



## Enhancing Sustainable Human Resource Management in Universities

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### Abstract

An organization requires sustainable and effective human resource management (HRM) to reach growth and long-term achievement. This research focuses on understanding the methods for sustainable HRM practices within universities which experience constant changes (Ahmed Zahrani, 2023; Mariappanadar, 2019). The study performs a complete evaluation of HRM sustainability challenges within academic institutions through quantitative research methods while using 32 detailed statements in their questionnaire which was sent out during summer 2024. The study used PLS software to perform refined statistical analysis and evaluate participants' answers by means of the 5-point Likert scale. The research results deliver several important discoveries. The research illustrates the significant advantages which emerge from correctly implemented educational-specific HR procedures. The methods bring dual benefits by advancing organizational effectiveness while maintaining institution competitiveness in the higher education market sector. The research illustrates social along with psychological elements as essential factors in the sustainability of HRM. Long-term HRM performance finds support within an environment which includes organizational culture together with employee morale and psychological well-being. The study investigates economic aspects together with corporate branding as factors that influence human resource management sustainability. Strong employer branding attracts excellent teachers and staff members who need financial stability that comes from making wise economic policy decisions.

**Keywords:** Competitive Advantage, University, Sustainability Management, Human Resource Management

### Introduction:

The human resources (HR) department holds the primary position as a competitive differentiator for companies. Companies identify human resources as their essential asset because HR enables cost reduction and productivity enhancement and quality improvement (Monash University, 2025). The development of new ideas benefits greatly from sustainability through its three-tiered analysis of environmental, financial and societal matters (Mariappanadar, 2019). Organizations must not dismiss HRM since it represents the critical social aspect of sustainability. They felt that due of the aging population, lack of human resources, and rise in occupational health problems, HRM sustainability is essential for businesses. Furthermore, sustainable methods can reduce unanticipated repercussions and negative feedback while aiming for results that satisfy stakeholders. The strategy views sustainability as a win-win situation for all parties involved, and it also views sustainable human resource management as a cross-functional undertaking. This

idea relates to the shift in emphasis from human control to resource management, since employee motivation should be considered the foundation of the workplace in firms. The majority of businesses today struggle with a shortage of motivated and skilled workers. Examining the idea of HRM sustainability using the "triple-bottom-line" approach is therefore crucial. Because of sustainable HRM, workers might be more involved at work and have a bigger influence on the community overall.

### **Problem Statement**

Organizational sustainability is the ability to satisfy present and future stakeholders' needs without giving in to their direct or indirect demands. Although the idea of sustainability has evolved, its potential in HRM has not been fully realized (Yadav, 2024). Sustainable development in HEIs must take a holistic approach by integrating social, environmental, and economic challenges (UCLouvain, 2023). Strong corporate culture, job security, health promotion, flexibility, participative leadership, sustainable competitive advantage, value-added economy, self-responsibility, and work-life balance are all facilitated by sustainable human resource management. Due to a lack of skills or employees' perceptions that HRM negatively affected them, experts have traditionally believed that sustainability and HRM in crises are related. According to, HEIs can use the idea of sustainability in a variety of ways, ranging from the state level to the institution level. Because it will be able to implement change and evolution, the current study can also help to emphasize the significance of sustainable development for HEIs.

### **Gap Analysis**

Some contend that the idea of sustainability has been simplified to just its environmental aspect as a result of a careful analysis of the phrases SD and becoming green. Consequently, there is a chance that sustainability research will become irrelevant and powerless. Examining the factors that influence sustainable HRM for university staff is seen to be the biggest difficulty. Sustainable HRM is pertinent in the context of globally competitive universities. It has also been maintained that it is essential for colleges to address the requirements of the current generation without sacrificing the potential and opportunities of future generations.

### **Research Objectives**

1. Investigate HRM Sustainability in Universities: The study aims to explore and understand the concept of Human Resource Management (HRM) sustainability specifically within higher education institutions (HEIs), recognizing HR as a critical component for organizational longevity and success.
2. A quantitative approach to study HRM sustainability factors in universities will be employed through summer 2024 via structured questionnaire data collection.
3. The research needs to identify multiple important factors which impact HRM sustainability in universities through examining human resource practices and social and psychological elements and employer branding efforts and economic aspects.
4. New findings about HRM sustainability in HEIs will be added to current literature while highlighting the necessity of sustainable practice implementation to boost organizational success and stability.
5. Organizational and environmental aspects should receive prominence in analyses as sustainable development of HRM practices in universities depends on such factors.

