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Developing and Validating a Strategic Direction Capability Scale for Sustainable Governance in Youth-Led Community Organizations

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ABSTRACT

Youth-led community organizations play an important role in sustainable community development, yet assessing their strategic governance capabilities remains challenging due to the limited availability of context-specific instruments. This study aims to develop and validate a Strategic Direction Capability Scale for Sustainable Governance in Youth-Led Community Organizations. Using a quantitative scale-development approach, data were collected from 313 respondents in Indonesia and analyzed through Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), including reliability, validity, and bootstrapping assessments. The results identified 29 valid indicators across six dimensions: Strategic Vision Clarity, Mission Alignment, Strategic Goal Orientation, Stakeholder Integration, Adaptive Strategic Decision-Making, and Sustainability Orientation. All indicators were statistically significant, with five dimensions achieving Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values above 0.50, while Strategic Goal Orientation demonstrated marginal AVE (0.495) with satisfactory reliability. The validated scale provides a practical instrument for evaluating strategic capabilities and strengthening sustainable governance and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) practices in youth-led community organizations.

Keywords: Adaptive Strategic Decision-Making; Mission Alignment; Stakeholder Integration; Strategic Direction Capability; Strategic Goal Orientation; Strategic Vision Clarity; Sustainability Orientation

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INTRODUCTION

Youth-led community organizations have become important organizational forms through which young people participate in community development, civic engagement, social innovation, and sustainability initiatives. Recent research on youth-led civil society organizations shows that young people can contribute directly to climate action, democratic governance, and civic participation, while their organizations often operate under constraints involving funding, access to decision-making structures, and organizational capacity (Kumi et al., 2025). These constraints make organizational capability a substantive issue for youth-led organizations because their social contribution depends on their ability to convert collective motivation into sustained organizational action. In Indonesia, the relevance of youth participation is also visible in the growing attention to youth as agents of change in sustainability-oriented initiatives. Maria et al. (2023), for example, examined young Indonesians as potential agents of change in circular economy practices, showing that youth participation is connected to attitudes, intentions, and behavior. The organizational dimension of this participation, however, receives less empirical attention.

The governance problem becomes more difficult when youth-led organizations move beyond short-term projects and seek to maintain programs, partnerships, volunteers, funding, and community legitimacy over time. Nonprofit organizations operate with multiple stakeholders and multiple forms of accountability, so governance cannot be reduced to board oversight or financial reporting alone (Renz et al., 2023; Ortega-Rodríguez et al., 2024). Recent work on nonprofit governance emphasizes mechanisms related to accountability, transparency, stakeholder relationships, leadership, and organizational structures. Research in developing-country contexts also shows that nonprofit governance is shaped by regulatory arrangements and institutional conditions, including in Indonesia (Ab Samad et al., 2024). These conditions are particularly relevant for youth-led organizations because many operate with relatively small membership bases, volunteer involvement, project-based funding, and evolving leadership structures. Strategic management provides a useful lens for this problem because governance requires organizations to determine where they are going, how activities relate to organizational purpose, which priorities should receive resources, how stakeholders should be involved, and how decisions should change when circumstances change. Previous research on nonprofit organizations has linked strategic planning and managerial capabilities to organizational performance and sustainability (Rifani & Balqiah, 2021; Marren et al., 2024). Yet strategic planning is a process, whereas strategic direction capability refers more specifically to the organizational capability that enables strategic intent to be formulated, communicated, aligned, translated into priorities, and adapted through decisions. This distinction matters for measurement. An organization may possess a written strategic plan without consistently using strategic direction to guide programs, decisions, stakeholder engagement, and long-term sustainability.

The measurement problem is therefore central. Existing instruments for strategy and organizational capability have largely been developed in business organizations, established nonprofit institutions, or other formal organizational settings. Measurement scales developed for one context cannot automatically be assumed to capture the organizational realities of youth-led community organizations. Scale-development research demonstrates the importance of contextual conceptualization, item generation, content assessment, empirical purification, and construct validation when an existing construct is transferred to a new context (Wang et al., 2021; Tzafilkou et al., 2022; Gallardo-Vázquez et al., 2024). Recent scale-development studies also show that

multidimensional constructs can require careful validation of both the dimensions and the higher-order concept (Ingusci et al., 2024; Li et al., 2024). A context-specific scale is therefore needed if strategic direction capability is to be assessed meaningfully in youth-led community organizations.

