

The Effect of Sustainable Human Resource Management on Achieving Sustainable Employee Performance: An Empirical Study

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Abstract

The research investigated the nature of the relationship between the components of sustainable HRM and sustainable employee performance. 400 surveys were distributed to the participants, who work in the UAE industrial sector. They returned 333 valid usable questionnaires for a response percentage of 83.2%. The results showed that there is a significant correlation between the components of sustainable HRM and sustainable employee performance. The researcher also offers a discussion, practical and managerial implications, research limitations, and future research suggestions.

Keywords: sustainable HRM, selective staffing, extensive training, performance management, UAE industrial sector, employee performance

1. Introduction

The fulfilment of a company's strategy and vision relies on the actual improvement of its personnel, who serve as the spine of the organisation, with an emphasis on constant improvement of their effectiveness and competency (Cherian & Farouq, 2013). Consequently, firm managers continuously pursue strategies to cultivate a favourably competitive workforce while reaching the highest levels of efficiency to thrive in an aggressive business climate (Chiang et al., 2011; Renee Baptiste, 2008). Favourably skilled labour is required to facilitate the achievement of national growth visions in countries focused on global competition.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is one of the nations that continue to dominate in the Middle East, and the World Bank recently named the UAE one of the world's greatest developed economies (The World Bank, 2016). Presently, the UAE is one of the fastest-rising economies in the Middle East, with the goal of becoming one of its top economies (Ibrahim & Al Falasi, 2014). The emirate industrial sector is incredibly diverse, with a workforce of over 180 nationalities, each with its own culture and ethnicity (Jabeen et al., 2015). As a result, managing and developing human resources in this region is challenging (Harry, 2007).

The labour force contributes to the UAE's economic growth (Abu Dhabi Council on Economic Development, 2008). Thus, those in the industrial sector in the UAE acknowledge the necessity of building and maintaining an effective workforce controlled by cutting-edge human resource management (HRM) policies. Following the same reasoning, the growth of any country's economic system would depend on its workforce's proper growth.

According to the most recent UN global rankings, the UAE has the most competitive industrial sector in the Middle East. The UAE ranked 30th out of 152 nations in the United Nations Industrial Organization's (UNIDO) Competitive Industrial Performance Index report for 2021 (Ministry of Industry and Advanced Technology [MoIAT], 2021).

Accordingly, those establishing organisational strategy should consider human resources as a backbone of enterprise and place greater emphasis on improving workforce competency (Cherian & Farouq, 2013). Implementing organisational strategy relies on the success of specific beneficial outcomes that companies establish as their primary objectives. Developing practical techniques to achieve favourable results is a typical strategy to generate long-term success via developing team and individual skills (Suliman & Al-Sabri, 2009) and involves considerable expenditures in forming effective HR systems which have a significant impact on such favourable outcomes (Paré & Tremblay, 2007).

In the real world, in spite the importance of HRM in optimising employee performance results, company managers do not always stress HRM sufficiently, resulting in the under-utilisation of their human resources (Moideenkutty et al., 2011). Consequently, the researcher examined the link between theoretical and practical perceptions of HRM functions by examining the connection between sustainable HRM and employee performance and by locating practical indications to support my hypotheses. Additionally, the researcher used the sustainability perceptive associated with HRM. The achievement of positive employee outcomes is not the consequence of the simple and direct application of a single component, such as HRM (Teclmichael Tessema & Soeters, 2006). Thus, to investigate outcomes, researchers must study multiple crucial components (Chiang & Birtch, 2007). Although the association between sustainable HRM and targeted objectives may appear evident (Hau-siu Chow et al., 2006), early studies concentrated on the association between sustainable HRM and employee outcomes. However, few contributions have investigated how these outcomes are accomplished (Butts et al., 2009). Thus, my purpose was to acquire a deeper knowledge that will assist sustainable HRM in maintaining beneficial employee performance results.

The research results offer three contributions. First, they incorporate a sustainability basis into the HRM literature about the UAE to supplement the comparatively few studies in that area. Second, they add to the sustainable HRM literature and its linkages to employee performance. Third, they concentrate on employees' perceptions about the research variables. My research aimed to answer this question: What is the effect of sustainable HRM on sustainable employee performance?

