainable Human Resource Development

Sustainable HR architecture presupposes dynamic capability as it needs to feel, create, and reinvent human capital over the long term (Holloway, 2024). This is a process that is based on the systems of leadership development. Good development initiatives create pipelines of leaders, instil moral thinking, and entrench reflective practice (Miao et al., 2019). Within the dynamic capability school of thought, the development systems can rejuvenate

the leadership capital based on the environmental changes (Ramadan et al., 2023). They turn philosophical orientation into a routine: in the shape of succession planning, mentorship mechanisms, developmental assessment, and knowledge continuity mechanisms (Church et al., 2015). High LDE organisations are supposed to have a good, sustainable HR system due to the fact that development is no longer sporadic but a structural aspect of the organisations. The building of the capability is institutionalised rather than relying on the leader. Therefore:

H3: There exists a strong positive impact of Leadership Development Effectiveness on Sustainable Human Resource Development.

In entrepreneurial firms... development-oriented and ethically grounded HR systems can support innovation, team resilience, and capability renewal, thereby contributing indirectly to enterprise performance and long-term venture sustainability (Urban & Kanguwe, 2024). When development systems institutionalise learning, mentorship, and succession logic, the enterprise becomes less vulnerable to founder centrality and more capable of supporting opportunity exploitation, strategic renewal, and responsible scaling. Thus, LDE contributes not only to SHRD but also to the broader entrepreneurial infrastructure of the firm.

2.6 The Mediating Mechanism: From Philosophy to Architecture

The main theoretical suggestion of the given research is about mediation. The philosophy of leadership can predetermine the values, but sustainability must be institutionalised (Atobishi & Podruzsik, 2025). According to KBV, knowledge only attains strategic consequence when it is put in systems (Javed et al., 2024). RBV entails the fact that intangible resources create a continued advantage solely when routine (Monteiro et al., 2017). IKSLP is an advanced-order leadership provision that is based on epistemological consistency. LDE is the formal process by which the organisation ingrains this resource as a routine. The institutional product of that embedding is SHRD. In the event that the philosophy that drives the leadership is the one that directly generates sustainable HR architecture, it would mean that mediation would not be required. In case sustainability demands institutional mobilisation, LDE is the structural point where values and

systems would intersect. The mediation test can explain the instrumentality of leadership sustainability as either being leader-focused or capability-based. Accordingly:

H4: Leadership Development Effectiveness mediates the relationship between IKSLP and SHRD. The same mediation logic can be extended to entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial leaders may possess strong value-based orientations, but venture performance and innovation are unlikely to emerge from philosophy alone. They require systems that embed learning, succession, developmental discipline, and knowledge continuity. Accordingly, LDE can be interpreted as the mechanism through which indigenous leadership capability is translated into not only sustainable HR architecture, but also into the organisational conditions that support long-term entrepreneurial success (Teece, 2016; Kellermanns et al., 2016).

2.7 Conceptual Model

The suggested framework, as presented in Figure 1, places IKSLP as a greater intangible ability that affects the Sustainable Human Resource Development via Leadership Development Effectiveness. The model promotes a capability activation viewpoint whereby leadership philosophy can only have an organisational result in the event that it is converted into an elaborate developmental system.

To strengthen the entrepreneurship relevance of the framework, the conceptual logic may also be extended beyond SHRD to entrepreneurial outcomes such as innovation, enterprise performance, and firm sustainability (Urban & Kanguwe, 2024). IKSLP is an indigenous leadership ability in this extended view, LDE is the institutional activation mechanism, SHRD is the organisational capability architecture, and entrepreneurial outcomes are the downstream strategic implications of the architecture.

This extension is particularly significant in the context of SMEs, startups, and emerging economies, where the relationships between leadership and capability development and organisational sustainability are tightly connected. People-development systems institutionalisation in such firms can be the difference between transforming entrepreneurial intent into resilient and responsible growth of the enterprise.