The present study addresses this gap by developing and validating a Strategic Direction Capability Scale for Sustainable Governance in Youth-Led Community Organizations. The study conceptualizes strategic direction capability as a multidimensional organizational capability reflected through six first-order dimensions: Strategic Vision Clarity, Mission Alignment, Strategic Goal Orientation, Stakeholder Integration, Adaptive Strategic Decision-Making, and Sustainability Orientation. The study contributes by operationalizing strategic direction capability as a multidimensional organizational capability, extending nonprofit governance research to youth-led community organizations, and providing a context-specific diagnostic instrument for organizations and institutions that support youth-led initiatives. The objective is to establish whether these dimensions form a reliable and valid measurement structure for assessing strategic direction capability in this organizational context.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Youth-Led Community Organizations and Sustainable Governance

Youth-led community organizations can be understood as voluntary or nonprofit-oriented organizations in which young people occupy meaningful roles in organizational decision-making and the direction of activities. Their importance derives from their proximity to community problems and their capacity to mobilize peers, volunteers, and local networks. Kumi et al. (2025) show that youth-led civil society organizations can contribute to development and democratic governance while facing constraints related to resources, institutional access, and organizational capacity. These constraints indicate that the ability to sustain youth-led organizations is partly an organizational governance problem.

Sustainable governance in this study refers to the capacity to maintain an organization's purpose, decision processes, stakeholder relationships, and strategic priorities over time while remaining responsive to social and environmental responsibilities. This view is consistent with recent nonprofit governance research, which treats accountability and stakeholder responsibility as central governance concerns rather than as isolated compliance activities (Ortega-Rodríguez et al., 2024). Collaborative governance research also shows that nonprofit organizations participate in governance processes that depend on relationships across organizational boundaries (Calo et al., 2024). For youth-led organizations, sustainable governance therefore requires strategic processes that connect internal organizational direction with external stakeholder needs and long-term community consequences.

The governance dimension of ESG provides an additional contemporary frame. ESG is generally associated with environmental, social, and governance considerations in organizational decision-making and reporting. In nonprofit settings, however, ESG should be adapted to organizational mission and context. Pratici et al. (2024) found that nonprofit healthcare organizations can use ESG as a useful reference for social reporting, but that ESG criteria need to be tailored to organizational mission rather than applied as a formal compliance checklist. This study follows the same contextual logic. It does not treat youth-led organizations as miniature corporations; instead, governance capability is positioned as the mechanism through which mission, stakeholders, social impact, and long-term organizational direction are integrated.

Strategic Direction Capability

Strategic direction is commonly associated with an organization's sense of purpose, long-term orientation, priorities, and choices about where resources and activities should be directed. In nonprofit organizations, strategic planning has particular importance because organizations pursue multiple objectives and often operate under resource constraints. Rifani and Balqiah (2021) found that strategic planning in a nonprofit setting is related to organizational performance considerations and is influenced by environmental dynamism and managerial factors. Pratici et al. (2024) similarly argues that strategic management and planning provide mechanisms for nonprofit organizations to manage long-term uncertainty and translate resources into social value. These studies support the relevance of strategic direction, but they do not provide a context-specific measurement scale for youth-led organizations.

Strategic direction capability is defined here as the organizational capability to establish a clear future direction and use that direction as a reference for mission alignment, strategic priorities, stakeholder engagement, adaptive decision-making, and long-term sustainability. The construct is deliberately multidimensional because these capabilities are related but conceptually distinguishable. A clear vision without mission alignment can remain symbolic; mission alignment without explicit goals can remain difficult to operationalize; goals without stakeholder integration can lose community relevance; stakeholder input without adaptive decision-making may not change organizational action; and short-term strategic choices without sustainability orientation can weaken continuity. The six dimensions therefore represent complementary components of a higher-order capability.

The multidimensional structure is consistent with contemporary scale-development research. Wut et al. (2021) developed and validated a digital sustainability scale through staged item generation, refinement, validity assessment, and model testing. Gallardo-Vázquez et al. (2024) similarly developed a multidimensional scale by combining conceptual development with empirical validity and reliability testing. Ingusci et al. (2024) demonstrate the value of explicitly assessing higher-order measurement structures when a construct consists of related lower-order dimensions. The present study applies this logic to strategic direction capability in a youth-led nonprofit context.