The current study is divided into three parts. Part, one covers sustainable HRM literature and its subvariables with employee performance. Part Two contains the methodology, research findings, and analysis, while Part Three covers the discussion, implications, limitations, and future research directions.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1 Sustainable HRM

Sustainable HRM is described as an HR strategy designed to accomplish organisational goals (Ehnert, 2011). Consequently, HRM has become an asset for maintaining an association's competitive advantage (Hau-siu Chow et al., 2006). HRM's role in sustaining and creating a competitive advantage is to develop employees' skills associated with organisational strategy by hiring the right talents, improving workers' knowledge through the appropriate training, establishing a motivational compensation system and managing workers' performance (Paré & Tremblay, 2007). Thus, recent HRM system conceptualisations reflect increasing agreement about the necessity for workers to have skill motivation to support organisational goals (Scheel et al., 2014; Wolf, 2012). Leaders in industry are increasingly recognising HRM as a precious component that may positively affect organisational success by creating and growing the value of the workforce (Renee Baptiste, 2008).

There are two points of view about the impact of HRM on work settings. The first identifies the characteristics that increase HRM's impact on producing favourable organisational results. This view is based on the concept that although HRM systems do not directly affect organisational outcomes, they do subsidiarily contribute to higher intellectual capital and, as a result, improved value creation (Paré & Tremblay, 2007; Youndt et al., 1996). The second view emphasises the need for sustainable HRM systems, heightened interest in current research and ongoing investigation of the sustainability of HRM systems to preserve a long-term connection between firms and their workers (App & Büttgen, 2016). Developing a beneficial long-term connection between employers and their employees should result in favourable organisational results that will finally push businesses to greatness (Parakandi & Behery, 2016). As a result, the researcher investigated the impact of the sustainability element of HRM systems.

Sustainable HRM systems incorporate value-added approaches to create a flawless match between businesses and individual demands (Garg & Punia, 2017). Though scholars do not agree on the mix of HR practices appropriate for each business environment, and this aspect of HRM requires further research (Kazlauskaitė et al., 2011) to comprehend how HRM strategies interact with one another and affect organisational results (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004). Despite researchers' extensive work in this sector, the basic principles behind effective HRM design remain unknown (Paré & Tremblay, 2007).

Because the literature reveals no specific HRM practices that adequately explain the impact of sustainable HRM (Paauwe & Boselie, 2005), The researcher looked at three HRM practices chosen from the literature based on previous studies and efforts in this sector (Moideenkutty et al., 2011; Smith, 2010) which represent the impact of the chosen HRM practices on positive long-term organisational outcomes among the most-studied HRM approaches. The chosen practices — training, staffing, and performance management — are the most-studied practices in the HRM literature (Boselie et al., 2005). The restricted scope of HRM practices is not anticipated to

thoroughly describe the effects of sustainable HRM in significantly supporting workers' favourable perceptions (Almarzooqi et al., 2019).

The sustainable effect is every day in adopting HRM methods, while employee perceptions are used to analyse their collective influence. If businesses want to achieve long-term results, these approaches are seldom used on a trial basis. Employees' increased knowledge, talents and drive suggest that training has a long-term impact on their performance (Scheel et al., 2014). Furthermore, the ongoing push for efficient business improvement aids employees in maintaining strong motivation (Kondrasuk, 2012), allowing for long-term improvement in their performance (Anitha & Kumar, 2016).

Traditionally, researchers have investigated the impact of sustainable HRM on organisational results using two unique methodologies: through their internal interactions and through the exterior impact of sets of practices on other areas of the organisation (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004). As an example of an internal impact, sustainable HRM methods such as performance assessment and training favourably influence employee performance (Van De Voorde et al., 2012) despite experts' claims about empowerment having no significant impact on employee outcomes if not accompanied by adequate training (Karatepe, 2013). This finding is an illustration of how sustainable HRM practices interact with one another.

