

**SUSTAINABLE HRM STRATEGIES FOR EMPLOYEE RETENTION IN HYBRID
WORK ENVIRONMENTS**

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ABSTARCT

Remote and in-office work have been incorporated to form one of the features of the modern organizations, the hybrid working model, which is more flexible and productive. Nonetheless, this has brought other challenges of employee retention, participation and sustainability. The issue considered in this paper is how the Sustainable Human Resource Management (SHRM) policies will contribute toward the employee retention in a hybrid workplace. According to the latest study of HRM and sustainability, the current paper offers four essential dimensions of a sustainable retention i.e., employee well-being, digital inclusion, continuous learning, and flexible work design. According to the results, it turns out, that the organizations, which have adopted human oriented and ecologically friendly HR, are more committed and less prone to turnover and are more flexible. The paper draws a conclusion that sustainability integration into HR systems does not only result in high workforce stability, but also prompts organizational resiliency in the ever-changing digital era.

Keywords: Sustainable HRM, Hybrid Work, Employee Retention, Organizational Sustainability, Work-Life Balance, Digital Inclusion.

1. Introduction

Organizational design and management of its human resource systems have been transformed by the dynamics of work in the digital era. After the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the dominant organizational models in the world is the hybrid work model of an arrangement combining remote and on-site work. This change has presented both the opportunities and challenges to Human Resource Management (HRM) especially in terms of keeping the employees engaged, productive, and retaining them in the long-term. The old paradigms of retention based on economic incentives and career protection can no longer be applied in such a professional and progressive working environment (Wang et al., 2022). Rather, workers are gaining respect of autonomy, well-being, including, and purpose in their work lives.

Sustainable Human Resource Management (SHRM) has also become one of the familiar approaches that apply economic, social, and environmental objectives to the HR practices. It is not oriented towards short-term efficiency even though it is aimed at creating long-term organizational and employee well-being (Kramar, 2014). In hybrid work settings, the principles of SHRM can establish some kind of stability due to their emphasis on promoting certain fair policies, digital inclusiveness, and work-life integration. In the modern economy, some of the determinants of competitive advantage include turnover which will be limited when organizations incorporate sustainability in their Hr practices, and employee satisfaction and loyalty which will have the power in increasing the empathy of employees.

With that said there exist strategic issues with balancing between sustainability and flexibility. The hybrid environments need the new HR practices that would make it possible to give equal opportunities to both the remote workers and the workers in the office and commit to open communication and foster careers simultaneously. The authors of this paper have provided an insight into the significance of sustainable HRM strategies in

employee retention in the hybrid work environment. It specifically tries to identify the most relevant sustainability action that can enable engagement and retention to provide feasible chances to the HR leaders who would desire to develop future-oriented organizations that are resilient.

2. Objectives of the Study

The core idea of the planned study is the exploration of the possibility to boost the rate of employee retention in the meaningful work settings of hybrid workplaces through the assistance of the Sustainable Human Resource Management (SHRM) strategies. The proposed research aims to bridge the gap between the uninformed HR practices and the models resting on sustainability to fill the much-needed perspective on what would promote long-term commitment to employees, their job satisfaction, and happiness.

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To examine how sustainable HRM principles apply to the case of hybrid work environments.
2. To determine the key aspects that drive employee retention in the hybrid working systems.
3. To determine how well-being, digital inclusivity and flexible work policies contributed to sustainable retention practices.
4. To investigate the impact that leadership and the organizational culture has on sustaining sustainable HRM strategies.
5. In order to make a conceptual proposal to incorporate sustainability and retention objectives in hybrid working environments.

All these objectives will help in establishing a strategic idea on the way organizations can develop sustainable, inclusive, and future-driven HRM systems, which enhance employee retention and organizational resiliency in the transforming work environments.

