

The impact of Employee Engagement and Organizational Environmental Performance: A Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

This literature review explores the pivotal role of employee engagement (EE) in enhancing organizational environmental performance (OEP). Key findings indicate that human resource management (HRM) practices, particularly those focused on sustainability, play a crucial role in fostering a green organizational culture that drives employee participation in environmental initiatives. HRM strategies, such as sustainability-oriented training, rewards, and recruitment, empower employees to contribute actively to environmental goals. Leadership and organizational culture are also identified as key factors, with transformational leadership and a supportive culture enhancing employee motivation and collaboration in sustainability efforts. Additionally, the review highlights mechanisms such as intrinsic motivation, feedback, and employee involvement in decision-making as essential drivers of pro-environmental behaviours. Engaged employees are more likely to adopt sustainable practices, such as waste reduction and energy conservation, aligning their behaviours with organizational sustainability objectives. Technological integration further supports engagement by providing real-time tracking, fostering transparency, and encouraging collaborative innovation. The review underscores the importance of HRM, leadership, culture, and technology in driving EE and OEP, offering valuable insights for companies aiming to integrate sustainability into their core operations.

Keywords: EE, OEP, HRM, Sustainability, Leadership.

INTRODUCTION

The increasing urgency of addressing environmental concerns has elevated the role of organizations in fostering sustainable practices. As organizations strive to mitigate their environmental impact, the concept of environmental performance has garnered significant attention. OEP refers to the ability of firms to meet environmental objectives through policies, strategies, and actions aimed at minimizing ecological footprints while maximizing resource efficiency (Wei et al., 2023). In an era marked by stringent environmental regulations and heightened stakeholder expectations, businesses are under pressure to embed sustainability into their operations. Among the various factors influencing organizational environmental performance, EE has emerged as a pivotal enabler. EE, defined as the emotional and cognitive connection employees feel toward their organization, plays a critical role in motivating environmentally responsible behaviours (Saks, 2022). Engaged employees often demonstrate proactive behaviours, such as adopting sustainable practices, suggesting eco-innovations, and participating in environmental initiatives (Amjad et al., 2021). Thus, examining the link between EE and OEP becomes essential for understanding how firms can enhance their sustainability outcomes.

Previous research has highlighted the role of leadership, organizational culture, and employee motivation in shaping environmental outcomes. Leadership styles emphasizing collaboration and sustainability foster an environment where employees feel empowered to take ownership of environmental goals (Singh et al., 2020). Similarly, organizational cultures that value environmental responsibility encourage collective efforts toward sustainability (Rawashdeh, 2018). However, the nuanced interplay between EE and environmental performance warrants further exploration. While significant progress has been made in understanding the drivers of OEP, the literature reveals a gap in examining how sustained EE contributes to long-term

environmental outcomes. Moreover, the potential mediating role of digital technologies and organizational practices in enhancing this relationship remains underexplored.

By addressing this gap, this research aims to deepen the understanding of the mechanisms through which EE impacts OEP. The study focuses on identifying actionable insights that can guide practitioners in designing effective engagement strategies aligned with sustainability goals. Despite substantial research on environmental performance and EE individually, limited studies integrate these areas. Specifically, there is a lack of longitudinal studies and cross-industry comparisons that explore how engagement strategies evolve and impact environmental performance over time (Bendig et al., 2023). This study focuses on exploring how EE enhances OEP. It seeks to identify key drivers, mediating mechanisms, and practical strategies for fostering employee participation in sustainability initiatives.

The central research question guiding this study is: how does EE contribute to OEP, and what mechanisms mediate this relationship? The significance of this study lies in its potential to bridge the gap between EE and environmental performance, offering insights into practical strategies for achieving sustainability goals. The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 reviews the existing literature on EE and OEP. Section 3 outlines the research methodology and data collection approach. Section 4 presents findings and discusses their implications. Section 5 concludes with practical recommendations and future research directions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Organizational Environmental Performance