The researcher studied sustainable HRM from an employee-perceived-value viewpoint. The researcher chose employee perception as an assessment technique because it reflects how workers perceive sustainable HRM, which substantially impacts how they behave at work (App & Bütgen, 2016; Kooij et al., 2013). Furthermore, positive employee perceptions can result in excellent employee performance (Kuvaas & Dysvik, 2010). Nonetheless, employee attitudes are affected not by how businesses prescribe HRM procedures but by how businesses execute them, and employees view them. Individuals perceive and respond to HRM practices in various ways, based on a variety of contributing circumstances (Den Hartog et al., 2004).

Based on the above, the research aimed to investigate the impact of sustainable HRM on employee performance. The research findings will assist managers in understanding the linkages between study variables, which will aid in the improvement of overall employee performance.

2.2 Sustainable HRM and Employee Performance

Employee performance is a facilitator of corporate performance (Alfes et al., 2013; Elsayy & Elbadawi, 2021) as well as a necessary benchmark for achieving overall organisational performance (Meléndez-González, 2016). Consequently, organisational performance results are heavily influenced by the methods firms use to manage their people (Ahmad et al., 2015). Recognising the dynamic function of sustainable HRM is critical to establishing a solid foundation for effective organisational performance (Renee Baptiste, 2008).

In the developed world, earlier studies concentrated on the HRM performance connection (Teclmichael Tessema & Soeters, 2006), with less focus on developing countries (Moideenkutty et al., 2011). Despite their significant efforts to better understand the effect of HRM systems on employee performance (Akhtar et al., 2016; Petros, 2014; Stumpf et al., 2010), scholars have yet to demonstrate clear evidence of the positive effect of HRM on desirable organisational outcomes such as employee performance (Mariappanadar & Kramar, 2014). Thus, the researcher had an additional goal for this research: offering empirical data demonstrating the favourable influence of sustainable HRM on maintaining high employee performance as a strategic business goal.

In current research, it is referred to employee performance as employees' capacity to accomplish their given duties most effectively and efficiently to create the most significant outcomes. My employee performance definition emphasises three significant worker performance characteristics: ability, efficiency and quality, all of which must always be preserved and maintained at the highest level. As a result, inspiring and sustaining high employee performance will depend on various elements and their interactions that contribute positively to employees' overall performance. Identifying the elements affecting long-term employee performance is critical for understanding how businesses may enable and sustain such success (Anitha & Kumar, 2016).

Researchers' current work on organisational and employee performance is moving towards a better understanding of the optimal relationships among influencing elements, particularly those connected to human resources (Moideenkutty et al., 2011). For example, Stumpf et al. (2010) investigated the influence of three HR methods on several organisational characteristics, including employee performance, and determined that HRM approaches could have variable effects on intended organisational objectives. Consequently, my purpose for this study is to add to the existing literature by investigating various interactional correlations between performance-enhancing elements, most of which are connected to sustainable HRM. The following hypothesis is offered considering this line of reasoning:

H1: Sustainable HRM practices have a significant positive influence on sustainable employee performance.

2.3 Selective Staffing and Employee Performance

Selection is a vital practice of HRM: selecting the appropriate candidates with essential characteristics, qualifications, and knowledge and placing them in the proper positions to suit the organisation's culture and environment (Vlachos, 2009). There are rising indications that HRM practices have a significant role in reaching high-attribute personnel. Researchers have found that selection influences the employee's performance (Almarzooqi et al., 2019; Jerónimo et al., 2020; Kepha et al., 2014). Thus, the following hypothesis is offered:

H1a: Selectivity has a significant positive influence on sustainable employee performance.

2.4 Extensive Training and Employee Performance

Training provides valuable skills, ideas and knowledge to execute practical work in a skilled pattern, comprising continued efforts and attempts designed to improve employee performance and skill (Griffin & Pustay, 2020). Angela (2014) explored the influence of training on employee performance among international civil servants in Somalia, finding that training increases employee engagement, which assists in improving employee performance. Thus, the following hypothesis is offered:

H1b: Extensive training has a significant positive influence on sustainable employee performance.

2.5 Performance Management and Employee Performance

There is an indication that performance management can be conceptualised as the primary basis for guiding managers in their struggles to increase employee performance in their organisations. Kagaari and his colleagues found that performance management practices and employee attitudes are vital for achieving high employee performance (Kagaari et al., 2010). Also (McAfee & Champagne, 1993) indicating that performance management is a strategy for improving productivity and employee performance. Thus, the following hypothesis is offered:

H1c: Performance management has a significant positive influence on sustainable employee performance.

