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CAN SUSTAINABILITY ORIENTATION AND HRM PRACTICES IMPACT ENTERPRISES' PERFORMANCE?

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Abstract:

In the post-COVID-19 era, organizations are experiencing significant changes in performance and activities. Leaders are reassessing their firms' resources, including employees, and carefully examining factors that could affect performance positively. In this article, sustainability orientation (SO) and human resources management practices (HRMPs) are proposed since they are expected to have a significant role in changing enterprises' directions. However, literature does not provide much with the impact of sustainability orientations on people practices, and how these variables affect performance. In particular, studies have yet to provide an explanation of their relationships comprehensively, mainly across the service sector in the Arabic context. Therefore, the paper's objective is to examine employees' and seniors' sustainability orientation influence on HRMPs, and how these practices might influence performance. Moreover, it aims to find out whether or not these activities can give an explanation of the association between sustainability orientation and performance by relying on the natural resource-based view (NRBV), since it can offer further and deeper clarification. A quantitative method is adopted in order to respond to the goal of this paper. The data of this paper were collected through questionnaires given to workers and supervisors of service firms in Saudi Arabia. A simple random technique is used. AMOS and SPSS were chosen for analyzing and scrutinizing 143 usable questionnaires. The findings illustrate that employees' sustainability orientations affect human resources practices, and these practices influence performance. Further, HRMPs (i.e., empowerment, security, and participation) mediate such orientations and

performance dimensions (i.e., quality, image, productivity, and revenue). The results contribute on sustainability and performance fields due to providing empirical evidence. Furthermore, supervisors and managers can be aware of the main reasons that impact their company's performance.

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Keyword:

Human Resources Management Practices, NRBV, Performance, Service Firms, Sustainability Orientation



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Introduction

Performance of firms has attracted researchers theoretically and practically since it is the result of all activities, plans, resources, etc. (Moldavska & Welo, 2019). And lots of variables are suggested in business literature to know their effects on the outcomes. However, each country and organization has unlike context and circumstances. For example, in many countries, media and social media have raised the tone of voice to highlight the essential role of workers' practices and attitudes to be sustainable, particularly, a significant number of enterprises ignore environmental and social issues (Abdullah et al., 2018). Thus, knowing the sustainability views and thoughts of workers and their real human resources management practices (HRMPs) can give further understanding of organizations' operations in the Arabic context, represented by Saudi Arabia, for knowing the performance of service organizations.

According to Katou and Katou (2008), the full engagement of human resources HR activities lead to improved performance for empowerment, participation, and other practices, which can have a direct influence on revenue and image as well. But such practices are affected by psychological factors like the beliefs and views that a person holds; for instance, sustainability orientations, since it can be reflected in doing tasks and the way of thinking of practicing. Hence, combining employees' orientations and HRMPs to study organizations' performance answers the main question of this research pertaining to what are the variables can improve companies' outcomes?

Remarkably, past studies concentrate on manufacturers, and we do not know much about the service sector (Abidin et al., 2020). Moreover, those articles have been conducted in divided

endeavors; in this case, activities and outcome (Hosain, 2017), and sustainability and performance (Nejati et al., 2017). Noticeably, the role of employees' and supervisors' orientations on sustainability is widely overlooked (Morioka & Carvalho, 2016). Further, these attempts have investigated Western countries and contexts. It shows a gap regarding sustainability orientations and organizations' performance, essentially across service sectors (Hosain, 2017). Thus, we need a deeper view of the interaction of such factors. Consequently, the present paper aims to provide a new insight into service organizations' performance in the Saudi context by answering the pivot question of whether HRM activities can mediate sustainability orientations and performance.

Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Organizations' Performance

This topic is discussed widely, and scholars provide several conceptions and definitions. For instance, Galpin et al. (2015) see outcomes as a firm's ability to achieve its financial goals through the usage of its resources effectively; it is the actual achievement. Moreover, a wide range of variables is adopted and used in order to measure it. Many of those factors are focused on financial results, such as return on investment (ROI), sales growth, etc., but others concentrate on non-financial results like quality, productivity, and so on, whereas new literature takes both of them into account based on context and circumstances (Karanaja, 2014).

In addition, the nature of the study and the explored sector determine the measurement used in many cases. For example, green standards should be taken into consideration as NRBV suggested satisfying wider stakeholders. And there are some significant reasons to choose the right measurement, such as the availability of information and the validity of usage. In both cases, researchers tend to use quantitative measures (Kitchot et al., 2021). Further, the correlated factors in a study play a major role in choosing organizational performance measurement tools or methods. However, in this paper, the concept is adopted for measuring performance in order to fit with other constructs logically. So, we need to know how performance weather can be positively affected by sustainability orientation and HRM practices.

