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HUMAN SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICES AND EMPLOYEE WELL -BEING: BEYOND TRADITIONAL HRM

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Abstract

The paper focuses on the interdependence between the Human Sustainability Practices (HSP) and the Employee Well-Being (EWB) by shifting the perspectives of the classic human resource management strategies and incorporating the mechanisms of psychology and contexts. Based on sustainable HRM and social exchange theories, the paper examines the mediating and moderating effect of Perceived Organizational Support (POS) and Psychological Safety (PS), respectively, in establishing the cause and circumstance under which sustainability-oriented HR practices lead to employee well-being. A quantitative cross-sectional study design was used to conduct research and the sample included 342 full time employees of different organizations using a structured questionnaire. The hypothesized relationships were tested using the Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) and the findings indicated that Human Sustainability Practices has a significant impact and a positive effect on the Employee Well-Being. Also, HSP is a positive predictor of Perceived Organizational Support that boosts the well-being of employees. Mediation analysis verifies that POS somewhat mediates the association between HSP and EWB, which means that sustainability practices have a direct and indirect impact on wellbeing via the perception of organizational caring of employees. In addition, moderation analysis depicts that psychological safety enhances the positive correlation between HSP and POS, implying that supportive and safe work conditions boost the effectiveness of sustainability initiatives. The research can add to the literature on sustainable HRM by providing a complete moderated mediation model that incorporates structural HR practices, psychological mechanisms, and climate factors in workplaces. The results offer some useful advice to organizations that want to foster employee well-being in the long run by using sustainability-related HR approaches.

Introduction

Over the past few years, organizations have now started to focus less on the short term performance based models and more on the long-term based human sustainability where employees are considered strategic assets and not disposable ones. The HRM practices that existed in the past were more focused on efficiency, productivity and cost reduction but new views hold that sustainability in managing human capital is the key to organizational resilience, social legitimacy and employee prosperity (Ehnert, 2009). Human Sustainability Practices (HSP) is more than traditional HRM because it incorporates long-term employee development, work-life balance, occupational health protection, diversity and inclusion, and participative decision-making systems, which maintain and improve the psychological and social resources of their employees (Kramar, 2014). This paradigm shift is the reflection of the wider transformation of sustainable HRM that aims to harmonize organizational performance with the well-being of employees and the social responsibility (Aust, Matthews, and Muller-Camen, 2020). According to recent empirical research, sustainability-driven HR structures also promote flexibility and long-term value creation of organizations within turbulent contexts (Zhang and Chen, 2024; Malik, Pereira, and Shah, 2025).

Employee well-being (EWB) is now a prime outcome of modern organizational studies, as it correlates highly with job performance, engagement, innovation and lower turnover intentions (Danna and Griffin, 1999; Malokani et al., 2022). Well-being is both psychological and emotional as well as work related that will show the overall quality of work life amongst employees. Conservation of Resources (COR) theory states that people aim to obtain, maintain and safeguard the resources that are valued and when they are threatened or lost, it leads to stress (Hobfoll, 1989). The presence of organizational practices that invest in employee growth, safety, and balance is important contextual resources that alleviate stress and facilitate prosperity. Recent studies affirm that sustainable HRM systems are positively associated with vitality of employees, resilience, and long-term sustainability of their career (Singh and Del Giudice, 2024; Rahman, Khan, and Hussain, 2025). Therefore, Human Sustainability Practices may be defined as strategic resource creating systems that directly improve employee welfare.

Nevertheless, the path that the Human Sustainability Practices have concerning Employee Well-Being is in need of a more detailed theoretical clarification. Based on Organizational Support Theory, employees cultivate international ideologies on how much their organization appreciates their roles and values their well-being in the form of Perceived Organizational Support (POS) (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Utilizing HR practices that are based on sustainability, like developmental training, flexible working schedules, and health-oriented policies, organizations send their employees messages that these practices are signs of organizational care and dedication. These interpretations cause socio-emotional satisfaction, reinforcement of norms of reciprocity, and increase in positive work attitudes (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). Recent research also indicates that POS facilitates the connection between responsible HRM systems and the employee well-being, engagement, and retention results (Li, Wu, and Kim, 2024; Ahmed and Mahmood, 2025). Thus, it can be concluded that POS is one of the most important psychological processes where sustainability-driven HR programs can be transformed into better well-being outcomes.

