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HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT: A SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL SCIENCE APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the way sustainable Human Resource Management (HRM) practices can help in the development of people and the sustainability of organisations. It looks at the level of improvement of the HR training, employee engagement, and CSR-intermingled HRM practices in terms of improving the outcomes of empowerment and how these processes of empowerment affect social, stakeholder-related, and economic aspects of sustainability. The research design was a mixed methods design where quantitative survey data (150 respondents) and qualitative data (12 key informant interviews) were used. The stratified random sampling was used to guarantee the participation of the HR managers, CSR officers, employees, and community coordinators. The quantitative analysis was based on descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression modelling, whereas qualitative data were analysed through thematic analysis to obtain more contextual approaches to the issue of HRM-driven empowerment. The findings show that sustainable HRM practices have a considerable predictive value of community empowerment, with HR training as the best predictor. There was also a high positive effect on employee engagement and HRM practices that were linked to CSR, and a weak influence of recruitment practices. The empowerment of the communities, on the other hand, led to good organisational sustainability, especially in social sustainability and stakeholder satisfaction. Highly HRM implementation and empowerment organisations performed best in sustainability, and this proved the synergistic relationship between HRM and empowerment and sustainability. The study is a continuation of sustainable HRM theory, as it places

community empowerment as a mediating force between HRM practices and organisational sustainability. It points out the strategic position of HRM outside the management of the workforce.

KEYWORDS: Sustainable HRM, Community Empowerment, CSR, Organisational Sustainability, Employee Engagement.

1. INTRODUCTION

Human Resource Management (HRM) has developed to be a strategic organisational operation that encompasses more than recruitment and training, and performance evaluation. Over the past years, sustainability principles have become an aspect of HRM, trying to tackle the social, economic, and environmental issues in a wider scope. Community empowerment as an additional aspect of sustainable HRM practices is another important change that has taken place. Empowered communities also increase organisational reputation and stakeholder trust, as well as ensuring the sustainability of the business in the long term. It has been determined that community participation is a crucial factor in the attainment of the goals of sustainable development, particularly where organisations participate in the development of the social capacity through the adoption of HRM-driven models in the enhancement of human capital [1]. Also, local wisdom-based community empowerment and participatory development improve the social resilience and build the societal base on which sustainable organisations thrive [2]. The developments highlight the need to research into the nexus between HRM, community empowerment, and organisational sustainability as a business and management matter.

The use of HRM in community-related programs is increasing in various sectors. HRM training programs have also been found to enhance the capacity of the social organisations, empowering them to maximise community empowerment programs and enhance the performance of the organisations [3]. On the same note, culture and social issues are important elements that influence the initiation and achievement of human resource development in the community context, demonstrating the possibility of introducing sociocultural empowerment strategies to the HRM models [4]. The empowerment strategies are also included in the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs to improve the welfare of the community and hence establish a mutual relationship between the businesses and the society [5]. In this connection, community service projects carried on by the entrepreneurship have proven to have a positive impact on sustainable development by building better social capacities as well as economic strengths [6]. The trends point to the fact that there is a shift to the wider concept of HRM that is no longer focused merely on the organisational boundary but involves the communities as important stakeholders in the sustainability agenda.

With these developments, there are still a number of research gaps that have not been addressed. To begin with, the current research on community empowerment is mostly placed in the realms of social

sciences, education, tourism or community development research, but is not presented in a business or HRM perspective. As an example, although the concept of community-based human capital management in accordance with sustainable development has been talked about, it is hardly ever contextualised in the framework of mainstream HRM research [7]. On the same note, sustainable HRM practices have been reviewed to apply to the coastal communities or micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), but broad incorporation of HRM strategies and community empowerment results in the overall organisational sustainability framework being scanty [8,9]. Second, despite the focus put on the role of sustainable HRM in implementing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) [10] by the scholars, empirical data provided concerning how HRM-based empowerment can directly influence organisational sustainability is yet to be developed. Third, although strategic HRM advocates the balanced perspective that combines organisational performance and stakeholder wellbeing [11], the precise ways in which HRM affects the empowerment of communities should be more clearly explained both theoretically and empirically. Also, empowerment systems that have been established in tourism villages or technology-based community development models [12,13] have not been adequately linked to the HRM practices in the corporate world. More so, although the literature on sustainable development gives solid background information on the principles and pillars of sustainability [14], the operational role that HRM plays in ensuring the implementation of these principles by the community is under-researched.

