



Embedding the Triple Bottom Line in School Governance as Pathways Toward Sustainable and Inclusive Higher Education: Insights from Don Jose Ecleo Memorial College, Philippines

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Abstract

This study examined the extent to which Triple Bottom Line (TBL) principles are embedded in the school governance of Don Jose Ecleo Memorial College (DJEMC), Philippines, and how these practices relate to institutional sustainability and institutional inclusivity. The study focused on the People, Planet, and Profit dimensions of TBL implementation and assessed their association with social, environmental, financial-operational, participatory, equity-oriented, and climate-related institutional outcomes. An explanatory sequential mixed-method design was employed, with a descriptive-correlational quantitative phase supported by documentary analysis. Student respondents were selected using Slovin's formula from a population of 1,709 students, yielding 325 student participants, while faculty and administrative staff were covered through complete enumeration and 30 community partners were purposively selected. Data were analyzed using frequency counts, weighted mean, standard deviation, one-way ANOVA, Pearson product-moment correlation, and multiple regression. Findings showed that TBL implementation was practiced to a high extent overall ($M = 3.72$), with People ($M = 3.73$), Profit ($M = 3.72$), and Planet ($M = 3.71$) all within the high-extent range. Institutional sustainability ($M = 3.71$) and institutional inclusivity ($M = 3.70$) were likewise rated high. Overall TBL implementation had a very strong significant relationship with institutional sustainability ($r = .893$, $p < .001$) and a strong significant relationship with institutional inclusivity ($r = .840$, $p < .001$). Regression results further showed that TBL dimensions strongly predicted sustainability ($R^2 = .854$) and inclusivity ($R^2 = .774$), with Planet and Profit emerging as significant predictors in both models. The study concludes that embedding TBL principles in school governance offers a viable pathway for strengthening sustainable and inclusive higher education in rural institutional contexts.

Keywords: Triple Bottom Line, School Governance, Institutional Sustainability, Institutional Inclusivity, Higher Education, Don Jose Ecleo Memorial College

1. Introduction

Higher education institutions are increasingly expected to demonstrate governance practices that address social responsibility, environmental stewardship, and economic viability. The Triple Bottom Line (TBL) framework, classically associated with the People, Planet, and Profit dimensions of organizational accountability, provides a useful lens for examining how institutions move beyond narrow financial measures toward broader forms of sustainable performance (Elkington, 1997; Leal Filho et al., 2020). In higher education, this orientation is especially relevant because colleges and universities function not only as providers of instruction but also as public-facing institutions that shape civic participation, environmental behavior, workforce development, and community well-being.

The global sustainability agenda has increased pressure on higher education institutions to align governance, operations, curriculum, community engagement, and resource allocation with long-term development goals. A



whole-institution approach is increasingly emphasized because sustainability cannot be limited to isolated projects or symbolic commitments; it must be embedded in planning, institutional culture, stakeholder participation, campus operations, and monitoring systems (Kohl et al., 2021; Menon & Suresh, 2020). This is especially important in rural and developing contexts where institutions often operate with resource constraints but are deeply connected to local development needs.

In the Philippine higher education context, the institutionalization of sustainability and inclusivity remains uneven. Some institutions demonstrate community outreach, environmental activities, student welfare initiatives, and financial accountability mechanisms, but these practices may not yet be integrated within a coherent governance model. The challenge is not only to implement programs but also to embed them systematically into governance structures so that they are sustained, monitored, and connected to institutional outcomes. For Don Jose Ecleo Memorial College, located in Dinagat Islands, the rural island context makes the integration of TBL principles particularly relevant because the institution serves both educational and community-development functions.

The rationale for the study rests on the need to generate empirical evidence on how TBL implementation relates to institutional sustainability and inclusivity in a rural higher education institution. While studies on sustainability in higher education have expanded in recent years, many remain concentrated on large universities, urban institutions, or environmental sustainability alone (Findler et al., 2019; Caeiro et al., 2020). Less attention has been given to how People, Planet, and Profit are jointly embedded in school governance and how these dimensions connect to inclusive institutional climates, equitable access, and stakeholder participation in rural Philippine settings.

This study therefore addresses a contextual and governance gap. It examines the extent of TBL implementation at DJEMC, assesses institutional sustainability and inclusivity, tests differences across stakeholder groups, determines the relationship between TBL implementation and institutional outcomes, and develops a governance framework grounded in the findings. In doing so, the study contributes to the discussion on sustainable and inclusive higher education by showing how rural institutions can use TBL as a governance pathway rather than as a peripheral advocacy or compliance activity.

