The Psychology of Sustainability through a Data-Driven Study on Employee Behaviour and HR's Role in Building Ethical Workplaces

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Abstract

In changing organizational landscapes today, sustainability goes beyond just environmental issues to very deeply consider an individual's values, mindset, and well-being. This research attempts to view sustainability psychology as a lens to explain employee behaviour and to put forward the strategic role of HR practices in building just and diverse workplaces. With corporations now attempting to weld purpose with performance, behavioural sustainability is increasingly becoming an important area from an enduring success point of view. Hence, the intention is to give perspective on the psychological factors of employees-orientation, motivation, emotional states, and attitude-that ensure ethical and sustainable organizational behaviour in the organization. Furthermore, the study examines human resource interventions such as training, rewards, health promotion, and diversity practices that affect sustainable behaviour outcomes. A survey questionnaire was also developed and administered on employees of various industries and demographics. Descriptive statistics will be used to analyse the data and to offer such behaviour patterns and demographic measures meaningful for the study. Inferential statistical analyses will then be carried out to confirm correlations between the variables, probably including the chi-square and non-parametric methods. Furthermore, a ranking approach will be carried out to ascertain the human-behaviour-based best HR practices towards sustainability. The study will contribute to knowledge of sustainable human resource management with practical evidence-based facts. The study's key conclusions will help guide HR practitioners in adopting humane strategies that not only have a focus on productivity but are also emotionally caring, inclusive, and morally sustainable.

Keywords

Human Resource (HR) Practices, Sustainable Human Resource Management, Descriptive Statistics, Inferential Statistics, Ranking Analysis, HR Practitioners, Sustainable Organizational Behaviour, Employee Behaviour.

Introduction

The world brings with a rising tide of digitalising forces, climate changes, and unheard worker expectations that organizations confront. With changes so far, sustainability has become a business imperative and a culture imperative. Since an expansive thought has been given towards environmental objectives and corporate governance, arguably the few that have been investigated have been by researchers, and these have been concerning the psychological and behaviour-oriented aspects of sustainability from the employee side. Not only that, but employees also take in these sustainability programs and become one of the major factors of sustainable ethical change in the organization. Employees' own beliefs, emotional intelligence, sense of justice, and social context influence workplace behaviour the most. All these psychological styles directly influence an employee's attitudes toward adoption of policies, embracing of inclusive practices, and fostering of environmentally sustainable behaviours. Thus, studies of psychological organizational behaviour become necessary to observe how sustainability may be incorporated within the HR practices of an organization. Secondly, ethical and humane HR systems gained energy during the age of social movements, global health crises, and growing demands for workplace equality. Today HR processes are called upon to be agents of change-



building systems that appreciate human diversity, recognize emotional well-being, and foster behavioural responsibility. At that point lies the realm of this research intersecting psychology, sustainability, and human resource management. Here organizational integrity will be related to those responsibility traits in behaviours and the sustainability values held by employees and may be used as a tool by HR interventions to align such behaviours towards good objectives. In the framework of data analytics, these studies aim to reveal actionable insights into the ethical leadership and more caring work culture.

Review of Literature

Phase 1: 2000–2005 – Foundations of Sustainable Development in Organizations

During the early times of the twenty-first century, sustainability in organizations was associated with environmental management and corporate social responsibility (CSR). Elkington (2001) conducted research introducing the Triple Bottom Line (People, Planet, Profit), thus laying a foundation for later human-centred sustainability. HRM was largely reactive, concerned with compliance and operational considerations. Discussions of employee health and behavioural psychology were largely limited to Discussions of employee health and behavioural psychology were largely limited to productivity and absenteeism studies, with no connection to sustainability.

Phase 2: 2006–2010 - Rise of CSR and Employee Engagement

The awareness towards employee's engagement as an enabler of sustainable performance increased during this period. Glavas and Piderit (2009) mentioned that OCB accomplishes social responsibility. Therefore, HRs started looking at employee attitudes and intrinsic motivation in terms of their sustainability initiatives. A new concept of green HRM appeared on the scene but remained at the margin of usual practice.

