Frontiers in Business, Economics and Management
ISSN: 2766-824X | Vol. 22, No. 3, 2026

Exploration of Sustainable Management Strategies for Enterprises under the Background of Socioeconomic Transformation

Tiankai Wu

The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, 999077, China

Abstract: In 2025, which marks the end of China's 14th Five-Year Plan, the gross domestic product (GDP) will surpass the 140 trillion yuan mark for the first time, reaching 140.1879 trillion yuan. The social economy will undergo a deep transforma tion towards high-quality development, and industrial structure optimization, green and low-carbon development, and digital transformation will become imperative requirements for enterprise development. This article takes the adaptive development of sustainable management in enterprises under the background of socio-economic transformation as the research objective, based on the national macro policy guidance, combined with authoritative statistical data and practical cases of enterprises of different sizes, systematically analyzes the multidimensional impact of economic transformation characteristics on enterprise sustainable management, and identifies and categorizes the current practical problems such as cognitive bias, insufficient investment, we ak practical implementation, and regional development imbalance in enterprises. Based on this, it proposes scientifically sound and practically feasible implementation strategies, providing professional practical references for various enterprises to enhanc e their sustainable management capabilities, align with economic transformation trends, and achieve long-term healthy development.

Keywords: Socio-economic transformation, Corporate Sustainable Management, ESG Management, Green transformation, Digital Empowerment.

1. Introduction

At present, China's social and economic development is in a critical transition period from the conclusion of the 14th Five-Year Plan to the transition to the 15th Five-Year Plan. The core of economic development in this stage is to achieve a transformation from a scale-and-speed-oriented model to a quality-and-efficiency-oriented one, continuously optimize the economic structure, and accelerate the transformation of development momentum. By 2025, the gross domestic product will exceed 140 trillion yuan, and the economic development will withstand external pressure, improve quality, and upgrade to excellence. The development trend of "stability, progress, novelty, and resilience" has put forward more stringent development requirements for enterprises as market entities. In addition, with the continuous implementation and clear guidance of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology's green manufacturing related policies, the ESG disclosure system is gradually refined and improved, and the digital wave is deeply penetrating into various aspects of industrial development, with technology applications becoming increasingly widespread. Enterprises have to face and properly respond to the multiple development tasks of green and low-carbon transformation, ESG compliance disclosure, and deep digital integration [1]. However, from the perspective of the actual development status of the industry, the effectiveness of advancing sustainable management among Chinese enterprises exhibits significant imbalance. The ESG disclosure rate of A-share listed companies is only 46.58%, and small and medium-sized enterprises, as an important part of the market, generally face practical difficulties such as vague understanding of sustainable management, insufficient resource investment, imperfect management system, and lack of professional competence. In the context of such development, a systematic analysis of the existing pain points and practical paths of sustainable management in enterprises under the background of socio-economic transformation, combined with real industry data and typical enterprise practice cases, provides practical support, path guidance, and method reference for various enterprises to adapt to transformation trends and cultivate core competitiveness. It not only has important theoretical research value, but also has distinct practical significance. It is also an important issue that urgently needs to be solved for enterprises to achieve long-term and healthy development at this stage.

2. The Core Characteristics of Socio-Economic Transformation and Its Impact on Corporate Sustainable Management

China's socio-economic transformation has always been centered on high-quality development, highlighting the four core characteristics of "stability, progress, innovation, and resilience". By 2025, China's R&D investment intensity will increase to 2.8%, the proportion of added value in high-tech manufacturing above designated size will climb to 17.1%, and the domestic sales of new energy vehicles will account for 50.8%. The pace of industrial structure optimization and development momentum transformation continues to accelerate [2], and this transformation trend will have a profound and direct impact on Corporate Sustainable Management from multiple dimensions such as policies, markets, and technology. From the perspective of policy orientation, the relevant policy system in the transformation process continues to be improved and implemented, always focusing on the two directions of green and low-carbon development and business compliance norms. The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology and seven other

departments have jointly issued a special plan, clarifying the development goal of achieving a comprehensive utilization rate of 62% for bulk industrial solid waste by 2030. The national carbon market has also gradually expanded to key high energy consuming industries such as steel and cement, forcing enterprises to continuously strengthen their environmental management capabilities and establish a normalized awareness of compliant operation from a policy perspective. From the perspective of development momentum, digital transformation and technological innovation have become the core driving forces for economic transformation. New generation information technologies such as artificial intelligence and 5G have deeply penetrated and pervasively empowered various industries. This requires enterprises to deeply integrate digital concepts and technological tools into the entire process and various links of sustainable management, and achieve digital upgrading of management models [3]. From the perspective of the market environment, the scale of ESG investment in the capital market is showing a continuous expansion trend. As of the end of the third quarter of 2025, the volume of green credit in China had reached 43.51 trillion yuan, and the green finance support system is continuously improving. The attention and assessment requirements of capital market investors for the sustainable development performance of enterprises are also increasing synchronously. At the same time, the trend of upgrading residents' consumption is becoming increasingly evident, with green consumption and quality-oriented consumption becoming the mainstream orientation, promoting enterprises to pay more attention to product green design and fulfilling social responsibilities throughout the entire life cycle in production and operation. The combination of multiple policies and changes in the market environment mentioned above jointly promotes the transformation of the development logic of sustainable management for enterprises from passive compliance response in the past to active strategic layout and systematic construction.