The research gaps provide evidence of a gap in the studies that would help place the concept of community empowerment in the Business, Management and Accounting field, by looking at how HRM can be used to bring about sustainable growth. The logic behind this research is the clarification of the implications of the amalgamation of HRM and community empowerment processes to managers. Knowledge about HRM in creating high-capacity, well-connected communities would be of great assistance to organisations that aim to attain the targets of sustainability performances, as well as to strengthen the corporate legitimacy and social relevance. The importance of community networks and social capital in effective empowerment programs has long been acknowledged [15]; so far, the potential of HRM strategy in strengthening such networks has not been studied much. Green HRM, sustainable employee behaviours are strongly connected with ethical

leadership and organisational development strategies [16], which provide a strategic basis to HRM expansion to community environments. The traditional HRM academic literature reinforces the perspective of people management as a key driver of organisational success [17], and methodologies of community development demonstrate the necessity of an approach that involves participation and inclusiveness of engagement [18]. It is through these views that the current study seeks to make its contribution towards a more complex perspective of HRM-led community empowerment as part of sustainable business practices.

1.1. Research Objectives

1. To evaluate how sustainable human resource management practices can help contribute to effective community empowerment initiatives in the organisational and CSR contexts.
2. To investigate the effect of community empowerment brought about by HRM on organisational sustainability and business and management stakeholder returns.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

The study design chosen in this study was a mixed-methods research study in order to gain the overall picture of how sustainable HRM practices aid community empowerment and organisational sustainability. The quantitative part asked for the measurement of the relationships between the variables using a structured survey, whereas the qualitative part sought to discover perspectives of managers using semi-structured interviews. This design could have triangulated the data that enhanced the validity of the results, and qualified the results of the analysis based on numbers and situation.

2.2 Population and Sampling

The groups that were used as the study population included the HR managers, CSR staff, the employees who participated in the community projects, and the community development officers working with organisational projects. A stratified random sampling was used to represent a sample of various ranks and departments. One hundred and fifty respondents were utilised in the quantitative survey, and this gave sufficient data to carry out correlation and regression analysis. Moreover, 12 key informants were purposely chosen to be interviewed in relation to their experience relating to HRM and community empowerment endeavours.

2.3 Research Instruments

The structured questionnaire and an interview guide were used to collect the data. The questionnaire reflected the measurements of sustainable HRM practices, indicators of community empowerment and organisational sustainability on a 5-point Likert scale. A pilot test was used to guarantee reliability by generating Cronbach's alpha values of more than 0.80. The interview guide included open-ended questions which prompted the participants to narrate their experiences with community programs that are HR driven, empowerment processes and sustainability outcomes, so that more insight could be gained as compared to what quantitative data would have provided.

2.4 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection was done in three phases. First, the questionnaire was emailed to the targeted respondents via official organisational contacts. Second, the purposely selected informants were interviewed through virtual interviews at mutually convenient times. Third, responses were validated in case of any clarification, which made responses complete and accurate. All the respondents were told that the study was voluntary and data was gathered in 6 weeks.

2.5 Data Analysis Techniques

The descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and multiple regression were used to analyse the quantitative data to establish the strength and direction of relationships between sustainable HRM practices, empowerment and sustainability. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data, and this included the coding of the transcripts of the interviews, the identification of common themes and the interpretation of how the common themes supported or elaborated on the quantitative results.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

The ethics were observed during the research. Respondents were informed about the aim of the study, and they gave informed consent before their participation. The participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, and all the information would not be used against them in any capacity. The participation was voluntary, and one had an obligation to mull out whenever he/she wanted, with no repercussions. All the data collected was safely stored to ensure privacy and integrity.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Descriptive Statistics of Respondents

The descriptive results contain a picture of the characteristics of the participants, such as gender, job position, and work experience. As indicated in Table

1, the sample is well balanced in terms of HR, CSR, and employee positions, which means that the viewpoints on the nature of sustainable HRM and community empowerment can be obtained at the various organisational levels.

Table 1: Profile of Respondents.

