

Do Government Efforts and Commitments Affect the SDGs?

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the influence of three pillars of government efforts and commitment on the Sustainable Development Goals index. The three pillars are Transformation, Coordination and Multilateralism. Knowledge related to country policies should be improved to boost effectiveness to achieve better sustainable development goals. The research sample includes 74 countries around the world that have implemented Sustainable Development Goals practices so that they have a Sustainable Development Goals index achievement value and a Government Efforts and Commitment index value for the index performance period of 2023. The analysis method uses multiple regression in STATA. The results showed that only the Transformation variable had a significant effect on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals index, but the Coordination and Multilateralism variables had no effect. This finding confirms that comprehensive changes in sectoral policies, accompanied by concrete long-term strategic actions from all parties, are the hallmarks of the government's efforts and commitment.

Keywords: Government Efforts; Government Commitments, Sustainable Development Goals, Sustainability

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji pengaruh tiga pilar upaya pemerintahan dan komitmen pemerintah terhadap indeks *Sustainable Development Goals*. Tiga pilar tersebut adalah Transformasi, Koordinasi dan Multilateralisme. Pengetahuan terkait kebijakan negara harus ditingkatkan untuk meningkatkan efektivitas dalam mencapai tujuan pembangunan berkelanjutan yang lebih baik. Sampel penelitian meliputi 74 negara di seluruh dunia yang telah menerapkan praktik *Sustainable Development Goals* sehingga memiliki nilai capaian indeks *Sustainable Development Goals* dan nilai indeks Upaya dan Komitmen Pemerintah untuk periode kinerja indeks tahun 2023. Metode analisis menggunakan regresi berganda dalam STATA. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa hanya variabel Transformasi yang berpengaruh signifikan terhadap pencapaian indeks *Sustainable Development Goals*, namun variabel Koordinasi dan Multilateralisme tidak berpengaruh. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa perubahan kebijakan sektoral yang komprehensif, disertai dengan tindakan strategis jangka panjang yang konkret dari semua pihak, merupakan ciri khas dari upaya dan komitmen pemerintah.

Kata kunci: Upaya Pemerintah; Komitmen Pemerintah; *Sustainable Development Goals*; Keberlanjutan

INTRODUCTION

Achieving the SDGs is a long-term process that requires the support of the commitment of all parties within a country nationally and globally. The target Agenda for achievement by 2030 motivates countries around the world to focus their policies and the direction of their execution actions on sustainability goals. Figure 1 shows the extent of SDG achievements from year to year as well as the target trend that is expected to be achieved until 2030. The pandemic has affected the interdependencies between SDGs, affecting the achievement of various goals, such as health, education, decent work, economic growth, and climate action. COVID-19 has impacted the interdependencies between Sustainable Development Goals, potentially hindering their achievement, particularly in areas like health, education, and climate action (Shulla et al., 2021). Despite experiencing a slowdown in progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) amidst the pandemic, it's crucial to recognize that these ambitious objectives have not been sidelined. On the contrary, post-pandemic, there is a heightened expectation for nations worldwide to redouble their efforts towards achieving the SDGs. Fulfilling this expectation demands unwavering commitment from all stakeholders involved.

