

EXPLORING THE ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES POLICY IN SABAH

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the adoption and implementation of sustainable business practices in Sabah, Malaysia, in the context of the Sabah Maju Jaya (SMJ) Plan 1.0 (2021-2025) and the broader goals of sustainable development. The research develops a policy framework tailored to Sabah's unique environment, emphasizing the integration of environmental stewardship, economic growth, and social equity. By reviewing existing policies and comparing them with successful international frameworks, the study identifies gaps and opportunities for enhancing sustainability in Sabah's business sector. The findings highlight the importance of collaboration between government, industry, and local communities in overcoming economic, technological, cultural, and behavioral challenges. The proposed framework aims to foster a balanced approach to development that preserves natural resources while promoting economic resilience and social well-being. The study concludes with recommendations for strengthening Sabah's policy framework to support and reward sustainable business practices, ensuring long-term environmental and economic benefits for the state.

INTRODUCTION

Sabah, the second-largest state in Malaysia, located on Borneo Island, is known for its vast landscapes, ancient rainforests, and diverse

cultures. Despite its abundant resources and economic potential (Idris & Mansur, 2020; Tahang, 2024), the state faces challenges with a relatively low GDP and economic disparities (Huda et al., 2022). The 12th Malaysia Plan (2021-2025) emphasizes green growth, renewable energy, conservation, sustainable transportation, and social inclusivity. Central to Malaysia's economic strategy is the New Investment Policy, aimed at enhancing investment opportunities.

In response to these challenges, the Sabah state government has launched the "Sabah Maju Jaya" (SMJ) Plan 1.0 (2021-2025). This initiative focuses on strengthening the green economy and environmental sustainability across various sectors, including agriculture, industry, and tourism. The plan also emphasizes human capital development, welfare, infrastructure, and green sustainability to propel Sabah's long-term development. However, despite these efforts, there is a need for increased awareness and engagement among the populace, as evidenced by weak dissemination and enforcement. Therefore, in addition to long-term planning, short-term initiatives are essential to bridge this gap and achieve sustainable development goals effectively.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Sustainable Business Practices Policy in Sabah includes guidelines and regulations aimed at promoting environmentally friendly and socially responsible practices among businesses. This policy covers aspects such as waste management, energy efficiency, biodiversity conservation, social welfare, and ethical business conduct. Researchers like Zainal et al., (2020) have highlighted the importance of sustainable environmental quality, arguing that balanced development can help mitigate environmental disasters like floods, often caused by developers ignoring construction regulations.

The policy seeks to harmonize economic growth, environmental conservation, and social equity, contributing to Sabah's long-term sustainability and resilience (Mohamad Ridzuan et al., 2023). However, achieving sustainable development in Sabah requires addressing economic, social, political, and environmental dimensions, with the government playing a pivotal role in reshaping economies and reducing socioeconomic disparities (Daily Express, 2023). Ongoing discussions between stakeholders and the government emphasize the need for equitable progress (Datuk Seri Panglima Haji Hajji Bin Haji Noor, 2022). The Sabah State Government is committed to realizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), prioritizing environmental sustainability and the well-being of residents (Huda et al., 2022). Through proactive measures, the government aims to safeguard natural resources, promote sustainability, and enhance the quality of life for all Sabah residents.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research aims to develop a framework a policy framework for sustainable development practices in Sabah.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sustainable Development and Business Practices

Definition of Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is a strategy for progress that focuses on meeting the needs of the current generation while safeguarding the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Baker, 2022). This approach balances economic growth, social well-being, and environmental protection (Hirai, 2022) and has led over time to the dominance of the economic growth model. Whilst academic/ideological vigour, policy relevance and institutional support, together with

intellectual independence, are essential; too radical an alternative approach would be dismissed by mainstream opinion, either by design or neglect. To survive and to remain influential, any alternative requires the mainstream to engage with it for political feasibility. The development discourse has thus evolved through a delicate balancing act, acknowledging a need for a cautiously optimistic outlook. By tracing changes in two approaches to development (basic needs and human development, promoting long-term well-being, equity, and responsible resource management. Key principles guide sustainable development. Environmental stewardship involves actions that protect and restore ecosystems rather than harm them (Luederitz et al., 2013). Economic growth should benefit everyone and avoid increasing inequality or harming communities (Soubotina, 2004). Social justice is crucial, as sustainable development aims to create a just society where everyone has equal access to opportunities and rights (Langhelle, 2000). Additionally, the preservation of cultural diversity and heritage is an important aspect (Wulf, 2013).