6. 6. Universities serve two primary purposes in sustainability promotion: they impart sustainable education and conduct research exchanges with communities for developing sustainable values and knowledge.
7. Fill Theoretical Gap: Address the gap in existing research on HRM sustainability within universities, aiming to provide comprehensive insights and understanding into this relatively underexplored area.
8. Recommendations for HEIs: Provide recommendations for higher education institutions (HEIs) based on research findings, advocating for the adoption of sustainable HRM practices to meet current and future challenges effectively.

These objectives collectively aim to advance understanding and practice of HRM sustainability in higher education, advocating for its integration into organizational strategies to foster long-term viability and contribute to broader societal well-being.

### **Research Question**

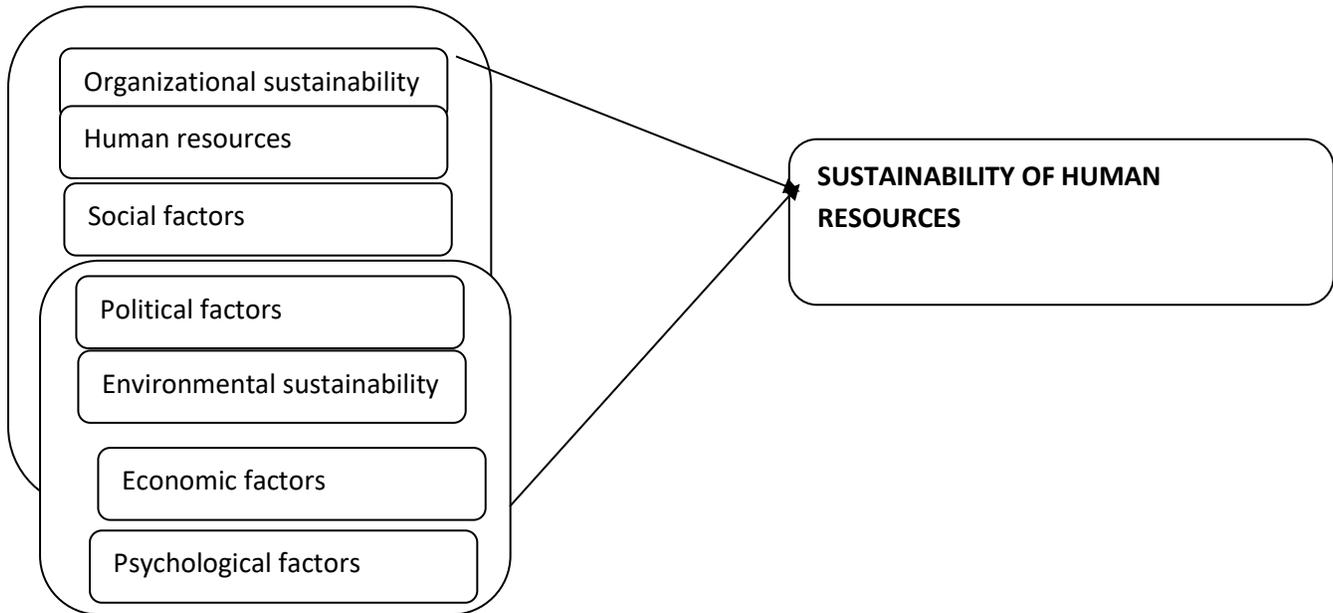
- What are the fundamental factors influencing HRM sustainability in universities?
- How do human resource practices in universities contribute to organizational sustainability?
- What is the role of social and psychological factors in enhancing HRM sustainability at universities?
- How can employer branding and economic factors support sustainable HRM in universities?
- What are the implications of sustainable HRM practices for organizational culture and employee well-being in universities?
- How can universities effectively integrate the principles of sustainable development into their HRM strategies?
- What are the challenges and opportunities associated with implementing sustainable HRM in universities?
- What are the comparative advantages of sustainable HRM practices across different types of universities?

