

The Impact Of Sustainable Human Resource Management Practices On Sustainable Employee Performance – A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

Sustainable Human Resource Management (SHRM) plays an important role in environmentally friendly organisations, as its practices and policies respect human beings and natural resources in line with the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainability. A tremendous rise in the significance of sustainable organisations has been observed over the last previous years. However, academic research currently lacks a coherent conceptualisation and empirical operationalisation of the concept of sustainable employee performance. Moreover, very little is known on the relationship between SHRM and sustainable employee performance. Therefore, the aim of this systematic literature review is to analyse their relationship and provide an understanding of how the implementation of SHRM practices can help to achieve sustainable employee performance. Articles have been extracted from google scholar and Scopus database. They were selected based on the PRISMA framework. After a detailed analysis, research trends have been identified and research gaps have been uncovered. Thus, this study has contributed to the literature of the relationship between SHRM and sustainable employee performance. A conceptual framework that can advance knowledge in this field has also been proposed.

Keywords

Employee well-being, PRISMA, Sustainable Human Resource Management and Sustainable Employee Performance.

1.Introduction

The whole world is facing an increasing demand and challenges of sustainable development such as overpopulation, climate change, social inequities and environmental problems due to which many organisations are committed to include sustainability in their operations (Järlström et al. 2023). Faisal (2023) stated that businesses can achieve sustainable business development by becoming more aware of social and environmental issues and thus adopt environmental objectives and economic goals when formulating objectives. Therefore, the concept of sustainability is being spanned on several management disciplines including human resource management (HRM), supply chain management, knowledge management, strategic management, marketing, operations and production (Kainzbauer et al.2021). In the area of HRM, the process of incorporating sustainability, have led to the emergence of a new approach known as the sustainable human resource management (SHRM).

Ehnert et al. (2016), defined SHRM “as the adoption of HRM strategies and practices that enable the achievement of financial, social and ecological goals, with an impact inside and outside of the organisation and over a long-term time horizon while controlling the unintended side effects and negative feedback. Additionally, Ehnert (2009a) stated that

SHRM involves maintaining the human resource base of the organization that help to safeguard its value and contributions towards the survival of the organization in the long term. Moreover, according to Kramar (2014), SHRM integrates HRM functions with sustainability and thus achieves organisational goals and environmental objectives. SHRM focuses on the importance of adopting HR practices that help to achieve organizational outcomes that go beyond financial performance (Ehnert et al. 2016). The authors Manzoor et al. (2019) stated that leaders who develop and implement SHRM practices ensure a clean Earth for the future and build healthy and happy employees. They further added that when employees foster a sense of care about mitigating waste and improving organisational efficiency, it leads to a profitable business.

The objective of SHRM is to attract and retain motivated and talented employees and to provide them with opportunities to grow and a healthy work environment (Ehnert 2006). In their study Ehnert et al. (2019) classified SHRM into four types including socially responsible HRM, green HRM, triple bottom line HRM and common good HRM. Socially responsible HRM links HRM with corporate social responsibility while green HRM focus on encouraging employees to adopt environmentally friendly practices and policies. On the other hand, triple bottom line concentrates on people-oriented practices that is based on the influence of the triple bottom line and how they shape the actions of HRM. Finally, common good HRM aims to highlight the ways that support leaders and employees to achieve ecological and social progress. The authors Stankevičiūtė and Savanevičienė (2018) argued that employees nowadays face problems and challenges such as burnout, health problems, stress at work or inability to balance work duties and private life. Thus, they stated that since SHRM brings in the human factor into play, it can serve as a possible solution that focuses on employee well-being. SHRM acts as a survival strategy that allows managers to deal with employees in such a way that current and potential employees would wish to stay and continue to work for the organization, be able to perform duties efficiently and have the possibility to work and stay healthy, stress-free and balance work and private life (Ehnert et al. 2014).

