



Integrating Triple Bottom Line in HR Practices: Enhancing Organizational Performance in Pakistan's Confectionary Industry

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Abstract

This study explores the impact of Triple Bottom Line (TBL) aligned Human Resources (HR) practices on employee engagement and organizational performance within Pakistan's confectionary industry. Utilizing a quantitative research design, the study employs a structured questionnaire to collect data from 350 employees across various confectionary companies. The research framework includes employee well-being programs, sustainable HR practices, and diversity and inclusion initiatives as independent variables, with employee engagement as a mediator and organizational performance as a dependent variable. The study also examines the moderating role of organizational culture in these relationships. Data analysis is performed using Smart PLS 4.0, and results indicate significant positive relationships between each TBL HR practice and employee engagement. Employee engagement, in turn, has a strong positive effect on organizational performance. Mediation analysis confirms that engagement mediates the relationship between TBL HR practices and organizational performance, while moderation analysis reveals that a positive organizational culture enhances the impact of engagement on performance. The findings suggest that integrating TBL principles into HR strategies is crucial for fostering a motivated and committed workforce, which leads to improved organizational outcomes. Despite its contributions, the study is limited by its use of convenience sampling and a cross-sectional design, which may affect generalizability and the ability to observe changes over time. Future research could address these limitations by employing longitudinal studies and diverse sampling methods. The study offers practical implications for HR professionals, emphasizing the need for well-being programs, sustainability, diversity, and a supportive culture to drive organizational success.

Keywords: Triple Bottom Line, Employee Engagement, Sustainable Human Resources Practices, Organizational Performance, Diversity and Inclusion, Confectionary Industry, Organizational Culture

1. Introduction

The global confectionary industry has experienced significant growth, driven by rising consumer demand, innovative product development, and expanding markets (Akanmu, Hassan, Mohamad, & Nordin, 2023). As sustainability becomes a critical concern worldwide, companies are increasingly integrating the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) approach—focusing on People, Planet, and Profit—into their business strategies (Kuwornu, Khaipetch, Gunawan, Bannor, & Ho, 2023). In this context, Human Resources (HR) plays a vital role in aligning workforce practices with these sustainability goals (Alsawafi, Lemke, & Yang, 2021). Within the confectionary industry, this approach has shown potential in enhancing employee engagement, fostering diversity, and promoting environmentally responsible practices (de Avelar, de Castilho Queiroz, & Efraim, 2020). In Pakistan, the confectionary market is burgeoning, with local and international brands competing for market share (Javed, Fazal Firdousi, Murad, Jiatong, & Abrar, 2021). However, the integration of TBL principles in HR practices remains limited. By adopting TBL-oriented HR strategies, Pakistan's confectionary companies can not only boost organizational performance but also contribute to broader societal and environmental objectives, positioning themselves as leaders in sustainable business practices (Nasr et al., 2022; Sivakumar & Kumar, 2019; Ullah & Sohail, 2020).

In Pakistan's confectionary industry, several research problems emerge when considering the integration of the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) into HR practices. Firstly, there is a lack of comprehensive understanding among companies about how TBL principles can be effectively integrated into HR strategies, particularly in enhancing employee well-being and engagement (Lopez-Cabrales & Valle-Cabrera, 2020). Secondly, many firms in the confectionary sector are struggling with the implementation of sustainable practices within their operations, largely due to limited resources and awareness (Hartmann, 2020). Thirdly, the challenge of fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace remains prevalent, as traditional practices often overlook the benefits of diversity in driving innovation and performance. Additionally, there is a gap in understanding the role of organizational culture in moderating the impact of TBL-oriented HR practices on overall performance (Misevic et al., 2020; Khan & Wali, 2020; Das, 2024). Lastly, the connection between employee engagement and organizational success in the context of TBL remains underexplored, leading to missed opportunities for improving productivity and sustainability in Pakistan's confectionary industry (Westerman, Rao, Vanka, & Gupta, 2020).