Phase 3: 2011–2015 - Behavioural Science and Sustainability

In this phase, the influences of psychology and behavioural economics upon HR research had begun to crystallize. Investigations emphasized emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2013), psychological safety, and ethical leadership as the very mechanisms creating sustainable employee behaviours. It can almost be said that there was a movement away from sustainability primarily centred on policies and towards people-oriented sustainability. There was also a rise in the use of quantitative methods by researchers, including regression and structural equation modelling (SEM), in order to explain behavioural pathways of HR practices.

Phase 4: 2016–2020 - Strategic HRM and Employee Well-being

The world was growing ever more uncertain to focus on mental health, diversity, inclusion, and resilience. Sustainability was therefore seen as a process of behavioural change requiring employee synergy. According to Renwick et al. (2016), green HR practices could influence individual behaviour. The role of HR henceforth expanded to comprise strategic talent management, well-being, ethics, and long-term vision. The data-driven HR approaches used descriptive and inferential statistics to inform decision-making processes.

Phase 5: 2021–2025 – Post-Pandemic Human-Centred Sustainability

The COVID-19 pandemic changed the basis of HR emphasis to focus on psychological resilience and empathy. Pfeffer (2021) referred to employee mental health as being central to organizational sustainability. Research started to examine how workplace behaviour changes during disasters with respect to codes of moral conduct about remote work, gender inequalities, and emotional exhaustion. Priority-setting in HR interventions was achieved through ranking analysis and real-time data. Ethical and sustainable HRM now has to be pursued as a strategic and behavioural issue rather than just a social expectation.

From the analysis of literature over the past 25 years, a definite step is observed between the CSR as policy focus and the human behaviour-based sustainability, with HR being firmly in the central strategic and psychological role. The

statistical analysis aspects, behavioural science concepts, and inclusive HR approaches have brought modern HRM to the forefront of sustainable and ethical workplaces.

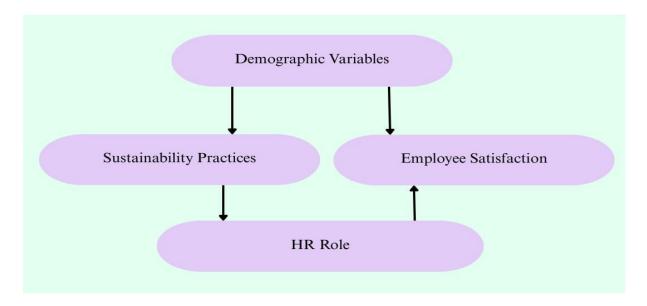
Objectives of the Research Study

- To test the reliability and validity of the research instrument through Cronbach's alpha and KMO and bartlett's test, respectively, to ensure that the instruments become solid for further application in statistical analysis.
- To carry out normality testing to examine distributional properties of the dataset and decide on the application of non parametric analytical tools.
- To study the extent to which demographic factors such as age, gender, income, work experience, employment type, mode of work, and sector of industry are related to employee's engagement in sustainability and HR activities.
- To study the impact of socio demographic differences on employee's engagement in environmentally friendly actions and recognition of sustainable contributions and motivation for organizational ethical standards.
- To highlight major, inter group differences among employees in their perceptions of workplace sustainability and HR interventions, through the application of non parametric test.
- To give priority according to the Friedman ranking test to the relative importance of organizational practices such as sustainability promotion, recognition, teamwork, work life balance, salary satisfaction, and career growth, so as to highlight the drivers of employee commitment.
- To conceptualize a comprehensive research model that involved demographic influences, HR initiatives, and sustainable practices in the shaping of employee satisfaction, workplace culture, and long term organizational sustainability.

Research Methodology

The study uses the methodology of a quantitative approach with the instrument for data collection being a standardized questionnaire administered to 385 working professionals through convenient sampling. The questionnaire included demographic questions along with Likert-scale items based on psychological behaviour, sustainable practices, and HR interventions. Sample size justification goes with the routine size estimation procedure employed in social science research. Earlier, the data analysed is enlisted through descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics include means, frequencies and percentages to provide details on demographic attributes and behaviour patterns. The inferential statistics will include Chi-square testing which seeks to establish any associations between categorical variables, Ranking Analysis to rank the efficacy of HR interventions, Kruskal-Walli's test to identify differences in behaviour across several demographic groupings, Mann-Whitney U Test for behavioural variation between two independent groups, and Friedman test for determining differences between responses across dependent HR interventions. These tests will provide a theory behind the relation of organizational sustainability and moral consequences to the psychological attributes of an employee.