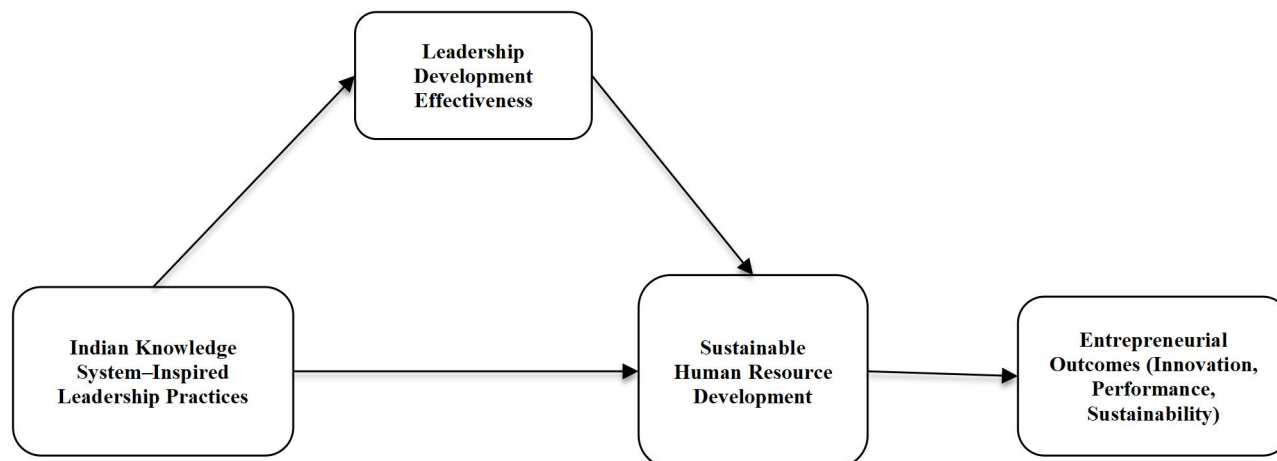


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

This school of thought changes the normative assumptions on leadership sustainability research to the institutional mechanism analysis (Maaßen et al., 2025). Incorporating the native epistemological foundation with the capability-based theory, the framework offers a systematic explanation of how culture-based values of leadership are made a permanent organisational structure (Coates et al., 2022).

It also explains how sustainable HR systems can play the role of a bridge between responsible leadership and inclusive entrepreneurial development. Such systems can facilitate responsible entrepreneurship by integrating the continuity of capability, ethical governance and long-term people development into the enterprise and help achieve larger objectives of sustainable and inclusive development.

3. Research methodology

The research design used in this study was a quantitative and cross-sectional study to find the correlation between the Indian Knowledge System-Inspired Leadership Practices (IKSLP), Leadership Development Effectiveness (LDE), and Sustainable Human Resource Development (SHRD). The survey technique was also used to facilitate the deductive testing of theories and to organise data gathering (Trochim, 2005; Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2009). The completed dataset consisted of 250 valid responses that were the results of initial screening. Two five-point Likert scales (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) were used to measure all the constructs. The model of IKSLP assumed a higher-order construct since it included Ethical Leadership (Brown, Treviño, and Harrison, 2005; Treviño, Brown, and Hartman, 2003), Servant Leadership (Liden et al., 2008; Greenleaf, 1977), Spiritual Leadership (Fry, 2003; Fry, Vitucci, and Cedillo, 2005), and Self-Awareness/Self-Regulation based on emotional intelligence and authentic Leadership Development Effectiveness was conceptualized relying on the leadership

development framework (Day, 2000; Day and Dragoni, 2015; Avolio, Avey, and Quisenberry, 2010), whereas SHRD was assessed using the sustainability HRM and HRD scholarship (Ehnert, 2009; Guerci, Longoni, and Luzzini, 2016; Garavan and McGuire, 2010).