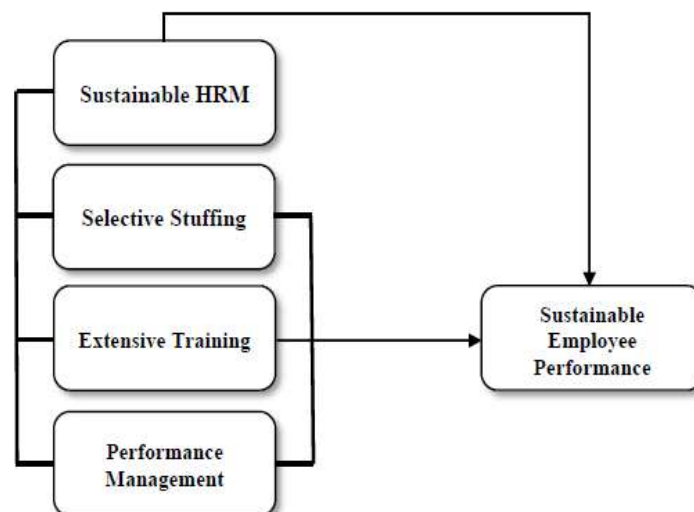


Figure 1. Study Model

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Sampling and Data Collection

The researchers conducted the current study using quantitative research. The researcher designed a web-based questionnaire to collect the required data. The respondents were full-time employees working in the UAE industrial sector. The questionnaire comprised two sections: a section for demographics and another section for the study variables (sustainable HRM and sustainable employee performance).

The UAE industrial sector includes organisations that specialise in beverages; food products; tobacco products; apparel; textiles; leather goods and related products; wood products (excluding furniture); paper and paper products; printing and reproduction of recorded media; Coke and refined petroleum products; chemicals and

chemical products; pharmaceuticals; medicinal chemicals; rubber and plastics products; other non-metallic mineral products; basic metals; fabricated metal products (except machinery); computer, electronic and optical products; electrical equipment; machinery and equipment; and motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers. The total workforce in 2021, according to the UAE Ministry of Industry and Advanced Technology (MoIAT), was (730,742) employees (MoIAT, 2022).

To determine the study sample, the researcher used Som's (1996) equation:

$$\text{Sample size} = \frac{Z_{1-\alpha/2}^2 P(1-P)}{d^2}$$

- $Z_{1-\alpha/2}$ = Standard normal variant (at 5% it is 1.96)
- p = Expected *portion* in population (50%)
- d = Absolute error (5%)

$$\text{Sample size} = \frac{(1.96)^2 0.50(1-0.50)}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$\text{Sample size} = 384 \sim 400$$

The Researcher gave a total of 400 surveys to the participants and received 333 usable responses, a response rate of 83.2%. Most of the respondents were males (78.4%). One hundred-fifty-one participants (45.6%) were between 25 and 35 years old. One hundred-twenty-seven participants (38.2%) were between 36 and 46 years old, and 55 participants (16.2%) were over 46 years old. Participants' work experience indicators reflected those 127 participants (38.2%) had from 5 to 10 years of experience, 108 participants (32.4 %) had from 11 to 15 years of experience, and 98 participants (29.4%) had from 16 to 20 years of experience. The study sample involved employees from various organisational levels: 169 (50.8%) from the lower managerial level, 130 (39%) from the middle managerial level, and 34 (10.2%) from the upper managerial level.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics (n=333)

Demographics	Category	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	261	78.4
	Female	72	21.6
Age	25–35	151	45.6
	36–46	127	38.2
	> 46	55	16.2
	5–10	127	38.2
Work experience	11–15	108	32.4
	16–20	98	29.4
Organisational levels	lower managerial level	169	50.8
	middle managerial level	130	39
	upper managerial level	34	10.2

3.2 Measures

The questionnaire was designed based on the following scales. Items were measured using a five-point Likert scale (1 strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 neutral, 4 agree, 5 Strongly agree).