3. The Core Connotation and Practical Value of Sustainable Management in Enterprises

The core underpinning of enterprise sustainable management is the ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) system, which serves as the core standard for measuring the sustainable development capability of enterprises in the industry. Its connotation comprehensively covers the four dimensions: economic, environmental, social, and governance sustainability [4]. The core development goal is to promote the coordinated development of enterprise operation and development with social public interests and ecological environment protection, fundamentally abandoning the extensive development model of traditional enterprises that emphasizes economic benefits and neglects social responsibility and environmental responsibility. The practical value and application effectiveness of this management model have been fully confirmed in the practice of multiple industries and the operation and development of different types of enterprises in China. In terms of environmental governance, Beilun, Ningbo has implemented the "Green Island" integrated reform model to address the pollution control difficulties faced by small and medium-sized enterprises, covering nearly 2,000 small and medium-sized enterprises in the region. Through centralized pollution control and resource sharing, more than 50 million yuan in pollution control costs have been saved, and the efficiency of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) treatment in the region has been greatly improved to 95%; At the level of enterprise efficiency, Haier Group deeply integrates the concept of sustainable management into the operation of the entire industry chain. In 2024, its revenue from its intelligent building business successfully exceeded 10 billion yuan, an increase of 15% over the previous year. The company has accumulated 119,000 patent applications, including 75,000 invention patents. The implementation of sustainable management has become an important driving force for steadily improving the company's core competitiveness [5]; At the industry leading level, as of April 30, 2025, the ESG disclosure rate of Shanghai and Shenzhen 300 constituent stock companies has reached 97%. Leading companies in the industry have taken the lead in market competition with their forward-looking layout and systematic implementation of sustainable management, forming a distinct industry demonstration effect. From the perspective of macroeconomic development, Corporate Sustainable Management is a key support for China to implement the "dual carbon" strategic goals and promote the optimization and upgrading of green industrial structure. It is also an important micro foundation to ensure that the contribution rate of China's economy to world economic growth remains stable at around 30%. Its dual practical significance - helping enterprises achieve long-term healthy development and promoting high-quality transformation of the social economy - is becoming increasingly prominent in the current economic transformation process.

4. Existing Problems in Corporate Sustainable Management Under the Background of Socio-Economic Transformation

Based on the national research on Corporate Sustainable Management, industry development reports from various provinces and cities, and typical regional practice cases, there are still many prominent problems in the advancement of sustainable management in Chinese enterprises, and they exhibit significant regional and scale imbalances, which have become the core bottleneck restricting enterprises from adapting to economic transformation and achieving long-term development. From a cognitive perspective, some enterprises have a biased understanding of sustainable management, simply equating it with a single investment in environmental protection funds, neglecting core aspects such as optimizing governance structures, protecting the rights and interests of stakeholders, and implementing social responsibilities. This problem is particularly prominent for the private small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Before the implementation of the "Green Island" integrated reform in Beilun, Ningbo, they faced the practical difficulties of insufficient environmental awareness and one-sided understanding of sustainable management among small and medium-sized enterprises in the region [6]. At the level of investment guarantee, the investment in sustainable management resources by enterprises is generally insufficient. Due to the triple constraints of capital, technology, and professional talent, the proportion of sustainable management investment by small and medium-sized enterprises in the domestic manufacturing industry is generally less than 1%,