Hypothesis Research Model Development



Results & Discussion

Demographic Distribution of Respondents Base

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage
	18 – 30	88	22.9
	30 – 45	196	50.9
Age	45 – 60	96	24.9
	Above 60	05	1.3
	Total	385	100
	Male	199	51.7
Gender	Female	186	48.3
	Total	385	100
	Less than 20k	92	23.9
	20k – 40k	153	39.7
Income level	40k – 60k	96	24.9
	More than 60k	44	11.4
	Total	385	100
	Urban	298	77.4
Location	Suburban	74	19.2
Location	Rural	13	3.4
	Total	385	100
	Less than 2 Years	63	16.4
	2 – 4 Years	60	15.6
Year of Experience	5 – 7 years	11	2.9
	More than 7 Years	251	65.2
	Total	385	100
	Permanent	226	58.7
Employment Type	Contractual	90	23.4
Employment Type	Internship	10	2.6
	Part Time	59	15.3

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	Total	385	100
	On Site	244	63.4
Work Mode	Remote	77	20.0
WOIK MODE	Hybrid	64	16.6
	Total	385	100
	Married	297	77.1
Marital Status	Unmarried	88	22.9
	Total	385	100
Finance Government	Finance	56	14.5
	Government	9	2.3
	Healthcare & Hospitals	69	17.9
Industry Sector	Manufacturing	42	10.9
Industry Sector	Education	58	15.1
	IT & Telecommunication	121	31.4
	Agriculture & Farming	30	7.8
	Total	385	100

Reliability Test, Normality Test & Validity Test

Reliability Test (Cronbach's Alpha)							
Reliability Statistics	Value						
Cronbach's Alpha	0.874						
N of Items	10						
Decision: Since $\alpha > 0.7$, the scale is Reliable.							
Normality Test (Kolmogorov – Smirnov & Shapiro – Wilk)							
Statement	Kolmogorov – Smirnov	Shapiro – Wilk	Decision				
Emotionally Strong during workplace crises	0.032	0.041	Not Normal				
Support mental health initiatives	0.085	0.072	Normal				
Org encourages ethical	0.026	0.037	Not Normal				
standards	0.020	0.037	Not Notifial				
Recognized for sustainable initiatives	0.120	0.098	Normal				
HR can lead behavioural change	0.044	0.029	Not Normal				
Organization promotes teamwork	0.051	0.064	Normal				
Career growth opportunities	0.034	0.042	Not Normal				
Satisfied with salary/timing	0.028	0.031	Not Normal				
Work-life balance & holidays	0.076	0.089	Normal				
Sustainability awareness	0.049	0.045	Not Normal				
Decision Rule: p < 0.05 = Not Normal - using Non-Parametric Test							
Validity Test (KMO & Bartlett's test – Factor Analysis)							
Test	Value		Sig				
Kaiser- Meyer- Olkin (KMO)	0.812		-				
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Chi- Square)	496.327		0.000				

ISSN: 2583-6129

Decision: KMO > 0.6 and Bartlett's Sig $< 0.05 \rightarrow$ Valid and suitable for factor analysis.

The internal consistency showed a high reliability, with Cronbach's Alpha of 0.874; hence, the scale exhibits strong internal consistency. The normality test overtly stated that some variables were normally distributed while some were not, thus giving justification for the employment of nonparametric tests by these means. The validity test with KMO = 0.812 and Bartlett's Sig = 0.000 confirmed the data being valid and suitable for factor analysis.