Sustainability Orientation

Sustainability orientation is employees' views toward environmental and societal issues, and practices based on them. These orientations are a cumulative process; for instance, it came from school, religion, family, etc. (Khizar et al., 2022). It affects workers' thoughts and their core values, and those orientations are based on values that an individual has held (Abidin et al., 2020). For instance, an employee may have some principles but does not have some orientations on related issues because of the context, the situation, or even other reasons (Abidin et al., 2020). On the other hand, such orientations will not exist without interrelated values, even though they can be violated for known and unknown causes as well (Abdullah et al., 2018). Further, workers are likely to prioritize them based on the situation, and these orientations can be changed from time to time. However, we do not look forward to similar activities for employees across different types of firms, nor alike behaviors due to different sectors and contexts (Wiengarten et al., 2017). Further, the personalities and backgrounds of individuals determine practices notably as NRBV has pointed

out (Nejati et al., 2017). Thus, the theory is likely to provide an explanation of how employees' practice based on their orientations.

Wiengarten et al., (2017) pointed out that personal factors empower workers to do their tasks in different ways, and in a manner that is unlike the traditional one. Besides, since sustainability orientations care about society, it is expected from workers and supervisors to participate more in different HRM activities. More importantly, practicing sustainably can satisfy a part of security for the organizations' employees. However, again, these elements of personality cannot always be guaranteed for expected behaviors. Cho and Choi (2021), for instance, find differences in employees' responses in regard to practices because of dissimilar attitudes of seniors and employees. Therefore, the paper supposes a positive effect of SO on HRM practices.

In addition, these thoughts determine the performance of service organizations for several reasons. For example, sustainable views improve the revenue of firms as research has found since it reduces costs, which NRBV has focused (Broccardo et al., 2023). Besides, this revenue improves the image and the brand of such a company. Customers and shareholders often prefer to deal with sustainable enterprises for many advantages, such as reducing risk. Moreover, producing at high quality standards is a result of sustainability orientations. Furthermore, these personal factors filter the production stage, which in turn reflects on better products. Thus, understanding employees' sustainability orientations is crucial for predicting the outcome of a service firm (Calic & Mosakowski, 2016).

A staff of any organization often faces ethical situations, and they analyze the circumstances based on available information and personal views, as well as whether they recognize or not this consciousness, which impacts performance by making a decision that consists within NRBV views. Wiengarten et al. (2017) mentioned that employees' personal features influence a corporation's moral culture, consequently, the outcomes. They examined managers' ethical values and concluded a correlation between those perceptions and the performance of their companies. Broccardo et al. (2023) as well revealed that seniors' backgrounds affect outcomes, as such beliefs impact their plans. On the other side, Chistov et al. (2023) research rejected the assumption that workers' orientations can explain and improve performance because leaders in many cases violate their values. And within this debate, we assume positive impacts of SO on performance.

HRM Practices

Organizations in such an era tend to give employees more space for doing tasks, sharing vision, and putting plans forward. This engagement of workers across all levels gives the firm an advantage to hear further voices and views, and it is reflected in more rational strategies and policies, which are expected to influence performance (Jerónimo et al., 2020). NRBV highlights that outcomes are seen as results of practices and enterprises' operations, mainly the green visions. Moreover, the degree of doing tasks is widely varied across employees within a firm, and each department has a different type of practice (Delery & Doty, 1996). For example, some of the divisions focus on empowerment and others on the participation of workers. Further, the view towards performance dimensions is dissimilar, and the concentration on image in some firms, whereas others are on productivity and/or quality. Additionally, individuals often prefer to work

for these types of enterprises provide farther security advantages, which can be reflected on better performance.

pointed out business satisfies the norms of practices, and the performance of the businesses noticed to be improved. Muñoz-Pascual et al. (2020) have found positive associations across HRM activities and sustainable performances. Also, Duvnjak and Kohont (2021) revealed a causal relationship between an organization's activities and economic performance. Furthermore, Garengo et al. (2022) find different outcomes of investigated enterprises for various practices. In consequence, it is hypothesized HRM practices impact performance positively.

Furthermore, businesses often measure performance through various dimensions, but the main focus is on what are the reasons that are more crucial compared with others? To answer the questions, researchers have suggested varying constructs based on the context and the sector. However, asking how practices are implemented is seen as an easy question, but what are the antecedents of those activities? Employees' and seniors' personal features can influence any enterprise's culture, such as practicing sustainably because of the backgrounds of workers. This reflection of sustainability orientations is a standard for employees once they are doing their tasks, as NRBV suggests (Adomako et al., 2021). For instance, empowering employees can lead them to think differently, rather than routinely, and then produce creatively. Further, giving workers a chance to participate can improve quality as a result of exchanging ideas and processes with a huge number of them (Stahl et al., 2020).