### **Research Significance**

This paper addresses the insufficient research about HRM sustainability in higher education settings. The paper aims to contribute new perspectives about this under researched field to existing knowledge. The research examines the necessity of sustainable HRM practices for HEIs and the role they perform in implementing social and environmental and economic concerns throughout daily operations. HEIs which aim to reach sustainable development goals need to implement this holistic strategy. This research seeks to enhance university organizational sustainability through sustainable HRM. The research explores how human resource procedures should link with extended social and economic and environmental targets to improve the organization's operational efficiency and business resilience. This study stresses the critical role of sustainable human resource management because university competitors worldwide face increasing intensity in the marketplace. It seeks to investigate elements that impact sustainable HRM that are essential for colleges to compete globally. It highlights how important colleges are for societal transformation as well as for teaching and research.

## Conceptual Model

The research's conceptual framework is presented as follows



The most complex problem in the HR field is HRM sustainability. The triple bottom line (TBL) is a dual-way, three-way goal that includes improving social, environmental, and economic outcomes as well as solving social, environmental, and economic issues. HRM models, theories, systems, and processes have shifted away from a profit-centric motivation. According to a theoretical approach, the HRM sustainability process is achieved by improving employee skills and maintaining a vibrant and healthy workforce. In addition, Dubey developed a model that outlines how soft (human resources) and hard (technology, strategy) aspects of green supply chain management are used. HRM sustainability helps businesses achieve sustainability and studied important elements for successfully adopting HRM sustainability. The causes of HRM sustainability at HEIs, however, have not received enough attention, according to the many studies conducted in this field. Four organizational sustainability variables have been identified by the authors of previous studies: employer brand, social factors, psychological factors, and human resources. Along with environmental sustainability, they also take political and economic factors into account.

## Hypotheses of the Study

Hypothesis 0 (H0). Various Factors Have Different Impacts on HRM Sustainability at Universities.

Hypothesis 1 (H1). HR practices have a significant effect on HRM sustainability.

Hypothesis 2 (H2). Social factors have a significant effect on HRM sustainability.

Hypothesis 3 (H3). Psychological factors have a significant effect on HRM sustainability.

Hypothesis 4 (H4). Employer branding has a significant effect on HRM sustainability.

Hypothesis 5 (H5). Economic factors have a significant effect on HRM sustainability.

Hypothesis 6 (H6). Workplace politics have a significant effect on HRM sustainability.

## Relationship between Direct and Indirect Variables

### Relationship between Direct and Indirect Variables:

- The direct variables identified (human resource practices, social factors, psychological factors, employer branding, economic factors) are likely influenced by the broader organizational and environmental context captured by the indirect variables.
- For instance, effective HR practices (a direct variable) may depend on supportive organizational culture (an indirect variable). Similarly, economic factors (direct) may be constrained or enabled by the financial resources available (indirect).
- The findings of the study suggest that to achieve HRM sustainability in universities, it is crucial to consider both the direct variables (which were explicitly measured and found significant) and the broader contextual factors (indirect variables) that shape and support these HRM practices.

Overall, the relationship between direct and indirect variables underscores the complex interplay between specific operational practices and the broader organizational environment in fostering HRM sustainability within universities. Addressing both sets of variables effectively is essential for enhancing competitiveness and long-term success in higher education institutions.

### Research Paradigm

The Conceptual Framework Was Developed Based On The Theoretical Discussion. Independent Variable And Dependent Variables Are Used In Order To Develop Conceptual Framework. This Conceptual Framework Is Logically Developed, Designed And Elaborated.

### Research Design

Based On The Literature, The Study Will Test Some Assumptions Empirically In This Analysis. This Study Found That There Could Be Influential Relationships Among Variables.

### Causal and Quantitative

The Sampling Technique That Has Been Used During This Research Is Convenience Sampling For Lesser Cost And To Easily Collect Data Through The Most Approachable Participants. It Is A Non Probability Sampling Technique That Does Not Gives An Equal Chance To Every Member Of The Population To Get Selected.

### Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Items	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
EB	0.459	0.471	0.785	0.647
ESEF	0.512	0.516	0.803	0.671
OSHR	0.577	0.578	0.825	0.702
PF	0.427	0.430	0.777	0.635
POF	0.603	0.621	0.833	0.714
SF	0.513	0.612	0.793	0.661
SHRM	0.579	0.588	0.825	0.703

### Pilot Testing

To test the study hypothesis we have used the structural equation model (SEM) whereas the testing has been gone through Smart PLS software. Moreover, to evaluate the indirect and direct effects of all the constructs the testing was done.