Strategic Vision Clarity

Strategic Vision Clarity represents the extent to which an organization has a clear understanding of its desired future state and communicates that direction to members. Vision provides a reference point for strategic choices because it gives members a shared interpretation of what the organization is attempting to become or achieve over time. The measurement items in this dimension assess long-term direction, member understanding, communication by leaders, use of direction in strategic decisions, and shared understanding of the organization's future. These elements treat vision as an organizational capability that guides action rather than simply as a statement displayed in organizational documents.

Mission Alignment

Mission Alignment captures the degree to which organizational programs, strategic priorities, and decisions remain connected to the organization's stated mission. The dimension includes alignment of activities with mission, the extent to which priorities reflect mission, use of mission in strategic decisions, contribution of programs to mission, and assessment of mission consistency. Mission alignment is distinct from vision clarity because vision concerns the desired future direction, whereas mission alignment concerns the consistency between organizational purpose and current strategic action.

Strategic Goal Orientation
Strategic Goal Orientation represents the capability to translate strategic direction into clear priorities and goals and to use those goals to guide programs and activities. The dimension also includes reviewing goals for continued relevance. This distinction is important because a clear direction does not automatically produce operational priorities. Goal orientation connects broad strategic intent with decisions about which programs to prioritize and how organizational effort should be allocated.

Stakeholder Integration
Stakeholder Integration reflects the extent to which an organization considers stakeholder needs, involves stakeholders in strategic decisions, seeks stakeholder input, allows stakeholder perspectives to influence priorities, and maintains dialogue during organizational change. This dimension is grounded in the idea that nonprofit organizations are accountable to multiple stakeholders and depend on relationships with communities, members, funders, partners, beneficiaries, and public institutions. Stakeholder governance is therefore part of strategic direction rather than a separate communication activity.

Adaptive Strategic Decision-Making
Adaptive Strategic Decision-Making captures the organization's ability to adjust strategic priorities and decisions in response to environmental change, new information, and community needs. The dimension includes adjusting priorities to environmental change, responding quickly to strategic changes, reconsidering decisions when new information becomes available, revising approaches when needed, and ensuring that decision-making responds to community needs. This dimension extends strategic planning from deliberate formulation to adaptive use of strategy.

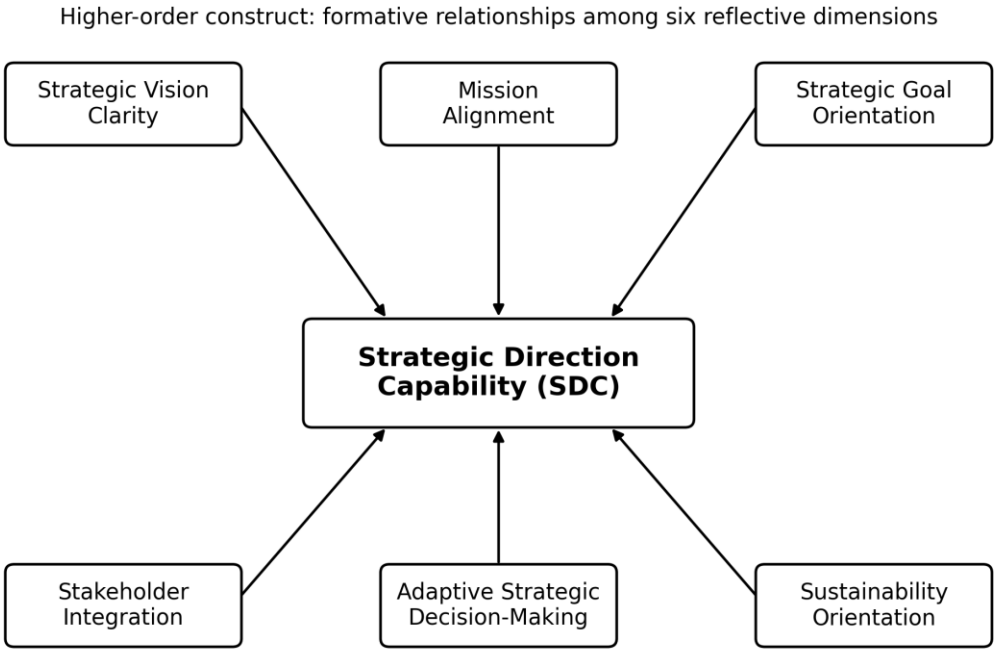
Sustainability Orientation
Sustainability Orientation captures the extent to which long-term sustainability and social consequences are incorporated into strategic priorities and decisions. The items assess consideration of long-term sustainability, long-term social impact, future consequences, balance between current and long-term needs, and the inclusion of sustainability in priorities. This dimension connects strategic direction with the time horizon of governance. An organization can have clear goals and strong stakeholder engagement while still making decisions that prioritize immediate outputs over organizational continuity and social impact.