Amongst the different factors that help to contribute to the achievement of sustainable employee performance, SHRM practices play a fundamental role. The authors Manzoor et al. (2019), argued that the SHRM practices can help employees to achieve a high level of performance that can lead to increased attainment. Additionally, HRM practices are high quality management practices that act as key drivers of employee performance (Rafiei and Davari 2015). Min et al. (2020) stated that the phenomena of intense competition between organizations have surged the prerequisite to achieve sustainable employee performance. Moreover, according to Ji et al. (2021), organizations need employees who have the ability to work in a sustainable way and for a longer period of time, to survive the aggressive competition in the market. However, the authors argued that the importance of sustainability for organizations to improve their overall performance have been addressed but the value of sustainable employee performance has been ignored. In this regards, there are still many gaps surrounding the field of sustainable employee performance which can be addressed by future researchers.

Emanating from the above, the main aim of this paper is to identify research trends in the area of sustainable employee performance by selecting articles from 2015-2024 from the Scopus and Google Scholar databases. After an analysis of the data from the selected articles, a conceptual framework will be proposed to investigate the impact of SHRM practices on sustainable employee performance. This research will provide meaningful knowledge and insights since the objective is to uncover SHRM which is a high area of interest for researchers and sustainable employee performance, a topic still in an early stage of development. Since sustainable employee performance is a new field of study, it is fundamental to identify the trends, methods and contextual dynamics through a systematic literature review, and following which the conceptual framework will be presented.

2. Methodology

This study adopted a systematic literature review method to provide a detailed analysis of sustainable employee performance and achieve the objective of this study. The process that the researchers of this study followed are to firstly define the research questions, conduct a search of relevant articles using keywords, screen the articles, develop the classification scheme, extract the data, synthesise the results and report gaps and trends. The criteria of the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) methodology was used to conduct the systematic literature review as presented at Figure 1. The database Scopus and Google Scholar were used for the search of articles in the abstract or title of publication using keywords “sustainable employee performance” and “sustainable job performance”. The last search was conducted on 15 June 2024 and all the papers from 2015 to 2024 were searched. At the identification stage, 249 articles were obtained and the second step involved identifying and deleting duplicate articles. After an assessment 59 articles were found to be duplicates. Following this, 190 articles

were further analysed by screening the abstracts and 110 articles were excluded because they were not in English language, were of wrong publication and broadly related to the topic of sustainable employee performance. The remaining 80 articles were retained to assess their full texts. 48 articles were further excluded because the full text article were not available or some of them were not directly related to the topic. After applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria, a total of 32 articles were finally retained and included for analysis.