3.2.1 Sustainable HRM Measure

The researcher adopted Moideenkutty et al.'s (2011) scale to measure the required following variable. The measurement consisted of 19 items distributed as follows:

- Selective Staffing (six Items).
- Extensive Training (five Items).
- Performance Management (eight Items).

3.2.2 Sustainable Employee Performance

To measure employees' performance, the researcher adopted Werner's (1994) scale using nine items.

3.3 Validity and Reliability

The data were analysed with SPSS version 22. To establish construct validity and Cronbach's alpha to check internal consistency, the researcher used the exploratory factor analysis method. the researcher identified the potential associations between the variables with the regression approach.

Table 2 shows the findings of the factor analysis after a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test. A component analysis is beneficial for data if the Factor loadings value is between 0.5 and 1.0. Bartlett's sphericity test reveals the degree of interdependence between the variables. After determining the test's significance level, researchers can learn the outcome. There are likely significant correlations between the variables when the p values are minimal (less than 0.05). If the p-value is greater than 0.1, factor analysis is appropriate for this data set. In this research, no item had a loading lower than 0.5, so all survey items were confirmed for final analysis.

Table 2. Exploratory Factor Analysis

Variable	Factor loadings	KMO Measure of Sample Adequacy (>0.5)	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity		Items confirmed	Items dropped	Cum % of loading	
			Chi-Square	Sig.				
Selective Staffing	(1)	0.974	0.722	1268.48	0.000	6	0	72.22
	(2)	0.837						
	(3)	0.624						
	(4)	0.962						
	(5)	0.953						
	(6)	0.826						
Extensive Training	(1)	0.889	0.747	876.35	0.000	5	0	78.26
	(2)	0.935						
	(3)	0.645						
	(4)	0.964						
	(5)	0.918						
	(6)	0.938						
Performance Management	(1)	0.933	0.762	657.37	0.000	8	0	65.45
	(2)	0.787						
	(3)	0.665						
	(4)	0.940						
	(5)	0.970						
	(6)	0.915						
	(7)	0.989						
	(8)	0.866						
	(9)	0.933						
Employee Performance	(1)	0.613	0.714	946.64	0.000	9	0	71.38
	(2)	0.912						
	(3)	0.938						
	(4)	0.908						
	(5)	0.903						
	(6)	0.717						
	(7)	0.535						
	(8)							
	(9)							

Computing Cronbach's alpha established the questionnaire's internal consistency to determine its dependability. A lower alpha value is acceptable for new scales, according to Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), who recommend using an alpha value as low as 0.60. Otherwise, researchers frequently follow the requirement of an internally consistent established scale with an alpha value of 0.70. My study's Cronbach's alpha cutoff value was 0.7.

Table 3. Reliability Examination

#	Variables	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Selective Staffing	0.765
2	Extensive Training	0.816
3	Performance Management	0.772
4	Employee Performance	0.716
Overall Reliability of the Questionnaire		0.767

Table 3 shows that the Cronbach's alpha values are over the cutoff value of 0.7, demonstrating the

questionnaire's overall reliability.

3.4 Results of the Correlation Analysis

All the independent and dependent variables have a substantial association, according to the correlation analysis results. The maximum correlation is between selective staffing and employee performance (0.727), and the lowest significant relationship is between performance management and employee performance (0.337).

Table 4. Correlation Analysis

Variables	Selective Staffing	Extensive Training	Performance Management	Employee Performance
Selective Staffing	1	0.723**	0.519**	0.727**
Extensive Training	0.723**	1	0.497**	0.671**
Performance Management	0.519**	0.497**	1	0.471**
Employee Performance	0.727**	0.671**	0.471**	1

** significant at the 0.01 level

3.5 Hypotheses Test Results

Within the study's conceptual framework, the researcher put forward an initial set of four hypotheses, and Table 5 shows that all the items in this category were approved.