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored primarily on Triple Bottom Line Theory, which holds that organizational performance should be evaluated through social, environmental, and economic accountability rather than financial performance alone (Elkington, 1997). In the present study, this theory informed the assessment of TBL implementation in terms of People, Planet, and Profit. The People dimension referred to inclusive governance policies, structured stakeholder engagement mechanisms, and formal community partnership programs. The Planet dimension focused on environmental policy integration, resource management practices, and environmental awareness and education programs. The Profit dimension covered financial planning and accountability systems, strategic resource mobilization initiatives, and operational efficiency and innovation practices.

Stakeholder Theory also informed the study by emphasizing that institutional governance should consider the interests, participation, and welfare of multiple stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, and community partners (Freeman, 1984). This theory is directly linked to institutional inclusivity, particularly participatory inclusivity, equity and accessibility, and supportive institutional climate. Sustainable Development Theory, drawn from the Brundtland conception of development that meets present needs without compromising future generations, supported the interpretation of institutional sustainability as a long-term responsibility involving social, environmental, and operational continuity (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). Inclusive Education Theory further strengthened the framework by emphasizing access, participation, representation, and institutional support for diverse stakeholders (Ainscow, 2005; UNESCO, 2021). Together, these theories explain why TBL-based governance can be expected to align with institutional sustainability and inclusivity.



Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework positions TBL implementation in school governance as the central construct. Its three dimensions—People, Planet, and Profit—are examined in relation to two institutional outcomes: sustainability and inclusivity. Institutional sustainability includes social sustainability, environmental sustainability, and financial and operational sustainability. Institutional inclusivity includes participatory inclusivity, equity and accessibility, and supportive institutional climate. The framework also recognizes that the integrated findings serve as the basis for a proposed sustainable and inclusive governance framework for DJEMC.

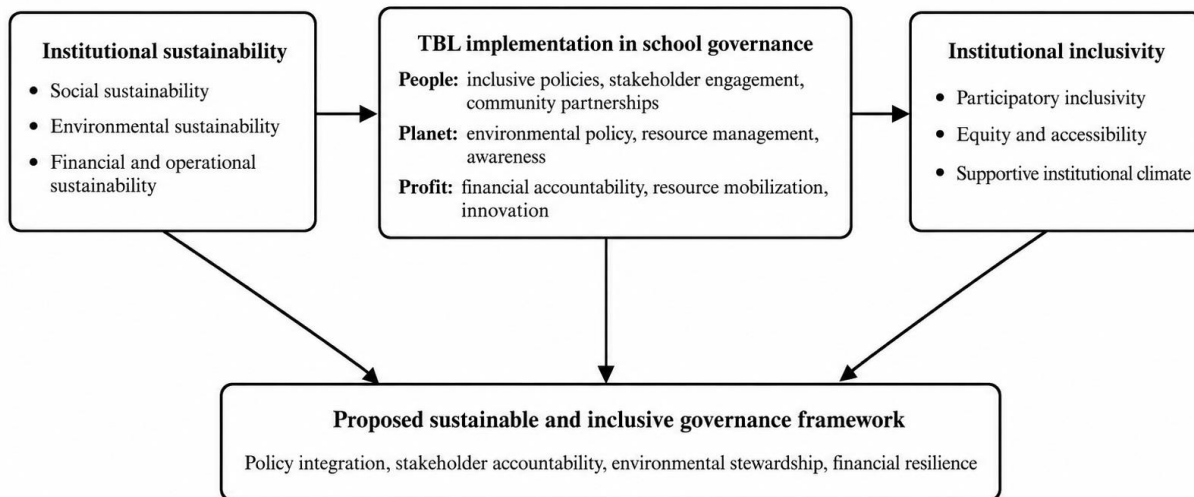


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of the study, showing how Triple Bottom Line (TBL) implementation in school governance is linked with institutional sustainability, institutional inclusivity, and the proposed sustainable and inclusive governance framework for Don Jose Ecleo Memorial College. At the center of the framework is TBL implementation in school governance, which consists of three major dimensions: People, Planet, and Profit. The People dimension includes inclusive policies, stakeholder engagement, and community partnerships; the Planet dimension includes environmental policy, resource management, and environmental awareness; and the Profit dimension includes financial accountability, resource mobilization, and innovation.