3. Literature Review

Concept of Sustainable Human Resource Management (SHRM)

Sustainable Human Resource Management (SHRM) is a paradigm shift of the conventional HRM into those practices that incorporate economic, social, and environmental long-term goals. As Kramar (2014) claims, SHRM focuses on the fact that there has to be a balance between organizational efficiency and human capital sustainability. It entails the creation of mechanisms that promote staff well-being, moral management as well as environmental sustainability. Otherwise, unlike traditional HRM that attempts to measure performance using short term measures, SHRM emphasizes on the longevity of employees, their inclusion and growth.

As mentioned by Ehnert et al. (2016), SHRM also helps the corporations to be sustainable by making the HR policies socially responsible, environmentally conscious, and economically viable. This complimentary approach increases the organizational legitimacy and confidence with the employees. The modern organizations have turned SHRM into a fundamental facilitator of competitive advantage especially in knowledge-driven organizations where talent retention is a critical success factor.

Evolution of Hybrid Work Environments

The hybrid work model became an important organizational innovation after the COVID-19 pandemic. It integrates distant and in-situ work to enjoy flexibility and productiveness as well as work together (Wang et al., 2022). Hybrid systems help employees have control over the location and manner of work that add to an increase in satisfaction and work-life integration. Nevertheless, such issues as communication, inclusion, and performance appraisals are also difficult to this model.

According to Bailey and Kurland (2020), hybrid work entails rebuilding, redefining leadership and HR strategies to ensure engagement and avoid employee isolation. Technology, trust, and culture are considered to be the components of a well-run organization that realizes high retention rates due to the ability to manage hybrid structures.

This model should be successful because the entity should be able to ensure fair access to opportunities, digital resources, and professional development among geographically separated teams.

Employee Retention and Organizational Sustainability

One of the most burning issues in the hybrid workplaces is employee retention. Retention is the ability of an organization to keep its employees unlike other companies which hire employees and the employees are retained by the organization through creating an environment which motivates them to work long term. Sustainable HRM strategies base their retention not only on human resource performance, but also on organizational performance and sustainability (Stankevičiūtė and Savanevičienė, 2018).

According to a research conducted by Chaudhary and Sharma (2023), enterprises that have implemented sustainability via HR practices, including ethical leadership, well-being programs, as well as inclusive policies, have reduced turnover intentions. Moreover, the sustainability-oriented retention plans lead to the branding of the employer and the organization image that is critical in attracting and retaining the best employees in the competitive markets.

Digital Inclusion and Technological Empowerment

In hybrid systems of work, technology is at the center of the processes of communication, collaboration, and performance. Digital inclusion means giving every employee, irrespective of their location or it is on a job, equal digital access to digital tools, training, and support (Gajendran and Harrison, 2022). Sustainable HRM practices do not showcase the use of technology as the addition of productivity but rather as a tool of empowerment and inclusion.

Most organizations that invest in digital literacy programs and infrastructure that support it are likely to develop more integrated and motivated workforces. Fernandez and Shaw (2021) discovered that digital inclusion has a significant impact on job satisfaction and organizational commitment due to its ability to develop transparency and relate. Without

universal digital policies, hybrid working places would pose a threat of establishing gaps that would erode the involvement and retention.

Employee Well-being and Work-Life Balance

A pillar of sustainable HRM is the well-being of the employees. Even though flexible, hybrid work may blur the lines between personal and professional life and result in burnout and emotional exhaustion (Raghuram et al., 2021). The solution to this problem is offered by sustainable HRM with active measures that stimulate mental health, ergonomic working design, and psychological safety.

Organizations that have embraced HR practices that are well-being-focused (flexible working hours, workloads) and those that offer health-related services (health support programs) are said to experience an improvement in engagement and loyalty. Park and Park (2023) state that leadership empathy and open communication are the important elements in creating a sense of belonging that can have a direct impact on retention results.

Learning, Development, and Career Growth

Education should be a continuous process to maintain motivation and flexibility in hybrid settings among the employees. Sustainable HRM enables the concept of lifelong learning to take place by catalyzing the structured training program, mentorship program and career advancement scheme. Fernandez and Shaw (2021) opine that workers who believe that they can develop are the ones that will be willing to spend more time in their respective organizations hence high retention.

