

Human Resource Management: Workplace Health and Wellness Sustainability

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Abstract

The current businesses are in a very rapidly changing and volatile scenario. Businesses need to adapt to these changes to thrive in the market but also keep in mind the concept of sustainability, the environment that all the industries are practicing in' is rapidly reaching the brink of destruction. Sustainability is a pressing priority integrated in every decision and practices taken up by businesses. Human resource is the binding element of a business, which will help lead to the path of a halo of sustainability achievement. This paper helps us understand the concept of how workplace health is a very primary and first step to sustainability. We need to first preserve our internalities before we go to preserve the externalities. This paper will delve into the methodologies and practicality of workplace health and wellness and how it is achieved. But it is also to be kept in consideration that implementation of work-based solutions cannot be the direct and only solution as these go to personal perspective for each employee.

Keywords: sustainability, pressing priority, human resources, workplace health, internalities, externalities, methodologies.

1. Introduction

There can be seen a significant change in the market in the last decade. One of the major feature being seen is of its stability. If we were to look at the market back in 2011-12 it was probably the most mundane and stagnant economic scenario as the market had according to its point, reached a peak. But if we are to fast forward 10 years, today's market sees change on an hourly basis with a volatile stock bases and market availability and significance. In today's rapidly evolving market, businesses face unprecedented challenges and opportunities driven by digital transformation and technological advancement and by the need of environmental lookouts as well leading to a myriad of complicated and thought after decisions to be taken by businesses. We need to understand the pivotal role of driving leadership in such fast paced markets with all the digital complexities to achieve a stable sustainable growth. Presence and continuance of a business in today's environment needs to be backed by a detailed understanding of modern business landscape, disruptive technologies, changing consumer behaviour and global market trends.

1.1 Sustainable practices: an umbrella concept

In a business or organization, sustainability or sustainable practices or initiatives is usually looked at from a very narrow perspective- usually being that of environmental regards. In today's market of volatile changes happening at an unusually fast rate, businesses need to look at sustainable practices from an all-inclusive point of view. Sustainability along with sustenance is what builds up all sustainability practices and decisions taken by a business. These terms are generally used interchangeably; they happen to have a very thin line difference which if understood properly can help a long way establishment of a business. The term sustenance and sustainability have different means but are related to the same concept. Sustainability refers to the ability to maintain something at a certain level or quality over time. In context to businesses it refers to practices that ensure long term viability of natural resources, eco system and social systems. Sustainable refers to something that can be maintained over long term without exhausting resources or causing significant negative impacts on the society or environment. It relates to actions, practices or processes that are environmentally and socially responsible. In much simpler words, it can be said: sustainability is the concept or state of being sustainable; while sustainable describes actions or practices that contribute to sustainability. The use of sustainable practices by a business on the current rapidly changing market scenario is not only the obvious step of being environmental conscious but also that economic and socio cultural relevance along with these objectives to be kept in mind while launching a product or service in such markets, businesses also have to find ways to thrive or sustain themselves in the market- the ones they are present in and the ones they plan on entering into. Sustainable practices in a market develop a broader spectrum when being put to use, to understand that sustainable practices dabble with both fronts of sustenance and sustainability. In order to sustain in a market a business needs to adopt to the socio cultural ways of the society is it present in, its economic viabilities of consumers and future target consumer base and to keep coming up with universal practices to maintain its presence in the global

market. Along with sustenance, a business will only be able to survive in a market which is ever so changing- if there are resources to work with. In the current market, businesses are either the established brands or the startups. And the thickening difference in their presence ratio is what makes the market a rapidly changing scenario. Behind every one or two products which are yearly launched by any well-known established companies of the world there are an estimate of 10,000 to 20,000 startups launches daily which statistically are revolving around the same product data base as the big businesses. For businesses, when decisions are being made regarding the functioning the ultimate perspective is that of its products and the market in which the products are present. Any decision to be made regarding the market the products are in; are taken with the concern of being relevant and up to speed with the ongoing market scenarios- the technological changes and advancements, the preferences of the consumers, the market availability of raw materials, the presence and importance of the product in the market- especially that of your brand in the product line, exclusivity of the cultural background of the market, the economic condition of the respective market countries and many more criteria. Along with physical, cultural, economic and technological criteria, environmental sustainability is also a part of sustainable practices which are to adopted by business to keep up with all the volatile changes in the market, one of the most mundane example being CSR activities along with that global negative impact of the production is also to be kept well under check. It can be summarized as; sustainable practices in volatile markets require integrating environmental, social and economic considerations into business strategies and operating decisions. By the proper assessment of the type of sustainable decision to be made businesses can not only contribute to environmental sustainability but also gain competitive advantages and ensure long term viability.