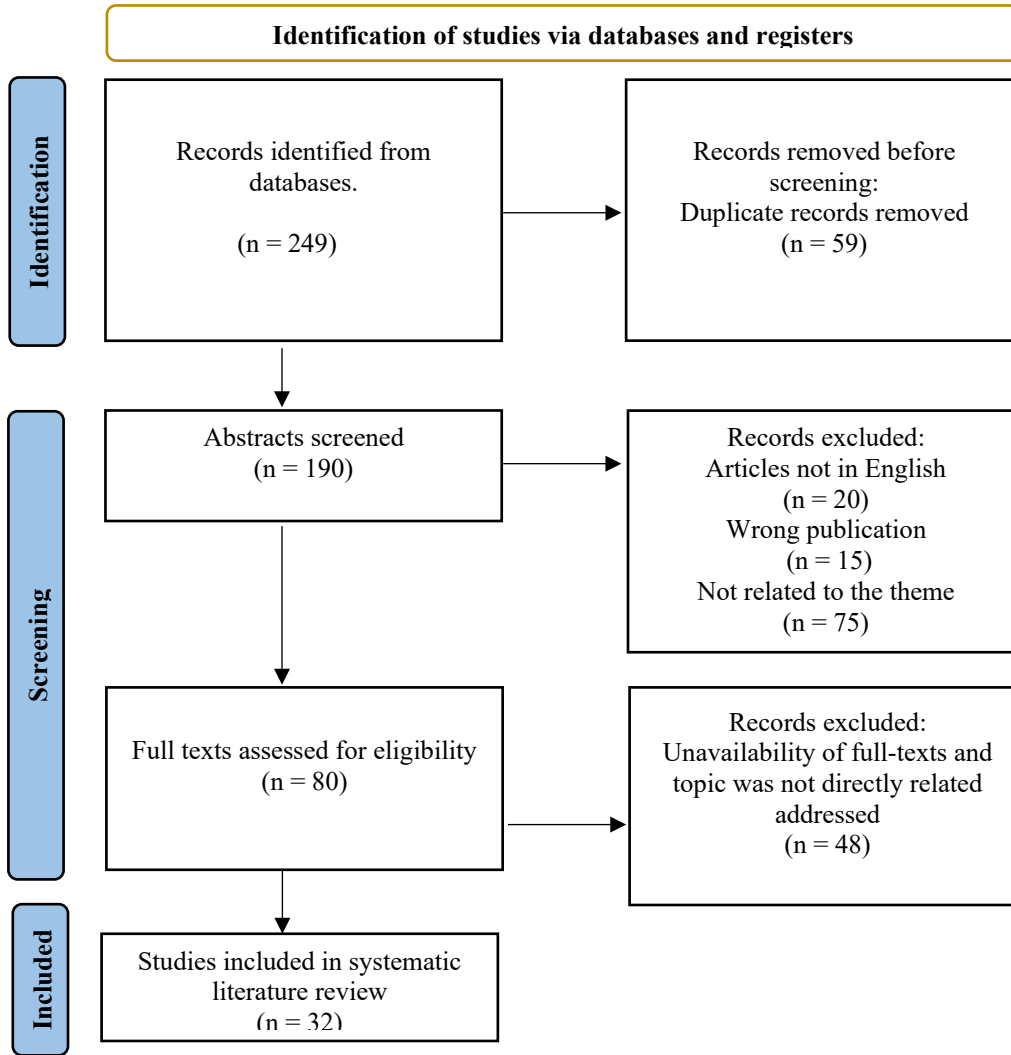


Figure 1. PRISMA flowchart for the screening and selection process of the selected studies

3.Results

The Basic Information Analysis Level

General information about the selected articles is discussed in the basic analysis level such as publication year and frequency, the geographical production of papers, sources of articles, methodological approach, and the sector in which the studies were conducted. Regarding the publication year and frequency as presented in Figure 2, it can be observed that sustainable employee performance has attracted the attention of researchers since 2023, showing a significant increase in the publication of articles compared to the previous years. This, in turn, reflects the importance of sustainable employee performance in organizations. Furthermore, as shown in Figure 3, numerous research has been undertaken by Indonesia, China and India. Malaysia has conducted two studies while countries like Egypt, Korea, Netherlands, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, and UAE each performed one study. The results show a lack of concentration in the field of sustainable employee performance by European and American countries.