The left side of the framework shows institutional sustainability, which covers social sustainability, environmental sustainability, and financial and operational sustainability. This indicates that the integration of TBL principles in governance is expected to support the long-term capacity of the institution to sustain its social responsibilities, environmental commitments, and financial and operational systems. The right side shows institutional inclusivity, which includes participatory inclusivity, equity and accessibility, and a supportive institutional climate. This reflects the role of TBL-based governance in promoting fair participation, inclusive access, and a positive institutional environment for stakeholders.

The arrows in the figure indicate the relationships among the major constructs of the study. Institutional sustainability, TBL implementation, and institutional inclusivity collectively inform the development of the proposed sustainable and inclusive governance framework. This framework emphasizes policy integration, stakeholder accountability, environmental stewardship, and financial resilience as strategic directions for strengthening governance at Don Jose Ecleo Memorial College. Overall, Figure 1 illustrates that embedding People, Planet, and Profit principles into school governance provides a pathway toward a more sustainable, inclusive, accountable, and resilient higher education institution.

Aim of the Study

This study aimed to determine the extent of Triple Bottom Line implementation in the school governance of Don Jose Ecleo Memorial College and examine its relationship with institutional sustainability and institutional inclusivity as a basis for a sustainable and inclusive governance framework.

Statement of the Problem

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the extent of TBL implementation at DJEMC in terms of People, Planet, and Profit?
2. What is the extent of institutional sustainability in terms of social sustainability, environmental sustainability, and financial and operational sustainability?
3. What is the extent of institutional inclusivity in terms of participatory inclusivity, equity and accessibility, and supportive institutional climate?
4. Is there a significant difference among respondent groups in their responses on TBL implementation, institutional sustainability, and institutional inclusivity?
5. Is there a significant relationship between TBL implementation and institutional sustainability?
6. Is there a significant relationship between TBL implementation and institutional inclusivity?
7. To what extent does TBL-based governance influence institutional sustainability?
8. To what extent does TBL-based governance influence institutional inclusivity?
9. What governance framework may be proposed to strengthen TBL integration in school governance toward sustainability and inclusivity?

Research Hypotheses

- H01: There is no significant difference among the respondents' responses on the extent of TBL implementation.
- H02: There is no significant difference among the respondents' responses on the extent of institutional sustainability.
- H03: There is no significant difference among the respondents' responses on the extent of institutional inclusivity.
- H04: There is no significant relationship between the extent of TBL implementation and institutional sustainability.
- H05: There is no significant relationship between the extent of TBL implementation and institutional inclusivity.
- H06: TBL-based governance does not significantly influence institutional sustainability.
- H07: TBL-based governance does not significantly influence institutional inclusivity.

2. Literature Review

The literature on sustainability in higher education increasingly argues for a systemic, whole-institution approach rather than fragmented program implementation. Menon and Suresh (2020) observed that sustainability initiatives in higher education frequently exist across teaching, research, campus operations, and community engagement, but integration remains uneven when governance mechanisms are weak. Similarly, Kohl et al. (2021) emphasized that higher education institutions contribute more effectively to the Sustainable Development Goals when sustainability is embedded across institutional systems. These perspectives are directly related to the present study because DJEMC is examined not merely in terms of isolated sustainability activities but in terms of how People, Planet, and Profit are embedded in governance.



The People dimension of TBL is closely associated with social sustainability and inclusive governance. In higher education, social sustainability is expressed through stakeholder well-being, fairness, participation, and institutional support. Grum and Babnik (2022) noted that social sustainability includes well-being, inclusion, decent work, and gender equality, while Contreras et al. (2020) emphasized that sustainability initiatives become more responsive when stakeholder voices are represented in governance. This literature supports the present study's focus on inclusive governance policies, stakeholder engagement mechanisms, and community partnership programs as expressions of the People dimension.

The Planet dimension emphasizes environmental policy integration, resource management, and sustainability education. Environmental sustainability in higher education requires more than periodic clean-up drives or awareness campaigns; it requires operational systems, policy alignment, monitoring, and a culture of responsible resource use. Findler et al. (2019) argued that higher education institutions affect sustainable development through their operations, governance, education, research, and societal engagement. Caeiro et al. (2020) similarly highlighted the importance of institutional tools that assess sustainability performance across multiple domains. These insights connect with the study's assessment of environmental policy integration, resource management practices, and environmental awareness and education programs at DJEMC.

The Profit dimension should not be understood as profit maximization in a commercial sense but as economic viability, responsible financial planning, resource mobilization, and operational efficiency. In resource-constrained institutions, financial and operational sustainability is necessary to maintain educational quality, student support, community partnerships, and environmental programs. Mader and Rammel (2021) emphasized that sustainability transformation in higher education requires governance structures that link institutional mission, financial capacity, and long-term planning. Thus, the Profit dimension in this study is treated as a governance requirement for institutional resilience rather than a purely financial indicator.