Conceptualization of Strategic Direction Capability
Taken together, the literature supports a multidimensional view in which strategic direction combines future orientation, mission use, goal translation, stakeholder integration, adaptive decision-making, and sustainability orientation. These dimensions are conceptually related but are not interchangeable. The study therefore treats them as first-order reflective dimensions contributing to an overarching Strategic Direction Capability construct. This specification is consistent with guidance on higher-order constructs in PLS-SEM, while the present validation focuses first on the empirical quality of each lower-order dimension (Sarstedt et al., 2019).

Conceptual Framework
Strategic Direction Capability is conceptualized as a higher-order multidimensional capability formed by six first-order dimensions. Each first-order dimension is measured reflectively by its corresponding indicators, while the higher-order capability is conceptualized as a composite of the six dimensions. Figure 1 illustrates the measurement architecture of the proposed scale rather than a causal model.

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Figure 1. Research Framework



RESEARCH METHOD

Research Approach and Design

This study employed a quantitative scale-development and validation design. The development process began with conceptual specification of Strategic Direction Capability and its proposed dimensions, followed by literature-based item generation and expert review. The empirical phase used a cross-sectional survey of individuals involved in youth-led community organizations in Indonesia. The analytical objective was measurement validation rather than testing causal relationships between strategic direction capability and an external performance outcome.

Population, Sampling, and Respondents

The target population comprised individuals who were actively involved in youth-led community organizations and sufficiently familiar with organizational decision-making to evaluate strategic direction practices. Screening criteria required respondents to report involvement in a youth-led organization and participation in organizational activities or decision-making. The initial dataset contained 350 responses. Responses that were not sufficiently involved in the organization and respondents from organizations that did not meet the youth-led criterion were excluded during screening. The final empirical dataset contained 313 respondents, all of whom identified their organization as youth-led and were retained for the PLS-SEM analysis.

The final sample included program or project coordinators, team leaders, board or management members, active members, founders or co-founders, and chairpersons, presidents, or directors. Almost half of the respondents had been involved in their organizations for three to five years, and most reported high or very high involvement in strategic decision-making. The respondent profile is therefore appropriate for a scale intended to assess organizational strategic direction because respondents had direct exposure to organizational priorities and decisions.

Data Collection and Measures

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire with five-point Likert-type response options. The initial Strategic Direction Capability instrument contained 30 indicators, with five indicators assigned to each proposed dimension. The indicators were developed to represent observable manifestations of the six dimensions. Strategic Vision Clarity covered long-term direction and shared understanding; Mission Alignment covered the connection between mission and activities; Strategic Goal Orientation covered priorities and goals; Stakeholder Integration covered stakeholder participation and dialogue; Adaptive Strategic Decision-Making covered response to change and new information; and Sustainability Orientation covered long-term sustainability and social consequences. The item-level data were screened before model estimation. The final 313 responses contained no missing values on the 30 strategic-direction items. Item purification was conducted sequentially rather than by deleting multiple indicators simultaneously. SI3, corresponding to the item concerning seeking stakeholder input, was removed because its loading was substantially lower than the other Stakeholder Integration indicators and the construct's AVE was below 0.50 in the 30-item model. The model was then re-estimated with 29 indicators. SGO5 was retained despite a marginal AVE because its loading was statistically stable, the construct had satisfactory composite reliability, and the item contributed to content coverage.