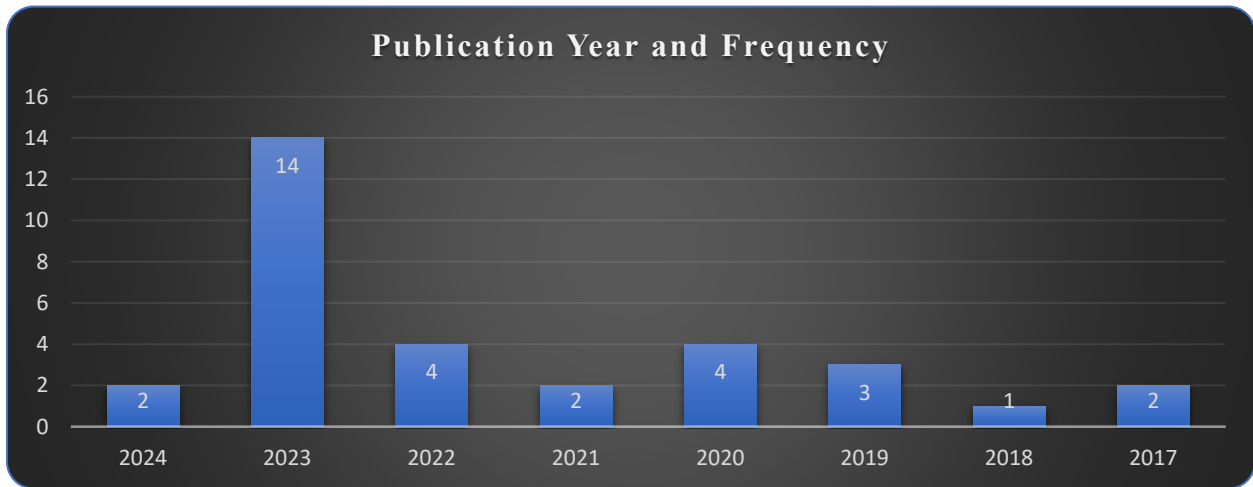


Figure 2. Publication Year

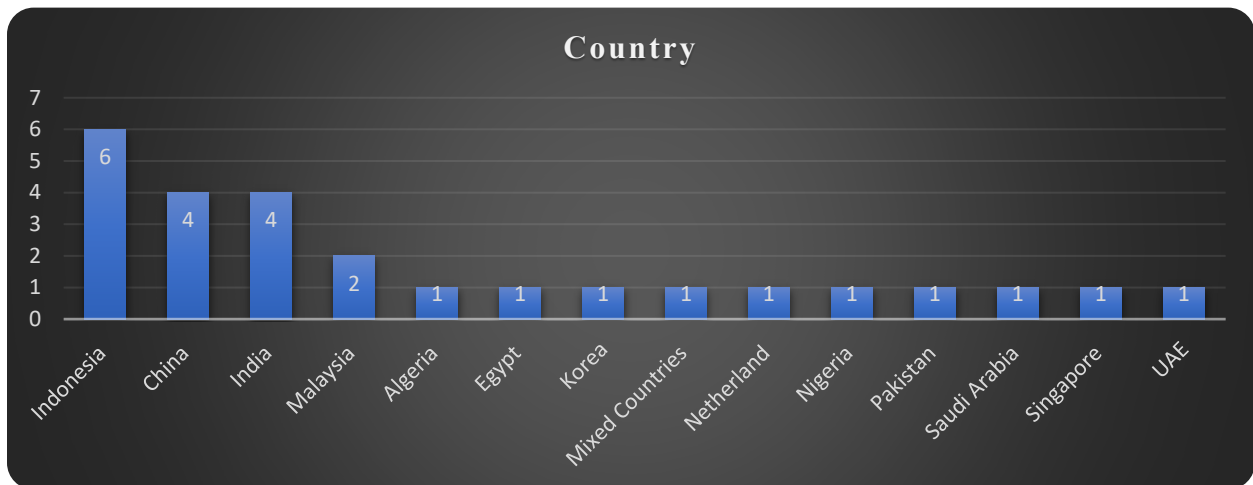


Figure 3. Publication Country

Additionally, Table 1 illustrates a breakdown of the included 32 publications out of which 30 were journal articles and 2 were conference papers. The highest number of articles were published in the journal of sustainability and the international journal of research in business and social science published 2 papers. The rest of the journals each have 1 paper on the subject of sustainable employee performance.

Table 1. Publications included in the review

Source/Journal	Count
Sustainability	7
International Journal Of Environmental Research And Public Health	2
International Journal Of Research In Business And Social Science	1
Enlightening Tourism. A pathmaking journal	1
Equilibrium. Quarterly Journal of Economics and Economic Policy	1
European Journal of Business and Management Research	1
Geojournal of Tourism and Geosites	1
Human Performance	1
Impact of Pandemic on Business and Management: Strategies for Sustainability	1
International Business Research	1
International Journal of Business Management and Economic Review	1
International Journal of Construction Supply Chain Management	1
International Journal of Education, Business and Economics Research (IJEER)	1
International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health	1
International Journal of Innovative Sciences and research technology	1
International Journal of Mechanical Engineering and Technology	1
International Journal Of Professional Business Review	1
International Journal of Progressive Sciences and Technologies (IJPSAT)	1
International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science	1
Journal of Economic and Administrative Sciences	1
Journal of Global Responsibility	1
Management Science Letters	1
Mining Science	1
Plos One	1
Proceedings of the 8th North American International Conference on Industrial Engineering and Operations Management	1
Proceedings of the First Australian International Conference on Industrial Engineering and Operations Management	1

