

INFLUENCE OF IDEATION ON ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY OF TEXTILE INDUSTRY IN RIFT VALLEY REGION, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The textile industry is increasingly recognized as a key pillar in achieving Kenya's Big Four Agenda and Vision 2030. However, these firms face the challenge of maintaining competitiveness in a rapidly changing global landscape. To thrive in the evolving market, Kenyan textile firms must embrace innovation across all stages but there remains a gap in understanding how to successfully integrate innovation for sustainable performance. This study aimed to examine the influence of ideation on the organizational sustainability of textile companies in the Rift Valley region. Guided by the resource-based view theory, the study employed a cross-sectional survey research design, targeting 14 textile manufacturing companies. A census method was used to select 61 managers, while 12 key informants were purposively chosen from innovation-leaning institutions in the region. Data was collected through questionnaires and interviews. Questionnaire data was analysed using frequencies, mean, standard deviation, and linear regression method while qualitative data was analysed using the thematic technique. Findings indicated that ideation significantly influences organizational sustainability, accounting for 44.7% of variance. The study concludes that to effectively promote organizational sustainability, firms in the Rift Valley textile industry should enhance ideation. The study recommends that policymakers and industry practitioners should foster stakeholder engagement through frameworks encouraging diverse perspectives and invest in employee training.

Keywords: *Ideation, Innovation, Textile, Organizational Sustainability*

1. INTRODUCTION

Building a stable and resilient future for mankind requires pursuing the goal of sustainable development (Moallemi et al., 2020). The sustainability of commercial organizations, which are essential to preserving economic stability, is the specific focus of this study. These companies produce revenue, broaden the tax base, add employment opportunities, and support general economic growth. A global challenge to achieve sustainability is highlighted by the alarming statistics on low business survival rates across generations. It is estimated that less

than 30% of firms survive to the second generation, 13% survive to third generation, while only 3% survive past the fourth generation (Farida & Setiawan, 2022). The lifespan of businesses is also dropping rapidly from an average of 35 years in the 1970 to about 20 years in 2021 (Warain, 2021). These statistics are an indication of the growing complexities of the business environment characterized by rapid technological advancement, shifting consumer preferences, increased competition and heightened environment and social scrutiny that have diminished business's ability to sustain operations.

The low survival rates among enterprises have implications not only for individual companies but also for society at large, with reduced shareholder value and job losses (Ahmad et al., 2019; Nnabuike & Onwuzuligbo, 2015). Firms play an important role in shaping the economic activities, social dynamics, political structures, and cultural values in a society (Pineda, 2022). Companies are the engines of value creation that contribute to the development of modern economies. Consequently, high mortality rate of companies is a major cause for concerns among development scholars and practitioners. The closure of firms leads to job losses that increase unemployment rate resulting in challenges that lower the quality of life in a society like high crime and poverty rates (Salimi & Vraiwdeunt, 2025). Unemployment is also associated with deteriorated health, proliferation of slums and low-quality housing, malnutrition and food insecurity among other aspects of human development (Azubuike et al., 2024). It is therefore paramount for development practitioners to ensure that businesses operating in given industry or economy survive for as long as possible.

The textile sector remains a vital engine of national growth, often serving as the foundation for countries engaged in export-oriented industrialization. Its emphasis on labour-intensive production techniques and low fixed costs are credited for this (Gereffi & Frederick, 2017). Globally, the value of textile market has increased significantly over time, reaching 993.6 billion USD (worldwide Market Research, 2021). The market in Asia Pacific is still the largest, with major rivals including China, the EU, and India, while the market in the United States is expanding at a quick pace (Lin et al., 2020). India's textile manufacturing sector is the third biggest in the world, making up more than 6% of total production (Moallemi et al., 2020).

Studies associate organizational sustainability with financial performance. However, Ahmad et al. (2019) opined that financial performance alone is not sufficient to guarantee long-term sustainability of firms. In fact, Pineda (2022) opined that a preoccupation with short-term profitability tends to compromise long-term survival of a firm. Organizational sustainability is a function of numerous internal and external elements including growth prospects, learning capabilities, leadership, maturity stage, industry life cycle, and the competitive environment. A significant threat to sustainability of a business is the inability to adjust and adapt to changing market conditions (Farida & Setiawan, 2022). Firms must innovate to respond to shift in consumer and societal behaviours or risk obsolescence. A sustainable business model emphasizes adaptability aiming to thrive in rapidly changing environment. Innovation improves an organization's capacity to learn and adapt to changes in its internal and external environment (Pineda, 2022).

A critical aspect of innovation is ideation, which is the process of generating ideas within an organization (Hur & Beverley, 2023). Ideation enables businesses to generate value and

maintain their competitiveness through the synthesis of insights from diverse sources within and outside an organization. Ideation is the initial phase of innovation that entails developing ideas for creating new solutions to customers' needs or for addressing organizational challenges (Omwami et al., 2020). Ideation has been instrumental in the Japanese textile sector success, notably in knitting machine manufacturing. Liao and Ren (2020) illustrate how Japanese firms have leveraged advanced technology like digitally programmed automated machinery to enhance efficiency and production speed. Complementing this, Atalie (2020) emphasizes how this streamlined process addresses labour and production costs while meeting dynamic customer demands.