Institutional sustainability is multidimensional. It includes the ability to sustain stakeholder welfare, environmental commitments, and financial-operational continuity across academic years and leadership transitions. Leal Filho et al. (2020) argued that sustainability leadership and institutional culture are crucial for moving sustainability from rhetoric into sustained practice. Lambrechts et al. (2020) similarly showed that organizational culture influences how sustainability policies are implemented across institutional units. These studies support the present inquiry because DJEMC's sustainability is examined through social, environmental, and financial-operational dimensions rather than through a single score.

Institutional inclusivity extends sustainability by examining who participates, who benefits, and whether the institutional environment supports belonging and equity. Inclusive governance includes participatory decision-making, equitable access to resources and services, and a supportive institutional climate. UNESCO (2021) emphasized that future-oriented education requires inclusion, participation, and social responsibility. Within the present study, these concerns are operationalized through participatory inclusivity, equity and accessibility, and supportive institutional climate. The literature therefore suggests that TBL implementation should be evaluated not only by sustainability outputs but also by inclusive stakeholder experiences.

Taken together, the literature shows that sustainability in higher education is strongest when governance integrates social, environmental, and economic dimensions, when stakeholders are actively involved, and when institutional practices are systematically monitored. However, rural Philippine institutions remain underrepresented in this literature. The present study responds to this gap by providing institution-specific evidence from DJEMC and by using the findings to propose a governance framework that translates TBL into sustainable and inclusive higher education practice.

3. Methodology



Research Design

The study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-method design with a descriptive-correlational quantitative phase supported by documentary analysis. The quantitative phase determined the extent of TBL implementation, institutional sustainability, and institutional inclusivity and tested differences, relationships, and predictive effects among the variables. The qualitative/documentary component examined institutional reports, governance records, policies, sustainability initiatives, and related documents to contextualize and explain the quantitative findings. This design was appropriate because the study required both measurement of stakeholder perceptions and contextual interpretation of institutional governance practices.

Participants and Locale

The study was conducted at Don Jose Ecleo Memorial College in San Jose, Dinagat Islands, Philippines. Student respondents were selected using stratified random sampling and Slovin's formula from a total student population of 1,709, yielding 325 student respondents. Faculty and administrative staff were included through complete enumeration, while 30 community partners were purposively selected based on their affiliation with institutional programs and partnerships. The inclusion of students, faculty and staff, and community partners allowed the study to capture internal and external stakeholder perceptions of TBL-based governance.

Table 1. Distribution of Student Sample by College

College	Population	Sample
Business Administration	363	69
Criminal Justice Education	459	87
College of Teacher Education	240	46
College of Arts and Sciences	150	28
College of Hospitality and Tourism Management	182	35
College of Information Technology	315	60
Total	1,709	325

Instrument

A structured adapted questionnaire was used to measure the extent of TBL implementation, institutional sustainability, and institutional inclusivity. Parallel versions were prepared for students, faculty and administrative staff, and community partners, with contextual adjustments for each group while retaining common constructs. The questionnaire used a five-point scale interpreted as follows: 4.21-5.00 = Very High Extent; 3.41-4.20 = High Extent; 2.61-3.40 = Moderate Extent; 1.81-2.60 = Low Extent; and 1.00-1.80 = Very Low Extent. The instrument covered TBL implementation across People, Planet, and Profit; institutional sustainability across social, environmental, and financial-operational dimensions; and institutional inclusivity across participatory inclusivity, equity and accessibility, and supportive institutional climate.

Data Collection Procedure

Permission was secured from the appropriate institutional authorities before the conduct of data collection. Respondents were informed of the study's purpose, voluntary nature, confidentiality safeguards, and their right to withdraw. Questionnaires were administered to the identified respondent groups, retrieved, checked for completeness, encoded, and prepared for statistical analysis. Institutional documents and records related to

governance, sustainability, partnerships, environmental programs, and financial-operational initiatives were also reviewed to support interpretation of the survey findings.

Data Analysis

Frequency counts and percentages were used to describe the student sample distribution. Weighted mean and standard deviation were used to determine the extent of TBL implementation, institutional sustainability, and institutional inclusivity. One-way ANOVA tested whether there were significant differences among respondent groups. Pearson product-moment correlation tested the relationship between TBL implementation and institutional sustainability and inclusivity. Multiple linear regression was used to determine the predictive influence of People, Planet, and Profit dimensions on institutional sustainability and inclusivity. The significance level was set at 0.05.