Sustainable development emphasizes meeting both current and future needs, ensuring resources and opportunities for future generations. It also highlights collaboration and participation, with decision-making processes involving governments, businesses, and communities. In essence, sustainable development involves making decisions that protect the environment, promote fairness and equality, and consider the well-being of both present and future generations. It gained prominence following the Brundtland Report in 1987, which defined sustainable development as meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

At the end of 2015, the United Nations concluded the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which aimed to reduce poverty,

and introduced a more ambitious set of goals known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These 17 SDGs and 169 targets, adopted in September 2015, aim to eradicate poverty, combat inequality, and address climate change by 2030. The SDGs cover a broad range of topics, focusing on social, economic, and environmental aspects of sustainable development, as well as peace, justice, and effective institutions. They emphasize the need for collaboration, financial resources, technology, and capacity-building to achieve these objectives. Building on the progress and lessons learned from the MDGs, the SDGs continue the global effort to reduce extreme poverty, improve education, promote gender equality, reduce child and maternal mortality, combat diseases like malaria and HIV/AIDS, and foster global partnerships for development.



Figure 1: The seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Source: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2015/12/sustainable-development-goals-kick-off-with-start-of-new-year/>

The SDGs are expected to play a critical role in addressing disparities in progress across regions and countries and ensuring that no one falls behind. They address a wide range of issues, including poverty and hunger, as well as health, education, clean energy, climate action, and collaboration. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes the SDGs, is seen as inextricably linked to efforts such as the

Paris Climate Agreement. Individual countries bear primary responsibility for making these goals a reality, but international partnerships and collaboration are also required. Progress will be reviewed on a regular basis at both the regional and global levels to track accomplishments, identify challenges, and make necessary adjustments. This process aims to involve a wide range of stakeholders, including civil society, businesses, and interest groups, to ensure that the SDGs are effectively pursued.

The Importance of Sustainable Business Practices.

The United Nations concluded the 15-year cycle of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which aimed to combat poverty, at the end of 2015, and introduced a more ambitious set of goals to address a variety of social problems by 2030. The Millennium Sustainable Development Goals include these new objectives. The world's leaders met in September 2015 and unanimously agreed to adopt these new goals, known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Within the next 15 years, 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets have been established with the goal of eradicating poverty, combating inequality, and addressing climate change.



Figure 2: Millennium Development Goals

Source: <https://www.mdgmonitor.org/outline-of-the-mdgs-notable-challenges/>

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasize social, economic, and environmental aspects of sustainable

development, as well as aspects of peace, justice, and effective institutions. They cover a wide range of subjects and topics. They emphasize the importance of collaboration, financial resources, technological advancements, and capacity-building activities in achieving these goals.

The MDGs' progress and lessons learned will serve as the foundation for the SDGs. Despite the fact that not all of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were met on a global scale, significant progress was made in a number of key areas. These included reducing extreme poverty, improving education, promoting gender equality, lowering child and maternal mortality, combating diseases such as malaria and HIV/AIDS, and forging global partnerships.

The Sustainable Development Goals are expected to play a significant role in addressing the disparities in progress seen across regions and countries, as well as ensuring that no one falls behind. They cover a wide range of issues, from poverty and hunger to health and education, as well as collaboration, clean energy, and climate change action. The achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, is seen as being inextricably linked to other initiatives, such as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Adopting sustainable business practises has numerous positive consequences. To begin, sustainable businesses put their employees' and suppliers' well-being first, ensuring equitable wages, respectful treatment, and safe working conditions. This method improves workplace safety and job satisfaction. Second, by conserving resources and reducing pollution, these practises help to protect the environment. Utilizing renewable energy sources and implementing recycling programmes reduce carbon footprints and contribute to climate change mitigation. Third,

socially responsible businesses give back to their communities by supporting education, healthcare, and poverty alleviation, which fosters trust and goodwill in the community. Finally, sustainable practises reduce costs by reducing resource consumption, waste generation, and energy consumption, ultimately leading to increased profitability. Businesses that embrace sustainability actively contribute to a better future and environmental well-being.