According to Boehm (2005), organisational environmental performance is the act of carrying out operations in a way that has a positive impact on the community around the organisation, recognising the community's importance as a major stakeholder in corporate operations. Wei et al. (2023) highlight the importance of green intellectual capital and top management commitment in enhancing OEP, with pro-environmental behaviour as a key moderator. Similarly, Aggarwal and Agarwala (2023) emphasize that green human resource management (GHRM) practices foster a culture that mediates the relationship between EE and environmental outcomes. Bendig et al. (2023) underscore the positive role of digital technologies in improving environmental performance, while Naz et al. (2023) reveal that pro-environmental behaviours mediate the impact of green HRM and psychological green climate on organizational outcomes. Lutfi et al. (2023) discuss the role of technology-organization-environment factors in adopting environmental management systems (EMAS) to drive sustainability in small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Asiaei et al. (2022) link green intellectual capital and environmental management accounting to enhanced environmental performance. Studies by Amjad et al. (2021) and Al-Swidi et al. (2021) demonstrate how GHRM practices, leadership, and culture improve employee performance and environmental outcomes. Research by Singh et al. (2020) and Kraus et al. (2020) highlights the significance of leadership, innovation, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) in achieving environmental performance. Symeou et al. (2019) emphasize organizational slack, while Yadiati et al. (2019) focus on green intellectual capital and organizational reputation. Older studies, such as Habidin and Yusof (2012) and Albino et al. (2012), underline operational excellence and collaboration as drivers of environmental performance. Meta-analyses like Horváthová (2010) affirm the positive link between environmental and financial performance, reinforcing the importance of strategic, cultural, and technological interventions in sustainability efforts.

Table 1: Organization's Environmental Performance

Author	Year	Findings
Wei et al.	2023	Encouraging pro-environmental behaviour at both individual and organizational levels enhances environmental performance. The interplay between green intellectual capital, top management commitment, and pro-environmental behaviour contributes to achieving environmental sustainability and enhancing organizational reputation.
Aggarwal & Agarwala	2023	Implementing GHRM practices contributes to environmental performance through the development of a green organizational culture. The mediating role of organizational culture provides insights into how HRM practices shape the environmental performance of organizations.
Bendig et al.	2023	Digital orientation positively correlates with an organization's environmental performance, indicating that digital technologies can be

		leveraged to enhance environmental outcomes. The study highlights the potential of digitalization to improve environmental performance, particularly in times of technological change.
Naz et al.	2023	GHRM practices positively influence environmental performance by fostering pro-environmental behaviours among employees. The mediation of pro-environmental behaviours elucidates the mechanisms through which HRM practices impact environmental performance, providing practical guidance for promoting sustainability in organizational settings.
Lutfi et al.	2023	Technology-organization-environment (TOE) factors influence the adoption of green environmental management systems (EMAS) in SMEs, subsequently impacting green innovations and environmental performance. The study offers insights into strategies for promoting sustainability in SMEs by analysing the determinants of EMAS adoption and its effects on environmental outcomes.
Asiaei et al.	2022	Green intellectual capital positively influences environmental management accounting, contributing to environmental performance. The study explores how organizations utilize intellectual capital and environmental management practices to improve environmental outcomes, offering insights into leveraging intellectual capital for environmental sustainability.
Al-Swidi et al.	2021	GHRM, leadership, and organizational culture positively influence employees' green behaviour and OEP. The study emphasizes the importance of environmental goals, evaluation methods, and recognition of exceptional performance in driving environmentally responsible behaviour within organizations.
Amjad et al.	2021	GHRM practices contribute to organizational sustainability by enhancing environmental and employee performance. The mediating role of environmental and employee performance elucidates the mechanisms through which GHRM practices influence organizational sustainability.
Nisar et al.	2021	GHRM practices positively influence environmental performance in Malaysian green hotels through the enhancement of green intellectual capital and the promotion of pro-environmental behaviour among employees. The study offers practical implications for promoting sustainability in the hospitality industry by examining the mechanisms through which HRM practices affect environmental performance.
Rehman Khan & Yu	2021	An approach to assess eco-environmental performance using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) with a practice-based view emphasizes the importance of evaluating the effect of green practices on socio-environmental performance beyond financial metrics. The research provides a comprehensive framework for analysing the impact of green initiatives on organizational sustainability.
Obeidat et al.	2020	Green human resource practices effectively enable environmental and organizational performance in the Qatari oil and gas industry. The study confirms the positive link between environmental and organizational performance and explores its manifestation in a specific industrial context.
Hameed et al.	2020	GHRM practices influence employees' environmental performance by fostering an organizational environment conducive to environmentally friendly behaviour. The study highlights the importance of aligning organizational values with employees' personal values to enhance environmental performance.
Singh et al.	2020	Green transformational leadership and GHRM practices positively influence green innovation and environmental performance. The study underscores the relationship between leadership, HRM practices, innovation, and environmental outcomes, offering insights into promoting environmental

