

Sustainability in Human Resource Management

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Abstract. The purpose of this study is to examine the concept of sustainability in relation to human resource management. the method used is a literature review to obtain the theory that serves as the basis for developing ideas. the findings in the study state that the concept of sustainability can be realized with proper management of human resources, especially by utilizing sustainable human resources. the practical implications are related to understanding other factors in supporting sustainable human resource management, such as religion, spirituality, ethics, values, morals, motivation and support systems.

Keywords: Sustainability, Human Resource Management, Sustainability in Human Resource Management, .

1 Introduction

Sustainability is one of the concepts that has gained increasing attention in the postmodern era, which is characterized by volatility, uncertainty, ambiguity, and complexity (VUCA) (Tshetshe, 2025). This era rapidly challenges individuals and organizations to survive. However, in 2020, a new term emerged to describe an even more complex situation, namely brittle, anxiety, nonlinear, and incomprehensible (BANI) (Coopernsmith, 2021; Kruger & Barkhuizen, 2024). The BANI era further emphasizes that the business environment is a vulnerable place that poses significant challenges to maintaining sustainability. Various efforts have been undertaken to better understand how sustainability can be achieved, such as through adaptation and innovation.

Sustainability can be understood as the ability to maintain processes or outcomes of an entity over time (Mensah, 2019; Basiago, 1999). However, sustainability can also be interpreted as the enhancement and preservation of economic, social, health, and ecological systems to support societal development (Tjarve & Zemyte, 2016; Thomas, 2015). The concept of sustainability is inseparable from environmental and social capital, enabling society to optimize its potential without triggering negative environmental impacts. Additionally, another perspective suggests that sustainability is related to human activities and their capabilities to meet various needs and desires without excessively exploiting resources.

Therefore, based on the notion of sustainability, a paradigm is established that emphasizes harmony, alignment, and balance in economic and societal development processes, which continuously strive to preserve environmental sustainability (Gossling-Goldsmiths, 2018).

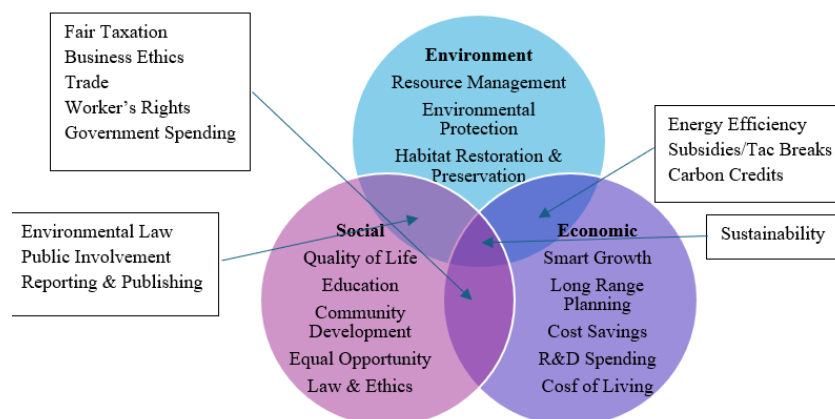


Fig. 1. Relation between Social, Environmental, and Economic Sustainability (Wanamaker, 2018).

The concept of sustainability in the contemporary world emphasizes social capital, environmental capital, and economic capital (Mensah, 2019). Economic capital is associated with efforts to utilize financial and natural capital sustainably (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012). Social capital is linked to the development of political, religious, cultural, educational, and health systems to ensure individual well-being (Evers, 2018). Environmental capital relates to the empowerment of ecological integrity and biodiversity. Figure 1 specifically illustrates the sustainability concept, which is interconnected with social capital, economic capital, and environmental capital. Sustainability can be achieved when there is a complementary and supportive relationship among these three capitals.

Sustainability, as previously explained, is an essential concept for all business actors. The sustainability concept serves as a paradigm that reminds us that the economic aspect cannot be separated from the societal and environmental aspects. When one of these aspects is not considered, sustainability cannot be achieved as expected. Sustainability is a broad concept that can be understood from various approaches, one of which is through human resources. Sustainable human resources management is essentially an approach focused on managing human resources to enhance social well-being and environmental sustainability in the long term (Kuhne & Hahn, 2018). A deeper understanding of this concept is expected to contribute to achieving sustainability as envisioned by researchers.