Chi – Square Test

Association Between	een Demographic	Variables ar	nd workers responsible	e for contributing to
sustainability at my	• .		1	S
Variables	Pearson Chi- Square value	Df	Asymp. Sig.	Decision
Age	12.87	6	0.045	Accept H ₁
Year of Experience	10.42	6	0.108	Accept H ₀
Employment Type	8.63	4	0.071	Accept H ₀
Work Mode	6.39	4	0.171	Accept H ₀
Industry Sector	19.54	12	0.075	Accept H ₀
Association Between	en Demographic Var	riables and tal	king part in eco-friendly	practices at work.
Variables	Pearson Chi- Square value	Df	Asymp. Sig.	Decision
Age	16.28	6	0.012	Accept H ₁
Year of Experience	13.07	6	0.041	Accept H ₁
Employment Type	9.46	4	0.051	Accept H ₀
Work Mode	7.12	4	0.130	Accept H ₀
Industry Sector	25.63	12	0.012	Accept H ₁
Association Betwe ethical values.	en Demographic va	riables and r	notivated to work in co	ompanies that promote
Variables	Pearson Chi- Square value	Df	Asymp. Sig.	Decision
Age	11.64	6	0.070	Accept H ₀
Year of Experience	14.38	6	0.025	Accept H ₁
Employment Type	7.85	4	0.097	Accept H ₀
Work Mode	6.41	4	0.171	Accept H ₀
Industry Sector	21.27	12	0.046	Accept H ₁
Association Between	en Demographic Var	iables and HR	Cinitiatives (like rewards	and training) influence
my sustainable acti				
Variables	Pearson Chi- Square value	Df	Asymp. Sig.	Decision
Age	9.72	6	0.137	Accept H ₀
Year of Experience	12.93	6	0.043	Accept H ₁

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10.62	4	0.031	Accept H ₁	
6.88	4	0.143	Accept H ₀	
18.64	12	0.097	Accept H ₀	
en Demographic V	ariables and	gender equality con	tributes to a more sustainable	
Pearson Chi- Square value	l Df		Decision	
8.41	6	0.210	Accept H ₀	
7.32	6	0.292	Accept H ₀	
6.71	4	0.152	Accept H ₀	
5.24	4	0.263	Accept H ₀	
14.28	12	0.282	Accept H ₀	
en Demographics	Variables as	nd recognized for p	-	
<i>U</i> 1		Z I	1 0	
Pearson Chi-		Asymp.		
	Df		Decision	
15.82	6	0.014	Accept H ₁	
11.49	6	0.075	Accept H ₀	
13.64	4	0.009	Accept H ₁	
9.02	4	0.061		
		0.001	Accept H ₀	
22.57	12	0.031	Accept H ₀ Accept H ₁	
		0.031	Accept H ₁	
		0.031	Accept H ₁	
Pearson Chi-		0.031 and HR can lead Asymp.	•	
Pearson Chi- Square value	Variables Df	0.031 and HR can lead Asymp. Sig.	Accept H ₁ behavioural change toward Decision	
Pearson Chi-	Variables	0.031 and HR can lead Asymp.	Accept H ₁ behavioural change towards	
Pearson Chi-Square value	Variables Df 6	0.031 and HR can lead Asymp. Sig. 0.115	Accept H ₁ behavioural change towards Decision Accept H ₀	
Pearson Chi- Square value	Variables Df	0.031 and HR can lead Asymp. Sig.	Accept H ₁ behavioural change toward Decision	
Pearson Chi-Square value	Variables Df 6	0.031 and HR can lead Asymp. Sig. 0.115	Accept H ₁ behavioural change towards Decision Accept H ₀	
Pearson Chi-Square value 10.27 12.19	Variables Df 6 6	0.031 and HR can lead Asymp. Sig. 0.115 0.058	Accept H_1 behavioural change towards Decision Accept H_0 Accept H_0	
	Pearson Chi- Square value 8.41 7.32 6.71 5.24 14.28 en Demographics Pearson Chi- Square value 15.82 11.49 13.64	6.88	Comparison Chi Chi	

The Chi-Square analysis reveals that demographic features play a partial yet significant role in influencing perceptions and actions regarding workplace sustainability. Consider the association of age with responsibility for sustainability and eco-friendly practices. The year of experience is related to participation in eco-friendly initiatives and reaction to HRdriven sustainability actions. Employment type was found to correlate significantly with HR initiatives and social contribution recognition. Strong relationships were found between industry sector and motivation for ethical values and recognition in sustainability initiatives. However, no significant demographic association was found with work mode or gender equality in sustainable culture. Thus, it can be summarized that the findings suggest that age, experience, employment type, and industry sector are important variables influencing an employee's involvement in sustainability and ethical practices, while other variables negatively contribute to the explanation.