and the proportion for small and medium-sized enterprises in the service industry is as low as 0.6%. Taking Hunan Province as an example, by the end of 2025, the ESG report disclosure rate of listed companies in the province was only 36.98%, far below the national average of 46.58%. Insufficient investment directly led to insufficient implementation effectiveness of sustainable management. The problem of uneven regional development is particularly prominent. The ESG disclosure rate of Hunan Province ranks low among central provinces, with a significant gap compared to advanced regions such as Beijing and Shanghai. In August 2025, the ESG disclosure rate of Beijing listed companies in Beijing reached 68%, while that of Shanghai A-share listed companies exceeded 70%. The gap in management and practice levels among the three regions continues to widen. The integration depth of digital technology and sustainable management is insufficient, and some enterprises have not effectively integrated digital technology into the entire process of sustainable management, resulting in a formal problem of emphasizing disclosure over practice. Academic empirical studies have confirmed that there is a clear "inverted U-shaped" relationship between enterprise digital transformation and ESG performance, and excessive digital transformation without reasonable planning will weaken the actual effectiveness of sustainable management. The problem of uneven quality of ESG information disclosure urgently needs to be solved. In 2025, there are currently no AAA rated companies in Hunan Province's listed companies, with 62.76% of listed companies in Hunan Province rated B or below. The disclosure content is mostly limited to basic compliance indicators [7], lacking in-depth explanation of management pain points, improvement measures, and long-term planning, making it difficult to meet the compliance requirements of the transition period and the expectations of capital market investors.

5. Core Implementation Strategies for Corporate Sustainable Management Under the Background of Socio-Economic Transformation

Based on the characteristics of the social and economic transformation era and the practical pain points of sustainable management in enterprises, and based on the actual development of China's industries and the national green development policy orientation, five targeted implementation strategies are proposed to help enterprises improve the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of their sustainable management systems. One is to strengthen cognitive guidance, guide enterprises to establish the concept of ESG multi-dimensional synergetic development, eliminate one-sided understanding of sustainable management, actively learn from the mature practical experience of leading enterprises in the industry, fully integrate it into the overall development strategy of the enterprise, and achieve coordinated planning for top-level design. The second is to optimize the investment structure, taking into account the development endowments and resource differences of enterprises of different sizes. Small and medium-sized enterprises can rely on the park resource sharing model to reduce implementation costs. For example, the "Green Island" reform in Beilun, Ningbo has effectively reduced the operational burden of small and medium-sized enterprises through centralized pollution control, bundled EIA approvals, and other measures; Large enterprises need to increase their investment in green technology research and digital construction, in line with the development requirement of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology to achieve a 20% proportion of short process steelmaking by 2030, and fully leverage the leading role of industry leaders. The third is to promote digital empowerment, relying on the industrial Internet platform to integrate and collect data throughout the entire process of sustainable management, learn from the practical experience of Haier Group in the deep integration of AI technology and Industry 4.0, improve the operational efficiency of management and the level of refined management and control, while avoiding the pitfalls of excessive digital transformation, and achieve the deep coordination and promotion of the two [8]. The fourth is to strengthen the government-enterprise collaboration. Enterprises need to actively connect with local policy support and resource allocation directions. For example, Hunan Province has included the "Xianglin Carbon Voucher" in the key support scope of green finance. Enterprises can actively apply for policy support such as funding and technology, and inject momentum into the implementation of sustainable management with the help of policy dividends. The fifth is to improve the disclosure and governance system, strictly follow the three-level ESG disclosure framework: "Basic Principles + Industry Guidelines + Preparation Guidelines", focus on improving the quality and pertinence of information disclosure [9], strengthen the supervisory decision-making responsibilities of the board of directors, improve internal governance mechanisms, and promote the transformation of Corporate Sustainable Management from traditional "compliance driven" to high-quality "value creation".

6. Practical Evidence and Data Verification

To verify the feasibility and practical effectiveness of the above implementation strategies, typical cases of different scales and industries were selected from three dimensions: enterprise practice, regional pilot, and industry benchmark for analysis. The application value of the strategies was further supported by authoritative statistical data in the industry. Haier Group has established a comprehensive sustainable management system, deeply integrating ESG core concepts into the entire process of production, enterprise management, and market services. With the support of a digital management platform, a series of practical measures have been implemented [10]. By 2024, the average training time for employees will reach 55 hours, emergency drills will cover over 150000 people, and the goal of zero product quality recalls will be achieved throughout the year, effectively achieving a win-win synergy between enterprise value and social value. The "Green Island" reform in Beilun, Ningbo, as a national level typical practice of sustainable management, has precisely solved the pain points of insufficient investment and weak professional capabilities in sustainable management for small and medium-sized enterprises through intensive measures such as centralized pollution control and joint EIA review. After its implementation, it has reduced the number of environmental administrative penalties for small and medium-sized enterprises in the region by nearly 80%, and steadily increased the annual output value of small and medium-sized enterprises in the region, providing a replicable park model for small and medium-sized enterprises to practice

sustainable management. Baowu Group focuses on the green and low-carbon transformation of the steel industry, strictly benchmarking the industry's low-carbon development policy requirements, continuously promoting the research and development of energy-saving and carbon reduction technologies, implementing core technologies for short process steelmaking, continuously reducing the comprehensive energy consumption per ton of steel, and becoming a benchmark enterprise for the sustainable transformation of traditional high energy consuming industries [11]. From the overall development data of the industry, in 2025, 36.8% of companies listed in the MSCI China A-Share Index have upgraded their ESG ratings, and 54 companies have received leading ratings. Most of these companies will implement relevant strategies around ESG system construction. The practical results of the above typical cases are in line with the overall data changes in the industry, fully demonstrating that sustainable management strategies that meet the needs of social and economic transformation and take into account the scale and regional development characteristics of enterprises can effectively enhance their core competitiveness, help various enterprises better adapt to the development trend of economic transformation, and achieve long-term healthy development.