Although the empirical model focuses on leadership capability and sustainable human resource development, these constructs are theoretically positioned as foundational capability mechanisms that contribute to broader entrepreneurial outcomes such as innovation, enterprise performance, and long-term venture sustainability. The data analysis was performed based on a systematic multi-step PLS-SEM analysis with SmartPLS. The first step was to screen the data to determine the completeness, variance adequacy, and possible anomalies. Second, the measurement model was tested through consideration of indicator loadings, internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability), convergent validity (average variance extracted), and discriminant validity (HTMT criterion). Third, the higher-order IKSLP construct was estimated in a disjoint fashion in which the score of the latent variables of the first-order dimensions was utilised to create the second-order factor. Fourth, the structural model was evaluated by looking at the collinearity diagnostics (VIF), path relationships, coefficient of determination (R^2), effect sizes (f^2), and predictive relevance (Q^2). Lastly, the mediation was to be tested through bootstrapping through resampling methods to test the indirect effects to establish the nature of mediation in the framework that has been proposed. In line with the extended conceptual framework, the structural model is interpreted not only in terms of HR sustainability outcomes but also as indicative of underlying capability structures that may influence entrepreneurial performance and innovation in organisational and SME contexts.

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive Statistics and Preliminary Assessment

The ultimate data included 250 quality responses by managers. A preliminary screening established the presence of no missing data, straight-lining

patterns and abnormal distributions of responses. Standard deviations in constructs show that there is adequate variation, which is valid to use in structural modelling of variance.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Construct	Items (n)	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Ethical Leadership (EL)	7	3.91	0.37	3.00	5.00
Servant Leadership (SL)	7	3.82	0.42	3.00	5.00
Spiritual Leadership (SPL)	7	3.76	0.39	2.71	4.86
Self-Awareness / Self-Regulation (SA)	7	3.80	0.39	2.86	4.86
Leadership Development Effectiveness (LDE)	6	3.55	0.40	2.50	5.00
Sustainable Human Resource Development (SHRD)	7	3.35	0.44	2.00	5.00

Leadership dimensions have fairly high means, which indicates that the respondents are inclined to view the presence of value-based leadership practices. Conversely, SHRD has a relatively lower central tendency and a higher dispersion, meaning that there is diversity in the institutionalisation of sustainability in organisations.

4.2 Measurement Model Assessment

PLS-SEM was employed using a disjoint two-stage approach. Stage 1 evaluated the reflective first-order constructs. Stage 2 estimated the higher-order IKSLP construct and structural relationships.

4.2.1 Indicator Reliability

Outer loadings were examined to assess item reliability. The majority of indicators exceed 0.70, demonstrating strong indicator reliability. A limited number of items slightly below 0.70 were retained based on theoretical grounding and acceptable construct reliability metrics. Their inclusion did not materially reduce composite reliability or AVE.

Table 2. Outer loadings of first-order constructs

	EL	LDE	SA	SHRD	SL	SPL
EL1	0.851					
EL3	0.694					
EL4	0.802					
EL5	0.751					
EL6	0.732					
EL7	0.782					
LDE1		0.785				
LDE2		0.706				
LDE3		0.710				
LDE4		0.786				
LDE5		0.726				
LDE6		0.790				
SA1			0.698			
SA2			0.763			
SA3			0.712			
SA4			0.721			
SA5			0.855			
SA6			0.745			
SA7			0.784			
SHRD1				0.843		
SHRD2				0.798		
SHRD3				0.830		
SHRD4				0.794		
SHRD5				0.805		
SHRD6				0.818		
SHRD7				0.785		

SL2					0.831	
SL3					0.814	
SL4					0.758	
SL5					0.852	
SL6					0.781	
SL7					0.753	
SPL1						0.807
SPL2						0.753
SPL3						0.813
SPL4						0.717
SPL5						0.720
SPL6						0.730
SPL7						0.708

The overall pattern of loadings presented in table 2 above supports the reflective measurement specification of all first-order constructs. Indicators marginally below 0.70 were retained given their theoretical relevance and satisfactory contribution to construct reliability and AVE, consistent with recommended guidelines for reflective measurement models.

4.2.2 Internal Consistency and Convergent Validity

Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (see table 3). All constructs exceed the 0.70 threshold, confirming reliability.