Sub-Saharan Africa's garment industry trails well behind that of Asia, the US, and the UK. African apparel products struggle even in local markets, with little export market share, as a result of increased imports following trade liberalization in the 1990s (Garth & Biesebroeck, 2017). This state of affairs is a result of historical factors, since African nations were largely producers for European industries and were highly dependent on the sale of cotton. In Kenya, it is estimated that approximately 30% of the labour force is employed in the textile sector, which also supports the livelihoods of over 200,000 small-scale farmers by providing markets for cotton (Kenya Investment Authority, 2017). Development blueprints, such as the Big Four Agenda and Vision 2030, the textile and apparel industry has been prioritized as a key focus area for driving industrialization, attracting investment, creating jobs, and boosting export earnings.

On the other hand, a report by a departmental committee of the Senate of Kenya showed that the number of textile mills in Kenya declined from 52 in 1984 to about 15 mills operating at 45% capacity (Mutunga et al., 2024). The production of cotton lint in 2024 stood at 7000 tons against a potential of 200,000 tons (ibid). The shortfall in production has necessitated Kenyan garment marking firms to import cotton from neighbouring countries like Uganda and Tanzania. Understanding the role of ideation in promoting organizational sustainability within this sector could significantly contribute to economic well-being and societal development.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Literature Review

The study was guided by resource-based view (RBV) theory posited by Barney (1991) and Chi et al. (1994) to explain the sources of firm competitiveness. This theory emphasizes that firms should strive to possess strategic resources that are valuable, rare, difficult to imitate, and non-substitutable. These resources encompass natural resources, human capital, market access, technology, innovation, and organizational processes. When effectively deployed, these resources can lead to a sustainable competitive advantage for the firm (Adnan et al., 2018). An organization's product portfolio can offer insights into its resource base, and the resources profile predicts the scope of its product offerings (Adnan et al., 2018). These resources, whether tangible or intangible, can be a source of strength or weakness for the organization.

The RBV theory was relevant to the study because it provided a framework for understanding the relationship between ideation and organizational sustainability. Ideation processes can be viewed as a strategic capability that can help textile organizational to develop innovative

resources like new products, processes, technologies, distribution channels, and pricing strategies (Adnan et al., 2018). These resources would enhance the competitiveness of textile firm leading to sustained competitive advantage and long-term survival. In addition, ideation may help firms in the textile industry accumulate intellectual property (IP) such as patents, trademarks, or copyrights (Burvill et al., 2018). Ideation in product and market development can also lead to the creation of unique products that cater to changing consumer preferences or niche markets (Sarjana et al., 2017). Saleem et al. (2023) noted in their systematic review that many studies on sustainability and competitive advantage utilize the resource-based view to explore how organizations harness their resources to achieve sustainability and market superiority.

2.2 Empirical Review of Literature

The link between ideation and organizational sustainability has been the subject of several empirical studies, with a range of conclusions drawn. One such study is by Heitzig and Mestrovic (2020) in Stockholm. The two researchers observed that successful ideation process within small and medium enterprises (SMEs) was a function of successful inculcation of the organizational vision among employees. However, this study linked ideation to company vision rather than organizational sustainability, which was the focus of the current study. The sample of the study was also limited to a single organization and 38 respondents, which limits the generalization of findings.

In the United Kingdom, Salter et al. (2015) found that ideation is linked to several factors including openness to external ideas, robust connections with senior management, a wide breadth of knowledge, an innovative work environment, employee motivation, and the duration of R&D efforts. Their results indicated that employees who are extrinsically motivated, perceive their work environment as supportive of innovation, possess broader knowledge, and have greater access to senior managers are more likely to generate ideas that progress to subsequent development stages. Furthermore, a longer R&D time horizon was found to enhance idea generation. This study was relevant because it identifies key factors essential to the ideation process, providing valuable insights for operationalizing the ideation variable in the present research. However, its limitations include a failure to connect the ideation process with organizational sustainability—an objective of the current study—and its focus on a single organization, which restricts the generalizability of the findings.

In another study, Gressgard (2012) demonstrated that both parallelism and synchronicity are critical for successful ideation in Norway. Here, parallelism refers to the effective occurrence of multiple simultaneous conversations in a work setting, while synchronicity describes whether interactions occur at the same time. Using an experimental design, the study manipulated the levels of parallelism, synchronicity, and identification across three groups comprising a total of 95 participants. The findings revealed that higher levels of parallelism and synchronicity were associated with improved ideation performance—groups that managed concurrent conversations effectively and engaged in more synchronized interactions tended to generate a greater number of high-quality ideas. However, because this study simulated ideation rather than observing them in a real-world context, the generalizability of its results to actual work environments may be limited

Omwami et al. (2020) explored the ideation process of designers in textile industries. The found that most design draw inspiration from two broad sources: existing concrete sources and self-generated sources. Concrete source comprises photographs, sketches, patterns, and images of art works. Self-generated sources include everyday life experiences, nature, narratives, and memories. The designers integrate inspirational elements using different types of strategies like selection, adaptation, and transformation. However, the study also relied on the experimental design hence results may be removed from reality. The study also views ideation from the perspective of product innovation only by fashion designers and ignored other forms of innovation like process and business model that may be undertaken by other employees.