Based on the identified research problems, the research objectives for this study in Pakistan's confectionary industry can be outlined as follows:

- To explore how the integration of Triple Bottom Line (TBL) principles into HR practices can enhance employee well-being and engagement in Pakistan's confectionary industry.
- To examine the challenges and opportunities for implementing sustainable HR practices within the confectionary sector in Pakistan.

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- To assess the impact of diversity and inclusion initiatives on organizational performance in the context of the confectionary industry in Pakistan.
- To investigate the moderating role of organizational culture in the relationship between TBL-oriented HR practices and organizational performance.
- To analyze the relationship between employee engagement and organizational success within the framework of TBL in Pakistan's confectionary industry.

2. Literature Review

The Triple Bottom Line (TBL) framework, introduced by John Elkington in the 1990s, extends the traditional financial bottom line by incorporating social and environmental dimensions, often summarized as "People, Planet, and Profit" (Adams, Frost, & Webber, 2013). This approach emphasizes that businesses should not only focus on generating profits but also consider their impact on society and the environment. In the context of Human Resources (HR), the TBL framework is highly relevant as it guides HR practices towards fostering employee well-being, promoting diversity and inclusivity, and implementing sustainable workplace practices (Adams et al., 2013). HR functions aligned with TBL principles contribute to creating a motivated, engaged, and socially responsible workforce, which in turn drives long-term organizational success. As businesses increasingly adopt TBL, HR departments play a crucial role in embedding these values into organizational culture, ensuring that the workforce is aligned with broader sustainability and social responsibility goals (Adams et al., 2013).

H1: Employee Well-being Programs are Positively Related to Employee Engagement.

Employee well-being programs have increasingly become a focal point in HR practices, as research shows their significant impact on employee engagement. Well-being programs, which include physical health initiatives, mental health support, work-life balance measures, and financial wellness plans, contribute to a positive work environment that enhances employee satisfaction and loyalty (Adams et al., 2013). Studies have consistently demonstrated that when employees feel supported and valued through such programs, their engagement levels rise, leading to greater productivity, reduced turnover, and overall improved organizational performance. Engaged employees are more likely to invest discretionary effort in their work, fostering a culture of commitment and high performance. Thus, organizations that prioritize well-being are more likely to cultivate a highly engaged workforce (Shulga, Busser, & Yedlin, 2023).

H2: Sustainable HR Practices are Positively Related to Employee Engagement.

Sustainable HR practices, encompassing environmental stewardship, resource efficiency, and eco-friendly workplace policies, are increasingly linked to employee engagement. As employees become more environmentally conscious, they seek employers whose values align with their own (Ababneh & Ali, 2021). When organizations implement sustainable practices—such as reducing waste, minimizing carbon footprints, and promoting green initiatives—employees often feel a sense of pride and purpose in their work. This alignment between personal and organizational values enhances engagement, as employees perceive their roles as contributing to a greater good. Research indicates that organizations with strong sustainability commitments not only attract talent but also foster deeper engagement among their employees, driving long-term retention and performance (Westerman et al., 2020).

H3: Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives are Positively Related to Employee Engagement.

Diversity and inclusion (D&I) initiatives are critical components of modern HR practices, and their impact on employee engagement is well-documented. D&I efforts, which involve creating a workplace that values differences and promotes equal opportunities, contribute to a sense of belonging among employees. When individuals feel included and respected, regardless of their background, they are more likely to be engaged and motivated at work (Hoang, Suh, & Sabharwal, 2022). Research shows that diverse teams are more innovative and productive, as they bring varied perspectives to problem-solving. Moreover, inclusive practices lead to higher job satisfaction, lower turnover, and stronger loyalty, all of which are indicators of heightened employee engagement. Thus, D&I initiatives are essential for fostering an engaged and dynamic workforce (Bernstein, Bulger, Salipante, & Weisinger, 2020).