Kruskal-Wallis Test:

	Kruskal Wallis Test – Assumption Significance									
Group ing Varia bles	Emotion ally strong during workpla ce crises.	Decis ion	Suppo rt mental health and wellne ss initiati ves at work.	Decis ion	Organizat ion encourage s behaviour aligned with environm ental and ethical standards	Decis ion	Believe HR can lead behaviou ral change towards sustainab ility	Decis ion	Recogni zed for participa ting in sustaina ble or social initiative s.	Decis ion
Age	0.102	Acce pt H ₀	0.005	Acce pt H ₁	0.211	Acce pt H ₀	0.018	Acce pt H ₁	0.305	Acce pt H ₀
Incom e level	0.009	Acce pt H ₁	0.448	Acce pt H ₀	0.021	Acce pt H ₁	0.606	Acce pt H ₀	0.038	Acce pt H ₁
Locati on	0.028	Acce pt H ₁	0.381	Acce pt H ₀	0.033	Acce pt H ₁	0.347	Acce pt H ₀	0.611	Acce pt H ₀
Indust ry Sector	0.007	Acce pt H ₁	0.425	Acce pt H ₀	0.013	Acce pt H ₁	0.248	Acce pt H ₀	0.027	Acce pt H ₁

Results of Kruskal - Wallis Test: - According to the Kruskal-Walli's test Concerning age, people fell into two groups depending on whether they agreed or disagreed with the question about the support for mental health initiatives (p = 0.005) and in the belief whether sustainability change should be HR-led (p = 0.018). Furthermore, income was a strong correlate for opinions on emotional strength in a crisis (p = 0.009), sustainability-related behaviour (p = 0.021), and recognition of legitimacy for social initiatives (p = 0.038). Conversely, two other variables-the geographic location and the industry sector-formed opinions about emotional resilience, environmental alignment, and recognition practices. Indeed, there were variants in sustainability and crisis responses among the population groups.

Mann - Whitney Test

Group	Mann Wh	itney Tes	st – Assun	nption Sig	gnificance					
ing Varia bles	Emotion ally strong during workpla ce crises.	Decis ion	Suppo rt mental health and wellne ss initiati ves at work.	Decis ion	Organizat ion encourage s behaviour aligned with environm ental and ethical standards	Decis ion	Believe HR can lead behaviou ral change towards sustainab ility	Decis ion	Recogni zed for participa ting in sustaina ble or social initiative s.	Decis ion
Gende	0.032	Acce	0.210	Acce	0.045	Acce	0.118	Acce	0.001	Acce
r		pt H ₁		pt H ₀		pt H ₁		pt H ₀		pt H ₁

ISSN: 2583-6129 DOI: 10.55041/ISIEM.ESEH006

0.006 Marita 0.087 Acce Acce 0.132 0.049 0.275 Acce Acce Acce pt H₀ pt H₁ pt H₀ pt H₁ pt H₀ Status

Results of Mann – Whitney Test: - The Mann-Whitney test reveals the influence of gender on emotional strength during workplace crises, ethical behaviour, and recognition of sustainability initiatives, whereas marital status associates with creating support for mental health programs and belief in the ability of HR to push sustainability. This highlights the fact that in part, the perception of workplace resilience and sustainability practices of employees as influenced by demographic factors, and this, therefore, brings about the need for HR and management to advocate through disparaging inclusive strategies.