Bergman et al. (2023) explore the utilization of artificial intelligence (AI) in the ideation process in the textile industry. The authors noted that ideation in the industry has for the longest time relied on human capacity. They opined that AI has the capacity to support data driven ideation approaches that are more responsive to market needs. However, results showed that there was little adoption of AI to support ideation in the textile industry. However, this study utilized a qualitative approach that involved interviewing 12 practitioners in the textile practitioners in Sweden thus limiting generation of findings.

Regionally, Obialo and Akinjo (2021) examined how various approaches to idea generation impact the growth of firms in the Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. The findings demonstrated that business performance was significantly impacted by the ideas they generated, whether from within their organizations or from clients. The research indicates that educating business owners and employees on the value of idea generation might support Nigerian companies in continuing to expand and exhibit creativity. However, the findings may not be entirely applicable to textile companies because the study focused on entrepreneurs in creative industries other than the textile sector.

Locally, Kiguru et al. (2025) found that middle level managers in small and medium enterprises in the textile sector were marginally optimistic regarding the integration of external and internal sources of information in the ideation process of textile firms. Nonetheless, they were less enthusiastic about efforts made by the firms to screen ideas and develop them into concepts. The study highlights the current state in the Kenyan textile industry in regards to ideation. Nevertheless, it does link ideation process to the organizational sustainability of firms. To fill these gaps, the current study sought to unearth the link between ideation and organizational sustainability in the country's textile sector.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

A cross-sectional survey design was employed, facilitating the collection of extensive data on various variables from a large sample of respondents (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This design proved particularly effective for capturing the views and opinions of individuals within the textile industry, enabling researchers to gather insights that would be difficult to observe through direct means. The study was guided by the pragmatism research philosophy, which asserts that the most effective way to discover knowledge and truth is through experience (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019).

3.2 Study Area, Target Population, and Sampling

The study was carried out in the Rift Valley region of Kenya. It is the largest region in the country covering 14 counties namely: Baringo, Bomet, Elgeyo Marakwet, Kajiado, Kericho, Laikipia, Nakuru, Nandi, Narok, Samburu, Trans Nzoia, Turkana, Uasin Gishu, and West Pokot. The target population for the study consisted of 70 senior managers from various departments, specifically, the research and development (R&D) department, design department, production department, marketing department, and supply chain department, across 14 textile manufacturing companies located in the Rift Valley region. In addition to the quantitative data obtained from the managers, the study also incorporated qualitative insights from 12 key informants drawn from diverse entities, including government institutions, academia, and business associations. The study employed a census approach in selecting respondents from the population of managers. Key informants were purposively selected.

3.3 Data Collection Instruments

The study used two data collection instruments: questionnaires for the managers and interview guides for key informants. The questionnaire had closed-ended questions while the interview guide was semi-structured in nature. To enhance reliability and validity, the questionnaire and interview guide were pre-tested on a sample of 7 respondents, which comprised 5 managers and 2 key informants, selected from Thika Cotton Mills in Thika. The pilot study allowed the researcher to assess the effectiveness of the research tools.

3.4 Data Analysis and Presentation

Data was analysed using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative analysis was done by generation of descriptive statistics such as percentages, means, standard deviations and other measures of central tendency. Inferential statistics were used to determine relationships between the variables of the study. In particular, the study used regression analysis due to its ability to evaluate the relationship between multiple variables including the moderating effect of organizational intellectual property (IP) policy. The qualitative data in form of interviews was analysed using thematic analysis.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Profile of Respondents

The study had a response rate for the questionnaires of 61 out 70 respondents from the 14 organizations translating to a percentage response rate 87.1%. All twelve key informants that were approached completed the interviews. Table 1 presents the profile of the respondents:

Table 1: Questionnaire Respondents Profile

Demographic Trait	Categories	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	27	44.3
	Female	34	55.7
Age	20-29 years	4	6.6
	30-39 years	25	41.0
	40-49 years	31	50.8
	Above 50 years	1	1.6
Highest level of education	Diploma/ Undergraduate	46	75.4
	Master's degree	14	23.0
	PhD degree	1	1.6
Number of years as a manager of the company	5 years or less	12	19.7
	6-10 years	26	42.6
	11-15 years	22	36.1
	More than 15 years	1	1.6

Results in Table 1 reveal that 44.3% (n = 27) of the respondents were male, while 55.7% (n = 34) were female, resulting in a total of 61 participants. In terms of age, 50.8% (n = 31) were in the 40 to 49-year-old bracket, followed by 40.9% (n = 25) in the 30 to 39-year-old group. The younger age group of 20 to 24 years accounted for only 6.6% (n = 4), while the 50 years and older category comprised a mere 1.6% (n = 1). This data indicates that the majority of respondents are experienced professionals who have spent significant time in the textile industry, thus achieving essential seniority levels within their respective companies. The majority of the respondents, 75.4% (n = 46), were holders of either a Diploma or an Undergraduate degree, implying that a large portion of the respondents had attained at least an elementary level of higher education. Further, 23.0% (n = 14) had a master's degree; thus, almost a quarter of the respondents had furthered their education. A small number of respondents, merely 1.6% (n = 1), had PhDs, confirming that very few have been able to get the highest academic honour. Lastly, 42.6% of the respondents had served as managers in their respective organizations for 6-10 years while 36.1% had served for 11-15 years. Over 80% of the respondents had served as managers in their organizations for at least 6 years. These results highlight the existence of a stable and knowledgeable leadership base.