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	78	52.0
	Female	72	48.0
Position	HR Manager	45	30.0
	CSR Officer	38	25.3
	Employee	49	32.7
	Community Coordinator	18	12.0
Experience	1-5 Years	57	38.0
	6-10 Years	54	36.0
	11+ Years	39	26.0

3.2 Correlation Between Sustainable HRM Practices and Community Empowerment

The outcomes of the correlation reveal that there are positive relationships between the sustainable HRM practices and the community empowerment indicators. HR training and employee engagement

indicated a strong positive relationship with empowerment, as indicated in Table 2, whereas the relationship between CSR-related HRM was moderate. Recruitment practices were less closely associated and therefore indicated a less direct influence on empowerment outcomes.

Table 2: Correlation Between Sustainable HRM Practices and Community Empowerment.

HRM Variable	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Strength
HR Training	0.721	Strong Positive
Employee Engagement	0.654	Strong Positive
CSR-Integrated HRM	0.612	Moderate Positive
Recruitment Practices	0.284	Weak Positive

3.3 Regression Analysis of HRM Practices on Community Empowerment

The regression analysis was entered to establish the predictive influence of HRM practices on community empowerment. As presented in Table 3,

the strongest predictor was Hr training, then employee engagement and HRM practices that are CSR oriented. Recruitment practices were not found to have high predictive power, so they did not have a very high impact as compared to development-oriented HR functions.

Table 3: Regression Results: HRM Practices → Community Empowerment.

Predictor Variable	Beta Coefficient	p-Value	Significance
HR Training	0.452	0.000	Significant
Employee Engagement	0.317	0.003	Significant
CSR-Integrated HRM	0.289	0.008	Significant
Recruitment Practices	0.121	0.075	Not Significant

3.4 Influence of Community Empowerment on Organisational Sustainability

The effect of community empowerment reflected an evident positive influence on the organisational sustainability in all the dimensions considered. The biggest impact was observed on the social sustainability, which scored the highest, meaning that empowerment efforts have a significant effect on strengthening social cohesion and community-

related outcomes, as shown in Figure 2. This was then followed by stakeholder satisfaction, which means the empowered communities increase the confidence of the stakeholders and the credibility of the organisation. Economic stability had the least but significant effect, and indicates that even though empowerment has economic effects, they are the least practical, and the greatest effects are social and relational in nature.

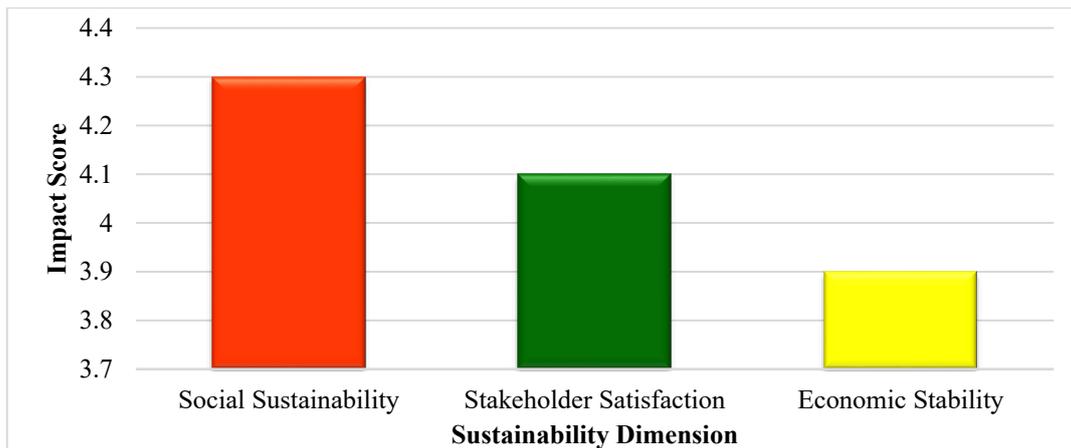


Figure 2: Impact of Community Empowerment on Sustainability Dimensions

3.5 Descriptive Analysis of Core Constructs

The analysis of descriptive means was done in order to comprehend the general attitude of the respondents towards sustainable HRM,

empowerment and sustainability outcomes. Table 4 indicates that all constructs have a score of above 4.0, which implies positive perceptions and good practice of sustainable HRM and empowerment across organisations.