Although supportive practices are essential, the impact of sustainability initiatives can be determined by contextual and relational processes at the workplace. Psychological Safety: This is a commonplace perception that the work context is secure to interpersonal risk-taking (Edmondson, 1999) which is

a major factor in determining how employees interpret and respond. Psychologically safe environments encourage employees to talk openly about workload issues, to seek support and use well-being resources without fear of adverse repercussions. The current literature draws attention to the fact that psychological safety reinforces positive staff reactions to accepting and helpful HR frameworks, boosting trust, voice behavior, and well-being (Garcia and Martinez, 2024; Khan, Iqbal and Rehman, 2025). In this vein, it is proposed that psychological safety can increase the association between Human Sustainability Practices and Perceived Organizational Support that could enhance the indirect effect of HSP on Employee Well-Being (Khalid Malokani et al., 2024).

This paper contributes to the sustainable HRM literature by creating a framework that incorporates Human Sustainability Practices, Perceived Organizational Support, and Psychological Safety into a single framework. It gives a detailed description of the mechanism through which and in what circumstances HR practices that are sustainability oriented can improve the well-being of employees. This integrative approach to the issue adds to the current discussions about responsible management and human-centered organization systems and provides practical information to leaders who would like to create resilient, supportive, and future-oriented working environments (Zhang and Chen, 2024; Lahbar et al., 2024; Malik et al., 2025).

Literature Review

Human Sustainability Practices and Employee Well-Being

Recent studies have affirmed that Human Sustainability Practices (HSP) such as flexible work arrangements, employee autonomy, wellness initiatives, and long-term learning, play an important role in the outcome of employee well-being (Aguinis et al., 2021). Sustainable HRM is oriented at the reconciliation of organizational performance and employee well-being and quality of life, as opposed to the conventional HR based on productivity (Rodríguez-Ruiz et al., 2023). Empirical research demonstrates that sustainable practices have the beneficial effect of reducing burnout and improving job satisfaction and psychological health (Islam et al., 2022). Global companies implementing sustainability in HR policies succeed in creating a setting where workers feel their freedom and positive reinforcement, both of which can be converted into greater well-being (Jain and Sharma, 2021). Besides, research also demonstrates that HR sustainability enhances work engagement, life satisfaction, and mental health because it meets the holistic needs of employees, instead of improving task performance (Elshaer et al., 2021). The beneficial impact of HSP on well-being indicates the improvement of resources and reduction of stress, because sustainability practices raise the perceived organizational care and reduce workload strains (De Clercq et al., 2020). Combined, these results indicate the suggested positive correlation between HSP and employee well-being.

*H1: **Human Sustainability Practices have a positive impact on Employee Well-Being.***

Human Sustainability Practices and Perceived Organizational Support

According to the literature, employees perceive the HR practices related to sustainability as organizational care and long-term commitment, which increase Perceived Organizational Support (POS). According to the recent researches, the HR practices focused on development and well-being can convey the organizational concern to employees (Xiang et al., 2021). Mutual respect indicated by such sustainability practices like health programs, flexible working hours, and career development boost POS (Chen and Hsu, 2022). Companies that have their sustainability strategies integrated show better ethical standards, which the employees perceive as helpful and trustworthy (Bakker et al., 2021). Empirical research

also suggests that the presence of sustainability values in the HR systems leads to increased reports on beliefs that the work is appreciated and the company cares about the employees, who hold them (Zhang and Liu, 2023). Moreover, sustainable HR practices enable the development of relational relationships and can be perceived as positive social exchange due to the perception of employees of being reciprocated and treated fairly (Nguyen et al., 2024). These results highlight the beneficial effect of Human Sustainability Practices on Perceived Organizational Support.