Moreover, Al Naimi (2022) provided another example, managers deliver their sustainability orientations into practices and workers comply with their own beliefs, which is expected to enhance performance. However, reviewing HRM activities and operations as a mediation in this context could give some explanation of how satisfying stakeholders may enhance revenue provides a justification of how satisfying them leads to revenue, image, productivity, and quality outcomes. Thus, it is proposed that HRM practices mediate SO and organizations' performance.

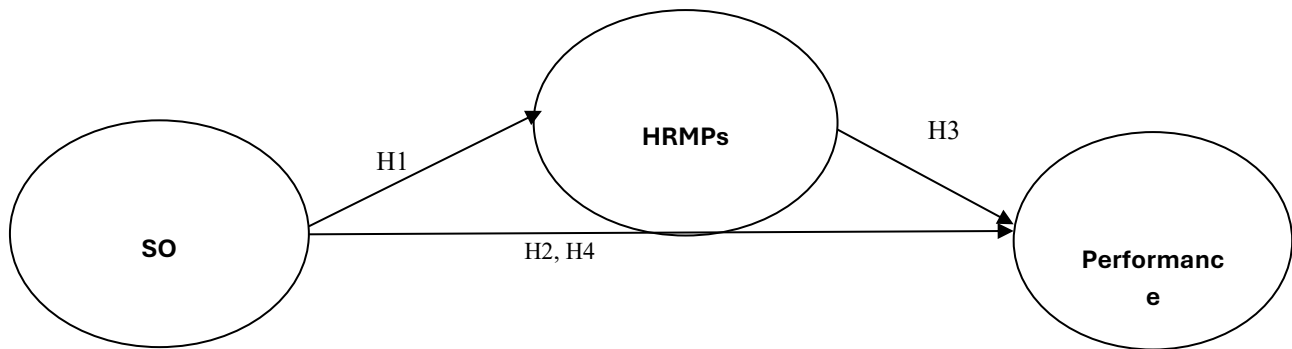
Therefore, based on the previous debates, literature, and the real-world problem, Figure 1 is shown to illustrate the relationships across suggested factors.

H1: Sustainability orientations affect HRMPs.

H2: Sustainability orientations affect performance.

H3: HRMPs affect performance.

H4: HRMPs mediate sustainability orientations and organizations' performance.



Method

The paper adopt sa quantitative procedure to study the nature of the relationship across SO, HRMPs, and the outcomes. Further, how could HRM activities mediate them? The data of the paper has been collected through self-administered and online surveys. The questionnaire was assessed by academics and managers of firms; additionally, a pilot study was carried out. Next, 30 participants, who are excluded from the main sample, are asked to fill the survey. The main purposes are to know the actual time for filling the questionnaire and to know whether there are some words and/or questions that are not clear or misleading. Then, the survey is ready to be distributed for the final sample. The research respondents are given a clarification of the objectives of this article. Then, the survey is distributed.143 questionnaires were validated for analysis. However, the paper follows a cross-sectional method (Hair et al., 2016).

Population and Sample

This paper has chosen employees and supervisors in the service segment in Saudi Arabia to be the sample. According to the government, the sector is contributing up to44.9 % in gross domestic product (GDP) (Albarrak & Alokley, 2021). Furthermore, it has a significant role in employment, and attracts a huge number of investors, whether citizens or foreigners. The GDP of the service sector in the country includes several main fields, and it can be divided into: retail trade, restaurants and hospitality, transportation, information sector communication, insurance and monetary, real estate, social and personal services (Albarrak & Alokley, 2021). Hence, it looks optimal to examine sustainability, HRMPs, and performance. However, the total sample of the research is 143workers. Moreover, each employee and manager gets an equal chance to participate, so a simple chance probability procedure has been used.

Measurements

The study uses a survey to measure suggested constructs, and they are measured as a first-order construct. The questionnaire is classified into four parts. Demographic variables are in the first section, followed by items adopted from Kuckertz and Wagner (2010) in order to cover sustainability orientations, which focus on employees' views towards sustainability-related issues. The third part covers HRMPs that were adopted from Delery and Doty (1996), and concentrate on employees' empowerment, participation, and security. Furthermore, Moideenkutty et al. (2011)

items are to measure the organization's performance, which covers image, productivity, revenue, and quality. However, all of those sections consist Likert five-point scale as shown on next Table.