### Normality Test

	Mean	Median	Observed min	Observed max	Standard deviation	Excess kurtosis	Skewness	Number of observations used	Cramér-von Mises test statistic	Cramér-von Mises p value
EB	0.000	0.116	-2.500	1.791	1.000	-0.427	-0.513	73.000	0.284	0.000
ESEF	0.000	0.478	-2.463	1.648	1.000	0.410	-0.780	73.000	0.472	0.000
OSHR	0.000	0.459	-2.338	1.575	1.000	-0.391	-0.639	73.000	0.475	0.000
PF	0.000	-0.187	-2.587	1.751	1.000	-0.357	-0.356	73.000	0.188	0.007
POF	0.000	0.426	-2.576	1.626	1.000	-0.529	-0.617	73.000	0.458	0.000
SF	0.000	0.269	-2.638	1.641	1.000	0.185	-0.722	73.000	0.299	0.000
SHRM	0.000	0.485	-2.735	1.558	1.000	-0.158	-0.679	73.000	0.411	0.000

### Questionnaire / Instrument

In this study we have used the instruments that were already developed and validated by researchers and supported by many studies mentioned in literature review. The questionnaire was made in English language as it is being spoken and understands by majority of employees of different sectors.

### Likert Scale

This study employs the likert scale a widely used measure developed by social scientist Rensis Likert in 1932 the scale presents participants with statements related to the target construct. Respondents indicate their level of agreement or disagreement on a pre determined scale that is 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree.

### Measure Utilize

S.No	Construct	Code	No of items	Scholar Citation
1	Organizational stability and human resources	OS HR	Four	Mohiuddin et.al.,2022
2	Social factors	(SF)	Six	
3	Psychological factors	(PF)	Four	
4	Employer branding	(EB)	Five	
5	Environmental stability economic factors	(ESEF)	Four	
6	Political factors	(POF)	Four	
7	Stability of HRM	(SHRM)	Five	

### Sample Frame

Public universities, Private Universities, HEC educational institutes, etc.