		sustainability within organizations.
Kraus et al.	2020	CSR indirectly impacts environmental performance through environmental strategy and green innovation. The study highlights the mediating role of environmental strategy and green innovation in translating CSR activities into environmental outcomes.
Li et al.	2020	Digital technologies positively impact environmental performance in the context of Industry 4.0, mediated by digital supply chain platforms and moderated by environmental factors. The study offers insights into leveraging digitalization to enhance environmental outcomes, particularly in the era of technological advancement.
Symeou et al.	2019	Organizational slack influences firms' ability to manage and improve environmental performance. The study highlights the importance of organizational resources and capabilities in facilitating environmental sustainability initiatives.
Yadiati et al.	2019	Green intellectual capital positively influences environmental performance, mediated by organizational reputation. The study sheds light on the mechanisms through which intellectual capital contributes to environmental sustainability, emphasizing the role of organizational reputation as a mediator.
Rawashdeh	2018	GHRM practices positively influence OEP in Jordanian health service organizations. The study underscores the significance of HRM practices, such as training and rewards, in promoting environmental concerns within the healthcare sector.
Bakhsh Magsi et al.	2018	Organizational culture influences firms' environmental strategies and performance outcomes. The study highlights the role of organizational culture in shaping environmental initiatives and outcomes.
Ardito&Dangelico	2018	Strategic and organizational orientations influence environmental performance, offering insights into the factors driving firms' environmental sustainability efforts.
Walker et al.	2015	Empirical organizational configurations impact corporate environmental performance. The study identifies configurations associated with successful sustainability outcomes, offering practical insights for organizations seeking to enhance environmental performance.
Jabbar&Abid	2014	GHRM practices motivate employees toward organizational environmental performance, highlighting the pivotal role of HRM in promoting environmental concerns within firms.
Habidin&Yusof	2012	Lean Six Sigma and environmental management systems impact organizational performance in the Malaysian automotive industry. The study underscores the importance of operational excellence and environmental management in enhancing organizational performance.
Albino et al.	2012	Inter-organizational collaborations enhance a firm's environmental performance, suggesting the effectiveness of collaborative efforts in promoting environmental sustainability within firms.
Horváthová	2010	Environmental engagement influences corporate environmentalism and firm performance, highlighting the interconnectedness between environmental initiatives and organizational success.
López-Rodríguez	2009	Environmental performance influences firm performance, emphasizing the impact of environmental initiatives on overall organizational success.
Wisner et al.	2006	Organizational proactivity toward environmental performance influences outcomes, offering insights into the strategies and practices that contribute to environmental sustainability.

Russo & Harrison	2005	Organizational design influences environmental performance in the electronics industry, highlighting the role of specific organizational dimensions in shaping environmental initiatives.
Hoque	2004	Strategy, environmental uncertainty, and performance measurement impact organizational performance, shedding light on the dynamics influencing organizational outcomes in uncertain environmental contexts.