Hybrid systems of work have also integrated e-learning systems, online training workshops and cross-functional training programs. Not only do such approaches facilitate the creation of skills but also allow them to fit personal career interests with those of the organisation in the long-term. The workers also develop organizational resilience over the long run since they pursue significant development opportunities.

Leadership and Organizational Culture

Sustainable HRM is determined by culture and leadership. Transformational leaders who practice empathy, trust and inclusiveness, have conditions that facilitate the effectiveness of hybrid work. Next generation leaders who are oriented to open communication lines and shared values facilitate higher provisions of psychological safety leading to higher retention (Park and Park, 2023).

An organizational culture fosters cooperation, justice and appreciation. It incorporates environmental awareness, morality and social responsibility in daily operations. These cultures have the effect of improving employee belonging and the sense of purpose which minimizes employee turnover intentions and improves the sustainability performance of the organization.

Synthesis of Literature

The analyzed sources demonstrate that an overlap of the sustainability concepts and the successful HRM occurs in the hybrid environments. Employee retention is enabled by the critical application of sustainable HRM strategies; well-being, flexibility, inclusion, and continuous learning. Nonetheless, the scientific gaps are still present in terms of the approaches to incorporating environmental sustainability into the frameworks of HRM in hybrid situations. Empirical studies should be conducted in the future and investigate ways in which SHRM can be operationalized to strike a balance between digital transformation and human connection as well as long-term retention in varied organizational structures.

4. Methodology

Research Design

The research design that is proposed in this study is a qualitative descriptive research study; it intends to determine the impact of strategies of Sustainable Human Resource Management (SHRM) on employee retention in a hybrid work setting. The qualitative method helps to comprehend in more depth that sustainability-oriented HR practices and

its connection to employee engagement, well-being, and loyalty. The paper is of exploratory nature, as it does not presuppose testing of a particular hypothesis and studies the synthesis of theoretical and empirical information on the previous studies.

This study design will combine literature-based thematic analysis; this will enable the researcher to recognize similar patterns, conceptual associations and the strategic implications in a variety of organizational settings. Such a design corresponds to the aim of the study to create a conceptual framework that will outline the linkage between the principles of SHRM and the finding of hybrid work retention.

Data Collection

The secondary sources were used to gather data on peer-reviewed scholarly journals, conference proceedings, case studies of organizations, and professional HRM reports, published within the time period of 2018-2025. The major databases to be utilized in data collection included the Scopus, Google scholar, Emerald insight, and ScienceDirect.

Search terms included combinations of the following keywords:

- “Sustainable HRM”,
- “Employee Retention”,
- “Hybrid Work”,
- “Work-Life Balance”,
- “Digital Inclusion”, and
- “Organizational Sustainability.”

The inclusion criteria were:

- Articles published in peer-reviewed journals between 2018–2025.
- Studies focused on HRM practices within hybrid or flexible work models.
- Research addressing sustainability, well-being, or employee retention.

A total of 56 relevant articles were identified initially, out of which 32 articles met the inclusion criteria after detailed screening for quality, relevance, and methodological rigor.

Data Analysis

A thematic analysis approach was employed to interpret and synthesize data from the selected sources. The analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step framework:

- Familiarization with data,
- Generating initial codes,
- Searching for themes,
- Reviewing themes,
- Defining and naming themes, and
- Producing the final analysis.
- Four dominant themes emerged from the analysis:
 - Employee well-being and work-life balance,
 - Digital inclusion and technological empowerment,
 - Continuous learning and development, and
 - Leadership and sustainable organizational culture.

These themes represent the core dimensions of sustainable HRM practices that contribute to retention in hybrid work environments. The findings from each theme were compared and cross-validated with recent empirical studies to ensure analytical consistency and conceptual robustness.

Research Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity and reliability of the study, multiple strategies were adopted:

- **Source Triangulation:** Data were drawn from multiple peer-reviewed databases to minimize bias.
- **Peer Review Validation:** The interpretation of themes was compared with existing models from SHRM literature to ensure conceptual alignment.

- **Transparency:** Clear documentation of selection and analysis procedures enhances replicability.