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of Main Constructs

Construct	Mean	Standard Deviation
Sustainable HRM Practices	4.21	0.51
Community Empowerment	4.08	0.57
Organizational Sustainability	4.16	0.49

3.6 Combined Effect of HRM and Empowerment on Sustainability

The overall analysis revealed that the combination of sustainable HRM practices and empowerment enhances organisational sustainability. Figure 3 shows that organisations that have high levels of

HRM and empowerment scored the highest (4.5) and medium (4.0) in terms of sustainability. The individuals with low scores attested the lowest score (3.2), which verifies that the much stronger HRM-empowerment integration results in the high sustainability outcomes.

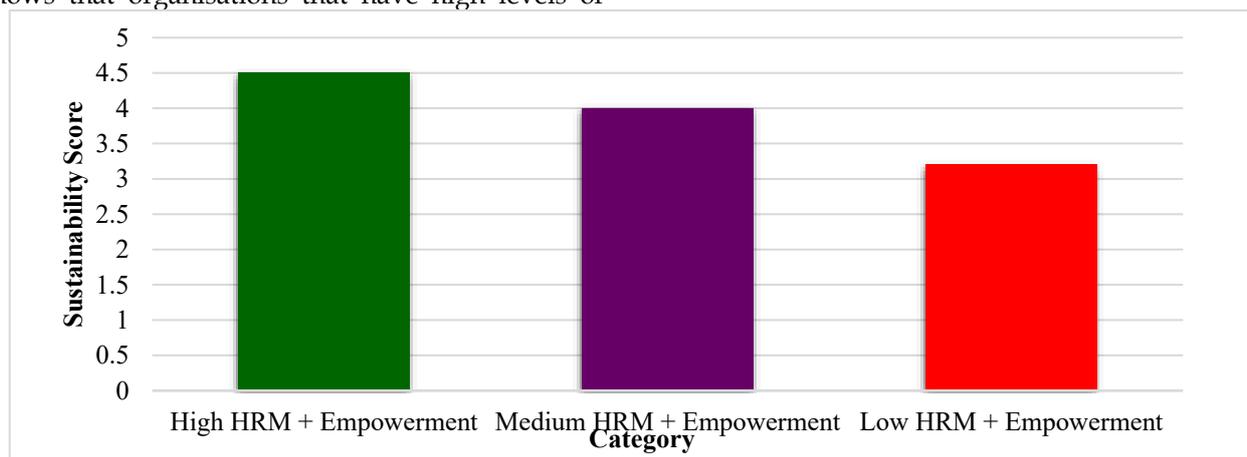


Figure 3: Combined Effect of HRM and Empowerment on Sustainability.

4. DISCUSSION

These research results have indicated that sustainable Human Resource Management (HRM) practices have a tremendous impact on community

empowerment and the sustainability of the entire organisation. The results of the correlation and regression analysis proved that the HR training and employee engagement, as well as HRM practices that are integrated with the CSR, are among the strong

predictors of community empowerment. These findings imply that organisations that invest in formal training programs, participatory engagement systems and socially responsible HRM practices enable the development of more confidence, involvement and capacity building in the communities. Moreover, the impact of empowerment on sustainability was analysed, and it was found that empowered communities enhance organisational social performance, enhance credibility among stakeholders and also add to the economic resilience. This implies that community empowerment acts as a strategic tool by which HRM practices are able to exert their impact not only on the boundaries of internal organisations, but also on the broader societal impacts. The integrated analysis also established that organisations with high scores of both sustainable HRM implementation and empowerment recorded the best sustainability scores. This is an indication that HRM and empowerment are synergistic, and when used together, they increase the long-term sustainability outcomes better than when used in isolation.

The results of this research are in line with other literature on sustainable and green HRM. This finding on the positive impact of sustainable HRM on sustainable empowerment is consistent with those of Lu et al. [19], who discovered that sustainable HRM positively impacts the resilience of employees and helps in shared organisational values that are oriented towards the common good. The attention to training and employee development of the given study resonates with the findings of Yong et al. [20], who emphasised the fundamental importance of green HRM practices in contributing to the sustainability in manufacturing organisations. Equally, the overall predictive ability of HR practices on the empowerment of communities is similar to the study conducted by Amjad et al. [21], who stated that green HRM has a positive influence on the environmental and employee performance, hence enhancing the sustainability of an organisation. Close connections established among training, involvement, and empowerment are also consistent with Shah's [22] validation of dimensions of green HRM in which training and employee involvement were fundamental aspects. Additionally, the creative and participatory outcomes of the HRM-supported empowerment are also reminiscent of the conclusions of Farooq et al. [23], who have revealed that HRM and the self-efficacy mutually amplify the aspects of green creativity in the hospitality organisations. Significance of HRM practices in service-based industries as diagnostic in this study is