2.2 Employee Engagement

Hafeez et al. (2024) highlight that job variety influences employee happiness and stress, with engagement and burnout mediating this relationship. Yousf and Khurshid (2024) emphasize that employer branding enhances employee commitment through engagement, while Susanto and Syailendra (2023) review factors such as job satisfaction, leadership, and motivation that impact engagement and organizational performance. Pincus (2023) and Saks (2022) explore engagement as a form of motivation, linking supportive human resource practices and intrinsic motivation to organizational outcomes. Boccoli et al. (2023) and Byrne (2022) discuss the evolving social constructs of engagement and their implications for organizational goals, including sustainability. Chanana and Sangeet (2021) examine innovative engagement strategies during crises, providing insights for sustaining engagement in challenging contexts. Lee et al. (2020) proposes a taxonomy of engagement resources, while Kwon and Kim (2020) link engagement to innovation using the job demands-resources model. Sun and Bunchapattanasakda (2019) and Saks (2019) review engagement's antecedents and outcomes, emphasizing its emotional and cognitive dimensions. Motyka (2018) and Eldor and Vigoda-Gadot (2017) highlight engagement's role in enhancing performance and organizational initiatives. Chandani et al. (2016) and Anitha (2014) focus on the factors influencing engagement, such as communication, recognition, and work-life balance. Earlier studies by Saks and Gruman (2014), Kular et al. (2008), and Macey and Schneider (2008) emphasize conceptual clarity, while Wollard and Shuck (2011) and Woodruffe (2006) underscore the importance of leadership and organizational culture in fostering engagement for performance improvement, including sustainability efforts.

Table 2- Employee Engagement

Author	Year	Findings
Hafeez et al.	2024	Dual impact of job variety on employee happiness and stress, mediated by EE and burnout. The study explores the complex relationship between job characteristics, employee well-being, and engagement.
Yousf and Khurshid	2024	Impact of employer branding on employee commitment, mediated by EE. The study explores how employer branding initiatives influence EE, leading to organizational commitment.
Susanto and Syailendra	2023	Review of factors influencing employee motivation and performance, including job satisfaction, EE, and leadership. Synthesizes existing research to analyse the relationship between these factors and their impact on employee performance.
Pincus	2023	Exploration of EE as a form of human motivation and its implications for theory, methods, and practice. Discusses different conceptualizations of EE and its relationship to individual and organizational outcomes.
Boccoli, Gastaldi, and Corso	2023	Examination of the evolution of EE, focusing on its social and contextual constructs. Highlights the importance of considering the broader organizational and social context in understanding engagement dynamics.
Byrne	2022	Comprehensive understanding of EE by integrating research with real-world examples. Explores various facets of engagement and its implications for organizational effectiveness.
Saks	2022	Presents a model of engagement within the context of human resources management, emphasizing the importance of caring practices. Underscores the role of supportive HRM practices in fostering engagement among employees.
Chanana and Sangeeta	2021	Exploration of innovative EE practices during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting strategies to maintain engagement in remote work settings. Offers insights into adaptive approaches organizations employ to sustain EE during

		crises.
Lee, Rocco, and Shuck	2020	Proposal of a taxonomy of EE resources, delineating categories to better understand and classify the components contributing to engagement. Lays the groundwork for identifying factors that may mediate the relationship between OEP and community impact.
Kwon and Kim	2020	Examination of the relationship between EE and innovative behaviour through the lens of the job demands-resources model. Revisits theoretical underpinnings to elucidate how engagement influences innovative outcomes.
Sun and Bunchapattanasakda	2019	Review of previous research on EE, identifying two main definitions and exploring various antecedents and consequences. Provides a foundation for understanding the dynamics of engagement within organizations.
Saks	2019	Revisitation of the antecedents and consequences of EE, focusing on job and organizational engagement. Synthesizes existing research findings to provide insights into creating a supportive environment for engagement.
Motyka	2018	Examination of the relationship between EE and performance. Highlights the importance of engagement for organizations and its impact on employee performance. Offers insights into factors influencing engagement and its outcomes.
Eldor and Vigoda-Gadot	2017	Rethinking the employee-organization relationship and examining the nature of EE. Provides insights into the interconnectedness of EE and organizational initiatives.
Chandani et al.	2016	Examination of factors influencing EE, emphasizing the role of organizational policies and practices. Discusses approaches for enhancing engagement.
Saks and Gruman	2014	Critical evaluation of existing knowledge on EE, focusing on definitions, measurement, and outcomes. Highlights the need for clarity and consistency in conceptualizing and measuring engagement constructs.
Kwon et al.	2014	Development of an integrated model exploring the relationship between employee development and engagement. Highlights the importance of employee development in fostering engagement and its subsequent impact on organizational outcomes.
Anitha	2014	Identification of key determinants of EE and examination of their impact on employee performance. Underscores the significance of engagement as a predictor of organizational success and employee well-being.
Handa and Gulati	2014	Investigation of the relationship between personality traits and EE among frontline personnel. Explores how individual characteristics influence engagement levels and contribute to organizational performance.
Bridger	2014	Emphasis on achieving EE for organizational success. Provides practical strategies and techniques for fostering engagement in the workplace. Offers actionable advice for leaders and managers.
Wollard and Shuck	2011	Exploration of the antecedents of EE, identifying key drivers such as leadership support and organizational culture. Provides insights into fostering an environment conducive to sustainability efforts.
Markos and Sridevi	2010	Exploration of the concept of EE and its significance for organizational performance. Discusses the importance of fostering a culture of engagement within organizations.
Kular et al.	2008	Review of the concept of EE, its drivers, and consequences. Highlights the importance of understanding and fostering engagement for organizational success.
Macey and	2008	Delves into the intricacies of the EE concept, addressing definitional issues and theoretical perspectives. Provide insights into the multidimensional nature of