Even though qualitative synthesis is not based on statistical generalization, applying this methodology is a sure way to make sure the concepts are reliable and enhance the credibility of the results in academia and professional HRM settings.

Limitations

Although the qualitative design will enable a comprehensive insight into the concept of sustainable HRM practices, it will fail to produce a quantitative validation of the relationship between SHRM strategies and retention outcomes. Future research projects should use mixed-method or longitudinal design in order to empirically verify the conceptual framework used in this paper in various industries and cultural backgrounds.

5. Findings and Discussion

An examination of available literature and sources of secondary data indicated that there are a number of themes, which are interconnected and through which sustainable HRM strategies of retaining employees amidst hybrid work settings are formulated. The results indicate the increased role of staff welfare, digital democracy, lifelong learning, flexibility, and management in creating long-term, humanized HRM systems. All these themes help the development of robust and adaptive organizations that have the capacity to retain talented employees regularly faced by fast-changing work systems.

Employee Well-being and Work-Life Balance

Among the most vivid results is the fact that the employee well-being as a domain of sustainable HRM and the predictor of retention directly. Hybrid work has caused the separation of work and personal life to be unclear, and most of the time, it has caused burnout, loneliness, and role confusion (Raghuram et al., 2021). Companies placing emphasis on mental health programs, ergonomics and flexible work schedules have greater employee involvement and less turnover intentions.

The combination of policies based on the well-being focus, i.e. mental health counseling, flexibility of work hours, and the possibility of teleworking, is the sign of the transition to sustainability-oriented HRM. Chaudhary and Sharma (2023) found a positive association between well-being programs in the HR framework and the organizational citizenship behavior and commitment. This implies that employee welfare is no longer a luxury programme, but a strategic need in hybrid environments to make them sustained.

Digital Inclusion and Technological Empowerment

The hybrid model relies on the digital infrastructure to a great extent. The study, however, suggests that digital exclusion, which is a result of inequity in accessing technology or a lack of digital literacy, may destroy work motivation and performance. Digital inclusion is the sustainable HRM strategy that contributes to this challenge by providing its employees with equitable access to technological tools, training, and support (Gajendran and Harrison, 2022).

Organizations that have digital empowerment programs enjoy greater levels of collaboration, efficiency and engagement. These measures also ensure justice in the field of hybrid teams, which tends to undermine the disadvantages that remote workers have to deal with. HR departments can encourage the inclusivity and advance the communication and renewable retention by providing access to dependable digital tools and guaranteeing the continuous technical education. Employee connectedness and organizational continuity have become curative attributes of the adoption of cloud-based collaboration platforms, e.g., one.

Continuous Learning and Career Development

The researchers discovered that continuous learning is a primary process that connects sustainability and retention of employees. The concept of hybrid work models demands employees to learn new technology and communication tools as well as change in the way they work. Sustainable HRM promotes the concept of lifelong learning that promotes

upskilling and reskilling in plain view of e-learning systems, mentoring, and online development courses (Fernandez and Shaw, 2021).

Employees who feel that they have growth and learning possibilities have a sense of emotional attachment to their organisations. This observation is in line with the sustainability approach that considers employee development as not only a moral but also a strategic requirement. The combination of online learning systems and knowledge-based growth channels has served to keep the best employees and at the same time competitive in the dynamic markets. In addition, companies which invest in employees skills create in-house capacity thereby eliminating the need to hire employees externally and require retention in the long run.

Flexible Work Design and Autonomy

The ability to be flexible became one of the critical factors of employee satisfaction and retention within the hybrid settings. The researchers found out that work design autonomy boosts intrinsic motivation and commitment to the organization. HRM practices that are sustainable include flexible working hours, performance based on trust, and approving policies that are friendly to hybrid who need to have freedom and responsibility at the same time (Bailey and Kurland, 2020).