Ethical Considerations

The study observed ethical principles in research involving human participants. Informed consent was obtained, participation was voluntary, and respondents were assured that participation, or non-participation would not affect their academic standing, employment, or relationship with the institution. No personally identifiable information was disclosed in the manuscript. Data were stored securely and used solely for academic purposes. The researcher also recognized positionality as an institutional administrator and mitigated potential bias by using standardized instruments, assuring anonymity, and relying on statistical analysis and documentary evidence in interpreting the findings.

4. Results and Discussion

Table 2. Summary of TBL Implementation across People, Planet, and Profit

Dimension / Indicator	Faculty & Staff M(SD)	Students M(SD)	Community Partners M(SD)	Overall M(SD)
People: Inclusive Governance Policies	3.80 (1.02)	3.92 (0.93)	3.70 (1.07)	3.84 (0.97)
People: Stakeholder Engagement Mechanisms	3.20 (1.15)	3.70 (0.98)	3.52 (1.23)	3.56 (1.06)
People: Community Partnership Programs	3.72 (0.98)	3.85 (0.88)	3.70 (1.00)	3.79 (0.92)
Sub-Mean: People	3.57 (1.05)	3.82 (0.93)	3.64 (1.10)	3.73 (1.03)
Planet: Environmental Policy Integration	3.73 (1.03)	3.85 (0.85)	3.80 (1.13)	3.82 (0.92)
Planet: Resource Management Practices	3.60 (0.94)	3.77 (0.85)	3.63 (1.07)	3.72 (0.88)
Planet: Environmental Awareness Programs	3.42 (0.91)	3.82 (0.84)	3.57 (1.17)	3.71 (0.89)
Sub-Mean: Planet	3.58 (1.00)	3.81 (0.85)	3.67 (1.12)	3.71 (0.99)
Profit: Financial Planning and Accountability	3.68 (0.89)	3.60 (0.89)	3.87 (1.17)	3.64 (0.91)
Profit: Strategic Resource Mobilization	3.67 (0.94)	3.85 (0.98)	3.75 (1.00)	3.80 (0.98)
Profit: Operational	3.64 (0.98)	3.77 (0.85)	3.80 (1.22)	3.74 (0.91)

Dimension / Indicator	Faculty & Staff M(SD)	Students M(SD)	Community Partners M(SD)	Overall M(SD)
Efficiency and Innovation				
Sub-Mean: Profit	3.66 (0.94)	3.74 (0.91)	3.81 (1.18)	3.72 (0.98)
Overall TBL Implementation	3.60 (1.00)	3.79 (0.90)	3.71 (1.13)	3.72 (1.00)

Table 2 shows that TBL implementation at DJEMC was practiced to a high extent overall ($M = 3.72$). The highest sub-mean was People ($M = 3.73$), followed closely by Profit ($M = 3.72$) and Planet ($M = 3.71$). Inclusive governance policies obtained the highest individual overall mean ($M = 3.84$), suggesting that respondents perceived the institution as relatively strong in fairness, diversity, and social responsibility. The lowest overall mean was financial planning and accountability systems ($M = 3.64$), although still within the high-extent range. These results indicate that DJEMC has already embedded TBL-related practices in governance but still has room to strengthen financial accountability and stakeholder engagement mechanisms.

Table 3. Institutional Sustainability of DJEMC

Dimension	Faculty & Staff M(SD)	Students M(SD)	Community Partners M(SD)	Overall M(SD)
Social Sustainability	3.53 (1.04)	3.75 (0.92)	3.73 (1.17)	3.69 (0.97)
Environmental Sustainability	3.58 (1.00)	3.75 (0.94)	3.67 (1.19)	3.70 (0.97)
Financial and Operational Sustainability	3.61 (0.97)	3.75 (0.92)	3.65 (1.06)	3.70 (0.94)
Overall Sustainability	3.57 (1.00)	3.75 (0.92)	3.68 (1.14)	3.71 (0.96)

Table 3 indicates that institutional sustainability was rated to a high extent ($M = 3.71$). The three sustainability domains were closely clustered: financial and operational sustainability and environmental sustainability both registered $M = 3.70$, while social sustainability registered $M = 3.69$. The results suggest that DJEMC's sustainability profile is balanced across social, environmental, and operational dimensions. However, because all dimensions remained below the very high range, the findings point to the need for more systematic monitoring, stronger continuity mechanisms, and deeper integration of sustainability initiatives into long-term institutional planning.