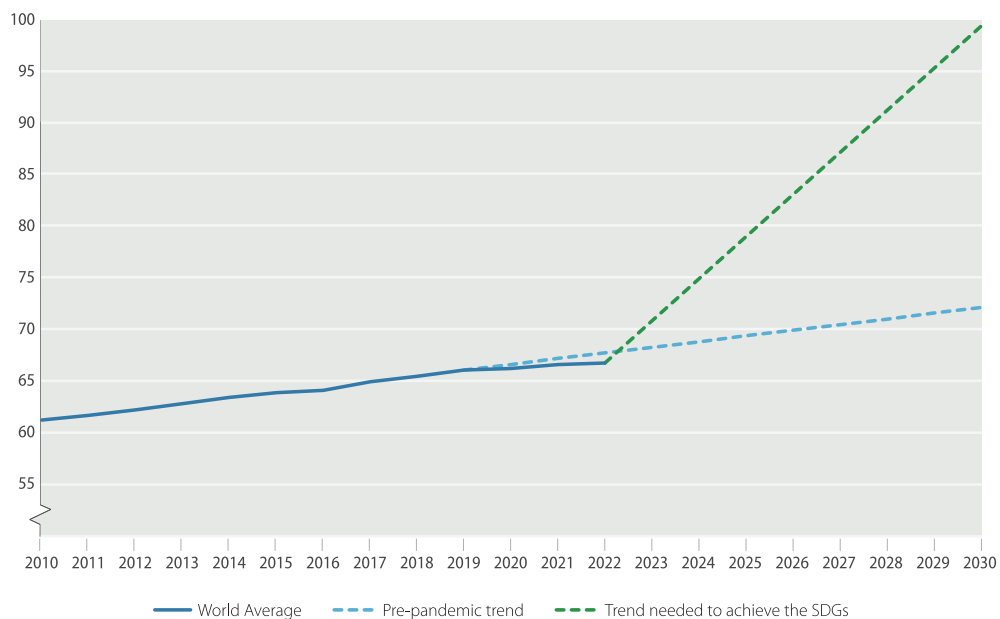


Figure 1. World Average SDG Index
Source. Sustainable Development Report 2023

Governments are pivotal in the pursuit of the SDGs, yet their successful realization hinges upon collaborative efforts from diverse stakeholders such as businesses, civil society, and individuals, as well as fostering international cooperation among nations worldwide. The government's commitment and the cooperation of stakeholders including multinational companies contribute to the achievement of the SDGs goals by 2030 (SDG, 2024; UN-SDSN, 2023; Ramani et al.,

2017). Government commitment can manifest through various forms, such as budget allocations and priorities. For instance, prioritizing research expenditure in the realm of science and technology can enhance innovation capabilities, thereby contributing to the achievement of SDG 9 (Mondal & Das, 2021). The government's efforts and commitment are also driven by the character of the business world in that country, where it is found that the business world's commitment to the SDGs varies between regions and countries (Monteiro et al., 2023). Furthermore, local government characteristics, such as region size, work units, and local own-source revenue, impact the accomplishment of Sustainable Development Goals (Mutiarani & Siswantoro, 2020). Top management support and government support significantly influence green supply chain management, environment, and community-based SDGs (Ilyas et al., 2020). The private sector has the potential to contribute to the SDGs through innovation, responsiveness, efficiency, and specific skills, but must overcome limitations in implementing sustainable practices (Scheyvens et al., 2016). Digital government capacity is crucial for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, but a gap between aspirations and capacity currently affects more than 69% of UN Member States (Janowski, 2016). Good government governance has a significant effect on SDGs (Afandi et al., 2023). This certainly confirms that the government's efforts and commitment greatly affect the achievement of the SDGs.

The global survey conducted by The Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) on government efforts and commitments to the SDGs did show major differences across countries in the world, including G20 countries, in their SDG strategies and commitments. The institute has comprehensively compiled an instrument that seeks to measure the government's efforts and commitment in realizing the SDGs, so that every country in the world then has an index that can show the extent of the government's efforts and commitment. The results are presented in the form of an index score reflecting government endeavours and dedication, which, upon closer examination, comprises three fundamental pillars. Firstly, it evaluates the integration of SDGs within sectoral policies and the formulation of sustainable long-term strategies, emphasizing the importance of aligning sectoral objectives with overarching sustainability goals. Secondly, it encompasses political leadership and institutional coordination, underscoring the significance of cohesive governance structures in advancing SDGs. Lastly, it assesses the commitment to multilateralism grounded in the principles of the UN Charter, highlighting the imperative of international cooperation and collective action in driving progress towards sustainable development.

This research aims to examine the influence of three pillars of government efforts and commitment on the SDG index. The findings of this study can emphasize the contribution of the three pillar indices that represent the government's efforts and commitment to the achievement of the SDGs index performance.