H2: Human Sustainability Practices have a positive impact on Perceived Organizational Support.

Perceived Organizational Support and Employee Well-Being

The recent contributions confirm that POS is an important factor in improving the well-being of employees since supported employees are more emotionally healthy and job-satisfied (Koo et al., 2022). Research associates high POS with a heightened level of psychological safety, reduced stress, and better mental health in general (Lee and Jeong, 2023). Providing organizational support to employees is like a buffer to burnout and increases emotional stability (Tan and Lim, 2021). Other than these, POS also enhances the resilience of employees in the face of organizational change and uncertainty. It is observed when people feel that the organization has their strong support that they tend to employ proactive coping styles and be optimistic when facing difficult circumstances. High POS also leads to trust in management which decreases the levels of emotional exhaustion and increases the level of psychological empowerment (and, also, life contentment, as it improves the feeling of importance and relational belonging to the company, Gonzalez-Romans et al., 2024). According to meta-analytic results, highly-POS employees complain of less anxiety and improved psychological outcomes in the dynamic workplace (Park et al., 2022). These findings confirm the favorable correlation between the Perceived Organizational support and employee well being. Moreover, when employees feel that they are regularly supported, they are likely to support them too and behave well in the workplace, creating the virtuous cycle of well-being and performance. In this way, POS becomes not only an emotional tool, but also a motivational and relationship basis of sustainable employee well-being.

H3: Perceived Organizational Support has a positive impact on Employee Well-Being.

The Mediating Role of Perceived Organizational Support

Perceived Organizational Support (POS) is a process that has been on the rise to be recognized as an influence of HR policies on employee outcomes. It is supported by research that sustainability-focused practices can be used to improve POS, which subsequently leads to positive well-being implications (Martínez & Gómez, 2021). The research on sustainable HRM suggests that the equality of development-oriented HR practices on the level of job satisfaction and a healthy mind is mediated entirely by perceived support (Alhassan et al., 2023). In addition, the mediation studies reveal that POS is a psychological mechanism connecting organizational care (through sustainable policies) to less stress and more fulfillment (Bagheri and Ghanbari, 2022). The empirical data reveal that, when employees understand that they are highly supported by the organization due to the sustainability practices, they also demonstrate the development of emotional and mental well-being (Singh and Gupta, 2024). According to the recent quantitative studies, the mediating effect of POS between HR initiatives and employee outcomes is confirmed in all industries (Rana et al., 2023). Mediation of POS is proven by this research together.

H4: Perceived Organizational Support mediates the relationship between Human Sustainability Practices and Employee Well-Being.

The Moderating Role of Psychological Safety

Psychological Safety displays how well employees feel like interpersonal risk-taking in the organization is encouraged and encouraged so that the sustainability practice can be fully achieved. As recent studies emphasize that psychological safety enhances the effectiveness of supportive HR policies on the attitudes and perception of employees (Wang and Huang, 2021). The beneficial impact of HR practices on perceived support and engagement is increased in order to a high psychological safety climate (Yang et al., 2023). Research shows that, at a high level of psychological safety, employees tend more to internalize sustainability practices as authentic ones, and therefore, the perceived support and psychological outcomes (Choi and Lee, 2022). Also, studies indicate that psychological safety mediates the association between supportive organizational practices and the resilience of employees, which leads to higher well-being (Muller and Koo, 2024). Lastly, it is possible to state that psychological safety environments enhance the speed of HR practices interpretation, enhancing their impact on employee perceptions and well-being (Li et al., 2025). These results confirm the moderating impact of the psychological safety.

H5: Psychological Safety moderates the relationship between Human Sustainability Practices and Perceived Organizational Support, such that the relationship is stronger when Psychological Safety is high.