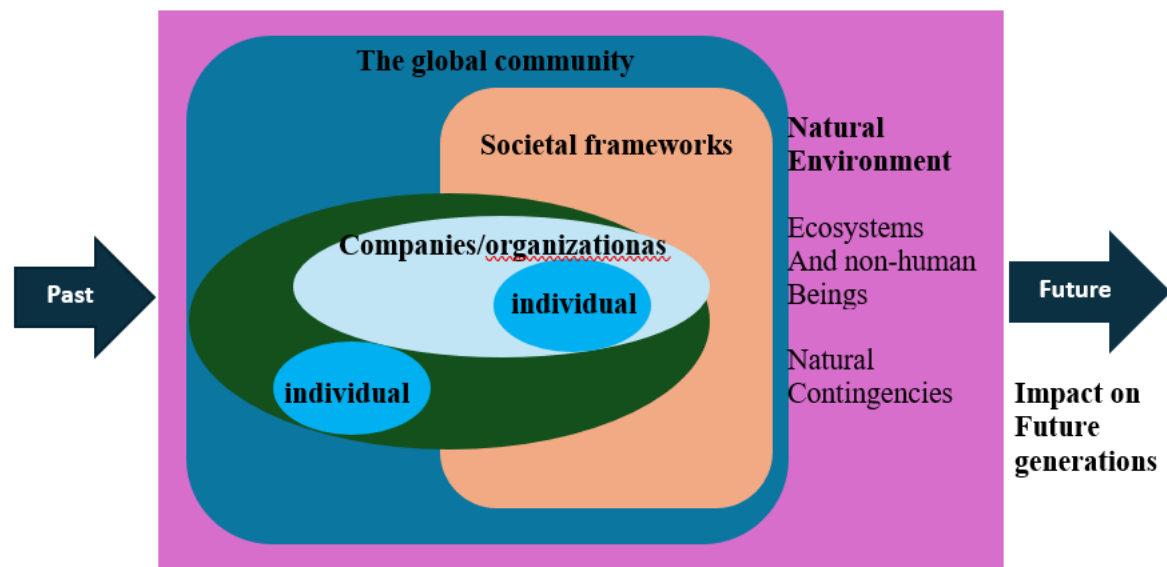


Fig. 2. The Sustainability Paradigm is related to 3 Capitals (Society, Economy and Environment) (Becker (2019).

Figure 2 illustrates that the concept of sustainability cannot be separated from individuals as human beings. Without human capital, the sustainability concept related to the correlation between society, economy, and environment cannot be realized. Sustainable Human Resources Management (SHRM) can be understood as a concept in human resource management that focuses on managing employees while maintaining a balance between long-term business objectives, social responsibility, employee well-being, and the environment (Kramar, 2022). The primary goal of SHRM is to create a work environment that supports organizational productivity without neglecting the environment and employee well-being (Griep et al., 2024).

The main principles of SHRM are related to several aspects, including (Aust et al., 2020): 1) Employee well-being, enhancing employees' quality of life is essential, especially by paying attention to work-life balance, occupational safety, and health; 2) Organizational sustainability, the development of long-term strategies will positively impact the company's competitiveness by managing a motivated and skilled workforce; 3) Social sustainability, special attention to social justice in the workplace will aid in organizational development; 4) Environmental sustainability, specific attention to environmental policies such as waste and carbon emission reduction, as well as energy efficiency, will support organizational growth; 5) Sustainable performance improvement, implementing strategies focused on continuous skill and career development will help manage human resources to remain relevant and competent.

Sustainable Human Resources Management emphasizes different aspects compared to Strategic Human Resources Management. Strategic HRM focuses on various strategic efforts so that workers can improve performance that has an impact on business goals by paying attention to efficiency and effectiveness. However, sustainable HRM focuses on managing human resources with attention to work balance, welfare, social responsibility.

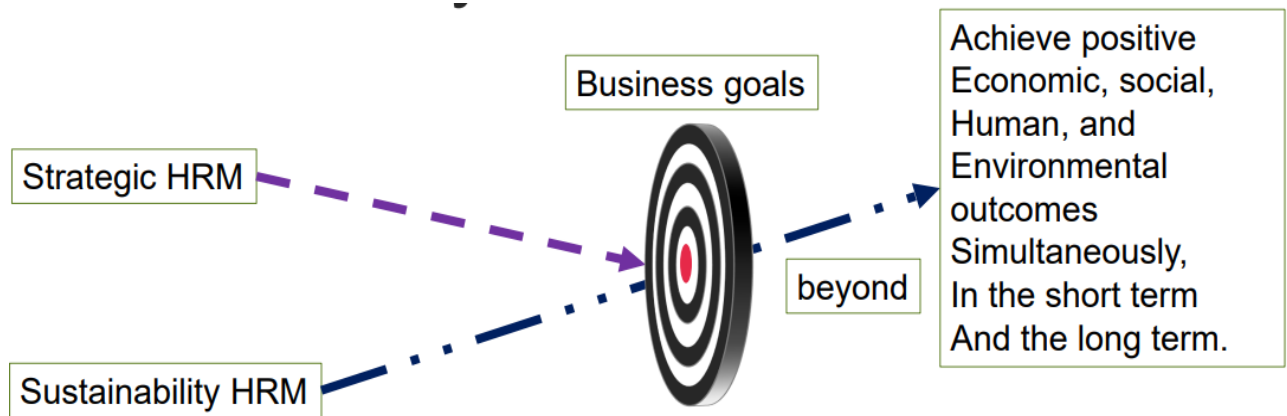


Fig. 3. Strategic HRM vs Sustainable HRM focus

Figure 3. specifically provides an understanding of the difference between strategic HRM and sustainable HRM. Strategic HRM is important for organizations (Sauv'e et al., 2016), which will contribute to financial outcomes (Hylton, 2019). In addition, strategic HRM makes HR as tools in an effort to achieve the goals of the organization (Griep et al., 2024). Sustainable HRM is an activity that goes beyond the goals of the business so that the achievement of well-being can be realized based on value-based orientation. The application of this concept will help in realizing sustainability in HRM.