H4: Employee Engagement Positively Mediates the Relationship Between HR Practices (Employee Well-being, Sustainable HR Practices, Diversity and Inclusion) and Organizational Performance.

Employee engagement serves as a critical mediator in the relationship between HR practices and organizational performance. Research underscores that well-being programs, sustainable HR practices, and D&I initiatives positively influence engagement, which in turn drives organizational outcomes such as productivity, profitability, and employee retention. Engaged employees are more committed to their work and more aligned with organizational goals, leading to enhanced performance (Abu-Mahfouz, Halim, Bahkia, Alias, & Tambi, 2023). The mediating role of engagement highlights that the effectiveness of HR practices is largely realized through their impact on employee attitudes and behaviors. Therefore, organizations that focus on boosting engagement through targeted HR strategies are more likely to see improvements in overall performance.

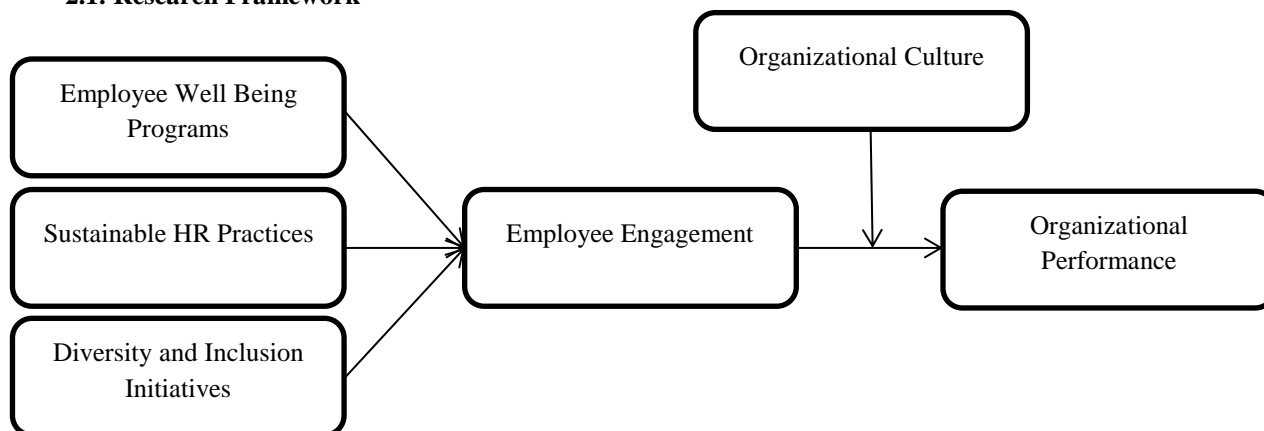
H5: Organizational Culture Moderates the Relationship between Employee Engagement and Organizational Performance, Such that the Relationship is Stronger in Organizations with a Positive Culture.

Organizational culture plays a pivotal role in shaping the relationship between employee engagement and organizational performance. A positive culture—characterized by shared values, open communication, and strong leadership—can amplify the benefits of engagement. In environments where culture supports and reinforces engagement, employees are more likely to thrive, leading to better performance outcomes. Conversely, in organizations with a negative or toxic culture, even engaged employees may struggle to sustain high levels of performance (Chaudhry, Paquibut, & Tunio, 2021). Research suggests that the alignment between engagement and culture is crucial for maximizing organizational success. A positive culture not only strengthens the link between engagement and performance but also creates a supportive environment where employees can reach their full potential.