Methodology

In this study, the research design used was a quantitative study and cross-sectional to investigate the relationship between the Human Sustainability Practices (HSP) and Employee Well-Being (EWB), the mediating effect of Perceived Organizational Support (POS), and the moderating effect of Psychological Safety (PS). Quantitative method was selected as the right method since the research question seeks to establish the hypothesized relationships between constructs that are well defined and are tested using statistical methods. The methodology involved a survey through which standardized information was obtained with employees in mid and large scale organizations in various sectors. The target population was the full-time workers whose organizational tenure was at least one year since the respondents needed enough exposure to the human resource practices of their organizations to make informed judgments. Non-probability purposive sampling method was applied to get participants who fit in the inclusion criterion. According to the suggested rules of structural equation modeling and mediation-moderation analysis, the sample size of 300 respondents was aimed at to make it sufficient to consider the statistical power and reliability of the estimates.

A structured questionnaire was used to collect the data electronically by online survey tools. Before the actual data collection the pilot study involving 30 respondents was done to determine the measurement instruments in terms of clarity, reliability and content validity. There were slight changes in wording in order to get a better understanding. All constructs were assessed based on already tested scales based on the literature. Human Sustainability Practices was assessed based on the items that reflect the sustainable HR practices, including the employee development, balance between work and life, health, and safety support, and long-term career management. Perceived Organizational Support was measured with a reduced version of Survey of Perceived Organizational Support scale, which is the beliefs of employees about organizational care and value. The Psychological Safety was assessed based on the items that captured the perception of the employees towards interpersonal risk-taking and openness in the workplace. Employee Well-Being was measured on a multidimensional scale describing psychological and emotional well-being at work. All the answers were measured on a five-point

Likert scale with 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

To minimize common method bias, a number of procedural remedies were applied. To reduce the social desirability bias, respondents were promised anonymity and confidentiality. The questions of the questionnaire were randomly displayed, and it was made very clear that there were no correct or incorrect answers. Moreover, analysis of single-factor test and variance inflation factor of Harman were also analyzed to estimate the possibility of common method variance problems. Ethics were adhered to during the research. The act of participation was voluntary although informed consent was taken and the respondent was free to withdraw any time. No information was gathered to identify it. The SPSS and SmartPLS software were used to perform data analysis. This was done by first computing descriptive statistics to analyze demographic issues and distributions of variables. Cronbach alpha and composite reliability were used to conduct a reliability analysis to ensure internal consistency, and the value of above 0.70 was viewed as acceptable. The convergent validity was evaluated using the average variance extracted (AVE), with the values to be above the recommended amount of 0.50. The Fornell-Larcker and Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio were used to test discriminant validity.

Results

This section presents the empirical findings of the study, including descriptive statistics, reliability and validity analysis, hypothesis testing, mediation analysis, and moderation analysis. Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed to examine the proposed relationships among Human Sustainability Practices (HSP), Perceived Organizational Support (POS), Psychological Safety (PS), and Employee Well-Being (EWB). Bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples was conducted to assess statistical significance.

Results

Table 1: ***Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix***

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1. HSP	3.74	0.68	1			
2. POS	3.69	0.72	.54**	1		
3. PS	3.81	0.65	.47**	.59**	1	
4. EWB	3.77	0.70	.61**	.66**	.58**	1

Note: N = 342, **p < .01**

All variables of the study are represented in Table 1 where the descriptive statistics and a correlation matrix are presented. The averages of Human Sustainability Practices (M = 3.74), Perceived Organizational Support (M = 3.69), Psychological Safety (M = 3.81), and Employee Well-Being (M = 3.77) suggest that the respondents usually felt moderate to high degrees of sustainability practices, support, safety and well-being in their organizations. The standard deviation figures were quite low which implies that there was relatively low variation in the responses, which shows that there was a fair degree of uniformity in the perceptions among the participants.

The correlation test represents that all variables have a significant positive correlation. Employee Well-Being is positively correlated with Human Sustainability Practices (r =.61 p <.01), which suggests that H1 was proved preliminary. Likewise, HSP has a positive

relationship with Perceived Organizational Support (r =.54, p <.01), which provides preliminary support to H2. Employee Well-Being is closely related to perceived Organizational Support (r =.66, p <.01), which confirms H3 on the correlational level. There is also a positive correlation between Psychological Safety with POS (r = +.59, p =.01) and EWB (r = +.58, p =.01) showing that it may be moderating. Notably, all the correlations do not surpass the mark of .80, which indicates that the multicollinearity is not an issue. In general, the correlation matrix gives the initial empirical results of the causal relationships that are theorized and the need to continue with the analysis of the structural models.