Questions and Factors

Sustainability Orientation

Enterprises have to take a worldwide role in ecological enhancement.
Green companies can take advantage of acquiring skilled workers.
Green practices must be a main value of organizations.
Environmental challenges are a major issue for societies.
Leaders have to take further green accountability (Kuckertz & Wagner, 2010).

HRMPs

Work is measured by results.
Employees can delegate their authorities.
Employees are responsible for their decisions.
I believe that I will stay a long time in my organization.
Security is almost guaranteed for this job.
Workers are always asked to take part in choices and decisions.
Supervisors often keep an open channel with employees (Delery and Doty, 1996).

Organization's Performance

Evaluating the image of your firm in comparison with competitors.
Evaluate the revenue of your firm in comparison with competitors.
Evaluate the productivity of your firm in comparison with competitors.
Evaluate the quality of your firm in comparison with competitors
(Moideenkutty et al., 2011).

Respondents' Characteristics

Questionnaires were distributed to workers of service corporations in Riyadh. The total number of usable surveys is 143 out of 600 distributed questionnaires. The features of the sample can be seen as 82% were males, whereas 18% were females. Additionally, 41% of them finished the degree, 12% having diploma, and 47% finished secondary school or less. Moreover, 28% of these firms operate in hotels, 21% retail trade, 17% restaurants; and 15% real estate, 11% in communications, 8% transport, and following Table depicts further.

Respondents' Characteristics

Factor	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	117	82%
	Female	26	18%
Segment	Hotels	42	29%
	Retail trade	30	21%

	Restaurants	24	17%
	Real estate	21	15%
	Communications	16	11%
	Transport	10	7%
Education	High School and Less	68	47.5%
	Diploma	17	12%
	Degree	58	41%

Analyzing the Data

The analysis unit in this article is individuals' category; data was gathered from service companies. The article used SPSS and AMOS in order to analyze the collected data. For this case, SPSS was used to describe information, and AMOS was used for hypothesis tests and relationships like causality across exogenous and endogenous constructs, also to examine the mediation impacts (Hair et al., 2016).

Measurement Model

The paper measured reliability by Cronbach's alpha, and the coefficient values were between .81 and .92, which are reliable, as Peterson (1994) has mentioned, as can be seen in the Table.

Measurement Model

Factors	Cronbach's alpha values	AVE
SO	.81	0.513
HRM practices	.87	0.565
Organization performance	.92	0.546

Furthermore, average variance extracted scores (AVE) have satisfied the standards since 0.513 for sustainability orientation, and HRM practices were 0.565; further, organization performance was 0.546 (see Hair et al., 2016). In consequence, measurement analysis is accepted because of these values.

Test of Hypotheses

As can be depicted, the suggested assumptions have been accepted although R^2 and beta are not similar., next Table illustrates deeper information.

Analyzing Regression

Relationship	Coefficients	T- test	P- Scores	Decision
Sustainability orientation → HRM practices	.185	2.065	.002	Supported
SO → Performance	.331	3.854	.000	Supported
HRM practices → Performance	.275	2.950	.000	Supported
SO → HRM practices → Performance	.229	2.351	.002	Supported

*The arrows reflect the impact of hypotheses.

The assumption that a positive connection between SO and HRM practices is supported since ($\beta=.185, P < 0.02$), and the t-value is 2.065. Additionally, the next hypothesis result illustrates that SO affects firms' performance ($\beta=.331, P < 0.00$), and the t-value was 3.854. Moreover, it is found that HRM practices have an impact on the outcomes for ($\beta=.275, P < 0.00$), and the t-value was 2.950. Further, these practices to mediate sustainability orientations and the performance due to ($\beta=.229, P < 0.002$), and the t-value was 2.351.

Additionally, Table 5 provides the variance of explanation of independent factors on the dependent constructs. In such a case, the low R^2 (.014) was for HRM practices. Whereas sustainability orientations have explained that the variance of performance is about 27%. Hence, as depicted vary values of R^2 are generated, which is explained by HRM activities and SO.

Variance of Explanation

Independent factor	Dependent construct	R^2
S O	HRM practices	.014
Sustainability orientation	organization Performance	.272
HRM practices	organization Performance	.151

SO: Sustainability Orientations, HRM: Human Resource Management

Discussion

Employees' orientations play a central role on performances for enterprises. And, to have deeper knowledge of their interactions, the variables are explained with HRM practices as a mediator.

At first, for verifying the consistency of factor items, factor analysis is run for two main jobs. It is exploratory and, secondly, is a confirmatory analysis. The exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is used once there is doubt regarding the question's attribution, while CFA is applied to confirm that the questions are attributed to a certain variable (Hair et al., 2016). Thus, for achieving the goals of this paper, CFA has been chosen because the items of all variables are adopted from the literature.