Table 5. Summary of Hypotheses Test Results

Hy. No.	Independent Variables	to	Dependent Variable	R-Squared	Beta Coefficient	t-value	Sig. Value	Status of Hypothesis
H1	Sus. HRM	→			0.177**	7.171	0.000	Accepted
H1a	Selective Staffing	→	Employee Performance	0.823	0.210**	9.213	0.000	Accepted
H1b	Extensive Training	→			0.163**	6.489	0.000	Accepted
H1c	Performance	→			0.170**	6.632	0.000	Accepted
	Management							

** significant at the 0.01 level

4. Discussion

With this research, the researcher aimed to examine the effect of sustainable HRM in constructing positive, sustainable employee performance. The findings show that there are significant correlations between all investigated variables. Furthermore, my results confirm what Jerónimo et al. (2020) and Manzoor et al. (2019) indicated — sustainable HRM practices should correspond with the organisation's sustainability orientation and its employee requirements to create a more solid relationship and therefore, employees become more involved in achieving their organisation's goals. The analysis revealed that selective staffing has the greatest effect on employee performance. That specific result reinforces that selecting the right individuals with the proper skills, characteristics and qualifications for the right job to align the organisation's environment and culture is an important step (Vlachos, 2009). Having an objective process of personnel selection is very helpful in accomplishing corporate goals, according to Harris et al. (1996). Likewise, Kepha et al. (2014) ascertained that staffing has an impact on employee performance in Kenyan research institutes.

Including training in the staffing process has a beneficial impact on employee performance. Similarly, involvement combined with training has a large and favourable impact on job performance. Employee performance is positively affected by training. Thus, putting sustainable HRM policies in place can help employees perform better at work (Manzoor et al., 2019).

Likewise, performance management has a significant positive influence on sustainable employee performance. That result supports Walters (1995), who argued that performance management is the process of managing and assisting employees so that they can work as efficiently and effectively as conceivable in accordance with the organisation's needs.

4.1 Implications

The results offer important practical implications in addition to theoretical contributions.

4.1.1 Practical Implications

All entities working in the UAE industrial sector should prepare staffing plans through its HR departments, which include attracting, selecting, and appointing employees based on environmental awareness, sustainability, and environmental preservation. They should also design training and development plans based on increasing environmental awareness, sustainable skills, and experiences along with specialised training programs that will shift the behaviours and attitudes of employees towards green and sustainable practices. Industrial organisations should also develop environmentally friendly practices such as rationalising water use, treating and reusing water, rationalising the use of paper, and using clean energy sources. Furthermore, managers should design employee performance measures based on sustainability practices to evaluate the sustainable employee's performance as well as create a climate for mutual learning among employees about sustainability behaviour. Industrial organisations should spread sustainability culture in the industrial sector through both official and unofficial channels of communication. Finally, employees should participate in quality improvement plans and solve problems related to sustainability issues.

4.1.2 Managerial Implications

HR managers must design plans that will set standard measures for training employees on sustainability, as well as creating systems to stimulate volunteer work and sustainability behaviours. Managers should also encourage employees to participate in sustainability activities.

5. Research Limitations and Future Research Suggestions

This study has various limitations. First, the researcher concentrated on only three sustainable HRM practices — studying more practices should enrich the sustainable HRM topic. Thus, future researchers could include a few more variables to see if they have a more significant impact. Second, the researcher examined employee performance as a whole variable without exploring its components. Future researchers may investigate the effect of sustainable HRM on various employee performance components. Third, the researcher studied full-time employees working within the UAE industrial sector, although the sector has many other employment statuses that may affect the results of future research. Fourth, the researcher investigated the whole sector as one construct even though there are 20 industries within the UAE industrial sector. Future researchers may study each industry separately. Fifth, the researcher concentrated on the direct effect between the study variables, so future researchers should investigate sustainable employee performance as a mediator to overall organisational performance and the moderating role of psychological empowerment, which may modify the relationship between sustainable HRM and employee performance. Sixth, the total number of persons that took part in my study (n=333) was small. Future researchers may obtain more conclusive results with a more representative sample from a larger population.

6. Conclusion

The Researcher conducted that research to understand how sustainable HRM affects sustainable employee performance. The Researcher evaluated sustainable HRM characteristics (selective staffing, extensive training and performance management) in connection with sustainable employee performance. The results indicated that all dimensions of sustainable HRM are significant predictors of sustainable employee performance. As a result, the findings show that sustainable HRM dimensions and sustainable employee performance are positively associated.

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