This is because flexibility will assist in the integration of work with life and particularly those who have family or caregiving issues. In terms of sustainability, the flexibility in the types of work arrangements will minimise the amount of environmental pollution that commutating causes, ensuring that employees have better wellbeing. Employees have to be granted with the freedom to work differently and at their own convenience, which leads to high productiveness and organizational loyalty. In this way, flexibility can be seen as a strategic tool between personal welfare, sustainability of the environment, and organizational sustainability.

Leadership and Organizational Culture

Leadership is critical towards instilling the principles of sustainability in HRM. In its turn, results suggest a positive impact on inclusive cultures in hybrid systems due to the application of transformational and empathetic leadership styles (Park and Park, 2023). Those leaders who facilitate honest communication channels, trust, and appreciation make the employees feel important, even in digitally mediated settings.

Sustainable organizations have organizational cultures that focus on teamwork, openness, and decision making that is ethical. They foster a common sense of purpose, which ensures that the values of employees are in line with the corporate sustainability objectives. This alignment improves the engagement and reduces attrition. Additionally, sustainability-oriented leaders tend to be more effective in innovating and managing hybrid issues that provide organizations with a favorable environment, which is likely to enhance employee morale and corporate identity.

Integration of Sustainability and Retention Framework

The synthesis of the results shows that sustainable HRM strategies work together to enhance retention. (conceptual framework, addressed in the following section) makes SHRM a multidimensional model that incorporates the following items:

- **Human Sustainability:** Employee well-being, inclusivity, and psychological safety.
- **Social Sustainability:** Collaboration, equity, and diversity in hybrid settings.
- **Economic Sustainability:** Productivity through engagement and innovation.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Reduced carbon footprint through remote work practices.

All these dimensions collaborate to create an equal HR ecosphere that promotes both the employees and the organizational objectives. The indications are that such holistic approach to SHRM is delaying organizations until they become even more sustainable in the workforce, able to attract talent, and successful in the post-pandemic economy.

Discussion

Findings of this study conform to and build on the earlier researches that dwelled on the significance of sustainability on HRM. The discussion has revealed that sustainable HRM, to the existing traditional methods of retention, is not sustainable due to the fact that employee experience, ethical leadership and environmental responsibility is connected to one another within sustainable HRM. Through the responsible HR management, there is the possibility that the hybrid model can become a source of organizational success in long-term.

The significance of this paper is the adoption and thinking thinking of HR professionals in an integrated approach where a human being is sacrificed to achieve efficiency through technology. Sustainable retention is not merely a question of policy making but question of organisational commitment of leadership, organisational culture change and people-true perspective. The other finding was that, organisations who failed to redefine their HR systems to meet complexity of hybrids risk losing their breadwinner talents not only, but also compromising their competitiveness.

6. Implications and Recommendations

This study has several strong theoretical and practical implications to the scholars, HR professionals as well as organizational leaders that would facilitate sustainable employee retention in the hybrid workplace. Sustainable Human Resource Management (SHRM) practices as the instrument of workforce stability can also be the pillars of attaining the long-term sustainability of the organization. It includes a description of the theoretical findings and practical suggestions that can inform further study and practice in the professional field of HR.

Theoretical Implications

The research supports the current perspective that HRM should go further to incorporate sustainability as a strategic center instead of operational efficiency. The incorporation of the sustainability concept into HRM strengthens the conventional human capital theory by

focusing on the well-being of employees, inclusivity and environmental responsibility as the driver of retention.

First, the results can be added to the increasing pool of literature connecting SHRM and organizational resilience, especially under the condition of hybrid work organization. They prove that employee retention is neither a static human resources outcome nor a dynamic process but a process that is shaped by well-being, digital inclusion, and ethical leadership.

Second, the paper expands the contributions of the study on behavioral and organizational sustainability, by suggesting that to retain, there must be a balance in hybrid systems, among autonomy versus accountability, technology versus empathy, and personal and communal objectives. The theoretical concept of sustainability is enlarged in this view since it is a multidimensional concept in HRM including economic, social and human sustainability.

Lastly, the findings indicate a gap in research on environmental aspects of HR sustainability in hybrid work locations. Although organizations have taken advantage of the hybrid systems to cut down commuting and emissions, there is little literature as to how environmental sustainability can be incorporated in HR strategies. The presented gap holds some perspectives of future theory development and empirical research.