Data Analysis

Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used for empirical validation. The first-order dimensions were modeled reflectively because the indicators were specified as manifestations of the underlying dimension. Measurement quality was evaluated through outer loadings, Cronbach's alpha, rho_A, composite reliability, average variance extracted (AVE), and the heterotrait–monotrait ratio (HTMT). Bootstrap resampling with 10,000 subsamples and a two-tailed 95% bias-corrected and accelerated confidence interval was used to evaluate the stability and significance of the indicator loadings. This approach is consistent with recent scale-validation applications using PLS-based measurement assessment (Tzafilkou et al., 2022; Gallardo-Vázquez et al., 2024). Higher-order constructs require explicit specification and validation, and the present study therefore treats Strategic Direction Capability as the overarching multidimensional construct while basing item purification on the first-order measurement models (Sarstedt et al., 2019).

Table 1. Respondent profile by current organizational role (N = 313).

Current Role	N	%
Program/project coordinator	71	22.7%
Team leader	63	20.1%
Board/management member	59	18.8%
Active member	47	15.0%
Founder/co-founder	39	12.5%
Chairperson/President/Director	34	10.9%

The distribution shows that the sample was not dominated by one organizational position. Program or project coordinators constituted the largest group (22.7%), followed by team leaders (20.1%) and board or management members (18.8%). Founders and top organizational leaders were also represented. The distribution therefore captures perceptions from respondents with different levels of organizational responsibility.

Table 2. Respondent involvement characteristics (N = 313).

Involvement Characteristic	n	%
1–2 years	67	21.4%

3–5 years	152	48.6%
More than 5 years	64	20.4%
Less than 1 year	30	9.6%
Highly involved	128	40.9%
Moderately involved	92	29.4%
Very highly involved	68	21.7%
Slightly involved	25	8.0%

Nearly half of respondents had been involved in their organization for three to five years, while 20.4% had more than five years of involvement. In terms of strategic decision-making, 40.9% reported being highly involved and 21.7% very highly involved. The sample therefore contains substantial exposure to organizational strategic processes.

RESULTS

Descriptive Profile of Strategic Direction Dimensions

The descriptive results show relatively similar mean scores across the six dimensions. Mission Alignment had the highest mean (M = 3.861), followed closely by Strategic Vision Clarity (M = 3.858) and Strategic Goal Orientation (M = 3.856). Stakeholder Integration had the lowest mean (M = 3.807), although the difference across dimensions was small.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of the final six dimensions (N = 313)

Dimension	Final items	M	SD
Strategic Vision Clarity	5	3.858	0.550
Mission Alignment	5	3.861	0.567
Strategic Goal Orientation	5	3.856	0.541
Stakeholder Integration	4	3.807	0.589
Adaptive Strategic Decision-Making	5	3.808	0.547
Sustainability Orientation	5	3.831	0.590

Item Purification and Indicator Reliability

The initial 30-item model identified SI3 as the clearest indicator-level problem. Its loading was 0.565 and Stakeholder Integration had an AVE of 0.482. After SI3 was removed, the remaining four indicators loaded between 0.683 and 0.804 and AVE increased to 0.550. SGO5 was retained despite the marginal AVE of 0.495 because its loading was 0.630, composite reliability was 0.829, and its bootstrap confidence interval remained positive. This sequential approach balances statistical evidence with content coverage.

Table 4. Sequential item purification

Dimension	Indicator	Initial loading	Initial AVE	Decision	Rationale
Stakeholder Integration	SI3	0.565	0.482	Deleted	0.550 after deletion
Strategic Goal Orientation	SGO5	0.630	0.495	Retained	CR = 0.829; bootstrap CI positive

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Final Measurement Model

The final model contains 29 indicators. All retained indicators have statistically significant outer loadings at $p < 0.001$, with loadings ranging from 0.630 to 0.804. The bootstrap confidence intervals are positive for all indicators. Several indicators fall below 0.70, but they were retained because their dimensions showed acceptable construct-level evidence and the indicators contributed to conceptual coverage.