Figure 4 shows the results of research methodologies adopted in previous studies and the majority of studies, that is, 75 %, adopted a quantitative approach. As there is a growing interest in sustainable employee performance, it would be beneficial for researchers to consider adopting qualitative approaches such as interviews and case studies. Additionally, future research can also leverage the mixed methodological approach to get comprehensive and insightful empirical knowledge on sustainable employee performance. Moreover, Figure 5 consolidates the sector in which the studies of the selected articles were performed. Most contributions, that is 23 % of the analysis stem from the education sector and 18 % of the studies were performed on mixed sectors. Other studies concentrated on sectors including healthcare, IT, Tourism, Manufacturing, etc.



Figure 4. Research Method Approach

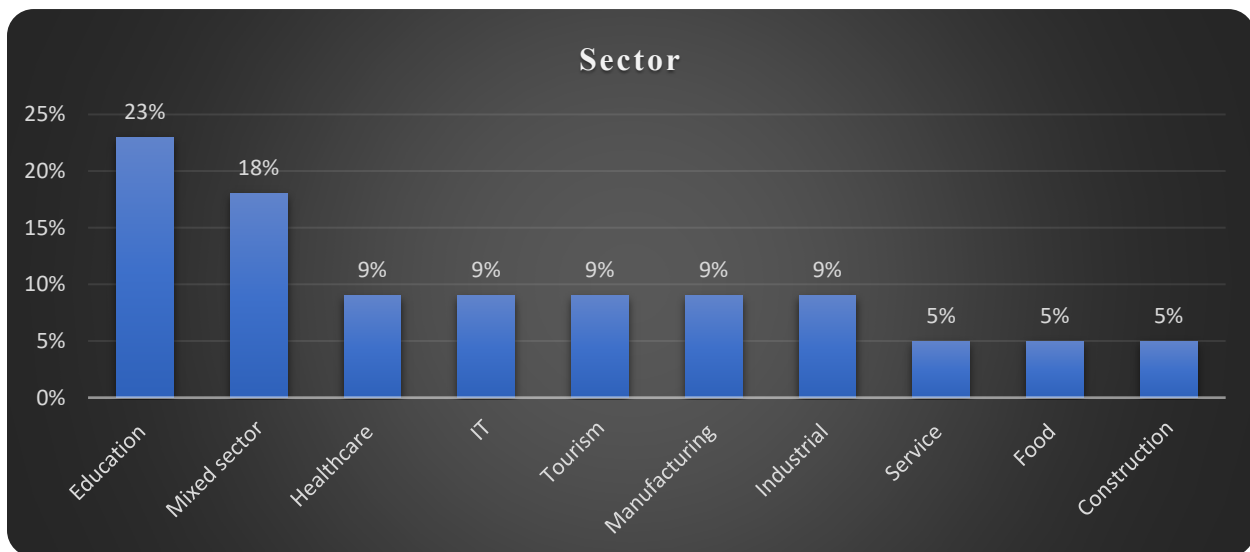


Figure 5. Sector

Keyword Analysis

Figure 6 presents a word cloud map depicting the most frequent keywords which have been used in the selected articles discussing sustainable employee performance. Larger keywords such as sustainable, employee and performance frequently and vice versa. In addition to this, the most frequent keywords are sustainability, leadership, green human resource management, environmental, behaviour, knowledge, satisfaction and transformational. All these words are directly related to sustainable employee performance, for example, words like leadership reflect and green human resource management reflect the factors that impact on sustainable employee performance.