4.2 Ideation in the Textile Manufacturing Firms

The independent variable was ideation with the textile manufacturing firms in the Rift Valley region. This variable was measured using four indicators namely company insight, number of ideas generated, diversity of sources of ideas, and quality of ideas. One questionnaire item was developed to assess each of the four indicators on five-point scale (1=no extent, 2=small extent, 3=moderate extent, 4= large extent, and 5= very large extent). Table 2 summarizes data on this variable:

Table 2: Ideation in the Textile Manufacturing Firms

Item	N	Mean	S. D
Company insight contributes to the ideation process and enhances organizational sustainability in the textile industry of the Rift Valley region.	61	2.80	.891
Number of ideas generated within your organization influences its sustainability in the textile industry of the Rift Valley region.	61	2.61	1.100
Diversity of sources from which new ideas are generated impact the sustainability of your organization in the textile industry of the Rift Valley region	61	2.74	1.031
Quality of ideas developed within your organization affect its long-term sustainability in the textile industry of the Rift Valley region	61	2.75	1.120
Overall ideation score	61	2.73	.906

A mean score of 2.80 for company insights indicates that respondents generally believe that company insight contributes to the ideation process and sustainability to moderate extent. This suggests that while insights from within the company are acknowledged as somewhat important, there is still considerable room for improvement and stronger integration of insights into the ideation process. The standard deviation is less than 1, which illustrates a high level of consensus among managers regarding the use of company insights to generate ideas. The findings are congruent with the work of Heitzig and Mestrovic (2020), who found that understanding and implementing an organizational vision enhances stakeholders' ideation capacity. Their study highlights that when employees are aligned with the company's vision, it fosters better idea generation that supports innovation and sustainability. This forms a clear link between internal insights and the ideation process, suggesting that a more articulated organizational vision could enhance managers' perceptions of the significance of company insights. However, while the current study shows recognition of company insights, it also indicates that further integration is needed. This inconsistency suggests that while companies acknowledge the importance of insights, they might not have fully developed mechanisms or a culture that facilitates the effective use of these insights for ideation.

A mean score of 2.61 for number of ideas generated indicates that the number of ideas generated influence sustainability to moderate extent. This suggests that most managers did not feel that their companies were generating an adequate number of ideas to make a significant impact on the sustainability of their organizations. The standard deviation is greater than 1, which reveals variability in the responses suggesting differing experiences and perceptions among managers with regards to the number of ideas generated. This finding aligns with the insights from Salter et al. (2015), who noted that factors such as motivation and a supportive

climate significantly affect the quantity of ideas produced by employees. Their research emphasizes that organizations where employees feel supported in their roles are more likely to generate ideas that advance innovation and sustainability. Hence, improving organizational climate and motivation could lead to a more robust generation of ideas. However, the moderate stance of the current study indicates potentially inadequate idea generation practices, highlighting a gap where organizations might not be leveraging these motivational strategies effectively.

The diversity of sources of ideas had a mean score of 2.74 implying that diversity of sources of ideas had a moderate impact on sustainability. This finding suggests that although the managers value the importance of diverse perspective in the innovation process, the impact is not strongly felt. This is an indication that the companies may not be fully leveraging diverse sources to enrich their ideation processes. The standard deviation is also greater than 1, which shows a sign of divergence of managers' views regarding the diversity of sources of ideas in their companies. The findings are congruent with of Kiguru et al. (2023), which also showed that middle level managers in textile-based manufacturing small enterprises had little optimism regarding the utilization of internal and external information in ideation process. This finding correlates with Gressgard (2012), who found that high levels of interaction and parallel discussions significantly enhance ideation performance. The implication here is that diverse sources of ideas can lead to richer, more innovative solutions. However, the current study's moderate score indicates a gap in effectively harnessing these diverse inputs, which may not be sufficiently integrated into ideation practices. On the contrary, the inconsistency lies in the utilization of these diverse sources. Although managers recognize their value, the divergence in responses suggests limited engagement or collaboration across departments. This reaffirms Gressgard's assertion that effective communication and collaboration are essential for maximizing the benefits of diverse insights during the ideation process.

Quality of ideas had a mean score of 2.75, suggesting that most managers believe it has a moderate effect on the sustainability of their organizations. This implies that although managers also recognize the importance of producing high-quality ideas, they may not perceive their current quality levels as significant to enhancing their organizational sustainability. The standard deviation of more than 1 also indicates divergence of managers' view regarding the quality of ideas generated in their organizations. This finding echoes Omwami et al. (2020), who asserted that designers typically draw inspiration from diverse sources but predominantly focus on product innovation. This means that while there may be a recognition of the need for high-quality ideas, there is also a limitation in exploring other innovation avenues such as process and business model innovation that are crucial for comprehensive sustainability.