Table 5. Final outer loadings and bootstrap results (N = 313)

Dimension	Indicator	Loading	t	p	95% BCa CI
ASDM	ASDM1	0.745	25.823	<0.001	[0.681, 0.795]
ASDM	ASDM2	0.711	23.247	<0.001	[0.643, 0.764]
ASDM	ASDM3	0.640	15.649	<0.001	[0.548, 0.711]
ASDM	ASDM4	0.734	22.927	<0.001	[0.661, 0.788]
ASDM	ASDM5	0.718	22.357	<0.001	[0.645, 0.772]
MA	MA1	0.729	25.082	<0.001	[0.663, 0.778]
MA	MA2	0.716	21.067	<0.001	[0.641, 0.774]
MA	MA3	0.732	23.280	<0.001	[0.663, 0.785]
MA	MA4	0.724	25.086	<0.001	[0.659, 0.773]
MA	MA5	0.752	26.771	<0.001	[0.690, 0.801]
SGO	SGO1	0.662	16.934	<0.001	[0.577, 0.731]
SGO	SGO2	0.762	28.033	<0.001	[0.701, 0.808]
SGO	SGO3	0.678	18.703	<0.001	[0.596, 0.741]
SGO	SGO4	0.774	30.825	<0.001	[0.718, 0.816]
SGO	SGO5	0.630	13.597	<0.001	[0.526, 0.709]
SI	SI1	0.804	32.505	<0.001	[0.747, 0.845]
SI	SI2	0.716	21.908	<0.001	[0.640, 0.770]
SI	SI4	0.757	26.210	<0.001	[0.693, 0.806]
SI	SI5	0.683	17.956	<0.001	[0.597, 0.746]
SO	SO1	0.785	33.457	<0.001	[0.733, 0.825]
SO	SO2	0.764	26.408	<0.001	[0.699, 0.813]
SO	SO3	0.654	18.302	<0.001	[0.577, 0.717]
SO	SO4	0.684	18.733	<0.001	[0.602, 0.746]
SO	SO5	0.802	41.494	<0.001	[0.761, 0.837]
SVC	SVC1	0.699	19.958	<0.001	[0.623, 0.760]
SVC	SVC2	0.730	25.025	<0.001	[0.665, 0.779]
SVC	SVC3	0.748	25.707	<0.001	[0.681, 0.798]
SVC	SVC4	0.726	21.665	<0.001	[0.648, 0.782]
SVC	SVC5	0.671	18.615	<0.001	[0.591, 0.733]

Table 6. Internal consistency reliability and convergent validity

Dimension	Cronbach's α	rho_A	CR	AVE
Adaptive Strategic Decision-Making	0.754	0.758	0.836	0.505
Mission Alignment	0.782	0.782	0.851	0.534
Stakeholder Integration	0.726	0.734	0.829	0.550
Strategic Goal Orientation	0.742	0.749	0.829	0.495
Strategic Vision Clarity	0.761	0.765	0.840	0.512

Sustainability Orientation	0.792	0.802	0.858	0.548

Five dimensions have AVE values above 0.50. Strategic Goal Orientation has an AVE of 0.495, slightly below the conventional criterion. Its Cronbach's alpha of 0.742, rho_A of 0.749, and composite reliability of 0.829 provide evidence of satisfactory internal consistency. The marginal AVE is therefore reported as a limitation of the current validation rather than concealed through additional item deletion.

Table 7. Heterotrait-monotrait ratios for discriminant validity

Dimension pair	HTMT	95% BCa CI
MA ↔ ASDM	0.567	[0.454, 0.663]
SI ↔ ASDM	0.492	[0.345, 0.624]
SI ↔ MA	0.645	[0.532, 0.744]
SGO ↔ ASDM	0.606	[0.494, 0.707]
SGO ↔ MA	0.528	[0.407, 0.637]
SGO ↔ SI	0.457	[0.324, 0.578]
SVC ↔ ASDM	0.521	[0.413, 0.621]
SVC ↔ MA	0.548	[0.426, 0.654]
SVC ↔ SI	0.540	[0.421, 0.646]
SVC ↔ SGO	0.712	[0.606, 0.803]
SO ↔ ASDM	0.526	[0.408, 0.628]
SO ↔ MA	0.591	[0.482, 0.685]
SO ↔ SI	0.633	[0.518, 0.731]
SO ↔ SGO	0.618	[0.502, 0.723]
SO ↔ SVC	0.698	[0.602, 0.784]

HTMT values range from 0.457 to 0.712. The highest value occurs between Strategic Vision Clarity and Strategic Goal Orientation, with a 95% BCa upper bound of 0.803. The results remain below the conservative 0.85 criterion and support discriminant validity among the six dimensions.