Figure 6. Word cloud of keywords

Conceptualisation of Sustainable Employee Performance

Chin et al. (2023) stated that sustainable employee performance is a new concept in the domain of human resource management that lay emphasis on employees' performance while taking into consideration the notion of sustainability. Sustainable performance at the workplace was first developed by Docherty et al. (2009) and is considered as a crucial factor that ensure sustained work performance and long-term well-being of employees. According to Ji et al. (2021), sustainable employee performance is the ability of employees to maintain and deliver high levels of performance in the long-term and is the responsibility of organisations to take care of their well-being. On the other hand, according to Jiang et al. (2017), sustainable employee performance is defined as the contribution of an employee to his sustainable development which is referred as task sustainable performance and the sustained development of the organisation which is called the relational sustainable development. The achievement of sustainable employee performance can help organisations to benefit from increased productivity, job satisfaction, profitability, reduced environmental impact and improved social responsibility (Dey et al. 2022).

Antecedent of Sustainable Employee Performance

This section determines the factors affecting sustainable employee performance in organisations. Many studies demonstrated the relationship between the type of leadership and sustainable employee performance such as responsible leadership (Khanam et al. 2023), green transformational leadership (Aulia and Nawangsari, 2023), transformational leadership (Averina et al. (2023); Hendrayani et al. (2019); Jiang et al. (2017), digital leadership (Pratomo et al. 2022), supervisory behaviour (Min et al.2020). Moreover, Aulia and Nawangsari (2023) and Fayad et al. (2023) studied the impact of green human resource management on sustainable employee performance while Elsayy (2022) investigated on the adoption of SHRM practices. Other factors included innovative behaviour and perceived organisational support Minanda and Nawangsari (2024), perceived enterprise digital capability (Fu et al. 2023), intra-organisational social capital and job burnout (Adekanmbi and Ukpere 2023), job embeddedness (Menon and Sujatha, 2023), financial and non-financial rewards (Elayah and Senglali, 2023), training and development, employee participation and employment security practice (Chin et al. 2023), training, compensation and career development (Yamin and Nawangsari), work demand and job autonomy (Yulianto et al. 2023), organisational resources and personal resources (Hassanin et al., 2023), workplace sustainability (Bharti et al. 2022), work well-

being (Nangoy et al.2020), daily mutual support (Cheah et al. 2019), knowledge management (Sahana and Menon, 2018) and use of social network sites (Min 2017).

Additionally, the variables which were used as mediators and moderators in the selected studies included job demands and job resources (Ji et al., 2024), employee learning, communication feedback and employee unlearning (Fu et al., 2023), employee green behaviour (Aulia and Nawangsari 2023), ethical climate (Khanam et al. 2023), organisational commitment and green motivation (Averina et al. 2023), organisational reward (Adekanmbi and Ukpere 2023), contentment experience and anti-mattering (Menon and Sujatha, 2023), total reward strategies (Elrayah and Semlali, 2023), employee job satisfaction (Yamin and Nawangsari 2023), technostress (Hassanin et al. 2023), work-life integration (Pratomo et al. 2022), optimism, resilience and green creativity (Bharti et al. 2022), conflict management strategies (Min et al., 2020), job crafting (Zhang et al. 2020), organisational commitment and work engagement (Hendrayani et al. 2019), daily role breadth self-efficacy (Cheah et al.2019) and organisational citizenship behaviour (Jiang et al. 2017).

4.Discussion And Future Directions For Research

This paper has analysed the current state of knowledge in sustainable employee performance by conducting a comprehensive study of the selected articles published from 2015 to 2024. The results show a limited number of studies in the field of sustainable employee performance but however a rise in the number of articles is being seen since 2023 clearly showing the interest of researchers in this domain. Additionally, since most of the studies have been conducted in Asian countries such as Indonesia, China, India and Malaysia, it is recommended that researchers from Europe and America to focus in this emerging area. Moreover, most of the studies adopted a quantitative approach which necessitates the integration of qualitative or mixed methods together with quantitative research.