The overall ideation score was 2.73 indicating a general perception that the ideation practices in the textile firms have moderate effectiveness in terms of their role in organizational sustainability. This finding signifies that current ideation practices may not be fully effective or aligned with the realization of high organizational sustainability. This finding is consistent with the work of Bergman et al. (2023), who indicated that the textile industry often relies on human capacity for ideation, with limited integration of artificial intelligence (AI) to support innovative processes. The moderate score implies that while the ideation practices are in place,

they may not be comprehensive or sufficiently aligned with sustainability goals. The key informants were also queried on the issue of ideation. Table 3 summarizes key themes that emerged from the study.

Table 3: Key Themes on Ideation in the Textile Industry

Theme	Key Points	Illustrative Quotes
Utilization of Internal Insights	- Employee engagement and feedback loops - Data analysis for decision making - Cross-departmental collaboration - R&D investment - Systems for capturing ideas	“We consider the opinions and suggestions critical and therefore we employ methods such as surveys, interviews and focus group discussions.” (Respondent 4)
Challenges in Idea Generation	- Communication barriers - Lack of trust and collaboration - Resistance to change - Resource constraints - Fear of failure	“When departments operate in isolation and limit cross-pollination of ideas...hinders innovation in sustainable materials or manufacturing processes.” (Respondent 2)
Quality of Ideas and Sustainability	- Importance of high-quality ideas - Innovation in processes and materials - Impact on long-term sustainability - Investment in training and development	“High-quality ideas have led to the development of innovative manufacturing processes that have minimized water and energy consumption.” (Respondent 2)
Strategies for Improvement	- Encourage diverse input from employees, customers, and stakeholders - Foster collaboration - Regular brainstorming sessions - Leverage technology	“We encourage employees from different departments to share their perspectives and ideas.” (Respondent 3)
Cultural and Structural Factors	- Importance of culture in innovation - Leadership attitudes toward sustainability - Need for a supportive environment	“The company does not provide a forum for people to fail, and as such people develop fear for failure which is not good for innovation and sustainability.” (Respondent 4)

The first theme that emerged was about the utilization of internal company insights. Across all respondents, the importance of leveraging internal insights from employees for enhancing the ideation process is consistently highlighted. Effective mechanisms, such as employee engagement initiatives, feedback systems, and data analytics, serve as critical tools for fostering innovation and sustainability.

“Employee engagement by encouraging employees to share ideas through feedback loops can lead to the creation of innovative outcomes.” (Respondent 1)

“We consider the opinions and suggestions critical and therefore we employ methods such as surveys, interviews and focus group discussions.” (Respondent 4)

These statements emphasize the value of involving employees actively in the ideation process, which not only supports creativity but also enhances organizational buy-in toward sustainability goals. The qualitative findings align with the quantitative results, confirming that while company insights are valued, there's significant room for improvement in implementing effective mechanisms for leveraging these insights. This is consistent with Heitzig and Mestrovic (2020), who demonstrated that aligning employee contributions with organizational vision enhances ideation capacity. The qualitative statements such as “employee engagement by encouraging employees to share ideas through feedback loops” reinforce the idea that an active involvement of employees is crucial for more effective ideation that leads to sustainability goals.

Another theme related to the challenges that the companies encountered when it comes to ideation. A recurring barrier mentioned by respondents is communication issues within the organization, particularly between departments. Lack of collaboration, low trust, and resistance to change emerge as significant impediments to generating a diverse array of ideas.

“Communication is one single largest barrier that we face especially as pertains to styles of communication within the company... which leads to misunderstandings.” (Respondent 1)

“When departments operate in isolation and limit cross-pollination of ideas...hinders innovation in sustainable materials or manufacturing processes.” (Respondent 2)

These statements highlight the crucial need for better communication structures within organizations to facilitate effective teamwork and innovation. The qualitative insights regarding communication barriers resonate with the broader literature, including the work of Johnson et al. (2022), which emphasize that strong communication frameworks enhance collaboration and innovation. The current study points directly to a need for improved communication structures to facilitate teamwork essential for ideation. This aligns with the idea that despite the presence of engagement initiatives, their effectiveness may be significantly hampered by communication gaps, echoing Salter et al. (2015)’s findings on the need for supportive climates to enhance idea generation.

The third theme related to quality of ideas and how the affected sustainability. Respondents underline the correlation between the quality of ideas generated and the organization's capacity for long-term sustainability. High-quality, innovative ideas are presented as vital for improving processes, reducing environmental impact, and adhering to sustainability practices.

“High-quality ideas have led to the development of innovative manufacturing processes that have minimized water and energy consumption.” (Respondent 2)

“We have invested in R&D whose responsibility is to create ideas with the intended purpose to explore the new spheres of technology.” (Respondent 3)

These statements suggest that investing in R&D not only fosters innovative solutions but also significantly contributes to better sustainability outcomes in the textile industry, thus aligning with long-term organizational goals. This theme underscores the necessity of high-quality, innovative ideas for sustainability, consistent with Omwami et al. (2020)'s assertion that innovative processes lead to environmental improvements. The qualitative emphasis on investing in R&D to minimize resource consumption particularly resonates with the idea that quality ideas derived from solid research contribute to sustainability efforts. The quantitative findings reinforce this perspective by showing a moderate acknowledgment of the current state of idea quality, suggesting organizations must focus on enhancing both the quality of ideas and their alignment with sustainability initiatives.