Incorporating sustainability into business operations involves proactive steps. Businesses can adopt various measures to enhance their sustainable practices. Firstly, conducting sustainability audits allows for identification of improvement areas and the setting of measurable goals. Secondly, adopting green energy solutions, like solar or wind power, aids in reducing carbon emissions and energy costs. Thirdly, implementing recycling programs minimizes waste and encourages the use of reusable products. Fourthly, businesses can use sustainable materials for their products and packaging, reducing ecological impact. Fifthly, promoting eco-friendly practices through awareness campaigns, training, and incentives creates a culture of sustainability. Sixthly, collaborating with suppliers who share sustainability values contributes to sustainable supply chains. Seventhly, strategies such as installing water-saving fixtures and fixing leaks help reduce water consumption. Eighthly, adopting sustainable transportation options like carpooling and public transport curbs transportation emissions. Lastly, participating in environmental initiatives and collaborating with other businesses promotes sustainability on a broader scale.

There are numerous advantages to incorporating sustainability into business practises. To begin with, cost savings are realised through reduced resource consumption, energy consumption, and waste disposal expenses. Second, putting sustainability first improves brand reputation and attracts loyal

customers. Finally, increased profitability is the result of efficiency gains. Fourth, governments provide tax breaks for environmentally friendly practises, which contributes to financial gains. Fifth, sustainability promotes a positive work culture, which leads to higher job satisfaction and lower turnover costs. Sixth, regulatory compliance keeps fines and penalties at bay. Finally, the appeal of sustainable practises to conscientious consumers and investors facilitates access to new markets. The long-term benefits of sustainable practises outweigh the initial costs, with businesses worldwide experiencing tangible benefits.



Figure 3: The six Sustainable Business Value (SBV) dimensions.

Source: (Buchholz et al., 2020)

Sustainable business practices are no longer an option. They are a requirement for companies seeking to thrive in an ever-changing business landscape. Sustainability benefits go beyond environmental stewardship to include cost savings, brand enhancement, innovation, and employee satisfaction. Organizations that embrace these practices will be well-positioned to create long-term value for themselves, their stakeholders, and the planet as sustainability becomes a cornerstone of responsible business. Businesses that reap the benefits of sustainable practices demonstrate their commitment to a brighter, more equitable future.

METHODOLOGY

To develop a policy framework for sustainable business practices in Sabah, a comprehensive review of the existing Sabah Development

Blueprints was conducted. This review involved analysing key policy documents, including the Sabah Maju Jaya (SMJ) Plan 1.0, as well as other relevant state and national development plans and guidelines. The review process began with identifying and gathering relevant documents, followed by a detailed content analysis to extract themes, goals, and strategies related to sustainable development and business practices. The study examined how these policies address environmental stewardship, economic growth, social equity, and cultural preservation. The findings were compared with best practices and successful frameworks from other regions or countries that have implemented sustainable business practices. This comparative analysis allowed for the identification of gaps, challenges, and opportunities within the existing policies in Sabah.

Based on these insights, a policy framework tailored to Sabah's unique context was developed, focusing on promoting sustainable business practices that align with the state's long-term development goals. The framework emphasizes collaboration between government, businesses, and communities, ensuring that economic growth benefits everyone while preserving the environment and cultural heritage for future generations.

FINDINGS

Policy Framework for Sustainable Business Practices in Sabah

Developing a comprehensive set of government initiatives, policies, environmental regulations and standards, incentives, and supports with the goals of fostering economic growth, reducing adverse environmental effects, upholding social responsibility, and sustaining business practices is the process that establishes a policy framework for Sabah. In addition to addressing these issues, a well-crafted policy framework can promote long-term prosperity.

Government Initiative and Policies

The governance of Sabah is composed of three levels: the federal, the state, and the local level, with the Dewan Bandaraya Kota Kinabalu serving as the head of the local government. Since independence, policies have been developed at the federal level and then gradually made their way down to the state and local levels. On the other hand, this method from the top down might not be the best option because it bypasses the unique demands of every state. In light of this, there is a growing need for a bottom-up approach, in which local governments would play a vital role in the process of developing and regulating policies, especially in dealing with the business community.

Local governments, due to their proximity, possess an in-depth understanding of the challenges and opportunities encountered by the local business environment in Sabah or any other states. They establish close ties with local businesses and are more adept at adapting policies to meet their specific needs. It is essential for both state and local governments to implement proactive strategies to create a favourable economic climate in Sabah, with assistance from the federal government. The primary emphasis should be on developing policies that are conducive to business and appeal to both domestic and foreign investors. Streamlining administrative obstacles is crucial in order to empower local governments to promptly address the demands of the business community and promote the ingress of investors. Through the optimization of procedures and the reduction of bureaucratic processes, local governments can accelerate the development and expansion of businesses in Sabah.