2 Methodology

The methodology in this research is a literature study to get basic ideas that will eventually be developed to solve the problem. There are several documents used as a theoretical basis. These theories are used as the basis for developing ideas that are relevant to the problems in this research..

3 Results and Discussion

Sustainable HRM is a sustainable concept that is important in an organization. The concept of sustainability will be realized with the support of the HR owned by the organization. HR is one of the important capitals, because great systems, finances, and resources will not be realized without the support of superior human resources. Therefore, HR management is important for organizations, especially management based on the concept of sustainability. Sustainability in HRM based on the focus of researcher interest is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. are the main aspects of sustainable HRM, emphasis on the main aspects will help in the realization of sustainable HRM. However, in the Indonesian context, sustainable HRM cannot be separated from factors such as culture, religiosity, spirituality, values, morals, ethics, individual motivation, and systems, to realize it. Figure 4 illustrates the various factors that can support the realization of sustainable HRM. Therefore, in an effort to realize sustainable HRM in the Indonesian context, it is necessary to understand the various supporting factors. Understanding the supporting factors will help stimulate the realization of sustainable HRM in an organization.

Table 1. Sustainability in HRM (Stankeviciute and Savaneviciene, 2018).

Characteristics of Sustainable HRM	Core aspects
Long term orientation	Identify future HR availability, identify future HR needs, eliminate the 'hire and fire' approach
Concern for employees	Health and safety management, work life balance
Concern for the environment	Evaluate employee performance according to environmental criteria, foster 'green careers', reward employees according to environmental criteria
Profitability	Sharing program
Employee participation and social dialogue	Various types and forms of participation
Employee development	Job rotation, different forms and methods of training, transfer of experience, focus on future skills and employability
External partnerships	Collaboration with the education system, partnership with all external stakeholders
Flexibility	Flexible work arrangements, job rotation
Compliance with labor regulations	Involve employee representatives in many decision-making processes outside of processes that require employee participation as a legal prerequisite, financial and non-financial support
Employee cooperation	Teamwork, good relations between managers and employees
Justice and equality	diversity, respectful relationships, fairness in terms of remuneration, and careers.

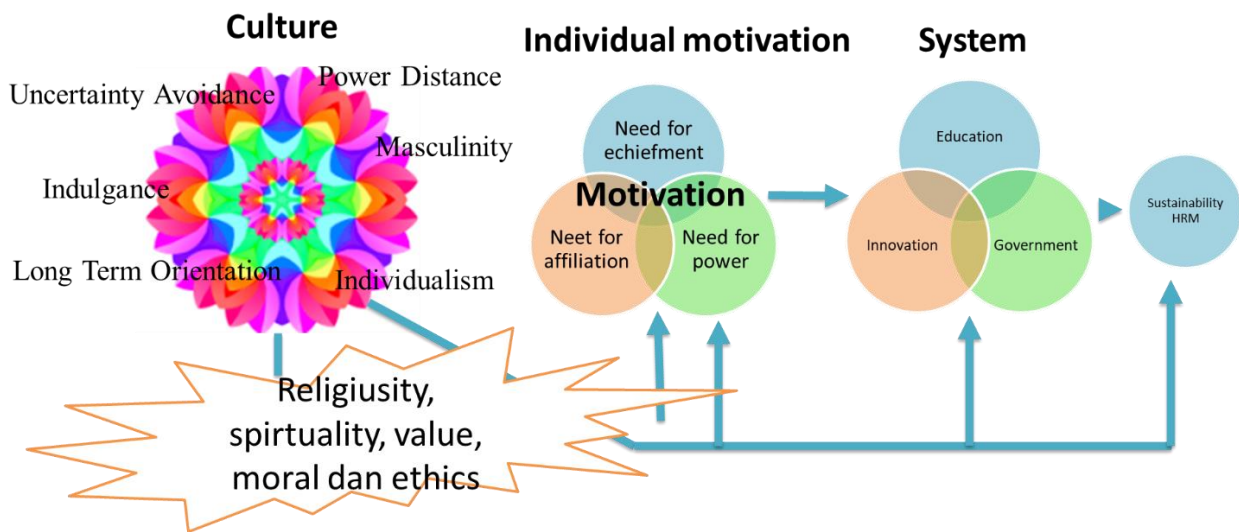


Fig. 4. Supporting Factors for Realization of Sustainable HRM

4 Conclusion

There's something beyond the material in Sustainable Human Resource Management (Sustainability in HRM): Spirituality and values, religiosity, morals and ethics. A proper understanding of sustainable HRM will help in the realization of sustainability in the organization. Sustainable HRM is not just an effort to achieve the goals of the organization, but an effort to go beyond organizational goals, namely the realization of employee welfare, environmental sustainability, and the sustainability of the organization itself.

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