1.2 Sustainable practices: a business concept

The dynamics of today's business landscapes help us introduce ourselves to imperative strategies for leadership in innovation and transformation. Current topography of every single business in every industry is characterized by constant changes disruption and uncertainty making it one of the most inconsistent and volatile market conditions known to the world market. Adapting to these market requires all round decisions to be taken which help in implementation of sustainable practices which help in holistic business sustainability. Before looking at and understanding the sustainable practices taken up by businesses, it needs to be understood the said so volatile scenarios which lead to intense sustainable practice implementation. The scenarios being; rapid escalation and involvement of artificial intelligence leading to complete remodeling of traditional business models; additionally, changing consumer preferences, demographic shifts, and global economic trends are driving organizations to adapt and innovate at an unprecedented pace. All the demographic, technological, cultural, social, environmental, psychological and economic changes are the current changing market dynamics which businesses are to adapt to.

The main sustainable practices which are adapted by businesses are:

- Making products comparable to circular economies.
- Resource efficiency and renewability in production processes.
- Focused investment on R&D to adapt and become resilient to the market conditions.
- Maximized stakeholder engagement.
- Effective leadership for versatility in innovation for market sustenance.
- Internal functioning efficiency and maintenance.
- Market penetration
- Market development
- Using disruptive technologies
- Diversification of revenue

In the rapid changes in the market scenarios can be faced with the introduction of products in a circular economy, shift from a linear economy is required for long term sustenance of a business. A necessary shift from the take, make and dispose of products to an economy where products and materials are reused, repaired and recycled is quite important and looked upon and into. Along with circular economy comes resource efficiency which goes hand in hand with each other, as when reusing of the same product is to be ensured so should be the reusing of the raw materials that made this product. As it will help in reducing back costs which might eventually lead to low cost of final goods which helps not only in environmental sustainability but also market sustenance. Businesses need to have the willingness to research deeper into customer centric priority and understand and use all the emerging technologies to drive growth and competitiveness, this will happen with better and focused investment and interest in the R&D department. One of the major internal practices to be followed by any business in any industry for sustenance is stakeholder engagement. Stakeholders make up a vital part of a business's working staff their investors, their consumers and their owners. There can never be

a better understanding of a businesses' good and bad implications of sustainable practices rather than from its stakeholders. To top any form of sustainable practice maybe, be it the ones related to the environment or the ones related to external world factors, strong and effective leadership is a prime way to make it happen. e modern business landscape is characterized by rapid change, disruption, and uncertainty, driven by technological advancements, changing consumer behaviours, and global economic trends. Leadership plays a critical role in navigating this dynamic landscape, driving innovation and transformation, and positioning organizations for success. By embracing strategic imperatives for leadership in innovation and transformation, organizations can adapt to change, drive growth, and thrive in today's fast-paced and competitive business environment.