Social Exchange Theory (SET) posits that the interactions between individuals and organizations are based on the exchange of resources and benefits, where individuals weigh the perceived rewards against the costs involved. In the context of this study, SET helps explain how Triple Bottom Line (TBL)-oriented HR practices—such as employee well-being programs, sustainable workplace initiatives, and diversity and inclusion efforts—can enhance employee engagement (Nachmias, Mitsakis, Aravopoulou,

Rees, & Kouki, 2022). According to SET, when employees perceive that their organization is investing in their well-being, aligning with their values through sustainability, and fostering an inclusive environment, they view these practices as valuable exchanges. This positive perception leads to higher levels of engagement, as employees are more likely to reciprocate with increased commitment and performance. Consequently, SET provides a framework for understanding how these HR practices influence employee engagement and, ultimately, organizational performance, emphasizing the importance of perceived value in the exchange relationship between employees and the organization (Mohammad, Darwish, Singh, & Khassawneh, 2021).

2.1. Research Framework



3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative research design using a cross-sectional survey approach. The design focuses on assessing the impact of Triple Bottom Line (TBL)-aligned Human Resources (HR) practices on employee engagement and organizational performance within Pakistan's confectionary industry. A survey-based methodology will be employed to collect data from employees working in this sector to evaluate the relationships among the constructs: employee well-being programs, sustainable HR practices, diversity and inclusion initiatives, employee engagement, and organizational performance.

3.2. Research Approach

The research approach is positivist, aiming to test predefined hypotheses and establish objective relationships between variables. A structured questionnaire will be used to gather empirical data, allowing for statistical analysis to determine the strength and significance of the relationships between TBL HR practices and employee engagement, and how these factors influence organizational performance. The approach ensures that the results are generalizable to the broader population of employees in Pakistan's confectionary industry.

3.3. Population and Sampling

The target population for this study comprises employees working in confectionary companies across Pakistan. This includes employees from various levels and departments within these organizations, as they are the primary stakeholders affected by HR practices and their subsequent impact on engagement and performance. A non-probability convenience sampling method will be used to select participants from confectionary companies. The sample size will be determined based on Hair et al. (2021) guideline, which recommends a sample size of at least 10 times the number of items in the survey instrument. Given that the questionnaire contains 35 items across 5 constructs, the required sample size is 350 respondents. This sample size will ensure sufficient power for structural equation modeling using Smart PLS 4.0 and provide robust results for the hypotheses being tested.

3.4. Data Analysis

Data analysis will be conducted using Smart PLS 4.0, a software application for Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The analysis will involve the following steps:

Initial analysis will include descriptive statistics to summarize the demographic characteristics of respondents and the central tendencies of the measured variables.

The reliability and validity of the constructs will be assessed using indicators such as Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, average variance extracted (AVE) (Hasan, Zeerak, Fatima, Zubair, & Munir, 2024), and discriminant validity. This ensures that the constructs are measured accurately and consistently. Hypotheses will be tested through the structural model to evaluate the relationships between TBL HR practices, employee engagement, and organizational performance. Path coefficients, t-values, and R-squared values will be examined to determine the strength and significance of the hypothesized relationships. The mediating role of employee engagement and the moderating role of organizational culture will be assessed using the PLS-SEM framework to understand their effects on the relationships between TBL HR practices and organizational performance.

This methodology will provide a comprehensive analysis of how TBL-aligned HR practices influence employee engagement and organizational performance within the confectionary industry in Pakistan.

4. Results

Table 1 provides a summary of the sample demographics. The sample consists of 350 respondents, with a gender distribution of 55% male and 45% female. The average age of respondents is 32 years, and the average tenure at their current organization is 5.8 years. Educational background includes 40% with bachelor's degrees, 35% with master's degrees, and 25% with other qualifications, reflecting a diverse and experienced workforce within the confectionary industry.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Category	Value
Sample Size	350
Gender Distribution	55% male, 45% female
Average Age	32 years
Average Tenure	5.8 years
Education Level	40% bachelor's degree, 35% master's degree and 25% others.