Table 4. Institutional Inclusivity of DJEMC

Dimension	Faculty & Staff M(SD)	Students M(SD)	Community Partners M(SD)	Overall M(SD)
Participatory Inclusivity	3.29 (1.13)	3.72 (0.98)	3.46 (1.14)	3.49 (1.08)
Equity and Accessibility	3.49 (1.11)	3.75 (0.99)	3.60 (1.20)	3.61 (1.10)
Supportive Institutional Climate	3.60 (1.11)	3.82 (1.93)	3.68 (1.22)	3.70 (1.09)
Overall Inclusivity	3.46 (1.12)	3.76 (0.97)	3.68 (1.22)	3.70 (1.09)

Table 4 shows that institutional inclusivity was also rated to a high extent overall ($M = 3.70$). Supportive institutional climate ranked highest ($M = 3.70$), followed by equity and accessibility ($M = 3.61$), while participatory inclusivity had the lowest mean ($M = 3.49$). The pattern suggests that respondents experienced a generally



supportive institutional environment but that stakeholder participation in decision-making can still be strengthened. The lower faculty and staff rating for participatory inclusivity (M = 3.29) indicates that participatory mechanisms may not be experienced uniformly across stakeholder groups.

Table 5. Differences in TBL, Sustainability, and Inclusivity by Respondent Group

Indicator	Faculty & Staff M(SD)	Students M(SD)	Community Partners M(SD)	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
People (Social Implementation)	3.57 (1.05)	3.82 (0.93)	3.64 (1.10)	0.015**	Reject H01	Significant
Planet (Environmental Implementation)	3.58 (1.00)	3.81 (0.85)	3.67 (1.12)	0.024**	Reject H01	Significant
Profit (Economic Implementation)	3.66 (0.94)	3.74 (0.91)	3.81 (1.18)	0.485	Accept H01	Not significant
Social Sustainability	3.53 (1.04)	3.75 (0.92)	3.73 (1.17)	0.0121**	Reject H02	Significant
Environmental Sustainability	3.58 (1.00)	3.75 (0.94)	3.67 (1.19)	0.0825	Accept H02	Not significant
Financial and Operational Sustainability	3.61 (0.97)	3.75 (0.92)	3.65 (1.06)	0.322	Accept H02	Not significant
Participatory Inclusivity	3.29 (1.13)	3.72 (0.98)	3.46 (1.14)	0.004**	Reject H03	Significant
Equity and Accessibility	3.49 (1.11)	3.75 (0.99)	3.60 (1.20)	<0.000	Reject H03	Significant
Supportive Institutional Climate	3.60 (1.11)	3.82 (1.93)	3.68 (1.22)	0.018**	Reject H03	Significant

Table 5 shows that respondent groups differed significantly in several domains. Significant differences were found in People implementation, Planet implementation, social sustainability, and all three inclusivity dimensions. Profit implementation, environmental sustainability, and financial-operational sustainability did not significantly differ among respondent groups. These results imply that stakeholders share relatively similar views of economic and operational aspects but differ more in how they experience social participation, environmental implementation, and inclusivity. Students generally reported higher ratings, suggesting stronger perceived exposure to institutional services and programs, while faculty and staff were more critical in participatory inclusivity and stakeholder engagement.

Table 6. Relationship between TBL Implementation and Institutional Sustainability

TBL Dimension	Social Sustainability	Environmental Sustainability	Financial & Operational Sustainability	Overall Sustainability
People	0.825***	0.788***	0.800***	0.839***
Planet	0.827***	0.826***	0.814***	0.858***
Profit	0.817***	0.840***	0.781***	0.848***
Overall TBL Implementation	0.866***	0.861***	0.840***	0.893***

Table 6 indicates strong to very strong positive and highly significant relationships between TBL implementation and institutional sustainability. Overall TBL implementation had a very strong relationship with overall

sustainability ($r = .893, p < .001$). The results suggest that stronger implementation of People, Planet, and Profit governance practices is consistently associated with higher social, environmental, and financial-operational sustainability. The null hypothesis on the relationship between TBL implementation and sustainability was therefore rejected.