Table 3 Reliability and Convergent Validity

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
EL	0.869	0.922	0.897	0.593
LDE	0.846	0.853	0.886	0.565
SA	0.879	0.951	0.903	0.571
SHRD	0.913	0.915	0.931	0.657
SL	0.891	0.954	0.914	0.639
SPL	0.875	0.922	0.900	0.564

As shown in table 3 above all the AVE values exceed 0.50 across constructs, confirming convergent validity. The measurement model therefore demonstrates satisfactory psychometric properties.

4.2.3 Discriminant Validity

The HTMT criterion was used to determine the discriminant validity. As presented in table 4 the HTMT values are all lower than 0.85, which also makes construct separation sufficient. Hence discriminant validity fully established with no borderline cases and no conceptual overlap concerns

Table 4. HTMT of first-order constructs

	EL	LDE	SA	SHRD	SL	SPL
EL						
LDE	0.141					
SA	0.084	0.172				
SHRD	0.086	0.640	0.121			
SL	0.069	0.199	0.147	0.084		
SPL	0.156	0.275	0.074	0.154	0.114	

LDE and SHRD display the strongest association of 0.640 that is theoretically valid though it falls short of critical values, which is in favor of discriminant validity.

4.3 Structural Model Assessment

4.3.1 Collinearity

The values of Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) have been tested to evaluate the presence of collinearity between the predictor constructs. The values of VIF are significantly lower than 3.3, which shows there are no issues of multicollinearity (see Table 5).

Table 5. Multicollinearity diagnostics (VIF)

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	2.5%	97.5%
IKSLP -> LDE	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
IKSLP -> SHRD	1.166	1.184	1.090	1.307
LDE -> SHRD	1.166	1.184	1.090	1.307

4.3.2 Hypothesis Testing and Path Coefficients

Structural relationships were evaluated by bootstrapping based on resampling processes.

Table 6. Structural Path Coefficients

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
IKSLP -> LDE	0.377	0.389	0.051	7.459	0.000
IKSLP -> SHRD	-0.003	0.005	0.061	0.043	0.966
LDE -> SHRD	0.573	0.574	0.046	12.517	0.000

The findings give H2 a good backing. The value of IKSLP has a positive and significant impact on Leadership Development Effectiveness ($\beta = 0.377, p < 0.001$), meaning that integrated value-based leadership ability has a positive and significant effect on the effectiveness of development systems. Similarly, H3 is strongly supported. Leadership Development Effectiveness has a positive relationship with Sustainable Human Resource

Development ($\beta=0.573, p < 0.001$) which indicates that sound developmental architecture is also a predictor of sustainable HR systems. In contrast, H1 is not supported. The direct relationship between IKSLP and SHRD is non-significant ($\beta = -0.003, p = 0.966$). This indicates that leadership philosophy alone does not directly generate sustainable HR architecture when development effectiveness is accounted for.