The fourth theme concerned strategies for improvement. Strategies to enhance ideation processes center around creating inclusive environments that encourage diverse contributions. Regular brainstorming sessions, collaboration across departments, and seeking input from external stakeholders are among the methods identified to stimulate idea generation.

“We have often been constrained with resource allocation... developing sustainable materials or processes requires investment.” (Respondent 2)

We encourage employees from different departments to share their perspectives and ideas.” (Respondent 3)

These insights illuminate how resource availability is intrinsically linked to the feasibility of implementing innovative ideas, underlining the importance of strategic investment in sustainability initiatives. The proposed strategies for improvement reflect findings in the literature that emphasize the need for inclusive environments and collaboration to foster innovation. For example, Gressgard (2012) research on parallelism and synchronicity underscores the value of creating an atmosphere conducive to open idea exchange. The qualitative responses about resource constraints also link back to the quantitative findings regarding the number of ideas generated (mean score 2.61), pointing out that limitations in resource allocation hinder the development and realization of innovative ideas.

The final theme was cultural and structural factors. The responses illustrate that cultural and structural factors play a pivotal role in the success of innovation and sustainability efforts. The

mindset of leadership towards sustainability and the organizational culture around risk-taking and failure can significantly impact the ability of employees to generate and share ideas.

“The top management at times does not provide the required resources in good time... which leads to lack of morale and motivation.” (Respondent 3)

“The company does not provide a forum for people to fail, and as such people develop fear for failure which is not good for innovation and sustainability.” (Respondent 4)

These statements encapsulate the critical connection between leadership support and employee motivation, suggesting that a positive cultural environment is vital for the long-term success of sustainability initiatives. The findings mirror those of Bergman et al. (2023), which address how organizational culture shapes ideation success. Leadership support is crucial; as stressed by respondents, a culture that avoids punishment for failure and instead fosters risk-taking is imperative for promoting innovative outputs. The qualitative insights affirm the critical role of leadership in motivating employees and enhancing their contribution to sustainability, and they connect with the more general acknowledgment of organizational effectiveness tied to cultural factors as discussed throughout the literature.

4.3 Organizational Sustainability of the Textile Industry in the Rift Valley Region

The dependent variable of the study was organizational sustainability of the textile industry in the Rift Valley region. This variable was measured using three indicators namely: adaptability, years of operation, and market and production trends. Data on the three indicators was gathered using nine items that were measured on five-point scale: 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3=neutral, 4= agree, and 5= strongly agree. Table 4 presents the results.

Table 4: Organizational Sustainability of Textile Industry

Statement	N	Mean	S.D.
Our organization quickly adapts to changes in the business environment	61	3.21	1.018
We have a well-established process for responding to market disruptions.	61	3.23	1.101
Our company actively invests in training employees to enhance adaptability.	61	3.08	1.053
Our organization's longevity is a result of strong business strategies.	61	3.07	.772
The experience gained over the years has improved our operational efficiency.	61	3.07	.834
Stability and financial resilience have contributed to our sustained operations.	61	3.05	.921
Our production processes align with current industry trends.	61	2.98	.785
The organization regularly invests in new technology to stay competitive.	61	3.33	1.106
Our company effectively integrates sustainable production practices.	60	3.17	1.092
Overall organizational sustainability score	61	3.13	.791

A mean of 3.21 for the first item is marginally above the neutral point, which suggests that respondents slightly agreed that their organization can adapt quickly to changes in the business environment. This result echoes the findings of Ahmad et al. (2019), which showed that adaptability is essential for organizational sustainability. The standard deviation ($SD=1.018$) is greater than 1 suggesting some variability in responses. This indicates that while some organizations feel confident in this adaptability, others may not share the same view. The literature emphasizes that organizations must be responsive to shifting market dynamics to ensure sustainability (Galaiti et al., 2023).

The mean score of 3.23 for the second item suggests a weak positive sentiment regarding the presence of established processes for dealing with market disruptions. This finding resonates with the ongoing academic discourse indicating that well-organized frameworks are pivotal for fostering resilience (Irawan et al., 2022). The higher standard deviation ($SD= 1.101$) indicates more variability, suggesting that some organizations may have strong processes, while others may not. This is congruent with the study by Chakraborty and Biswas (2020), which found that many textile firms globally lacked adequate frameworks to navigate the sudden disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in increased production costs and a decrease in consumption.

The mean score of 3.08 for the third item also implies very weak positive views regarding the investment in employee training for adaptability with the organizations. It suggests the existence of faint efforts in prioritizing employee development to adapt to changes. The results are consistent with the study by Kim and Choi (2022), who found that the use of human resource management practices that adaptation-oriented enhanced firms' self-organization, which in turn led to increased exploration. Exploration is an adaptation strategy that entails venturing into new markets, products or technologies that are characterized by high uncertainty but potentially high rewards. The standard deviation ($SD=1.053$) signals major disparities in prioritization of employees' training across organizations. Some organizations could be doing better in this aspect than others.