Table 7. Relationship between TBL Implementation and Institutional Inclusivity

TBL Dimension	Participatory Inclusivity	Equity & Accessibility	Supportive Institutional Climate	Overall Inclusivity
People	0.762***	0.752***	0.778***	0.811***
Planet	0.713***	0.742***	0.783***	0.792***
Profit	0.739***	0.726***	0.762***	0.789***
Overall TBL Implementation	0.777***	0.779***	0.815***	0.840***

Table 7 shows that TBL implementation was strongly and significantly related to institutional inclusivity. Overall TBL implementation correlated strongly with overall inclusivity ($r = .840, p < .001$), and all dimensional correlations were positive and highly significant. The strongest association was between overall TBL implementation and supportive institutional climate ($r = .815$). These findings suggest that TBL-based governance is not only linked to sustainability but also to institutional practices that promote participation, accessibility, fairness, and supportive stakeholder experience.

Table 8. Regression Models Predicting Sustainability and Inclusivity

Outcome	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	df1	df2	p
Institutional Sustainability	0.854	0.853	627.08	3	321	<0.000
Institutional Inclusivity	0.774	0.772	367.21	3	321	<0.000

Table 8 presents the overall regression model fit. The TBL dimensions jointly explained 85.4% of the variance in institutional sustainability and 77.4% of the variance in institutional inclusivity. Both models were statistically significant. This indicates that TBL-based governance is a powerful explanatory framework for understanding institutional sustainability and inclusivity at DJEMC. The findings support the rejection of the null hypotheses stating that TBL-based governance does not significantly influence institutional sustainability and inclusivity.

Table 9. Regression Coefficients for TBL Dimensions

Outcome	Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p	Interpretation
Sustainability	People	0.124	0.051	2.424	0.016**	Significant
Sustainability	Planet	0.385	0.053	7.243	<0.000**	Significant
Sustainability	Profit	0.451	0.040	11.408	<0.000**	Significant
Inclusivity	People	0.099	0.065	1.523	0.129	Not significant
Inclusivity	Planet	0.313	0.067	4.638	<0.000**	Significant
Inclusivity	Profit	0.513	0.050	10.230	<0.000**	Significant

Table 9 shows that all three TBL dimensions significantly predicted institutional sustainability, with Profit having the strongest coefficient ($B = .451$), followed by Planet ($B = .385$) and People ($B = .124$). For institutional inclusivity, Planet ($B = .313$) and Profit ($B = .513$) were significant predictors, while People was not statistically significant when the other dimensions were included in the model. This does not mean that the People dimension is unimportant, since it had strong zero-order correlations with inclusivity. Rather, the regression result suggests that the unique predictive contribution of People overlaps with Planet and Profit when all three dimensions are entered



simultaneously. Governance reforms should therefore integrate all three dimensions while giving particular attention to financial-operational resilience and environmental systems as drivers of both sustainability and inclusivity.

Proposed TBL-Based Governance Framework

Table 10. Proposed Governance Framework for TBL Integration at DJEMC

Component	Objective	Key Strategies	Expected Output
People-centered governance	Strengthen inclusive and participatory governance.	Institutionalize stakeholder consultations, student and staff representation, community-partner feedback, anti-discrimination mechanisms, and transparent reporting of concerns.	Stronger participation, clearer feedback channels, and more inclusive decision-making.
Planet-oriented governance	Embed environmental responsibility in institutional planning and operations.	Adopt an environmental policy, strengthen waste and resource management, continue tree-planting and clean-up activities, monitor environmental outputs, and integrate sustainability education.	Institutionalized environmental stewardship and sustained campus/community environmental programs.
Profit and operational resilience	Improve financial accountability, resource mobilization, and innovation.	Strengthen budget transparency, resource-generation initiatives, operational efficiency reviews, cost-saving innovations, and financial reporting systems.	More resilient financial and operational systems supporting long-term institutional development.
Sustainability monitoring	Ensure continuity of sustainability practices.	Develop annual TBL performance reports, set indicators for social, environmental, and financial-operational sustainability, and review progress at governance meetings.	Evidence-based sustainability monitoring and continuity across academic years.
Inclusivity assurance	Ensure equitable access and supportive institutional climate.	Audit participation opportunities, accessibility of services, disability-sensitive facilities, grievance mechanisms, and stakeholder support programs.	Improved equity, accessibility, and institutional climate for students, employees, and community partners.

Table 10 translates the empirical findings into a governance framework. Since TBL implementation was high but not yet very high, the framework focuses on institutionalization rather than initiation. It recommends clearer stakeholder participation systems, formal environmental policy and monitoring, stronger financial accountability, annual TBL reporting, and inclusivity assurance mechanisms. These strategies are aligned with the study's finding that TBL implementation is strongly related to sustainability and inclusivity and that Planet and Profit dimensions are strong predictors of institutional outcomes.