While it's clear that every government is looking to attract investors and businesses, it's important to maintain a balance by implementing sustainable practices. Most investors are required to invest their funds

into countries or states that demonstrated environmental responsibility, thus this is crucial. It's imperative that local governments in Sabah receive adequate funding to invest in research and development (R&D), particularly directed towards advancing green technologies, fostering the production of eco-friendly products, and promoting sustainable manufacturing processes. This investment will not only contribute to environmental preservation but also stimulate economic growth by positioning Sabah as a hub for sustainable innovation in the region.

Additionally, the federal government should play a pivotal role by offering incentives such as tax breaks, grants, and subsidies to businesses that embrace innovative solutions aimed at reducing their environmental footprint. These incentives would encourage companies operating in Sabah to prioritize sustainability in their operations, thereby contributing to the overall environmental goals of the state and nation. Moreover, fostering collaboration between academia, industry, and government agencies is essential for facilitating the transfer of knowledge and diffusion of technology in Sabah. By fostering partnerships and encouraging information sharing, Sabah can leverage the expertise of its academic institutions, the ingenuity of its industries, and the resources of its government agencies to drive sustainable development forward. This collaborative approach will foster a dynamic ecosystem where ideas can flourish, innovations can be implemented, and the benefits of sustainable practices can be realized across various sectors of the economy in Sabah.

Environmental Regulations and Standards

In Sabah, the implementation of severe environmental regulations is absolutely necessary in order to protect the state's abundant biodiversity and natural environments. To begin, it is of the utmost need to put stringent rules on activities such

as logging, mining, and agricultural practices in order to prevent deforestation and the destruction of habitat. Considering the extensive rainforests and different ecosystems that Sabah is home to, unrestrained logging and mining might cause catastrophic harm to these rich resources, which would ultimately result in the loss of habitat and the extinction of species. With the implementation of regulations that restrict the scope and intensity of these activities, Sabah will be able to protect its natural heritage for the benefit of future generations while also ensuring that its forest and land resources are utilized in a sustainable manner.

Furthermore, it is essential to implement environmental impact assessments (EIAs) for all significant development attempts in order to assess potential ecological implications prior to construction or expansion. Particular ecosystems in Sabah are tremendously sensitive to disturbances; consequently, any extensive development attempt possesses the capacity to inflict substantial environmental damage. Policymakers are able to evaluate the possible effects of proposed projects on soil integrity, water quality, and biodiversity by conducting thorough EIAs. This enables them to make well-informed decisions and execute appropriate mitigation strategies in order to reduce the severity of any negative impacts.

Furthermore, establishing limits on waste generation, water consumption, and carbon emissions is crucial for addressing climate change and mitigating the damage to the environment in Sabah. Sabah, being a region exceptionally prone to the consequences of climate change including irregular precipitation patterns and warmer temperatures, is obligated to implement proactive strategies for carbon footprint reduction and water resource preservation. Sabah can promote the use of cleaner production processes, enhance resource efficiency, and reduce pollution levels by businesses and industries through the implementation of explicit regulations

accompanied by sanctions for non-compliance. This would effectively support the region's general environmental sustainability objectives.

Conservation is essential for Sabah's biodiversity and vulnerable ecosystems. First, protected areas, wildlife corridors, and buffer zones are essential to protecting regional ecosystems and biodiversity hotspots. Wildlife in Sabah includes endangered species like orangutans and pygmy elephants, which need pristine habitats. Sabah can preserve its ecosystems and maintain its unique species by creating protected areas and wildlife corridors and buffer zones. Furthermore, it is crucial to advocate for reforestation and afforestation initiatives in Sabah in order to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change and restore degraded landscapes. The extent of forest cover in Sabah has been drastically reduced due to deforestation and land degradation, resulting in soil erosion, biodiversity loss, and increased carbon emissions. Sabah can bolster carbon sequestration, restore degraded habitats, and increase ecosystem resilience to climate change through the implementation of sustainable forestry practices and tree planting initiatives. These endeavours not only serve to preserve the environment but also afford economic prospects for nearby communities by means of sustainable forest administration and ecotourism endeavours.

Sabah can protect its natural heritage, mitigate the effects of climate change, and advance sustainable development, which is advantageous for people as well as businesses, by implementing these conservation measures. Sustaining these efforts and assuring a sustainable future for the ecosystems and biodiversity of Sabah necessitates the active participation and cooperation of government agencies, local communities, and stakeholders. Moreover, Sabah can also achieve a harmonious coexistence of economic growth and environmental preservation, thereby safeguarding the long-term sustainability of

its unique ecosystems and promoting the well-being of its people and business industry.