Furthermore, the main objective of this study is to propose a conceptual framework that will analyse the impact of SHRM practices on sustainable employee performance. In this context, based on the results of the selected articles, it is seen that only four studies investigated on the relationship between SHRM and sustainable employee performance. Chin et al. (2023) explored the impact of SHRM practices including training and development, employee participation and employment security practice on employee sustainable performance. They found that training and development and employee participation positively impact on sustainable employee performance while employment security practice does not affect sustainable employee performance. Elsayy (2022) analysed the impact of SHRM practices including selective staffing, extensive training and performance management on sustainable employee performance. The findings showed a positive relationship between SHRM practices and sustainable employee performance. Additionally, the studies of Aulia and Nawangsari (2023) and Fayad et al. (2023) were based on green human resource management which is a dimension of SHRM. Aulia and Nawangsari (2023) found that the implementation of green human resource management leads to better employee sustainable performance. While Fayad et al. (2023) conducted a systematic literature review and found that green human resource management help organisations to achieve sustainable employee performance.

Based on the above discussion, it can be observed that in the studies of Chin et al. (2023) and Elsayy (2022), traditional HRM practices like selective staffing, extensive training, employee participation, employment security practice and performance management was used as SHRM practices. No studies were conducted in relation to the other types of SHRM such as socially responsible HRM, green HRM and common good HRM as classified by Ehnert et al. (2019). This paper therefore opens avenues to investigate the relationship between socially responsible HRM, green HRM and common good HRM and sustainable employee performance (job performance and employee well-being) and proposes a conceptual framework as presented at Figure 7.

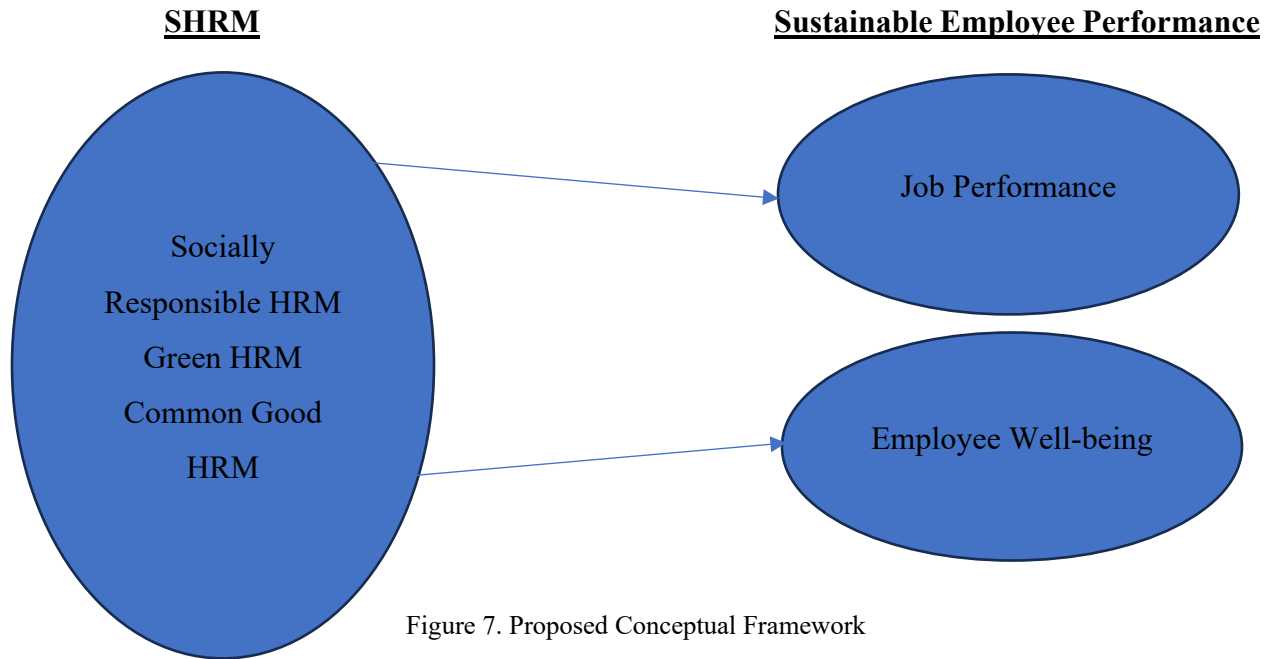


Figure 7. Proposed Conceptual Framework

Implications

This paper offers important theoretical and practical contributions. From a theoretical perspective, this study has contributed to the literature of SHRM and sustainable employee performance and has recommended a conceptual framework that explore the relationship between the two variables. Therefore, this study closes the gap in the literature and recommends future researchers to conduct more studies that explores the relationship between the different dimensions of SHRM and sustainable employee performance. Both qualitative and quantitative methods can be adopted to explain the relationship between these two variables. The relationship between SHRM and sustainable employee performance is complex and can be influenced by several factors including organisational culture, leadership and attitudes of employees. Thus, future research can include these factors as mediators in their studies.