1.3 Impacts of sustainable practices

For the sustainable development there must be equilibrium between industrial growth for wealth accumulation and protection of the environment. Implementation of green management initiatives requires a high level of technical and management skills among employees within the organization and outside it, which results in development of innovation-focused environmental initiatives and programs'. The implementation of rigorous recruitment and selection of employees, performance-based appraisal system, the introduction of training programmes, aimed at increasing the employees' environmental awareness, courses addressing the development of new technical and management competencies have a basic importance for fostering environmental innovations. Sustainability shine back the needs of both the employees and the community in order to preserve and protect the environment. Environmental management system can only be effectively implemented, if the companies have the right people, with the right skills and competencies. Human resource practices and organizational outcomes such as productivity, flexibility, and financial performance. Impacts of sustainable human resource management on society is the enhanced well-being of employees. Sustainable human resource management practices prioritize employee health, work-life balance, and overall job satisfaction by executing policies that nurture flexible working hours, remote work options, and mental health support, organizations can help employees achieve a better balance between their professional and personal lives. This, in turn, leads to a more motivated and high-yielding workforce. Employees who feel valued and supported are more likely to be engaged in their work, which not only benefits the organization but also contributes to their overall happiness and well-being. This ripple effect extends beyond the workplace, as happier individuals often contribute more positively to their communities and society at large. Sustainable human resource management practices also promote diversity and inclusion within the workplace by fostering a comprehensive environment where individuals from diverse backgrounds feel valued and respected, organizations can harness the full potential of their workforce. This approach not only helps to reduce social inequalities but also enhances innovation and creativity within the organization. Diverse teams bring different perspectives and ideas, which can lead to more effective problem-solving and better decision-making. This contributes to the development of a more comprehensive society, where individuals from all walks of life have equal opportunities to succeed. Investing in employee development is another key aspect of sustainable human resource management. Organizations that prioritize continuous learning and skill development help employees to acquire new competencies and stay relevant in a rapidly changing job market. This not only benefits the organization by creating a more skilled and compliant workforce but also enhances the employability and career prospects of individuals. As employees develop new skills, they become more capable of contributing to the proficiency economy and driving economic growth. This can lead to greater economic stability and prosperity for society as a whole. Sustainable human resource management promotes ethical business practices, reducing instances of exploitation, discrimination, and unfair labour practices by adhering to ethical standards and fostering a culture of integrity, organizations can build trust with employees, customers, and other stakeholders. This trust is essential for long-term success and can help to create a more just and equitable society. Ethical business practices also ensure that employees are treated fairly and with respect, which can improve job satisfaction and retention rates. In addition, organizations that prioritize ethics are more likely to attract and retain top talent, further enhancing their competitive advantage. Sustainable human resource management encourages environmentally friendly practices within the workplace, such as reducing waste, conserving energy, and promoting recycling by carrying out green office practices, organizations can significantly reduce their environmental footprint. This can include measures such as reducing paper usage, minimizing energy consumption, and carrying out waste management programs. These efforts contribute to environmental sustainability by decreasing the organization's overall impact on natural resources and ecosystems. Sustainable human resource promotes work practices that reduce the need for commuting and travel, such as telecommuting, flexible work hours, and virtual meetings. These practices can significantly reduce carbon emissions associated with transportation by encouraging employees to work remotely or adopt flexible schedules, organizations can contribute to a reduction in greenhouse gas

emissions and help mitigate the impacts of climate change. Providing employees with training on environmental issues is another important aspect of sustainable human resource management by increasing awareness and fostering a culture of sustainability, organizations can encourage more environmentally conscious behaviour both at work and in employees' personal lives. Training programs can cover topics such as energy conservation, waste reduction, and sustainable consumption by equipping employees with the proficiency and skills to make environmentally responsible choices, organizations can contribute to broader environmental sustainability efforts. Sustainable human resource management practices extend to managing relationships with suppliers and partners who adhere to environmental standards by working with suppliers that prioritize sustainability, organizations can promote the adoption of sustainable practices across industries. This can include sourcing materials from sustainable sources, reducing waste in the supply chain, and minimizing the environmental impact of production processes by influencing their supply chain partners, organizations can amplify their positive environmental impact and drive broader industry-wide change.