However, the first hypothesis answered question one, which is that SO impacts HRM practices positively. This assumption is accepted since experimental evidence illustrates so. Furthermore, it has supported the theory that suggested environmentally thoughts lead employees to think differently when they are doing their jobs. Further, this conclusion is consistent with Abdullah et al. (2018) article, who arrived at the ethical view, which can contribute to doing tasks notably. Additionally, Calic and Mosakowski (2016) provide practical facts of how our behaviors are influenced by our values more than society's views, and it can be seen as causes and effects.

Hypothesis two answers the question related to the influence of SO on performance. This assumption is supported by an empirical result; besides, this conclusion is in line with past research and NRBV. For example, Moldavska and Welo (2019) find that SMEs' outcomes are widely impacted by owners' beliefs and values; in particular, the founder of any enterprises play a main role in the firm's culture (Frimpong et al., 2024). Moreover, Broccardo et al. (2023) pointed out that the performance of companies is influenced by customers' thoughts when a firm has satisfied sustainability standards. In other words, clients tend to buy from sustainable enterprises.

The third assumption provides an answer for the effect of HRM activities on an enterprise's outcomes, and it is accepted. Also, the result is in line with NRBV, which suggests that socially and environmentally practices are influencing organizations' outcomes. For instance, Muñoz-Pascual et al. (2020) find that responsible activities and operations provide advantages of word of mouth, mainly across stakeholders. And, within the context of this article, these organizations are practicing greenly even more than the state's standards.

The last and main supposition is responding to the main question, which are HRM practices mediate sustainability orientations and performance of the investigated enterprises. This hypothesis is accepted and is consistent with NRBV's proposed organizations' outcomes, which are a result of ecological views and/ or practices (Morioka & Carvalho, 2016). For such a case, once workers have and hold sustainable views and thoughts, it is expected to be reflected on them when they are doing jobs, in other words, HRM practices are impacted by employees' values. And, they are practicing sustainably, which has affected the firm's performance since it operates differently.

Implications

This study contributes to the NRBV domain for mediating HRM by providing knowledge of how the outcome is influenced by employees' SO. This theory has proposed many factors that could clarify why performance is affected. A new construct is suggested in this paper (i.e., HRM) for extending the NRBV perspective. However, the NRBV is not a warranty for enhancing the outcomes without understanding the surrounding circumstances well. Secondly, the literature is extended, and a new window is opened for scholars because of a concrete evidence of sustainability orientation and HRM are provided, mainly, a psychological factor is examined in business administration field, which is not always that psycho factors are investigated broadly in management domain, Thus, incorporating the suggested variables will enhance our understanding of their relationships (Manner, 2010). Thirdly, HRM practice sand managers' backgrounds and relationships are shown, and hence, performance is influenced despite state and culture; therefore, the beliefs of employees cannot be overlooked. Another theoretical contribution of this article is Arabic context shares views with western in regard to the issues of businesses' sustainability. In accordance, HRM and sustainability standards are validated in different cultures, especially when the community's beliefs and views are respected.

In managerial practices, employees need to re-examine sustainability beliefs and orientations, mainly social and environmental views, as sustainability challenges change over time. Furthermore, these results can improve our understanding of predicted outcomes when organizations' workers hold such orientations. Additionally, this research opened windows for leaders to reconsider the significance of employees' activities when they are impacted by their values, which leads to better performance. Further, managers should have better communication with local communities to know their necessities, particularly, sustainable groups, since they develop norms over time. Thus, organizations should share their experiences for better performance and supporting the society, despite each enterprise has own context.

Limitations

The article has some limitations, though it has provided a number of contributions. For instance, this examination covers a single sector of the country's economy, and we need other sectors to be investigated, such as financial, industry, and farming. Moreover, one independent factor is tested; researchers could investigate further constructs to know more variables that could affect the performance. Besides, other factors can be added as moderators, like innovation or the organization's culture, to know outcomes deeply.

Conclusion

The article aims to examine service firms' sustainability orientations' impact on HRMPs and an organization's outcomes. Further, the mediation influence of these activities between sustainability orientations and performance, since research has yet to explore such associations intensely. Moreover, there is a call to understand the psychological factors impacts on workers' tasks. This paper used several methods to analyze the collected data. The findings show that orientations of sustainability affect HRMPs and performance. In addition, these practices mediate such

orientations and outcomes. Besides the contribution to NRBV and literature, the study contributes on practical domain for providing some suggestions based on the results. Finally, a direction for researchers is recommended to better understand the sustainability and HRM fields.

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