Schneider		engagement and its role in driving employee motivation and commitment.
Little and Little	2006	Critical analysis of conceptual issues surrounding EE, including definitional ambiguity and measurement challenges. Underscores the need for clarity and consistency in defining and assessing engagement constructs.
Saks	2006	Review of existing literature on EE, focusing on antecedents and consequences at both individual and organizational levels. Provides insights into factors influencing engagement and its implications for organizational performance.
Woodruffe	2006	Discussion of the concept of EE and its relevance at the organizational level. Emphasizes the importance of fully involved and committed employees in enhancing organizational performance.

METHODOLOGY

This review adopts a systematic approach to analyse peer-reviewed studies from leading management and environmental journals, focusing on the relationship between EE and OEP. The analysis emphasizes key themes, including the role of HRM practices, pro-environmental behaviours, and the influence of leadership and organizational culture on fostering engagement. Studies were selected based on their relevance to the topic, methodological rigor, and contribution to understanding the mechanisms linking EE to environmental outcomes. The review encompasses a diverse range of theoretical frameworks, such as social cognitive theory and the job demands-resources model, alongside practical applications from various industries, providing a comprehensive perspective on how organizations can enhance environmental performance through employee involvement. This integrative approach ensures a nuanced understanding of the topic, highlighting existing research gaps and opportunities for future investigation.

FINDINGS

The Role of HRM: HRM practices play a pivotal role in fostering EE and aligning it with organizational environmental performance. Aggarwal and Agarwala (2023) and Amjad et al. (2021) emphasize that HRM practices focused on sustainability, such as training programs, rewards for eco-friendly behaviours, and sustainability-oriented recruitment, create a green organizational culture. This culture acts as a mediator, encouraging employees to engage in practices that contribute to environmental performance. These HRM initiatives foster awareness, motivation, and a sense of responsibility among employees, empowering them to take ownership of environmental goals. The findings suggest that organizations integrating HRM with sustainability initiatives are more likely to achieve their environmental objectives effectively.

Leadership and Organizational Culture: Leadership and culture significantly influence EE in environmental sustainability. Al-Swidi et al. (2021) and Singh et al. (2020) underscore the role of transformational leadership in shaping a supportive environment that motivates employees to adopt pro-environmental behaviours. Transformational leaders inspire employees through clear communication of environmental goals, recognition of individual efforts, and fostering a sense of shared purpose. Moreover, a supportive organizational culture amplifies these effects by promoting collaboration, innovation, and a collective commitment to sustainability. This dynamic interplay between leadership and culture serves as a powerful catalyst for driving employee-led environmental initiatives.

Mechanisms of Engagement: The mechanisms through which EE translates into improved environmental performance are rooted in supportive human resource practices and intrinsic motivation. Saks (2022) and Byrne (2022) illustrate that employees who feel valued and supported by their organizations are more likely to engage in sustainability efforts. These mechanisms include providing feedback, recognizing contributions, and creating opportunities for employees to participate in environmental decision-making. Intrinsic motivation, fuelled by alignment between personal values and organizational goals, further enhances engagement, ensuring employees take proactive steps to achieve environmental objectives.