Incentives and Support for Sustainable Business Practices.

Promoting sustainable business practices in Sabah requires the introduction of incentives and support, both of which are vital for nurturing a thriving and sustainable business environment. These initiatives provide businesses with a range of customised benefits and assistance to persuade business communities to implement sustainable practices. To begin with, financial incentives are of paramount importance in stimulating businesses to adopt sustainable practices. Sabah's government may offer tax incentives, grants, subsidies, or low-interest loans to businesses that exhibit a steadfast dedication to sustainable operations. These incentives can assist in mitigating the initial expenses associated with the adoption of environmentally conscious technologies, processes, and initiatives, thereby enhancing the financial viability of sustainability for organisations of varying scales. In addition, regulatory incentives that recompense businesses that meet or surpass sustainability standards or objectives may be adopted. One potential incentive for businesses to comply with environmental regulations or attain specific sustainability certifications in Sabah would be expedited permit approvals or reduced regulatory burdens. By means of optimising regulatory procedures and offering concrete advantages, Sabah has the ability to motivate businesses to give priority to sustainability in their business activities.

Furthermore, technical assistance programmes and capacity-building initiatives can offer significant assistance to businesses aiming to implement sustainable practices. Sabah could allocate resources towards the provision of advisory services, training programmes, and seminars that assist businesses in acquiring the requisite

knowledge, competencies, and expertise to successfully execute sustainability endeavours. Sabah can enable businesses to surmount obstacles to sustainability and expedite the adoption of environmentally conscious business practices by granting them access to knowledge, resources, and specialist knowledge. Support from the public and marketing can motivate business communities to show their dedication to sustainability. Sabah has the capacity to implement certifications, awards, or labelling initiatives to differentiate businesses that demonstrate exceptional sustainability performance. Furthermore, by means of marketing campaigns, eco-tourism initiatives, and participation in sustainable trade fairs and exhibitions, the government could bolster the local and global visibility and reputation of sustainable businesses.

To run a sustainable business in Sabah, the government must meticulously reconcile economic growth with conservation goals. This can only be done by managing your resources properly. Given that Sabah has a wide range of landscapes and numerous biodiversity forests, it is very important to prioritise the use of sustainable land-use planning methods. It is important to carefully manage these areas so that ecosystems stay healthy over time and the economy grows. The state of Sabah can protect its natural resources and encourage sustainable economic activities by putting in place land-use plans that put protection areas first, support long-term forestry practices, and support smart city growth. It is also important to give businesses community benefits and help them adopt sustainable practices. By improving regulatory frameworks, giving economic incentives, supporting capacity-building programmes, and publicly recognising sustainable efforts, Sabah can move its economy towards one that is more resilient and eco-friendlier. This method not only helps businesses, but it also helps protect the environment and encourages long-term growth in the area. By incorporating these elements into a cohesive policy framework,

Sabah has the potential to foster sustainable business practices that achieve a harmonious equilibrium between social equity and environmental preservation, thereby guaranteeing a more robust and prosperous future for present and future generations.

Challenges in Adopting Sustainable Business Practices in Sabah

a. Economic Challenges

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Sabah frequently face challenges due to their restricted financial resources, which might impede their capacity to engage in sustainable practices. Small and medium-sized enterprises in Sabah frequently encounter challenges when trying to secure funding for their sustainability projects. Ambad et al. (2020) reported that small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Sabah encounter obstacles such as restricted financing options and elevated operational expenses, hindering their ability to invest in sustainability projects.

Sustainable practices may sometimes incur higher costs compared to conventional practices (Vorisek and Yu, 2020). One of the reasons sustainable alternatives can be more expensive is the higher initial investment required. For example, transitioning to renewable energy sources like solar or wind power may involve significant upfront costs for purchasing and installing the necessary infrastructure. Similarly, implementing eco-friendly manufacturing processes or investing in sustainable supply chains often requires capital-intensive upgrades to equipment and facilities.

The demand for sustainable products and services in Sabah's market is not well established, which can pose challenges for businesses looking to invest in sustainability. One reason for the lack of market acceptance of sustainable products and services in Sabah is the low level of consumer awareness. Many consumers may not fully

understand the environmental impact of their purchasing decisions or may not be aware of sustainable alternatives available in the market. Without a clear understanding of the benefits of sustainable products, consumers may continue to prioritize factors such as price and convenience over sustainability considerations. Sabah is a region where many consumers are price-sensitive, particularly in rural areas where income levels may be lower. Sustainable products and services often come with a premium price tag due to higher production costs or investments in eco-friendly technologies. As a result, consumers may be reluctant to pay a premium for sustainable products, especially if they perceive little immediate benefit from doing so.

b. Technological Challenges

Access to sustainable technologies and expertise may be limited in Sabah, particularly in rural areas where infrastructure development is less advanced (Fang et al., 2015). Implementing sustainable technologies requires specialized knowledge and skills. However, there may be a shortage of technical expertise in rural areas of Sabah to install, operate, and maintain these technologies effectively. This lack of local expertise can hinder the adoption and sustainability of technological solutions.