The government's implementation of integration across diverse sectoral policies can serve as a catalyst for advancing progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This can take the form of integrating industrial ecology

and strategic management theory to contribute positively to the Sustainable Development Goals while building a competitive advantage for commercial organizations (Sullivan et al., 2018). In line with this, Kenny (2018) also revealed that policy integration can accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, or in other words, integrated development approach shows a positive impact in this regard (Ahner-McHaffie et al., 2017).

Cross-sectoral coordination is essential to accelerate the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by addressing complex issues and developing comprehensive solutions, improving policy integration, and optimizing development outcomes (Berawi, 2021). Coordination and collaboration approach allows SDGs to realize key breakthroughs over the short-term and achieve sweeping progress over the long run (Fu et al., 2020). Conversely, inadequate coordination mechanisms and misaligned incentives may hinder the implementation of SDG transformation (Horan, 2019).

The existence of a composite SDG index can indeed enhance global stakeholders' shared understanding of SDG progress, support coordinated planning at the regional level and strategic decision-making at the national level (Huan et al., 2021). This rationale equally applies to the index scores gauging government efforts and commitments, that show the extent to which the government is serious about responding to SDG issues. Previous studies agree that transboundary cooperation (Hussein et al., 2018), international cooperation (Larionova, 2020), collaboration between nations through economic, social, and political integration between governments and societies (Guzel et al., 2021), strengthening multilateralism (Cheng et al., 2021) and developing partnerships among countries (Chen & Yen, 2023) is essential for SDG implementation.

Based on the description above, the hypothesis of this study is prepared as follows:

- H1 : Transformation affects the SDGs
- H2 : Coordination affects the SDGs
- H3 : Multilateral affects the SDGs

METHODS

Sample, Variables and Measurements

The research sample includes 74 countries around the world that have implemented SDG practices so that they have SDG index achievement scores and Government Effort and Commitment index scores. The independent and dependent variables are measured using index numbers obtained from published data released by the Sustainable Development Report web database for Chapter Part 3. Government Efforts and Commitments for the SDGs, and Chapter Part 2. The SDG Index and Dashboards for the period of 2023.

The independent variable is Government Efforts and Commitment to SDGs, proxied using a three-pillar framework: integration of SDGs in sectoral policies and long-term pathways (Transformation), political leadership and institutional

coordination (Coordination), and commitment to multilateralism under the UN Charter (Multilateralism). Meanwhile, the dependent variable is the SDG index which describes the achievement of the implementation of 17 SDG indicators for each country. The index of each variable is scaled from 0 to 100, where 0 represents the worst performance and 100 represents the optimal performance.

Analysis Method

The stages of the analysis procedure include testing classical assumptions (normality, heteroscedasticity, and multicollinearity), descriptive statistical analysis, testing the feasibility of the research model with the F test, and testing the hypothesis with the t test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics Results

The number of countries in the world contained in the data base amounted to 74 countries, but after reviewing the completeness of data availability for all variables used in this study, it turned out that there were two countries where the SDG index was not available, namely Samoa and Seychelles, so they were eliminated. In the process of classical assumption testing procedures, there were 12 outlier data so that the final total of usable data was only 60. The robustness stage was carried out in this research stage because of the heteroscedasticity problem.

On average, the SDG score index is in the Moderate range, indicated by a value of 72 out of 100 for optimal performance achievement, meaning that 72% of SDG achievement indicators have been able to be carried out by countries in the world. The transformation variable when compared to the other two independent variables on average has the lowest value, meaning that world countries on average agree more in showing their government's commitment through coordination and multilateralism variables. Descriptive variable Coordination can achieve the highest score because there are countries that have an optimal score. This means that the country can demonstrate the government's public statements and strategic use of their public processes to support the SDGs. The country's policies, regulations and sectoral investments have aligned to achieve the SDGs. The country that has a score of 100 is Indonesia. Local Government in Indonesia actively participates in SDGs formulation and validation, contributing to better citizen well-being and prosperity (Ardiwidjaja, 2019). In fact, in the GES index ranking, Indonesia ranks 7th, which means it is at the high level of effort and commitment. Meanwhile, government commitment in the form of multilateralism on average also shows a good figure of around 72%.