Pro-Environmental Behaviour's: Engaged employees are more likely to exhibit behaviours that align with organizational sustainability goals, as demonstrated by Naz et al. (2023) and Rawashdeh (2018). These behaviours include reducing waste, conserving energy, and innovating eco-friendly processes. Pro-environmental behaviours are often influenced by a combination of EE, perceived organizational support, and a strong alignment between individual and corporate values. The studies highlight that fostering such

behaviours requires organizations to actively involve employees in sustainability planning and recognize their contributions to achieving environmental goals.

Technological Integration: Digital tools have emerged as key enablers for engaging employees in sustainability efforts, as highlighted by Bendig et al. (2023). Technologies such as digital dashboards, sustainability tracking systems, and communication platforms allow employees to monitor and contribute to environmental performance in real time. These tools also foster transparency and accountability, enabling employees to see the tangible impact of their actions. Furthermore, digitalization creates opportunities for collaborative innovation, empowering employees to suggest and implement sustainable solutions. This integration of technology with EE strategies significantly enhances organizational environmental performance, particularly in industries undergoing rapid technological change.

DISCUSSION

The findings highlight the critical role of EE in enhancing OEP. By aligning engagement strategies with environmental objectives, organizations create a synergistic relationship where employees feel empowered to contribute to sustainability goals. A key insight is the importance of fostering a culture that not only values sustainability but also actively encourages employee participation through structured platforms and initiatives. Such a culture cultivates a sense of ownership and shared responsibility among employees, leading to greater commitment to environmental objectives. The role of HRM practices emerges as a cornerstone in driving this alignment. Training programs, sustainability-focused appraisals, and rewards systems provide employees with the skills, recognition, and motivation needed to actively participate in eco-friendly practices. These HRM strategies bridge the gap between organizational policies and individual actions, ensuring employees feel supported and valued in their efforts. Leadership and organizational culture further amplify the impact of engagement on environmental performance. Transformational leaders inspire employees by articulating a clear vision for sustainability, fostering a sense of purpose, and recognizing individual contributions. When coupled with a supportive culture, these leadership practices create an environment conducive to pro-environmental behaviours. Employees in such settings are more likely to innovate and collaborate on sustainability initiatives, driving continuous improvements in environmental performance. The integration of digital technologies adds another dimension to these dynamics. By providing real-time tracking, transparency, and collaboration tools, digital platforms empower employees to monitor their contributions and identify areas for improvement. These tools enhance accountability and foster innovation, making it easier for employees to engage with and contribute to organizational sustainability goals. Despite these advancements, the findings reveal several research gaps, including the need for longitudinal studies to understand the sustained impact of engagement strategies and the role of industry-specific factors. Addressing these gaps will provide deeper insights into optimizing engagement strategies for long-term environmental sustainability.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

EE plays a pivotal role in driving organizational environmental performance, acting as a bridge between corporate sustainability goals and actionable outcomes. The findings of this review emphasize that engaged employees are more likely to adopt pro-environmental behaviours, innovate sustainable practices, and contribute actively to environmental initiatives. By investing in HRM practices tailored toward sustainability, organizations can create a culture that aligns individual efforts with broader environmental objectives.

Leadership development emerges as another key factor, with transformational leaders inspiring and motivating employees to take ownership of sustainability goals. Additionally, supportive organizational cultures act as enablers, fostering collaboration, innovation, and commitment to environmental performance. The integration of digital tools further enhances these efforts, enabling real-time tracking, transparency, and collaborative problem-solving that empower employees to make meaningful contributions to sustainability initiatives.

Despite these advancements, challenges remain, including the need for longitudinal research to examine the sustained impact of engagement strategies and the influence of industry-specific factors. Future research should explore the evolving dynamics of EE, particularly in addressing emerging environmental challenges such as climate change, resource scarcity, and regulatory pressures.

By strategically aligning EE with sustainability objectives, organizations can achieve not only improved environmental performance but also enhanced organizational resilience and competitiveness. This

underscores the critical need for organizations to prioritize engagement strategies as a core component of their sustainability frameworks, ensuring long-term success in a rapidly changing environmental landscape.

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