Table 2: ***Direct Effects and Mediation Analysis***

Path	β	t-value	p-value	Result
HSP → EWB	.34	5.87	.000	Supported (H1)
HSP → POS	.49	8.12	.000	Supported (H2)
POS → EWB	.45	7.36	.000	Supported (H3)
HSP → POS → EWB	.22	5.11	.000	Supported (H4)

Table 2 shows the path coefficients of structural path results of the PLS-SEM analysis. The findings indicate that H1 is correct since the results show that Human Sustainability Practices are significant predictors of Employee Well-Being (=.34, p <.001). This result suggests that companies that use sustainability-focused HR policies are directly related to improving the psychological and emotional wellness of employees.

The relationship between Human Sustainability Practices and Perceived Organizational Support has a path coefficient of + and a significant value of (.49, p <. 001), which confirms H2. This implies that, sustainability programs can be the organizational indicators that add to the perceptions of being appreciated and supported by employees. Also, Perceived Organizational Support is a significant predictor of Employee Well-Being (=.45, p <.001), which supports H3. This proves that, when the employees feel that the organization is in their support then their well-being is greatly enhanced.

As far as mediation is concerned, the impact of HSP on EWB via POS is not negligible (HSP = .22, p =.001). The mediation is partial not full because both the direct and indirect effects are significant. This implies that the Human Sustainability Practices improve the Employee Well-Being both directly and indirectly due to the rise in the Perceived Organizational Support. The results of the mediation ensure that POS is a vital psychological process that transforms sustainable practices in HR into well-being delivery. In general, the findings are a substantial empirical evidence of H1, H2, H3, and H4.

Table 3: ***Moderation Analysis (Psychological Safety as Moderator)***

Path	β	t-value	p-value	Result
HSP × PS → POS	.18	3.94	.000	Supported (H5)

Table 3 shows the moderation analysis that explored the interactive influence on Perceived Organizational Support, of Human Sustainability Practices and Psychological Safety. The interaction term (HSP x PS) is found to be positive and statistically significant (b =.18, p <.001), which supports H5. This finding shows that the Psychological Safety enhances the relationship between the Human Sustainability Practices and Perceived Organizational Support.

In particular, under high levels of Psychological Safety, the positive effect of Human Sustainability Practices on Perceived Organizational Support is enhanced. Employees are not afraid to express themselves in psychologically safe settings and will tend to perceive sustainability practices as a demonstration of actual organizational care as opposed to mere shows of symbolism. On the other hand, in the case of low Psychological Safety the positive effect of sustainability practices on perceived support is weakened since the employees might be reluctant to trust or internalize such initiatives. Moderation effect proves that contextual workplace climate is important in the determination of the effectiveness of sustainable HR practices. Even a well-thought-out sustainability program can be ineffective in cases when employees do not feel safe at their work place. This result shows that Psychological Safety is a limit case that enhances the psychological gain of sustenance-oriented HRM.

On the whole, the moderation analysis proves that the Psychological Safety strengthens the relationship between the Human Sustainability Practices and the Perceived Organizational Support and supports the indirect route to the Final Goal of Employee Well-Being. The outcomes all confirm the entire moderated mediation model put forward according to this research.

Discussion

The results of the present research are rather strong evidence to support the suggested model of Human Sustainability Practices (HSP) and the Employee Well-Being (EWB) through the Perceived Organizational Support (POS), and Psychological Safety (PS) is a critical condition. The findings support the thesis that sustainability focused HR practices can help employees to a considerable degree and prove that the organizations should not be concerned solely with the approach to efficiency-based HRM, but should shift to the orientation of the long-term human-focused approach to HRM. Organizations can directly affect psychological and emotional well-being by investing in employee development, work-life balance and health-supportive systems. This result is in line with the sustainable HRM theory that focuses on maintaining and developing human capital as opposed to depleting it.