Table. 1 Descriptive Statistics Results

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
sdgiscore	60	72.62323	6.902701	54.5464	73.3584
transformation	60	56.60532	12.61018	23.5448	78.2129

coordination	60	64.26388	17.47145	20.8333	100
multilateralism	60	72.2051	12.13996	32.2826	91.3043

Classical Assumption Testing Results

The results of testing the classical assumptions of normality, heteroscedasticity, and multicollinearity are significant according to the assessment criteria despite the treatment of observation data due to outliers. This means that the observation data used in the regression equation and hypothesis testing has met the data quality. These results are presented in the recap Table 2.

Table 2. Classical Assumption Test Results

Classical Assumption	Method	Results
Normality	Skewness-Kurtosis	Prob > chi2 0.0626
Multicollinearity		Mean VIF 1.23
Heteroscedasticity	Breusch-Pagan	Robusted

Model Feasibility, Hypothesis Testing and Coefficient of Determination Results

The F test results show that the research model meets the feasibility so that it can be continued in hypothesis testing. From the t-test results to test the hypotheses, it was found that the first hypothesis stating that Transformation has an influence on SDGs was accepted. Meanwhile, the second hypothesis stating that Coordination has an influence on SDG is rejected, as well as the third hypothesis stating that multilateralism has an influence on SDG is rejected. The contribution of the three independent variables in this study in explaining the dependent variable is high, namely 74%. This means that government efforts and commitment proxied by the variables of Transformation, Coordination and Multilateralism can explain the SDG achievement variable by this value, while the rest is explained by other variables outside this model.

Table 3. F-test and Coefficient of Determination Results

Prob > F	R-squared
0.0000	0.7411

Table 4. t-test Results

Variable	Coef.	t	P> t	Results
transformation	.387644	10.25	0.000	hypothesis accepted
coordination	-.0297838	-1.14	0.261	hypothesis not accepted

multilateralism	.0414974	1.05	0.297	hypothesis not accepted
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Discussion

The three pillars of the conceptual framework for evaluating government efforts and commitment to the SDGs are represented as independent variables. The results of hypothesis testing show that only the pillar of integration of SDGs in sectoral policies and long-term pathways, symbolized by the naming of the Transformation variable, has a significant positive effect on SDGs. While the other two variables have no influence on SDGs. The pillars of political leadership and institutional coordination and the pillar of commitment to multilateralism under the UN Charter have no effect on SDG implementation.

The influence of Transformation on the SDGs shows the government's efforts in adopting and implementing ambitious sectoral policies for the SDGs. If we look at the instruments that measure this index, there are 17 indicators that measure it or contribute around 58.62% of the total number of indicators from the 29 total indicators measuring the government efforts and commitment index. Research findings that show a significant positive direction can be interpreted that the success of the SDGs is greatly influenced by the achievement of comprehensive, long-term targeted transformation as a manifestation of the government's commitment.

This aligns with the recommendations outlined by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), which advocates for six transformational strategies to be implemented by every nation over the long term. In this regard, governmental leadership in governance, policy integration, and fostering collaboration among stakeholders in both the public and private sectors is paramount. The six points are: providing universal quality education and an innovation-based economy; realizing universal health outcomes; designing zero carbon energy systems; focus on creating sustainable ecosystems, sustainable agriculture, and climate resilience; realizing the creation of a sustainable city; and finally, carrying out a transformation towards universal digital access and services (UN-SDSN, 2023).

Policies serve as vital instruments for governments to enact transformative initiatives, showcasing their dedication to achieving the SDG. This can be done by integrating the SDGs with national policy frameworks (Singh, 2021), designing policy features to achieve the SDG targets (Ramani et al., 2017), as well as with a progressive government so that local government can make a positive contribution to achieving the SDGs (Martínez-Córdoba et al., 2021). Policy design features can encourage multinational companies towards poverty alleviation through foreign direct investment, public-private partnerships, corporate social responsibility, and knowledge transfer Ramani et al. (2017). Public programs with similar goals, financial commitment and political will can help achieve the SDGs, especially if they are large-scale programs that can effectively drive the execution of concrete actions (Bridgewater et al., 2015). The forms of transformation such as digital transformation

(ElMassah & Mohieldin, 2020) ; Wysokińska, 2021) and technological innovation (Schwindenhammer & Gonglach, 2021) through an integrative framework of SDG implementation (Beyne, 2020) in business strategy and operations can lead to sustainable transformation.