The mean score of 3.07 for the fourth item also shows that respondents slightly agreed that strong business strategies contribute to their longevity. This finding is congruent with the study by Farida and Setiawan (2022), which found that business strategies Indonesian textile industry enhances innovation and business performance, which in turn enhanced the competitive advantage of textile firm. Competitive advantage is an important component of organizational sustainability as it determines the organizational capacity to sustain operations amidst increasing competition. The lower standard deviation ($SD=.772$) suggests that there is somewhat more consensus on this item compared to others. This implies that most of the organizations are more or less in the same levels regarding the contribution of their business strategies to their longevity.

The fifth item also had a mean of 3.07, which reflects slight agreement about how years of operation have contributed to operational efficiency of the organizations. This result echoes those of Mallingu et al. (2020), which showed firms that have been in operations for many years tend to exhibit better performance than relatively new companies. On the other hand, Bouncken et al (2021) found that companies with many years of operations are less innovative

than younger companies. However, the innovation of older companies is enhanced by establishing partnerships that facilitate co-creation of knowledge. The low standard deviation ($SD = .834$) suggests that the moderate contribution of years of experience towards operational efficiency cuts across most organizations.

The mean of 3.05 for the sixth item also indicates that respondents felt marginally agreeable to the claim that financial stability has been an important factor in sustaining the operations of their organizations. This result aligns with those of Chandio and Talpur (2021), which indicated that textile industry in Pakistan is predominantly in a "grey" zone, meaning a mix of stable and potentially unstable firms. Thirty percent of companies are financially sound, 40% are in a potentially risky area, and 30% are in a distress zone. The overall average suggests room for improvement in financial ratios to achieve greater stability within the industry. The standard deviation ($SD = .921$) implies that these sentiments cut across most organizations.

Item seven has the lowest mean score of 2.98, which indicates slight disagreement with the idea that production processes within the textile companies are in line with current trends. This suggests the existence of a gap in the product processes. This outcome reaffirms the study by Sikander et al. (2024), which observed that that drop in production orders for textile products during the COVID-19 pandemic, heightened competition in the textile industry, making it more challenging to satisfy customers. The low standard deviation ($SD = .785$) suggests that this problem is consistently perceived across most of the sampled organizations.

On the other hand, item eight had the highest mean score of 3.33, indicating that respondents feel more positively about their organization's commitment to investing in new technology. The result correlates those Abraham et al. (2022), which showed that the textile industry in Ghana had adopted new technologies like computer-generated designs and digital embroidery technologies in their productions. However, the high standard deviation ($SD = 1.106$) indicates that commitment to new technologies may not be evident in all organizations. This result also echoes those of Abraham et al. (2022), which showed that while most textile companies in Ghana had adopted digital production technologies that were some that were still relying on traditional advertising techniques and manual screen printing.

The ninth item had a mean of 3.17 indicating a moderately positive perception among respondents that sustainable practices are integrated into their organization's production process. This observation aligns with those of Sharma and Narula (2020), which showed that the Indian textile industry is increasingly adopting sustainable practices, with an emphasis on using recyclable materials, local sourcing, and green certifications for suppliers. However, the standard deviation ($SD = 1.092$) suggests that not all organizations may be affectively prioritizing sustainability in their operations. This also echoes the findings of Sharma and Narula (2020), which also showed that the Indian textile industry scored highly in some sustainability aspects like investing in energy-efficient technologies, redesigning products for sustainability, educating suppliers about green practices and executing environmental audits. However, the industry had low scores on aspects like utilizing leftover materials and having dedicated environmental management teams. Overall, findings from the current and previous studies show potential for further integration of sustainability into the textile industry.

The overall organizational sustainability mean score of 3.13 suggests that the respondent view the overall sustainability of their organizations as slightly above neutral but not strongly positive. The standard deviation indicates little variance in perceptions, reflecting little disparities in the overall organizational sustainability across the firms. Notably, the highest individual mean score of 3.33 for investing in new technology highlights a proactive approach in recognizing the importance of technological innovation, which aligns with findings by Abraham et al. (2022) regarding the critical role of modernization in achieving competitive advantage. However, the lowest mean score of 2.98 concerning the alignment of production processes with industry trends underscores a significant gap in adaptability to market demands; an area emphasized in the literature as essential for resilience amidst uncertainty. Overall, these findings suggest that while firms demonstrate awareness and proactive measures towards sustainability, there's a need for enhanced focus on aligning operational practices with emerging trends and fostering deeper organizational adaptability to ensure long-term success in a dynamic business environment.

4.4 Ideation and Organizational Sustainability in the Rift Valley Textile Industry

The relationship between ideation and organizational sustainability in the Rift Valley textile industry was tested using the simple linear regression method. Table 5 presents the results.

Table 5: Ideation influence on Organizational Sustainability

Statistic	Value
R	0.669
R Square	0.447
Std. Error of the Estimate	0.593
ANOVA	
F	47.699
Sig.	0.000
Regression Coefficients	
Ideation Unstandardized coefficient	0.584
T	6.906
Sig	0.000

The correlation coefficient (R) was found to be 0.669, indicating a moderate to strong positive relationship between ideation and organizational sustainability. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.447$) suggests that approximately 44.7% of the variability in organizational sustainability can be accounted for by ideation. This indicates a substantial effect of ideation on sustainability outcomes within the textile sector. The ANOVA results demonstrated that the regression model was statistically significant, $F(1, n-1) = 47.699$, $p < 0.001$. This allows us to conclude that ideation is a significant predictor of organizational sustainability. The regression coefficients revealed an unstandardized coefficient for ideation of 0.584, with a corresponding t-value of 6.906 and a significance level of $p < 0.001$. These findings imply that as ideation increases, organizational sustainability also improves, highlighting the critical role that innovative thinking and idea generation play in enhancing sustainable practices within the textile industry. Overall, the results support the rejection of the

null hypothesis and the conclusion that ideation is a vital factor in fostering organizational sustainability in this context.