7. Conclusion

The conclusion of the 14th Five-Year Plan in 2025 marks a new stage of social and economic transformation in China. The development characteristics of "stability, progress, novelty, and resilience" have put forward stricter requirements for Corporate Sustainable Management. Sustainable management has become the core support for enterprises to align with the transformation trend and achieve long-term development. This article relies on authoritative statistical data released by the National Bureau of Statistics, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, and other departments, combined with leading enterprises such as Haier and Baowu, the Beilun region of Ningbo, and local practice cases of Xianglin Carbon Certificates, to deeply analyze the specific impact of social and economic transformation on Corporate Sustainable Management. It systematically identifies, categorizes, and analyzes prominent problems such as cognitive bias, insufficient investment, and regional imbalance in current Corporate Sustainable Management, which are particularly evident in the private small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Based on the actual development of enterprises, it proposes five implementation strategies: cognitive guidance, optimized investment, digital empowerment, government-enterprise collaboration, and improved governance. The feasibility and effectiveness of these strategies are verified through practical results and industry data. Research has shown that Corporate Sustainable Management must align with the green, digital, and compliance-oriented development trends of social and economic transformation, taking into account their own scale characteristics and regional development differences, in order to achieve synergy and win-win results between enterprises, society, and the environment. There is still significant room for improvement in the sustainable management of Chinese enterprises. In the future, it is necessary to focus on enhancing SMEs' awareness of sustainable management, narrowing the regional development gap, and promoting the fundamental shift of sustainable management from "compliance driven" to "value creation". This will provide strong support for the high-quality development of China's economy and the stable growth of the global economy. Constrained by sample selection scope and research period, this study still has certain limitations. In the future, more in-depth exploration and research can be focused on the sustainable management of small and medium-sized enterprises in specific industries.

References

[1] Lu, Y., Xu, C., Zhu, B., & Sun, Y. (2024). Digitalization transformation and ESG performance: Evidence from China. Business Strategy and the Environment, 33(2), 352-368.

[2] Pan, W., Wang, J., Lu, Z., Liu, Y., & Li, Y. (2021). High-quality development in China: Measurement system, spatial pattern, and improvement paths. Habitat international, 118, 102458.

[3] Xu, J., Yu, Y., Zhang, M., & Zhang, J. Z. (2023). Impacts of digital transformation on eco-innovation and sustainable performance: Evidence from Chinese manufacturing companies. Journal of Cleaner Production, 393, 136278.

[4] Zhou, S., Rashid, M. H. U., Mohd. Zobair, S. A., Sobhani, F. A., & Siddik, A. B. (2023). Does ESG impact firms' sustainability performance? The mediating effect of innovation performance. Sustainability, 15(6), 5586.

[5] Zhai, Y., Cai, Z., Lin, H., Yuan, M., Mao, Y., & Yu, M. (2022). Does better environmental, social, and governance induce better corporate green innovation: The mediating role of financing constraints. Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management, 29(5), 1513-1526.

[6] Qu, Y., Liu, Y., Nayak, R. R., & Li, M. (2015). Sustainable development of eco-industrial parks in China: effects of managers' environmental awareness on the relationships between practice and performance. Journal of Cleaner Production, 87, 328-338.

[7] Liu, M. (2022). Quantitative ESG disclosure and divergence of ESG ratings. Frontiers in psychology, 13, 936798.

[8] Yang, X., & Han, Q. (2024). Nonlinear effects of enterprise digital transformation on environmental, social and governance (ESG) performance: evidence from China. Sustainability Accounting, Management and Policy Journal, 15(2), 355-381.

[9] Li, C., Wu, M., Chen, X., & Huang, W. (2022). Environmental, social and governance performance, corporate transparency, and credit rating: Some evidence from Chinese A-share listed companies. Pacific-Basin Finance Journal, 74, 101806.

[10] Li, X., Cao, J., Liu, Z., & Luo, X. (2020). Sustainable business model based on digital twin platform network: The inspiration from haier's case study in China. Sustainability, 12(3), 936.

[11] Wang, Y., Zuo, H., & Zhao, J. (2020). Recent progress and development of ironmaking in China as of 2019: an overview. Ironmaking & Steelmaking, 47(6), 640-649.