also in line with Tanova and Bayighomog [24], who reported that HRM constructs are important determinants of sustainability behaviours within service industries. Lastly, the beneficial sustainability results related to high levels of HRM-empowerment integration correspond to those of Roscoe et al. [25], who highlighted that HRM may contribute to the establishment of green organisational culture and enhance sustainability performance. All of these comparisons confirm the current findings and place sustainable HRM as a decisive factor in the development of the community-based and sustainability-oriented organisational strategies.

The findings have significant implications for the organisational leaders and HR practitioners. The close interaction between the HR training, engagement and empowerment implies that the managers are supposed to focus on continuous learning activities and participatory HRM processes. Community involvement, social capital, and enhanced stakeholder trust can be attained at greater levels in organisations that incorporate empowerment strategies in HRM policies. The HRM practices that are incorporated with CSR can also provide significant means to make sure that the business objectives are aligned with the needs of the community and, as a result, the organisational legitimacy is reinforced. The results of empowerment can be used by managers as a measure of the success of their HR sustainability strategies and allow managers to focus their HR interventions on the creation of relevant impacts on communities and organisations. This research adds value to the theoretical sphere of sustainable HRM by showing that its effect is not limited to the level of outcomes on the individual employee but reaches the community and society in general. The study contributes to a broader HRM platform by developing a mediating role of community empowerment between HRM and sustainability, which incorporates strategic HRM, CSR, and sustainability theories. The results confirm the opinion that HRM is not a simple functional role but a process strategy that can influence internal and external sustainable development results. This has strengthened the applicability of sustainability-based HRM models and has offered foundations to the future development of theoretical understanding of the same field.

The value provided by the findings, the study is limited in a number of ways. To begin with, the sample is confined to a set of organisational settings, which can limit the interpretation of the findings to other industries or nations. Second, the self-reported

data creates the risk of social desirability or bias in responses since the participants might have answered the questions favourably. Third, the study is cross-sectional, thus making it impossible to establish a causal relationship, as the relationships that are observed are associations and not temporal effects. Moreover, the qualitative data were collected through a few informants and this even although adequate in exploring themes are not likely to give a clear picture of the complexity of HRM community dynamics.

The limitations can be overcome by future research through increasing the sample to cover various sectors, regions, and cultural settings, so that comparative analysis can be done across various organisational settings. Longitudinal research designs would prove to be useful in establishing the long-term effects of HRM and empowerment on sustainability. Structural equation modelling (SEM) is an advanced statistical method that may be applied to provide increased understanding of mediating and moderating processes. The role of digital HRM tools, artificial intelligence, and technology-based empowerment platforms can also be investigated by researchers to know how technological progress affects HRM-based community development. Lastly, policy frameworks, leadership styles, and organisational culture can be explored in the future to support the HRM-empowerment-sustainability nexus.

5. CONCLUSION

This study has examined the way sustainable Human Resource Management (HRM) practices can encourage the empowerment of communities and add

to organisational sustainability. The results show clearly that sustainable HRM practices, in particular, HR training, employee engagement, and CSR-integrated have a strong impact on empowering communities. Out of them, HR training was the most effective predictor, as it showed to be significant in terms of confidence building, skill enhancement, and participation growth of the community members. The significance of employee engagement also demonstrated a significant impact, which proves that inclusive and participatory HR strategies empower community involvement and enhance better organisational-community relations. HRM practices that were integrated with CSR also favoured the elements of empowerment through aligning the organisational priorities with the wider societal and developmental objectives. The other significant conclusion is the direct and positive role played by community empowerment in organisational sustainability. The effect was best noticed in social sustainability than the stakeholder satisfaction and economic stability. This highlights the fact that empowered communities contribute to enhancing the social image of the organisations, their stakeholders trust them, and the organisations are stable in the long term. The merged analysis also indicated that organisations that possessed both high sustainable HRM and community empowerment scored the highest on the sustainability, therefore indicating the complementary and mutually solidifying nature of these factors. On the whole, the paper comes to the conclusion that sustainable HRM is not merely a vital internal management approach but an effective external impetus of community development and organisational success over the long term.

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