Inadequate infrastructure, such as waste management facilities or renewable energy grids, can pose challenges to implementing sustainable practices effectively. Many areas in Sabah lack proper waste collection and disposal infrastructure, leading to issues such as illegal dumping, open burning, and uncontrolled landfilling. This inadequate infrastructure exacerbates environmental pollution and public health risks. Dusim (2021) brought to light that Kota Kinabalu's current solid waste management policy is notably deficient, particularly concerning proper waste disposal practices. (The National Solid Waste Management Department's, 2013) report on "Survey on Solid Waste Composition, Characteristics, and Existing Practice of Solid

Waste Recycling in Malaysia" indicates that household recycling in Sabah lags behind other states, making it the lowest in Malaysia and consequently contributing to the nation's overall lower recycling rate. Moreover, Dusim (2021b) noted the absence of specific by-laws in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, mandating waste separation by the public up to the present day.

c. Cultural and Behavioural Challenges Technological.

Limited awareness and education about sustainability issues can also impede the adoption of sustainable business practices in Sabah. Without a clear understanding of the benefits of sustainability or the consequences of unsustainable practices, businesses may struggle to prioritize sustainability in their operations.

Traditional practices deeply rooted in Sabahan culture may pose challenges to the adoption of sustainable business practices. Implementing sustainable business practices in Sabah requires a deep understanding of the local culture and a sensitive approach that respects and integrates traditional knowledge and practices where possible. Insensitivity or disregard for cultural values can lead to friction and resistance from communities. There may also be differences in attitudes towards sustainability between older generations, who may be more rooted in traditional ways, and younger generations who may be more open to new ideas and approaches. Bridging this generational gap and fostering dialogue between different age groups is essential for effective change.

Consumer preferences and behaviours play a significant role in driving demand for sustainable products and services. Changing consumer behaviour is difficult, especially when habits are deeply ingrained, or convenience is prioritized over sustainability. Additionally, consumer preferences may vary widely, making it challenging for businesses to develop sustainable products that appeal to a broad audience.

CONCLUSION

Finally, the study of the adoption and implementation of Sustainable Business Practices Policy in Sabah provides a complete examination of the potential and obstacles associated with transitioning to sustainable development. Sabah, with its rich biodiversity and unique ecosystems, is at a crossroads where the adoption of green technologies, sustainable agriculture, effective waste management, and eco-friendly tourism practices can significantly improve environmental conservation efforts while also promoting economic growth.

The findings highlight the significance of a collaborative strategy involving government, industry, academia, and local communities in overcoming the economic, technological, cultural, and behavioural barriers to sustainable practices. The importance of government initiatives, laws, environmental legislation, and incentives adapted to Sabah's specific context is emphasised in order to encourage businesses to incorporate sustainability as a core aspect of their operations.

Furthermore, the importance of technology advances and breakthroughs in promoting sustainability cannot be emphasised. Access to sustainable technology, together with infrastructure development and skill building, can help to close the gap between present practices and the intended sustainable outcomes. It is clear that building a sustainable corporate culture, backed up by a supportive policy framework and community participation, may result in major environmental and economic benefits for Sabah.

To move forward, it is advised that Sabah increase its efforts to develop a strong policy framework that not only supports but also rewards sustainable economic practices. This includes creating more targeted incentives, providing technical and financial support to

SMEs, and promoting sustainable tourism and agriculture as key growth industries. Furthermore, increasing awareness and education about the benefits of sustainability, integrating traditional knowledge with modern practices, and strengthening public-private partnerships will be critical to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and ensuring the long-term resilience of Sabah's economy and natural heritage.

In summary, Sabah's shift to sustainable business practices provides a unique chance to balance economic development and environmental stewardship. By embracing sustainability, Sabah can safeguard its natural resources, promote social fairness, and ensure a successful future for future generations. The path to sustainability is hard and needs collaborative efforts, but the potential benefits for Sabah's environment, society, and economy are enormous and well worth the effort.

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