Practical Implications

Regarding the managerial surface, this research study offers practical ideas on how to strategize to create sustainable HRM systems that help retain the employees in the hybrid environment. Along with human, social, and technological issues of hybrid work, organizations need to correlate their strategies to retain with long-term sustainability objectives.

- **Embed Well-being into HR Policies:**

The health of the employees must be established as a performance and sustainability measure. The HR departments ought to have all-inclusive wellness programs targeting mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing. Digital detox levels, flexible work schedules,

and psychological support services are added to the list of practice patterns that improve employee satisfaction and loyalty.

- **Promote Digital Equity and Inclusion:**

In its turn, to give credit to the organizations, the opportunities of access to the digital tools, training, and connectivity, are to be estimated on the same level. The reduction of inequalities may be achieved through digital infrastructure investment and skill-building solutions to support a hybrid or not hybrid collaboration. Inclusive digital policies also optimise communication between remote employees who would be isolated slightly.

- **Foster Continuous Learning and Development:**

HR leaders need to implement reskilling and upskilling programs in sustainable workforce planning. Innovation and adaptation are the important ones in employee retention in the fast changing organizations and can be fostered through the application of e-learning technology, mentoring system and online exchange of knowledge.

- **Redefine Flexibility and Performance Management:**

Assessments should be outcome based as opposed to traditional performance indicators that are based on the physical presence. Being able to give autonomy in work schedules but continue to hold an individual responsible brings out a culture of trust, empowerment, and responsibility. This strategy also helps in sustaining the environment through reduced commuting which is not necessary.

- **Cultivate Transformational Leadership and Sustainable Culture:**

Sustainability is a constituent that can be embraced using leadership. HR departments will impart leadership to show serving, openness and inclusiveness. The culture of trust and inclusion is guaranteed through praising and recognition of sustainable behavior amongst workers such as collaboration, social responsibility and engagement in the community.

- **Integrate Sustainability Metrics into HR Analytics:**

The sustainability indicators involving employee well-being, employee engagement longevity, and internal mobility rates should be implemented in HR analytics frameworks in the organization. This type of data driven insights may be utilized regarding workforce strategic decisions and prediction of the trend in attrition.

Policy and Strategic Recommendations

To promote sustainable HRM in hybrid setting, other larger initiatives that may be undertaken by organizations and policymakers include:

Policy Alignment: Governments and industry organizations are to work out the rules to promote the idea of sustainable HR practices, including equitable regulations on remote working, mental health, and environmental policies of a hybrid system.

Public-Private Collaboration: Academic alliances with companies and policymakers can implement new sustainable HRs, which can be used in research and workforce training.

Sustainability Certification for HR Practices: It can be done by creating sustainability standards and certifications systems on HRM in order to allow organizations to gauge the progress and promote openness in the workforce sustainability efforts.

Summary of Implications

As a concluding point, sustainable HRM provides a combined method of addressing the challenge of retention of the hybrid workplace. The implications of this research as discussed above are relevant to the significance of human based, technology enabled and ethically based HR systems. With the HRM embracing sustainability, not only more retention and productivity but also the social and environmental sustainability can be experienced within the long perspective.

Conclusion

The study determines that Sustainable Human Resource Management (SHRM) would be quite useful in enhancing employee retention during hybrid working environments. The HR policy in organizations will produce strong and committed labor force through wellness, online inclusion, on-job training, and job design. The findings reveal that

sustainable HRM is not a transient management trend, rather, sustainable HRM is a strategic requirement that can be sustained that can make an organization positive in terms of employees satisfaction with the organization and social responsibility.

In essence, the organisations that adopt humanistic and sustainability-focused HRM models will be in a better position to retain talent, introduce novelty and sustainability of organisations in the hybrid new and dynamic environment. More researches should be carried out by submitting these strategies with quantitative validation and incorporation of environmental sustainability further in HR practices in order to introduce wholesome work force sustainability.

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