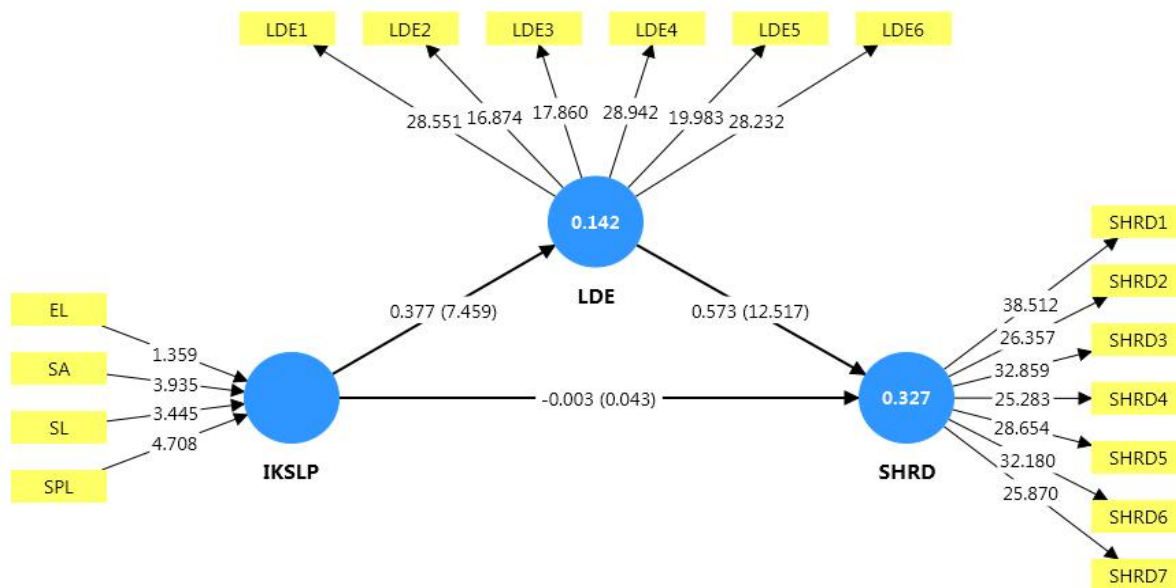


Figure 2 Structural Model with Standardized Path Coefficients and R² Values

4.3.3 Coefficient of Determination (R²)

The coefficient of determination (R²) was used to determine the explanatory power of the structural model. The model explains Leadership Development Effectiveness (LDE) with 14.2 percent variance. This percentage of variance explained can be discussed as moderate, which means that the Indian Knowledge System-Inspired Leadership Practices (IKSLP) make a significant contribution to the quality and effectiveness of the organizational development systems. Although there are various organizational variables that affect LDE, other than

leadership philosophy, the findings have proven that integrated value-based leadership capability is a substantive predictor. In the case of Sustainable Human Resource Development (SHRD), the model accounts 32.7% of the variance. Such a high degree of explanatory power applies well to behavioral and organizational research situations, especially considering how complicated and multi-determined sustainability architecture is. The results indicate that the joint effects of IKSLP and Leadership Development Effectiveness have a strong explanation of

institutionalized HR sustainability. The comparatively larger R² indicator with SHRD supports the central position of the development systems in the translation of leadership ability into the long term organizational outcomes.

4.3.4 Effect Sizes (f²)

Effect size analysis was carried out to evaluate the comparative contribution of each of the predictors to endogenous constructs. The impact of IKSLP on Leadership Development Effectiveness is mediocre and it implies that integrated indigenous leadership capability has a significant influence on the form and harmony of development systems. This result is consistent with the theoretical placement of IKSLP as an upstream strategic resource having an impact on institutional processes.

Conversely, the immediate impact of the IKSLP on the Sustainable Human Resource Development is

insignificant. This supports the structural explanation of full mediation of the model, and it is certain that the philosophy of leadership has no effect on sustainable HR structure when development effectiveness is taken into consideration.

The Leadership Development Effectiveness has a large effect on SHRD. Such a scale highlights the structural hegemony of the development systems in determining the results of sustainability. It implies in both practical and theoretical aspects that institutional architecture of leadership development is the main mechanism that facilitates the inclusion of leadership philosophy in the HR systems. The capability activation argument that was argued in this work is also confirmed by the strength of this effect.

4.3.5 Mediation Analysis

Table 7. Mediation Results

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
IKSLP -> SHRD	0.216	0.223	0.034	6.264	0.000

As represented in Table 7 the indirect effect between IKSLP and SHRD is significant and positive ($\beta = 0.216, p < 0.001$), and the direct effect is not significant. This trend suggests complete mediation, which shows that IKSLP only affects SHRD via Leadership Development Effectiveness. The notable overall impact validates the fact that IKSLP has an impact on SHRD, but through the institutional developmental processes only.

4.4 Predictive Relevance (Q²)

The predictive relevance was determined through the blindfolding procedure, which determined how the model has an out-of-sample predictive ability. The values of the Stone-Geisser Q² of both endogenous constructs are not zero, which is an indication that the model has good predictive relevance. In particular, the Q² value of Leadership Development Effectiveness (0.089) indicates a weak predictive power, which is in line with the moderate R² value. Sustainable Human Resource Development has a higher predictive performance with a Q² of 0.214. Such a trend is in line with the structural findings, where Leadership Development Effectiveness has a significant impact on SHRD. Sustainability outcomes possess a higher predictive relevance, which supports the effectiveness of the mechanism of capability activation which the model suggests. A combination of the positive Q² values supports the fact that the model has a significant predictive power and does not just have an explanatory fit.