5. Discussion

The results demonstrate that DJEMC has already embedded TBL-related practices into school governance to a high extent. The clustering of People, Planet, and Profit means around 3.71 to 3.73 suggests that the institution's sustainability practices are relatively balanced. This is important because one of the weaknesses noted in higher education sustainability literature is the tendency of institutions to privilege one dimension, usually environmental initiatives, while neglecting social inclusion or financial viability. In this study, the findings show a more integrated pattern, although the results remain below the very high range, indicating the need for stronger institutionalization.

The high rating for institutional sustainability suggests that DJEMC has maintained programs and services that support stakeholder welfare, environmental responsibility, and operational continuity. However, the findings also imply that sustainability should be treated as a governance system rather than a sequence of discrete activities. The strong correlation between TBL implementation and sustainability indicates that when TBL dimensions are strengthened collectively, sustainability outcomes also improve. This supports the view that sustainability in higher education requires leadership commitment, resource allocation, stakeholder participation, and cultural alignment (Leal Filho et al., 2020; Menon & Suresh, 2020).

The inclusivity results reveal a slightly more nuanced picture. Although overall inclusivity was high, participatory inclusivity was the weakest subdomain. This means that while the institutional climate and access mechanisms were perceived positively, stakeholders may still need more consistent and meaningful opportunities to influence institutional decisions. The significant differences among stakeholder groups further suggest that students, faculty and staff, and community partners do not experience inclusivity in exactly the same way. Governance reform should therefore include structured feedback systems and more visible participation channels for all groups.

The correlation and regression results provide the strongest empirical basis for the proposed framework. Overall TBL implementation was strongly related to inclusivity and very strongly related to sustainability. Regression analysis showed that TBL dimensions explained a large proportion of variance in both outcomes. Profit and Planet were particularly strong predictors, suggesting that financial-operational systems and environmental governance are central levers for institutional transformation. These findings do not diminish the role of People-oriented governance; rather, they suggest that social inclusion becomes more effective when supported by stable resources, accountable systems, and environmental responsibility.

Overall, the study advances the argument that TBL can function as a governance pathway for rural higher education institutions. In the case of DJEMC, TBL implementation is not merely a conceptual framework but a practical structure for aligning social responsibility, environmental stewardship, and economic accountability with inclusive and sustainable institutional development. The proposed governance framework therefore responds directly to the empirical results and to the institutional need for a more integrated model of sustainable and inclusive governance.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The study concludes that the Triple Bottom Line is embedded in the school governance of Don Jose Ecleo Memorial College to a high extent across People, Planet, and Profit dimensions. Institutional sustainability and inclusivity were also assessed to a high extent, indicating that the institution has established governance practices that support social responsibility, environmental stewardship, financial-operational continuity, equitable access, and supportive institutional climate. The strongest empirical finding is that overall TBL implementation has a very strong significant relationship with institutional sustainability and a strong significant relationship with institutional inclusivity. Regression analysis further confirms that TBL-based governance substantially predicts both institutional outcomes. These results indicate that TBL provides a viable pathway for strengthening sustainable and inclusive higher education in rural institutional contexts.



Recommendations

It is recommended that DJEMC institutionalize a formal TBL-based governance framework that connects planning, policy implementation, stakeholder engagement, environmental stewardship, and financial accountability. The institution should strengthen participatory inclusivity by creating more systematic consultation and feedback mechanisms for students, faculty, staff, and community partners. Environmental governance should be supported by formal policy integration, resource-use monitoring, and sustainability education. Financial and operational sustainability should be enhanced through transparent budgeting, resource mobilization, and innovation-oriented operational reviews. Annual TBL monitoring reports should be prepared to track progress and ensure continuity across leadership and academic cycles. Future researchers may replicate the study across multiple rural and urban higher education institutions to compare how institutional context shapes the relationship between TBL implementation, sustainability, and inclusivity.

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Credit Authorship Contribution Statement

Renford F. Ho: Conceptualization, methodology, data collection, formal analysis, writing-original draft, and project administration. The final version of the manuscript should be reviewed and approved by the author before submission.

Ethical Statement

Informed consent was obtained from the respondents before data collection. The confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were maintained throughout the study. The research complied with applicable ethical and data protection standards.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The author declares no competing financial, personal, or professional interests.

Data Availability Statement

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AI-assisted tools were used only for language refinement, condensation, formatting support, and journal-template adaptation. The author must review, verify, and approve the final content before submission.

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