The Coordination variable describes the efforts made by the government, for example by establishing a special coordination unit for the SDG, allocating budget resources for implementing SDG initiatives, and implementing a strict and accountable monitoring framework to track progress consistently. The lack of effect of the Coordination variable could be because the focus of this pillar is limited to evaluating the frequency of SDG references and the existence of specialized SDG processes, but not evaluating their effectiveness and impact in practice (SDG, 2024). This means that the government's efforts and commitment to the SDGs is not only about how far (has been done or not) coordination through political and institutional leadership to the parties that are considered capable of being the key to the success of achieving the SDGs but rather whether these efforts and commitments are effective in real action to execute the practices of achieving the SDGs. More research is needed to measure the synergy and efficiency between sectors to effectively achieve the multi-sector SDG agenda (Ahner-McHaffie et al., 2017).

In addition, the cause of sub-optimal performance could also be that there is a gap between national quantitative targets and business quantitative targets in the SDGs (Malay & Aubinet, 2021). Similarly, major gaps remain in assessing linkages, trade-offs, and synergies between targets, which can undermine effective implementation and the transformative potential of the SDGs (Allen et al., 2018). Therefore, in the future, the following can be considered in executing the Coordination pillar to be effective. Interactions among SDGs targets provide a stronger basis for determining priorities, identifying which targets have the most and least influence on the network, guiding where efforts can be directed, and suggesting where cross-sectoral collaboration is feasible (Weitz et al., 2018). After all, the implementation of the SDGs requires a cross-sectoral process to drive policy coherence, which requires translating interdependencies into policy actions (Breuer et al., 2019).

The Multilateralism variable, which describes the extent of the government's efforts and commitment to build global collaboration and cooperation with other governments, especially those under the UN, has no effect on SDG implementation. This finding could be because the impact of cooperation between nations is still low, with success factors like funding, personnel, and clear strategies being restricted (Schnitzler et al., 2021). In another, there could be potential obligations in regional trade agreements (RTAs) that conflict with some of the SDGs, leading to policy inconsistencies and potential threats to equitable access to essentials (Ruckert et al., 2017). This no-effect result may be since the conditions for the usefulness of multilateralism vary according to the type of cooperation problem faced by countries, and its vulnerability depends on the strategic interactions underlying the behavior of countries (Martin, 1992). Another cause could be the uneven implementation of the

SDGs in fragile and conflict-affected states and the varying commitment of elites to peace, justice, and effective institutions (Baranyi et al., 2021). Therefore, it is important to adopt an integrated assessment approach when prioritizing SDG targets based on urgency, systemic impact, and policy gaps (Allen et al., 2019), as each country's conditions, needs and priorities are different. The differences in conditions between countries, for example, the level of religiosity and economic conditions (Riyono & Widianingsih, 2023), as well as a country's dependence on non-renewable natural resources and the level of readiness to shift to renewable energy consumption (Widianingsih et al., 2024), thus contributing to the achievement of the country's SDGs. These differences in conditions can be a difference in the priorities of a country in building its multilateral relations.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The results of this study indicate that the government's efforts and commitment to the achievement of the SDGs index, which has a significant effect only on the Transformation variable, while the other two variables: Coordination and Multilateralism have no effect. This finding confirms that comprehensive changes in sectoral policies, accompanied by concrete long-term strategic actions from all parties, are the hallmarks of the government's efforts and commitment. This finding confirms that comprehensive changes in sectoral policies, accompanied by concrete long-term strategic actions from all parties, are the hallmarks of the government's efforts and commitment. This finding also opens space for further research to evaluate the effectiveness of the role of Coordination and Multilateralism and its impact in practice in the success of SDG achievements.

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