The results of the current study contribute significantly to the existing body of literature. As indicated in the study, a strong positive relationship ($R = 0.669$) between ideation and organizational sustainability was found, suggesting that enhancing ideation can lead to improvements in sustainability performance. This finding resonates with the literature, particularly with the work of Salter et al. (2015), which identified critical factors associated with ideation, such as motivation, climate of innovation, and access to management, which could also be relevant to sustainability outcomes. The emphasis Salter et al. place on organizational support for innovation mirrors the findings of the current study, underscoring the necessity of a conducive environment for ideation to flourish and, consequently, enhance sustainability. The results also echo the work by Obialo and Akinjo (2021), which addressed the critical impact of idea generation on business performance. The call for educational initiatives on idea generation resonates with the current findings about the importance of fostering ideation.

The results of the current study also align closely with the principles of sustainable development theory. The significant positive relationship identified between ideation and sustainability underscores the necessity for organizations to pursue innovative practices that balance economic, social, and environmental objectives. This harmony is essential for fostering sustained performance, echoing the concept of intergenerational equity, which promotes meeting present needs without compromising future generations (Mensah & Casadevall, 2019). In this light, investing profits into innovation is crucial for long-term success and resilience in the face of evolving challenges, supporting the notion that short-term gains should not eclipse long-term goals. Moreover, the study highlights the importance of systemic thinking, as innovative practices are shown to positively influence multiple dimensions of sustainability.

In addition, the results of this study resonate with which emphasizes that a firm's internal resources are central to achieving and maintaining a competitive advantage. The positive influence of ideation on organizational sustainability highlights how ideation capabilities act as valuable, rare, and unique resources that can differentiate textile firms in the Rift Valley region. According to the RBV, firms that nurture their innovative capacities can effectively respond to dynamic market shifts, leveraging their unique knowledge and skills to develop products that meet changing consumer preferences. This enables them to achieve operational efficiencies and reduce costs, ultimately enhancing their survival and growth. The emphasis on ideation aligns well with the RBV's focus on creating and managing distinctive resources to optimize performance.

5. CONCLUSIONS

From the findings, the study concludes that ideation has a positive and statistically significant influence on organizational sustainability in the Rift Valley Textile industry. This relationship emphasizes the need for supportive environments that encourage innovative thinking. By fostering ideation, organizations can enhance their operational resilience, aligning with sustainable development principles that advocate balancing economic, social, and

environmental goals. The study underscores the importance of investing in ideation as a foundation for long-term resilience, suggesting that embracing ideation is essential for enduring success amidst changing challenges. The strong correlation between ideation and sustainability signifies its role as a key predictor of success, reinforcing the importance of creating an environment that nurtures innovative thinking. Embracing ideation emerges as a vital strategy for ensuring long-term success in a rapidly changing landscape.

Findings illustrate that while there is moderate effectiveness in current ideation practices impacting organizational sustainability within the Rift Valley textile industry, significant improvements are necessary. The analysis highlights critical gaps in integrating company insights, fostering diverse perspectives, and enhancing the overall quality of ideas, all of which are essential for driving sustainable outcomes. The univariate analysis on ideation reveals a moderate effectiveness in current ideation practices impacting organizational sustainability. Respondents recognize the importance of company insights but indicate that mechanisms for integrating this feedback are lacking. The generation of ideas highlights insufficient innovation practices and variability in manager experiences. Overall, the study emphasizes the critical need for improved communication, cultural support, and strategic investment in fostering a more effective ideation environment.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions, the study recommends that textile companies in the Rift Valley region must develop frameworks that encourage stakeholder engagement, fostering diverse perspectives and integrating insights from various sources. This will create a richer ideation landscape essential for driving sustainable outcomes. Additionally, investments in education and training for employees will equip them with the skills needed to contribute effectively to ideation processes. Practitioners in the Rift Valley textile industry should actively cultivate a workplace culture that values open communication and innovation, ensuring that all voices are heard and considered. Strategic investments in research and development can also enhance the quality of ideas generated.

Furthermore, aligning operational initiatives with broader sustainable development goals will not only promote economic viability but also address social and environmental challenges. Organizations must prioritize communication, cultural support, and strategic investment in ideation processes to not only enhance operational resilience but also align with the broader principles of sustainable development, facilitating a balanced approach to economic, social, and environmental goals. By embracing these recommendations, organizations can strengthen their resilience and achieve long-term success in an ever-evolving market landscape.

Future research should explore how digital transformation can enhance innovation and sustainability in the textile sector. Research should be conducted to study how changes outside the firm, such as market dynamics, global competition, and environmental policies influence the way firms view sustainability. Future studies might use a cross-regional attempt with different textile firms to bring individual-level depth to the best practices regarding innovation-driven sustainability.

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