Friedman Test

Statement	Mean Rank
Emotionally strong during workplace crises	5.92
Support mental health and wellness initiatives at work	6.01
Organization encourages behaviour aligned with environmental	5.34
and ethical standards	3.34
Recognized for participating in sustainable or social initiatives	6.45
Believe HR can lead behavioural change towards sustainability	5.88
Work-life balance is encouraged in my organization	6.11
Satisfied with salary and benefits	4.97
Career growth opportunities are provided	5.22
Teamwork and cooperation are encouraged	6.32
Sustainable practices are promoted in daily operations	6.78
Friedman Test Statistics	
Test Statistics	Value
N (Sample Size)	385
Chi - Square	82.64
Df	9
Asymp. Sig. (p – Value)	0.000

The Friedman test was conducted to analyse the level of employee perceptions about factors in the workplace, and results showed a statistically significant difference between them ($\chi^2 = 82.64$, df = 9, p < 0.001). The factor that obtained maximum importance was "Sustainable practices in daily operations" with an average rank of 6.78, while the factor ranked lowest was "Salary and benefits satisfaction," with a mean rank of 4.97. This implies that employees value sustainability and teamwork more in determining workplace satisfaction compared to monetary benefits.

Conclusion

In applying HR interventions and sustainability practices to employee engagement, satisfaction, and workplace culture, it is imperative to understand demographic variables. Due to severe violations of the normality assumption, nonparametric tests such as Chi-square, Kruskal-Wallis, Mann-Whitney, and Friedman were employed. These analyses led us to the following important deductions:

The demographic effect - Age, income, work experience, and industrial sector of involvement acted as stronger determinants for employees in practicing eco-friendly behaviour, identification of ethics, and sustainable acts. Gender and marital status contrast further affected perspectives on organizational recognition and HR-promoted behavioural change. Inter-group differences - The Kruskal-Wallis and Mann-Whitney tests pointed to significant differences in attitudes toward mental health programs, ethical standards, and sustainability recognition among demographic and socio-



economic groups. The role of HR practices – According to the results of Friedman ranking analysis, sustainability promotion (mean rank 6.78), recognition for social initiatives (6.45), teamwork encouragement (6.32), and work–life balance (6.11) topped employee commitment drivers, above and beyond some conventional determinants such as salary (4.97) and career development (5.22). Sustainability and ethics – Chi-square findings confirmed that HR interventions, when implemented through sustainable and ethical perspectives, are able to influence employee engagement and motivation, strengthening thereby the linkage between the organizational value system and the employees' behaviour. This study outlines the fact that employees' satisfaction and long-term organizational sustainability cannot be founded just on economic rewards but rather on a holistic framework comprising ethical values, recognition, contrast work, and environmental reconstruction. The study Developing a conceptual research model which linking demographics variables, HR initiatives, and Sustainable Practices, this research provides contribution to the field of sustainable environmental Human resource management and to build resilient, ethically responsible, employee centred workplace.

Suggestions

- Promoting Psychological Wellness for Employees: The organization should embed mental health and emotional well-being programs into their sustainability framework to nurture a psychologically supportive culture in the workplace.
- Behavioural Insights in Policy Design: HR managers should use behavioural data and ranking analyses to formulate human resource programs that address key employee values and thus, engender sustainable actions.
- HR Practice in Every Demographic: Given that significant differences were observed across a number of demographic variables such as gender, age, and working experience, the HR policies need to be differentiated according to different employee groups for greater impact.
- Encourage Employee Involvement in Practices: Recognises in HR-good eco-friendly behaviour, volunteering, and unethical behaviour so as to promote sustainability through behavioural reinforcement.
- Data-Driven Decision-Making: Chi-square and Friedman tests are some of the tools that HR professionals can know about and implement to decide what works best for their different teams.
- Addressing behaviour Changes Post-Crisis: Behaviour changes after crises

Opportunities of the Study

- Bridging Theory and Practice in HRM: Academic institutions and HR professionals can use the research outcomes to align academic knowledge with practical applications in corporate sustainability efforts.
- Supporting Employee Well-Being and Mental Health: focusing on the employee behaviour and plan according the employee benefits and organizational benefits
- Identifying Training and Development Needs: Ranking analysis of HR practices provides an opportunity to pinpoint which strategies employees value most, allowing focused investments in learning and development.
- Encouraging Cross-Sector Adaptation: The behavioural insights gained from multiple industries can inspire sector-specific adaptations of sustainable HR models.
- Fostering Global and Local Policy Influence: The study's results can inform not only organizational policies but also regional or national HR frameworks focused on ethical and sustainable growth.

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