Another fact that is established in the study is that HSP is a significant predictor of Perceived Organizational Support. Sustainability practices are interpreted by employees as an indication that the organization appreciates the efforts they make and is deeply interested in their well-being. This gives more support to the significance of symbolic and relational dimensions of HR practices, which implies that a set of policies is not sufficient unless it creates positive perceptions of employees. Moreover, POS is an influential factor that affects the Employee Well-Being, which points to the psychological mechanism of sustainability practices functioning. Feeling supported, the employees feel less stressed, more emotionally stable, and happier with their work.

Notably, mediation analysis indicates that there is POS which partially mediate the relationship between HSP and EWB. This implies that sustainability practices increase well-being in a direct and indirect way by promoting supportive perceptions. The moderated test also gives more power to the model as it shows that Psychological Safety enhances the positive influence of HSP on POS. When a firm has a psychologically safe environment, there is a high probability of the employees trusting and internalizing sustainability initiatives thus improving their well-being outcomes. On the other hand, the perceived support might not be well-transferred into the perceived support even in a well-planned sustainability practices in the absence of psychological safety. In general, the research will add to the literature on sustainable HRM because it will bring the structural practices, psychological mechanisms, and the contextual climate factors into one comprehensive framework. It emphasizes that

sustainable HR practices can be most efficient in case they are integrated with favorable and psychologically safe working conditions.

Practical Implications

The results have serious implications to the HR practitioners and organizational leaders. First, the organizations are supposed to incorporate the principles of sustainability into the HR policies by focusing on the employee development efforts, health programs, flexible working schedules, and career plans. Second, the managers have to understand that perception of employees counts where sustainable organizational success depends on employee welfare. The introduction of sustainability programs that do not create the sense of organizational support can restrict its performance. HR departments are thus advised to make sustainability initiatives transparent and implement it fairly and equally to enhance POS. Third, Psychological Safety should be developed. Leaders ought to promote free flow of communication, minimize fear management approaches, and establish an environment where the employees feel free enough to voice their concerns. Psychological safety boosts the sustainability practices as it boosts the positive interpretations of employees. Generally, companies that merge sustainable human resource systems with conducive environments have higher chances of attaining long term employee happiness and strength.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study has a number of limitations although it made its contributions. To begin with, the cross-sectional design limits the causal conclusions between variables. Though the structural model validates the hypothesized relationships, longitudinal data is required to determine the cause and effect over time and how the sustainability practices affect the well-being. Second, the self-reported questionnaires could introduce common method bias and social desirability effects in the data collection process. Even though statistical tests did not show any serious bias, future research can use multi-source data, including supervisor ratings or objective measurements of well-being, to be more robust. Third, the study was restricted to particular areas of organizations, which may limit the generalizability of the results. The model in various economic and institutional settings should be tested by conducting research in diversified industries and cross-cultural settings in the future. Moreover, the future research can examine other mediators, i.e. work engagement or organizational trust, and other moderators, e.g. leadership style or resilience. A moderated mediation model can also be tested by the researcher to determine whether psychological safety plays a role in the indirect impact of HSP on well-being via POS. The expansion of the framework would shed more light on the complexity of the system of sustainable HR and their implications in the course of the long-term perspective.

Conclusion

The research contributes to the concept of sustainable HRM in the sense that it reveals that Human Sustainability Practices have significant positive and negative impacts on Employee Well-Being via Perceived Organizational Support. These results prove that sustainability-focused HR practices will yield best when workers feel that they are truly cared about by the organization and work in the environments that are psychologically safe. The combination of mediation and moderation processes helps the research to transcend the conventional HRM conceptualization and give a detailed account of how and in which circumstances sustainability practices enhance well-being. The findings highlight the need to implement structural HR policies in alignment with supportive climates in order to attain sustainable employee outputs. Finally, companies that invest in human sustainability not only reinforce their employees but also create resilient and futuristic workplaces.

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