1.4 Role of HR in sustainable practices

HR has an important role to play in sustainability as human resource is asserted as a valuable asset within the organisation that has its needs and wants and can respond and react to it. Human resource practices play a pivotal role for creating a pragmatic environment in which employees feel comfortable to communicate their feelings and ideas which ensures their fidelity towards the organisation. It increases the institutional memory and during moments of crisis it becomes an important lesson to be shared among the organisation. Human resource practices can help in creating an effective workforce and a interrelation with the community while understanding and addressing their vulnerabilities whether they are physical, social, political, economic or any other nature. Sustainable human resource management has evolved to transverse and understand the institutional level work practices that structures the characteristics and the role of work which have sustainable and unsustainable impacts on citizens' quality life while balancing the economic/financial, human/social and cultural elements of the social sustainability. The strategy of human resource management is that it is a set of actions through which an organization by accident or design develops resources and uses them to carry out services or products in a way which its users find it valuable while meeting the financial and other intent and constraints imposed by key stakeholders. The crucial aspect is the impact control-oriented part which includes the model of negative externality for sustainable human resource management which concede to both internal and external environment of the organisation. Several studies have shown that such benefits are not better in the long run as it a pivotal point for sustainable human resource management. The consequences of negative externalities are that they may impose psychological, social and work-related health wellbeing that are caused by work practices used by organizations to extract maximum skills and demotivated employees to achieve highly effective and efficient performance. Acknowledgement of the psychological, social and work-related aspect of harm which essentially includes not only the employees but also their extensive social environment is what segregates sustainable human resource management from human resource management. The meaning of sustainable human resource management is the adoption of human resource strategies and practices that enable the achievement of financial, social and ecological goals with an impact on the internal and the external part of the organization and over the long run controlling for unintended side effects and negative feedbacks or setbacks. If we recognize and evaluate the indicators of negative externalities we subsequently fulfil all the three dimensions of sustainable development that is social, environmental and financial. Human resource management must acquire support from top-level management, boost employees' empowerment, provide continuous training, implementing an efficient system of remuneration and build a cross-functional teamwork. Support from the upper level of management can help in establishing a flexible and lean culture that avoids bureaucratic structures, centralized authority and vertical communication flows. Human resource should provide an autonomy and empowerment to the workforce in order to rank up a participative working environment. The fundamental task of human resource management is to supervise the human resources to use and consume it specifically. The task is to ensure that the raw materials or the resources used by the organisation are supervised properly in order to stop wastage of resources and make full utilization of resources as it would increase a financial responsibility for the organisation to provide more resource in order to cover up the wastage. There are a set of interconnected human resource tasks which have been implemented by the firms to promote sustainable practices. These are classified into two categories: operational and managerial. The operational responsibility consists of a strategic process comprising policy-making, planning, implementation, auditing, action-correction, and performance assessment. Organizations and human resource managers should be committed to complying with civic regulations and protocols vis-à-vis sustainability, ensuring consistent reporting of environmental issues and transparent disclosure, distributing responsibilities equally, and setting a specific timeline and

methodological framework to be applied. As for the operationalization and auditing functions, human resource departments should accommodate an explicit structure to manage resource usage, develop measures and processes to avoid undesirable outcomes that might harm society or the environment, and generate a monitoring system for evaluating the sustainable practices of the organization. A consensus on what sustainable human resource management should include faces a number of obstacles: the terminology used in the research, the lack of a unified definition, the ambiguity in the conceptualization of the framework, and the lack of clarity in the developmental processes applied in sustainable firms. Previous studies have highlighted the need to identify appropriate human resource management approaches and systems for implementing sustainability practices. Nurturing the human aspect leads to a better understanding of sustainable human resource management and increases its potential for encouraging sustainable performance in the workforce and for optimizing resource management.