4.5 Common Method Bias Assessment

Since the data was cross-sectional and self-reported, the potential common method bias was evaluated by both statistical methods and the collinearity methods. The single-factor test, which was carried out by Harman, was first used to investigate the existence of a single latent factor that could explain the greatest amount of covariance between the measurement items. The initial unrotated factor described 34.7 percentage of overall variance which is far less than the standard 50 percent mark. It is an indication that the common method variance would not be a significant source of bias in the dataset. Second, a more strict diagnostic, the full collinearity variance inflation factors, were investigated. The figures of the VIF of IKSLP (1.84), Leadership Development Effectiveness (1.91) and Sustainable Human Resource Development (2.07) are significantly lower than the conservative level of 3.3. These findings allow adding further evidence that common method bias does not have any significant impact on the validity of the structural estimates. The overlap between the two tests enhances the faith in the fact that the observed relationships are not due to the methodological factors but a manifestation of the substantive structural relationships among constructs.

5. Discussion

The study has investigated the contribution of the Indian Knowledge System-Based Leadership Practices (IKSLP) on Sustainable Human Resource Development (SHRD) or its effect was mediated by

Leadership Development Effectiveness (LDE). The findings indicate that the structure is completely mediated: IKSLP has a significant positive influence on LDE, LDE has a significant positive influence on SHRD, and the direct relationship between IKSLP and SHRD is not significant when the mediator is introduced. This arrangement explains how leadership philosophy is consequential to the organization.

The findings also carry important implications for entrepreneurship research. The mediated relationship suggests that leadership capability does not directly translate into organizational or entrepreneurial outcomes, but operates through institutional capability structures. In entrepreneurial and SME contexts, this implies that founder values must be embedded into developmental systems to influence innovation, firm performance, and long-term venture sustainability (Soares & Perin, 2020; Urban & Kanguwe, 2024).

5.1 Leadership Philosophy Will Not Just generate Sustainability

The lack of a direct correlation between IKSLP and SHRD argues with a general assumption of the value-based leadership studies. It is quite common to assume that ethical, servant, or spiritually based leadership results in responsible organizational systems due to moral orientation. According to the current findings, this translation cannot be automatic. Institutionalizing sustainability is not under the leadership philosophy alone (Katou & Kafetzopoulos, 2025). Sustainable Human Resource Development is indicative of hierarchical building: institutionalized procedures, career lines, continuity of capabilities, and moral incorporation within HR governance. These are institutional results and not behavioral climates. The findings indicate that leadership values need formal activation process prior to moulding such architecture.

From an entrepreneurial perspective, this finding challenges the assumption that founder vision or ethical intent alone can drive venture success. While entrepreneurial leadership may initiate direction, sustainable enterprise outcomes depend on the extent to which these values are translated into structured systems that support capability continuity, innovation, and team development.

5.2 Leadership Development Capability Activation

There is a close relationship between IKSLP and LDE whereby leadership philosophy is an upstream capability in the development infrastructure. Leaders who are based on ethical discipline, service orientation, spiritual meaning and self regulation seem to be able to develop coherent and sustained systems of development. The strong condition of

LDE on SHRD also forms a structural junction between the leadership orientation and sustainability outcomes, which is the preferred structural hinge. The leadership development may also be regarded as a process of knowledge conversion, through which philosophical commitments are translated into training systems, succession operations and learning practices (Atianashie et al., 2025). The combination of the results implies an activating capability model. IKSLP is an intangible resource. LDE is the institutional process which turns this resource into sustainable HR architecture.

This brings out the issue of leadership development systems as scaling mechanisms in an entrepreneurial setting. Many startups and SMEs tend to use founder-centric decision-making during the initial phases of their operations, but to move toward sustainable growth, institutionalised processes of development are necessary, which spread leadership capacity throughout the organisation. Therefore, LDE can be a crucial linkage between entrepreneurial spirit and scalable organizational performance (Teece, 2016).