Higher-Order Measurement Consideration

Strategic Direction Capability is conceptualized as a higher-order multidimensional construct composed of six first-order dimensions. The first-order measurement results provide the empirical basis for the six dimensions and the 29 retained indicators. When the scale is used in a subsequent structural model, the higher-order construct should be estimated with an appropriate two-stage procedure. Repeated-indicator output that produces artificial perfect explanatory power should not be interpreted as evidence of perfect higher-order reliability or explanatory power (Sarstedt et al., 2019).

DISCUSSION

The main finding is that Strategic Direction Capability can be operationalized as a multidimensional capability comprising Strategic Vision Clarity, Mission Alignment, Strategic Goal Orientation, Stakeholder Integration, Adaptive Strategic Decision-Making, and Sustainability Orientation. The six dimensions survived empirical validation with satisfactory reliability and generally satisfactory convergent and discriminant validity. This result supports a conceptualization of strategic direction that goes beyond the existence of a strategic plan. The validated dimensions describe how strategic direction is embedded in organizational understanding, mission use, goal setting, stakeholder relationships, adaptive decisions, and long-term sustainability.

This finding extends earlier nonprofit strategic planning research. Rifani and Balqiah (2021) examined strategic planning in a nonprofit setting and linked planning to environmental dynamism, managerial factors, and organizational performance. The present study shifts the unit of measurement from planning as a formal process to strategic direction capability as a broader organizational capability. This distinction is relevant for youth-led organizations because a formal plan may exist while the organizational members do not share the same future direction, programs may not be consistently aligned with mission, or decisions may not respond to changes in the environment.

The multidimensional structure also aligns with nonprofit governance research that emphasizes accountability, stakeholder relationships, and organizational structures (Ortega-Rodríguez et al., 2024; Renz et al., 2023). The scale adds a strategic capability perspective by treating governance as partly dependent on the organization's ability to maintain coherent direction across multiple processes.

Strategic Vision Clarity and Mission Alignment were among the strongest dimensions in the final measurement model. Their AVE values were 0.512 and 0.534, and composite reliability values were 0.840 and 0.851. The results indicate that respondents distinguished between knowing the organization's desired future direction and ensuring that current activities remain connected to organizational mission. This distinction is theoretically useful because youth-led organizations can experience leadership turnover and changing volunteer participation. A shared future direction provides continuity, while mission alignment protects the organization from strategic drift.

Mission alignment is relevant to governance because stakeholders evaluate organizations partly through consistency between stated purpose and actual activity. Research on mission statements supports the view that mission content can be associated with organizational outcomes (Lizares, 2022). In the present scale, mission is treated as a decision reference rather than as a textual artifact.

Strategic Goal Orientation achieved satisfactory internal consistency but produced an AVE of 0.495. The result deserves explicit reporting because it is the only dimension that falls slightly below the conventional 0.50 criterion. SGO5 had the lowest loading at 0.630, but its bootstrap interval remained positive and the construct's composite reliability was 0.829. Removing SGO5 would improve a statistical coefficient, but it would also narrow the representation of strategic goal orientation. The decision to retain the item therefore reflects a balance between convergent validity and content validity.

The decision to retain SGO5 follows scale-development logic: item purification should balance psychometric evidence with conceptual coverage. Recent measurement studies emphasize staged refinement rather than automatic deletion based on a single threshold (Wut et al., 2021; Gallardo-Vázquez et al., 2024). Replication should determine whether SGO5 remains stable in independent samples.

Stakeholder Integration improved materially after SI3 was removed. In the initial model, SI3 had a loading of 0.565 and the dimension had an AVE of 0.482. After deletion, the remaining four indicators produced an AVE of 0.550 and composite reliability of 0.829. The decision to remove SI3 was therefore supported by both indicator-level and construct-level evidence. Importantly, SI3 was not removed because its bootstrap significance was absent; it was statistically significant. The issue was the magnitude of the loading and its contribution to convergent validity.

The Stakeholder Integration result also supports the relevance of community participation to governance. Research on community participation in Indonesia shows that participation across planning, implementation, utilization, and monitoring can affect the management of community resources (Prihatini & Sutikno, 2023). The present scale extends this logic to strategic decision processes in youth-led organizations.