From a practical perspective, the conceptual framework can help managers and executives to improve employee performance on the long-term while also taking into consideration their well-being. Sustainable employee performance can help organisations to reduce their environmental impact, increase social well-being, improve profitability, build a good corporate image, and attract and retain the best employees.

5. Conclusion

This study examined publication trends, research landscape, and literature related to SHRM and sustainable employee performance by conducting a systematic literature review. Data was retrieved from the Scopus and Google Scholar database and after applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria 32 articles were finally selected. The results indicate that there is very few research in relation to sustainable employee performance and Asian countries are conducting more research in this specific domain. This study provides valuable insights on the literature of SHRM and sustainable employee performance and presented a conceptual framework that fill the gap of investigating the impact of SHRM practices including socially responsible HRM, green HRM and common good HRM on sustainable employee performance.

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Biographies

Miss Gaitree Ramgolam is currently working as Human Resource Executive in a governmental organisation and as a part-time lecturer at the University of Technology, Mauritius (UTM). She is also a PhD student at UTM in the field of Sustainable Human Resource Management, which is an interesting area for research because of the increased awareness witnessed during the recent years in sustainability. Her research interest centers around Human Resource Management, Sustainable Human Resource Management, Entrepreneurship and Leadership.

Dr Needesh Ramphul is currently an Associate Professor at the University of Technology, Mauritius. He is knowledgeable and he has practical experience in the field of management, human resource management and business studies with 17 years of experience in academia and 7 years of experience in textile and Property sector. He has been lecturing on business related and Human Resource Management modules at both undergraduate and postgraduate level, designing programs related to business management and carrying out research in various areas of management. He has already presented several research papers in international conferences and published chapter in a book and published in international journals. His areas of expertise include Strategic Management, Business Management, Organisation and Management, Organisation Behaviour, Human Resource Management, Team Building and Leadership, Rewards and Performance Management, International HRM, Managing Pay and Performance, Research Methods, Strategic Human Resource Management, Organisational Development and Consultancy.

Professor Hemant Chitto has more than 30 years' experience in different Tertiary Education Institutions in Mauritius and has been a visiting Faculty for Universities in UK and Australia. Specialized in Management, Public Policy and Management areas, he is currently a Professor, Researcher, Consultant in the field of Public Policy, National level Strategic Planning Management, Business Development, Training Management and Human Resource Management. He has led the School of Business, Management and Finance for 6 years and has been the Ag. Director General of the University of Technology, Mauritius for nearly 2 years, among other major functions he has held. He has managed several crisis situations successfully. He has provided consultancy services to the World Bank, the UNICEF, CIDA, CAFRAD, European Development Fund British American Tobacco, Sugar Beach Hotel, Nigerian Mortgage Re-financing Company (Nigeria), Fin Club Ltd. (on Leveraging AI for Credit Risk Assessment), Education Management for MGI, Business Continuity Planning, SME Development, Prisons Services and a number of Companies in Mauritius, among others including he has written 3 national level reports for the Government of Mauritius, several book chapters, more than 80 articles in refereed journals and some 50 conference papers. He has also been invited as keynote speaker in a number of international conferences. Leading education and strategy education at the University of Technology, Mauritius, Dr. Chitto has participated in the formulation of the National Strategic Foresight Exercise 2050 for Mauritius and has been member of different National level Committees for the Government of Mauritius. He has insights into a number of sectors in Mauritius – like SME sector, Business Sector, Gender and Children, Employment Sector, Prison and Reforms, Educational Management, Human Resource Management, Hotel Sector, Public Sector etc.