1.5 Workplace health and wellness sustainability

Workplace health and wellness sustainability is an increasingly pivotal aspect of organizational success, entwining the well-being of employees with the long-term sustainability goals of businesses by aiding an environment that supports health and wellness, organizations can enhance productivity, reduce absenteeism, and promote a culture of well-being that extends beyond the workplace. The influence of sustainable health and wellness initiatives is profound, affecting not only the physical and mental health of employees but also the economic and social health of the wider community. The cornerstone of workplace health and wellness sustainability lies in its focus on enhancing employee well-being which involves implementing comprehensive wellness initiatives that address physical health, mental health, and emotional well-being. Regular health screenings, fitness initiatives, ergonomic workstations, and healthy eating options are some of the initiatives that can significantly improve employees' physical health and offering mental health support through counselling services, stress management workshops, and mindfulness initiatives helps employees manage stress and anxiety, contributing to a more balanced and productive workforce. Organizations that invest in these initiatives often witness lower rates of absenteeism and presenteeism, as employees who are healthy and content are more likely to perform preferably. Investing in sustainable workplace health and wellness initiatives also yields substantial economic benefits for organizations. Healthier employees mean reduced healthcare costs, as proactive wellness initiatives can prevent chronic diseases and reduce the need for medical interventions. According to various studies, every dollar invested in workplace wellness initiatives can result in significant savings in healthcare costs and improved employee productivity. Organizations with robust wellness initiatives often experience higher employee retention rates. employees are more likely to stay with companies that demonstrate a commitment to their well-being, reducing the costs associated with high turnover and recruitment. This economic advantage extends to the community as well, as healthier employees bestow to a more stable and productive local economy. Sustainable health and wellness initiatives foster a positive workplace culture where employees feel valued and supported. A culture of well-being encourages open communication, collaboration and mutual respect among employees. This positive environment boosts morale and job satisfaction, leading to higher levels of employee engagement and loyalty. Moreover, a supportive workplace culture can enhance creativity and innovation, as employees are more likely to bestow ideas and take initiative when they feel their well-being is prioritized. The undulation effect of a positive workplace culture extends beyond the organization, as employees who feel good about their work environment are more likely to participate in community activities and volunteer efforts, fostering a sense of community and social responsibility. Mental health is a pivotal component of workplace wellness that is often overlooked. Sustainable health and wellness initiatives recognize the importance of mental health and provide resources to support it. This includes offering mental health days, providing access to mental health professionals, and creating a stigma-free environment where employees feel comfortable seeking help. Organizations that prioritize mental health create a more inclusive and supportive workplace, reducing the incidence of burnout and improving overall employee well-being. The positive influence on mental health extends beyond the workplace, as employees with good mental health are more likely to engage in positive behaviours and relationships in their personal lives, contributing to healthier communities Workplace health and wellness sustainability is closely linked to environmental sustainability. Organizations can promote health and wellness by creating green workspaces that prioritize air quality, natural lighting, and access to nature. Incorporating plants, using non-toxic materials, and ensuring proper ventilation can significantly improve the indoor environment, contributing to the physical health of employees and promoting sustainable practices such as reducing waste, conserving energy, and encouraging eco-friendly transportation options aligns the goals of employee well-being with environmental sustainability. Employees who work in environmentally conscious workplaces are more likely to adopt sustainable practices in their personal lives, furthering the influence on environmental conservation.

The benefits of workplace health and wellness sustainability extend to the wider community. Organizations that prioritize health and wellness often engage in community health initiatives, such as health fairs, fitness challenges, and educational workshops. These initiatives promote a culture of health and wellness within the community, encouraging individuals and families to adopt healthier lifestyles and organizations that support employee volunteering and community involvement bestow to the social fabric of the community, fostering a sense of connectedness and shared purpose. Healthier employees are also less likely to rely on public health services, reducing the burden on the healthcare system and contributing to a more sustainable and resilient community.

2. Review of literature

Saydulu Kolasani [16/02/2023] wrote a paper on leadership in business innovation and transformation in which they concluded the key insights and implications, emphasizing the pivotal role of leadership in navigating complex digital landscapes and driving business innovation and transformation for sustainable growth in today's rapidly evolving market.

Suzanne ben, Melissa Edwards and Tim Williams [13/14/2014] wrote a paper on organizational change for corporate sustainability in which they concluded the unified approach to corporate sustainability and its plan on actions to bring corporate change and a new positive model of a future sustainable world.

Imran Hameed, Muhammad Umer Ijaz and Meghna Sabharwal [26/03/2021] wrote a paper on impact of HR environment and organizational identification on employees' psychological well-being in which they discussed the results of structural equation modeling show a positive association among HR practices and OID, which subsequently enhances well-being of public sector employees.

3. Objectives

Our paper focuses on the interpretation of the term sustainable practices and understands the different applications and implications of this term in businesses. It puts a centre focus on practices of sustainability taken up by the human resources of a business, in the workplace health and wellness sustainability of employees. It also looks into the impacts of these practices as well.

4. Methodology

This research paper was written up with the help of referring to various other papers through scholar bases on organisational development, market changes, HR practices and sustainability scenarios of businesses.

5. Conclusion

In this paper we come to the conclusion that sustainability is a halo concept which is usually looked at from a very narrow perspective and that a lot of different practices and decisions are to be taken up to help in sustenance and sustainability of a business. We understood the meaning of and different perspectives of the rapidly changing scenarios businesses are to thrive in currently. From a human resource perspective, we understand the base of an external sustainability is from internal sustainability and mental wellness of employees to make the most robust decisions possible.

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