Adaptive Strategic Decision-Making showed satisfactory reliability and an AVE of 0.505. Its indicators emphasize adjustment to environmental change, responsiveness to new information, revision of approaches, and responsiveness to community needs. This dimension reflects an important characteristic of strategic direction in resource-constrained organizations: strategy must provide continuity while allowing decisions to change when conditions change. Marren et al. (2024) similarly identify adaptivity as one of the organizational practices associated with sustainability in not-for-profit organizations.

Adaptive Strategic Decision-Making distinguishes the proposed scale from instruments that treat strategy primarily as formal planning. Youth-led organizations operate amid changes in volunteers, funding, community needs, and institutional relationships. Adaptivity allows strategic direction to remain useful under uncertainty, consistent with evidence that adaptivity supports sustainability in not-for-profit organizations (Marren et al., 2024).

Sustainability Orientation achieved the highest composite reliability among the six dimensions at 0.858 and an AVE of 0.548. Its indicators cover long-term sustainability, social impact, future consequences, balancing current and long-term needs, and sustainability in priorities. The results support the inclusion of sustainability within strategic direction rather than treating it as an external outcome variable. In other words, sustainability is operationalized as part of how strategic choices are made.

The ESG relevance should be interpreted carefully. The scale is not an ESG reporting instrument; it measures governance capability that can support the governance component of ESG. Recent AIBPM research on ESG disclosure and sustainability performance reinforces the relevance of governance and sustainability as organizational concerns (Apriono et al., 2023; Gita & Prasetio, 2024). For nonprofit settings, ESG frameworks also need contextual adaptation to organizational mission (Pratici et al., 2024).

The theoretical contribution of the study is the conceptualization of Strategic Direction Capability as a multidimensional governance capability. Existing strategic management discussions frequently treat strategic direction through vision, mission, goals, and planning processes. The present model integrates these elements with stakeholder integration, adaptive decision-making, and sustainability orientation. The resulting construct is therefore broader than strategic planning but more specific than general organizational capability.

The scale also extends nonprofit governance literature into a context where youth leadership is central to organizational structure. Research on youth-led civil society organizations identifies organizational capacity as a constraint on their contribution to development (Kumi et al., 2025). The present scale provides a measurement structure for one part of that capacity: strategic direction.

For youth-led community organizations, the scale can be used as a diagnostic instrument. Organizations can assess whether members understand the future direction,

programs remain aligned with mission, strategic priorities are explicit, stakeholders influence decisions, responses adapt to change, and long-term consequences are considered.

Universities, development agencies, and funders can use the scale as one component of organizational-capacity assessment and youth leadership development. The instrument should be interpreted alongside contextual and qualitative evidence rather than used as a standalone ranking of governance quality.

CONCLUSION

This study developed and validated a Strategic Direction Capability Scale for Sustainable Governance in Youth-Led Community Organizations using data from 313 respondents in Indonesia. The final measurement structure contains 29 indicators across six dimensions: Strategic Vision Clarity, Mission Alignment, Strategic Goal Orientation, Stakeholder Integration, Adaptive Strategic Decision-Making, and Sustainability Orientation. The measurement results show satisfactory reliability and generally satisfactory convergent and discriminant validity. SI3 was removed because of its low loading and its effect on Stakeholder Integration's AVE, while SGO5 was retained because the construct maintained satisfactory reliability and the item contributed to content coverage.

The scale provides a context-specific instrument for assessing strategic direction capability as a governance capability in youth-led community organizations. Its contribution lies in linking organizational direction with mission alignment, stakeholder integration, adaptive decision-making, and long-term sustainability. The instrument can support organizational diagnosis and capacity development, while further validation with independent and cross-context samples is needed before broad generalization.

LIMITATION

The empirical validation uses a cross-sectional sample of 313 respondents from youth-led organizations in Indonesia and relies on self-reported perceptions. The results therefore provide initial evidence within this context but do not establish measurement invariance across countries, organizational forms, or age groups. Strategic Goal Orientation also has a marginal AVE of 0.495. Future research should replicate the scale with independent samples, test measurement invariance, reassess SGO5, and examine nomological validity through relationships with governance quality, organizational sustainability, social impact, or organizational performance.

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DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The authors have declared no potential conflicts of interest concerning the study, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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