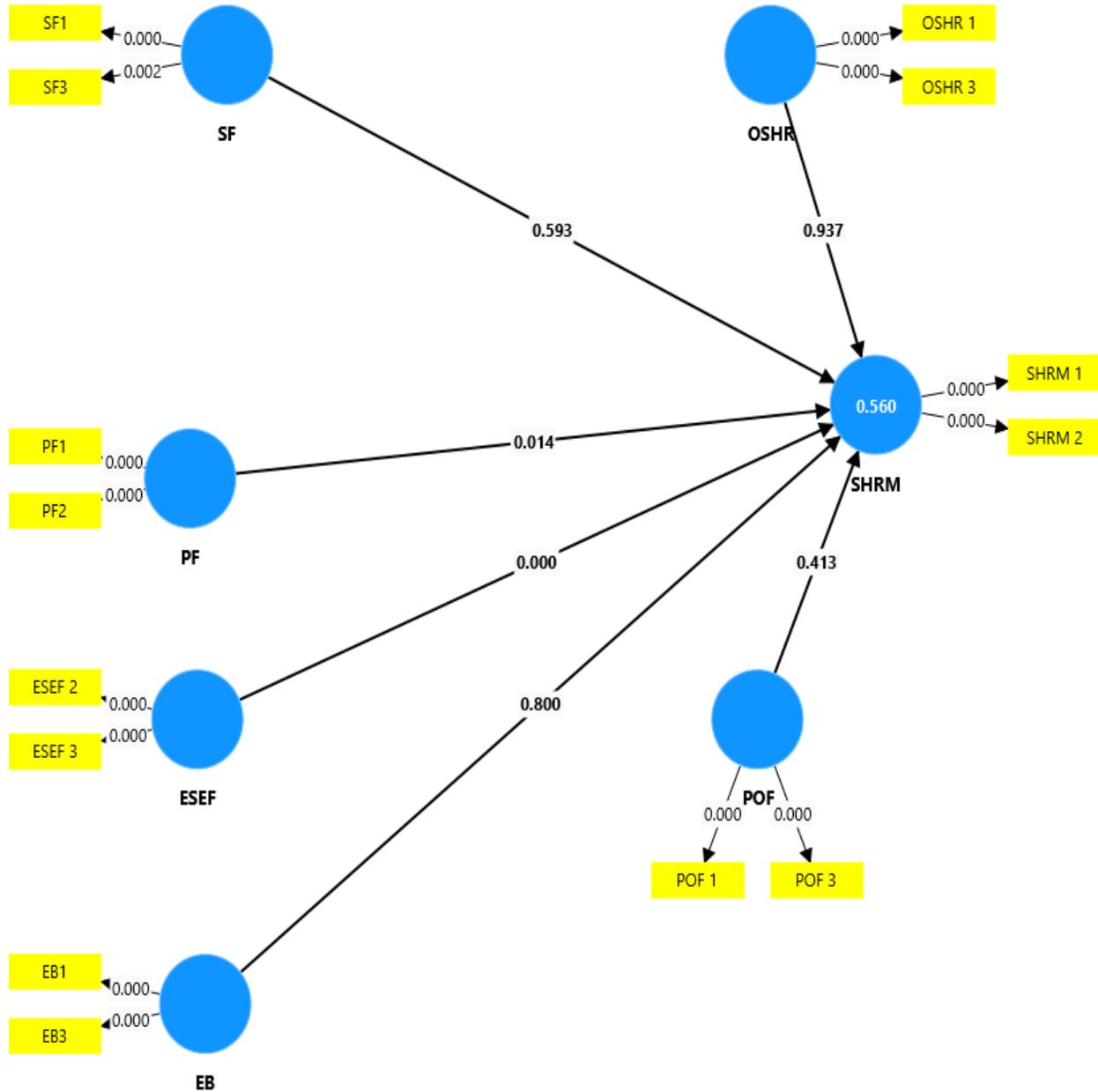
### Sample Size

I have collected almost 76 responses from the sample frame.

### Data Collection

Data was collected using online questionnaire.

### Structural Model Assessment



## DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULT:

### MEASUREMENT MODEL ANALYSIS (LOADING RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY ETC)

Items	EB	ESEF	OSHR	PF	POF	SF	SHRM
EB1	0.848						
EB3	0.759						
ESEF 2		0.842					
ESEF 3		0.796					
OSHR 1			0.826				
OSHR 3			0.850				
PF1				0.772			
PF2				0.821			
POF 1					0.879		
POF 3					0.809		
SF1						0.911	
SF3						0.701	
SHRM 1							0.864
SHRM 2							0.811

Items	Mean	Median	Observed min	Observed max	Standard deviation	Excess kurtosis	Skewness	Number of observations used	Cramér-von Mises test statistic	Cramér-von Mises p value
EB	0.000	0.116	-2.500	1.791	1.000	-0.427	-0.513	73.000	0.284	0.000
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SHRM	0.000	0.485	-2.735	1.558	1.000	-0.158	-0.679	73.000	0.411	0.000

### STRUCTURAL MODEL ANALYSIS (PATH COEFFICIENTS)

Items	Path coefficients
EB -> SHRM	0.040
ESEF -> SHRM	0.432
OSHR -> SHRM	0.010
PF -> SHRM	0.289
POF -> SHRM	0.131
SF -> SHRM	0.053

## **Discussion:**

The purpose of this study was to look at the variables that affect HRM sustainability in higher education. According to the literature now in publication, sustainability has received a lot of attention during the past 20 years, which has led to an increase in actions pertaining to sustainability. It highlights the growing importance of sustainability over the past two decades and how universities play a critical role in promoting science, innovation, justice, and socio-economic development (Bennett, 2020). Institutional frameworks ought to foster teamwork together with responsibility and analytical abilities to ensure the sustainability of human resources management for educational and societal objectives (Kemp, 2019). The role of universities extends to leadership in science development alongside technology innovation which combines justice concepts with talent assessments and empowerment processes and wealth production. The institutions create a collaborative environment and ensure accountability as they establish a platform that serves professionals and researchers and thinkers. They improve societal well-being through free scientific critique in environments where new ideas are developed and distributed for improving individual and community lives. University HRM sustainability functions as a crucial element for attaining these extensive targets. The investigation for According to the first hypothesis, certain facets of HR procedures have a major impact on HRM sustainability. Research suggests that skill development, health initiatives, and motivation enhance employee performance and commitment (Smith & Brown, 2021). The findings of the related studies are consistent with those of other studies conducted by, which showed that employee skills and adequate health and activities lead to HRM sustainability. Addressing the intricate process of the shift to sustainability in any society, particularly HEIs, can be greatly aided by human factors and the activities of transition agents. It is also predicated on a theoretical framework that stresses knowledge acquisition as a means of achieving sustainability objectives. Another essential component of sustainable development is the training of an organization's human capital. Employees have the power to impact university employment in a number of ways, such as the caliber of research, academic reputation, and academic plans. Thus, HRM strategies can boost employees' performance, which will boost university success. University empowerment is achieved by strategic planning for development, support for research and innovation, future activities, research, and professional skill development, provided that the workforce is satisfied and committed to building the organization. Opportunities for learning and creativity at work are enhanced by employees' motivation and autonomy. Furthermore, the university staff's obligations and moral obligations have led to adherence to rules and guidelines. Through hands-on learning and skill development, sustainable talent development is achieved. Such initiatives contribute to a more capable and dedicated workforce, which, in turn, boosts the academic reputation and institutional success of universities (Nguyen et al., 2022). Talent may be developed and eventually HRM sustainability at the university level can be achieved through unique mechanisms such as succession planning, motivation tactics, teamwork, training, coaching, specialized seminars, self-development, information sharing, hands-on learning, and networking.