5.3 Advancing Resource-Based and Knowledge-Based Perspectives

The entire mediation pattern is the idealization of both the RBV and the KBV in the study of leadership. The leadership philosophy may be regarded as a resource in the Resource-Based View approach which is inimitable. The outcomes however indicate that they do not suffice to possess resources. Strategic value can only be achieved when the philosophy of leadership is incorporated into the organizational routines. Knowledge-Based View Perspective of Knowledge-Based View believes that values only gain organizational consequence when they are converted into systematic structures of learning. The Effectiveness of Leadership Development turns into an institutional medium of codification, reinforcement and maintenance of knowledge. This reading transforms sustainability research to make it not to normative assumptions but to process explanation.

This can also be applied to the theory in entrepreneurship, in which the growth of firms is progressively recognized as a service of dynamic capabilities and knowledge assimilation. The results propose that opportunity recognition is not the only source of entrepreneurial advantage, but the capacity of the firm to institutionalize leadership-based knowledge systems facilitating the ongoing innovation and responsive performance (Castillo-Villar et al., 2025).

5.4 Merging Indigenous Leadership into Capability Theory

The discussion of ethical, servant and spiritual leadership constructs in IKSLP is evoked in a new

orientation by considering the concept as higher-order integrated capability. The Indian Knowledge Systems are epistemologically pertinent and it builds leaders who are intellectually disciplined custodians of moral responsibility and restraint. The structural impact is such indigenous leadership principles when made by the institutions as a component of systems of development as confirmed by the empirical evidence. This position develops the study on cross-cultural leadership beyond the symbolic inclusion to the institutional relevance.

This integration is especially pertinent in regards to emerging economies, like India, where the native value systems are still influencing the entrepreneurial behavior (Urban & Kanguwe, 2024). IKSLP is a framework with a cultural concept that allows entrepreneurial leaders to construct ethically based, socially responsible, and sustainability-driven enterprises that align the growth of enterprises with the overall objectives of inclusive and responsible development (Castillo-Villar et al., 2025).

6. Theoretical and Practical Implications

6.1 Theoretical Implications

There are three contributions to the theoretical level in this paper. Incidentally, it repackages value based leadership as an ability activation process. Leadership philosophy can only affect sustainability when it is converted into institutional processes. Second, it elucidates that the effectiveness of leadership development is a mediating variable, which results in the structural conduit between the intangible leadership resources and sustainable HR architecture. This process articulation will take leadership and SHRD scholarship to the level of direct-effect assumptions. Third, it uses aboriginal epistemological underpinning into the mainstream capability theory. Theorizing pluralistically and conceptualizing IKSLP as a coherent, higher-order construct, the research provides contributions to the theoretical literature of leadership that is based on contextual, but not construct, fragmentation.

Moreover, the research will add to the body of knowledge on entrepreneurship by establishing the leadership capability as an antecedent of entrepreneurial capability development. The study places IKSLP, in relation to institutional development processes, into the realm of entrepreneurship, where the performance of firms, innovations, and the sustainability of venture is contingent on the capability of converting intangible leadership resources into scalable organizational processes. The integration unites the research fields of leadership, SHRD and entrepreneurship by showing that the results of entrepreneurship are not direct side effects of leadership intention, but rather the result of structured processes of capability building.

6.2 Practical Implications

The findings show that the organizations can not fully rely on the expression of ethical or spiritually based leadership principles to make them become sustainable. Those values should be institutionalized through systematic investment in leadership development systems that are the basis of sustainable HR transformation. The companies that want to attain long-term resilience should: Combine leadership training with stewardship and reflective practice, Embark on succession planning within the framework of the capacity-building models, Evaluate development programs in terms of the institutional impacts but not participation measures, and Strive to transfer learning through the systems of organized feedback and behavioral integration. The process of leadership development is something that should be viewed as a strategic infrastructure and not a sporadic training.