The second hypothesis focuses on how social factors have a positive and noteworthy impact on HRM sustainability. This result is consistent with research that argued that in order to fully comprehend the demands and objectives of stakeholders, HEIs should take into account their knowledge and activities. As a result, they will be able to create objectives and plans, keep an eye on these plans to ensure accountability, and create community-university involvement. This procedure will result in a university that is highly sustainable. Similarly, in order to improve the

perspective of the future generation, employees need to be provided with comprehensive sustainability training. Social factors positively influence HRM sustainability. Universities should consider stakeholder needs, promote social justice, and reduce disparities to enhance organizational commitment (Harris, 2020). Social sustainability fosters a sense of accountability and encourages staff to uphold institutional goals. Engaging with diverse cultural groups and establishing international academic networks further strengthens HRM sustainability (Garcia & Lee, 2021).

Education, public facilities, green spaces, recreation, livable housing, environmental quality, and urban sustainable design are all components of social sustainability design, which in turn has an impact on the social environment either directly or indirectly. Additionally, social sustainability eliminates social injustices and disparities, improves and contributes to the quality of life, and, by ensuring continuity, connects the cultural values of the past, present, and future. Maintaining social justice in higher education is necessary because it encourages staff members to comply with organizational policies, accept organizational structures, and make sacrifices for the organization's goals and resource security. This component motivates staff members to take the initiative in running the company's operations and fulfilling their social obligations within the university. In order to foster intercultural variety in the development of HRM sustainability, universities should also strengthen their practical cooperation with instructors and students from various cultures and establish connections with universities worldwide.

The third hypothesis focuses on how psychological elements have a notably favorable impact on HRM sustainability. This result is consistent with previous studies that highlighted the importance of psychological stability in addition to the organization's positive conduct as a factor in improving people's quality of life. Similarly, disengagement is the conceptual opposite of engagement, which is an unconscious manifestation, according to engagement theorists of psychological processes. Therefore, the indicators of disengagement are dissatisfied emotions including worry, melancholy, and boredom; lack of effort or persistence in activities; and upset thinking (mental retreat and inattention). They consider relief from work-related stress to be a key component of sustainability and want to extend the environmental perspective of sustainability into the social and psychological spheres. Employee well-being, job satisfaction, and emotional stability significantly affect performance and sustainability (Meyer & Davis, 2018). Engagement theories suggest that psychological needs must be met to support career growth and reduce stress. Workshops, in-service training, and creative spaces within the institution can improve morale, increase productivity, and enhance HRM sustainability (Vargas & Liu, 2020).

Job stress must be addressed, managed, and significantly reduced by identifying resources and increasing productivity as this component increases and impacts communication and teamwork. University employees' psychological requirements, including human traits, organizational values, self-reconstruction and self-esteem, self-awareness, and a sense of belonging, must also be met. Meeting the psychological needs of workers is the foundation for career advancement, well-being, and survival in the workplace, where people's strengths and capacities are supported by their working environment. This can be accomplished by holding workshops, sessions, and other in-service training activities that foster creativity within the company, which promotes professional development and advancement and shapes and reinforces employment growth prospects.

Furthermore, these elements influence the sustainability of HRM and support academic performance growth and development.