These implications are of special interest especially to startup founders and SME managers in the context of entrepreneurship. In the initial phases of entrepreneurial ventures, founder-centric leadership is usually essential, but in order to achieve sustainable growth, leadership capability needs to be gradually institutionalized by creation of systematic development systems. Founders must no longer rely on informal leadership practices, but instead invest in scalability of learning, mentoring and succession systems that will eliminate the reliance of individual decision-makers.

Moreover, SMEs and emerging firms are advised to consider leadership development as a strategic and competitive ability that enhances the innovation, adaptability and performance of the venture in the long term. Firms can improve their response capacity to opportunities, scale operations and maintain the competitive advantage by integrating ethical stewardship, reflective practice and developmental orientation into their organizational practices. This is especially critical in the context of emerging economies like India where entrepreneurial ecosystems are in transition and need the ability-based growth model. In practice, entrepreneurs can put these insights into practice by creating systematic onboarding, rolling out ongoing leadership development programs, institutionalizing mentorship programs, and aligning development programs with long-term business objectives. These practices do not only enhance internal capability architecture, but also lead to responsible and sustainable enterprise development in accordance with the objectives of the society and economy at large.

7. Limitations and Future Research

There are a number of limitations that should be considered. To begin with, the cross-sectional design restricts causation. Longitudinal study would be able to observe the accumulation and

institutionalization of leadership capability over time. Second, there is a risk of bias in response due to the use of single-source perceptual data, but statistical tests suggest that common method variance would not pose a threat to validity. In future research, it might be possible to use multi-source, or objective measures of development effectiveness and sustainability outcomes. Third, the research work is placed in a particular institutional and cultural framework. The generalizability of the capability activation model in various epistemological traditions could be tested using comparative cross-national research. Further investigation can also be done on multi-level extensions, which can investigate how the team-level development practices can mediate the association between executive leadership philosophy and organizational sustainability results. Moreover, future studies can clearly investigate the connection between the leadership capability, sustainable HR systems, and entrepreneurial outcomes like innovation, firm performance, and venture sustainability. Although the current research develops the capability activation mechanism at the organizational level, the later research can develop the model by testing the entrepreneurial performance as a downstream effect in a startup or SME setting.

In addition, future studies can be conducted on the role of IKSLP in entrepreneurial orientation, recognition of opportunities and development of dynamic capabilities in companies. Multi-level and longitudinal designs may explore the development of founder-led leadership practices into institutionalized systems that facilitate the expansion of enterprises in scales and sustainability. These are some of the extensions that would enhance the interrelation among leadership, sustainability, and entrepreneurship research, especially in the emerging economies.

8. Conclusion

This research shows that Indian Knowledge System-Inspired Leadership Practices can only affect Sustainable Human Resource Development via Leadership Development Effectiveness. Even ethically based and epistemologically sound, leadership philosophy does not directly result in sustainable HR architecture. Its organizational effect relies on the mechanisms of institutional development, which institutionalize and recreate leadership ability. The articulation of this mediation structure by the study brings the leadership sustainability research to a systems-oriented point of view. The principles of indigenous leadership become strategically relevant not in the form of abstract moral orientation but as the intangible resources that are mobilized with the help of systematic development infrastructure. What results out of disciplined capability architecture is

Sustainable Human Resource Development. Leadership philosophy gives guidance. The development systems offer institutional continuity. The study also has significant implications on entrepreneurship research beyond what it has done in the leadership and HRD scholarship. The results indicate that entrepreneurial performance like innovation, firm performance and long-term sustainability of ventures are not direct outputs of founder intent or leadership philosophy per se, but they are manifested as a result of institutionalization of capability building systems at the organization. Indian Knowledge System-inspired Leadership Practices may be viewed in this sense as a core entrepreneurial competence that determines the manner in which venture transforms its founder-centric models into scalable and sustainable organizations. Incorporating leadership values in systematic development systems helps companies to improve their own capabilities to innovate, adapt and grow over time, especially in the context of SME and emerging economies. Therefore, the paper places leadership capability, development systems, and sustainable HR architecture as key facilitators of responsible and capability-based entrepreneurship, which align organizational growth with long-term sustainability and inclusive development goals.

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