The fourth hypothesis focuses on how employer brand has a significant positive impact on HRM sustainability. As a result, the information gathered supports this theory. These findings are in line with those who claim that brand stability successfully alters power dynamics in the global community and higher firms. Prestigious universities with a clear, attractive brand image can influence internal motivation and external perceptions (Jackson & Sweeney, 2019). Stability is seen as a source of competitive advantage that promotes company growth and higher sales. New skills are needed as a result of expanding university programs, raising community awareness of environmental issues, and developing new information technologies. Competition and flexibility amongst institutions are therefore necessary. The study's conclusions show that prestigious universities can help build an academic reputation, which helps the university accomplish all of its long-term objectives both inside and outside of it. Furthermore, excelling in a university setting requires research and student output, high-quality instruction and professors, and university performance. A better university helps meet both the university's and society's current needs while also meeting future demands. Employee adherence to brand objectives and the creation of a competitive brand might result from managers' dedication to implementing sustainability in HEIs. As a result, the brand significantly improves HRM sustainability.

The influence of economic factors on HRM sustainability is the subject of the fifth hypothesis. This result runs counter to that of. The authors argued that improved resource management, process optimization, cost control, and economic management are the keys to economic stability. Sustainability highlights how important it is to preserve the environment and provide the standard for implementing sustainable practices in both public and commercial organizations. Macroeconomic conditions, inflation, and external sanctions (as in the case of Iran) can pose challenges, making internal economic strategies vital for HRM effectiveness (Liu & Chen, 2020). Despite Iran's declining economic numbers and shifting economic circumstances, there has been a rise in smart city projects to achieve sustainability objectives. However, the sustainability of human resources has suffered as a result of the severe sanctions placed on the Iranian government. Additionally, because of the devaluation of the national currency and high rates of inflation, colleges and other institutions have been forced to work longer hours, which has decreased their efficiency and production.

The direct influence of political factors on HRM sustainability is the subject of the sixth hypothesis. This result confirms the conclusions of the person who said that one of the research's intractable components is the need for political stability and the elucidation of normative characteristics. Providing necessary tools and fostering performance standards are critical to navigating political uncertainties (Tran & Patel, 2021). Sustainable development necessitates both researcher commitment and institutional involvement, science faces high expectations. Universities must therefore treat the staff members of their educational departments as essential members of the university and implement rules and performance requirements that align with contemporary scientific norms. Universities need to provide the providing academics and staff with the necessary resources and programs and putting them into practice appropriately to achieve scientific advancement. Institutional practices that can lead to the attainment of legitimacy among other universities must be adopted by universities. Additionally, long-term goals both inside and

outside the institution can be accomplished while meeting the present requirements of the university and society by putting a variety of policies and procedures into place. This helps the university to preserve HRM by managing unfavorable outcomes, addressing future needs, and avoiding unfavorable comments.

Since sustainable development requires both institutional support and researcher commitment, there are high expectations for science in this area. Therefore, through policies and performance criteria and by seeing the staff of educational departments as essential members of the university, universities should function in compliance with the most recent scientific standards. To achieve scientific breakthroughs, universities should provide the staff and professors with the right tools and programs and execute them well. Institutional strategies that could help other universities achieve legitimacy should be adopted by universities. Additionally, long-term goals both inside and outside the institution can be accomplished while meeting the demands of both society and academia today by utilizing a range of policies and processes. This enables the university to fulfill upcoming obligations, control undesirable outcomes, and stop negative remarks to guarantee ongoing HRM.

### **Conclusion:**

This study clarified the notion of sustainability and its relationship to HRM, despite the paucity of research and lack of evidence supporting a clear definition of HRM sustainability. Employees can experience long-lasting well-being when sustainability principles are incorporated into HRM procedures (ResearchGate, 2024). Additionally, since there must be links and interactions between different levels in order to achieve the goals, temporal dynamics in both short-term and long-term dimensions must be highlighted. In order to avoid endangering the demands of society and dominating negative feedback, goals must be achieved using a variety of organizational tools.

The current study cannot be without limits, despite all of its contributions. The generalizability of the current study's findings is criticized since, for instance, some university staff members were unable to collaborate due to their conservative personalities or prejudiced responses. Furthermore, there are a number of culturally specific aspects and characteristics of sustainable HRM that make it challenging to extrapolate the findings to all societies. As a result, it is recommended that other researchers use the same methodology to repeat the same investigations in different universities or cultures. In addition, it is advisable to find and study other intra- and inter-organizational results in sustainable HRM in other universities. Since sustainability is a dynamic process, sustainability does not mean rigidity. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out more studies to study sustainability in HRM.

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