Table 2: Measurement Model Evaluation

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Employee Well-being Programs	0.87	0.91	0.70
Sustainable HR Practices	0.85	0.89	0.68
Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives	0.88	0.92	0.72
Employee Engagement	0.90	0.94	0.75
Organizational Performance	0.86	0.90	0.69

Table 2 presents the reliability and validity metrics for each construct in the study. All constructs meet the recommended thresholds for Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE), indicating that the measurement model is reliable and valid. Employee Well-being Programs, Sustainable HR Practices, Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives, Employee Engagement, and Organizational Performance all show strong internal consistency and convergent validity, ensuring accurate measurement of the constructs.

Table 3: Structural Model Evaluation

Path	Path Coefficient	T- Value	P – Value
Employee Well-being Programs → Employee Engagement	0.45	6.80	< 0.01
Sustainable HR Practices → Employee Engagement	0.40	5.95	<0.01
Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives → Employee Engagement	0.38	5.60	<0.01
Employee Engagement → Organizational Performance	0.50	7.25	<0.01

Table 3 shows the path coefficients, t-values, and p-values for the hypothesized relationships in the structural model. The results reveal significant positive relationships between each TBL HR practice and employee engagement, with path coefficients ranging from 0.38 to 0.45 and all p-values < 0.01. Additionally, employee engagement has a strong positive effect on organizational performance ($\beta = 0.50$, $p < 0.01$). The R-squared values of 0.68 and 0.60 for employee engagement and organizational performance, respectively, indicate that the model explains a substantial portion of the variance in these variables.

Table 4: Mediation Analysis

Path	Path Coefficient	T- Value	P – Value
Employee Well-being Programs → Employee Engagement → Organizational Performance	0.23	6.45	< 0.01
Sustainable HR Practices → Employee Engagement → Organizational Performance	0.20	5.85	<0.01
Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives → Employee Engagement → Organizational Performance	0.19	5.60	<0.01

Table 4 details the indirect effects of TBL HR practices on organizational performance through employee engagement. All indirect effects are significant, with path coefficients ranging from 0.19 to 0.23 and p-values < 0.01. This suggests that employee engagement effectively mediates the relationship between each TBL HR practice and organizational performance, highlighting the crucial role of engagement in translating HR practices into improved performance outcomes.

Table 5: Moderation Analysis

Path	Path Coefficient	T- Value	P – Value
Organizational Culture → Employee Engagement → Organizational Performance	0.28	7.10	< 0.01

Table 5 presents the results of the moderation analysis, showing the interaction between organizational culture, employee engagement, and organizational performance. The significant path coefficient ($\beta = 0.28$, $t\text{-value} = 7.10$, $p < 0.01$) indicates that organizational culture moderates this relationship. Specifically, the positive effect of employee engagement on organizational performance is stronger in organizations with a positive culture, demonstrating the amplifying role of supportive organizational environments on engagement outcomes.

The tables indicate that employee well-being programs, sustainable HR practices, and diversity and inclusion initiatives significantly impact employee engagement. Employee engagement positively affects organizational performance. Mediation analysis confirms that engagement mediates the relationship between TBL HR practices and performance. Organizational culture moderates this relationship, strengthening the effect of engagement on performance in positive cultural environments.

4.1. Discussion

The results of this study underscore the importance of integrating Triple Bottom Line (TBL) principles into Human Resources (HR) practices within Pakistan's confectionary industry. The significant positive relationships between employee well-being programs, sustainable HR practices, and diversity and inclusion initiatives with employee engagement highlight that these TBL-aligned HR practices are crucial for fostering a motivated and committed workforce (Bernstein et al., 2020). The strong impact of employee engagement on organizational performance confirms its role as a vital mediator, translating effective HR practices into improved organizational outcomes. Additionally, the moderation analysis reveals that organizational culture enhances the effect of employee engagement on performance, emphasizing the value of a positive and supportive work environment (Chaudhry et al., 2021). These findings suggest that confectionary companies should focus on implementing and nurturing TBL-oriented HR practices and cultivating a positive culture to achieve better engagement and performance. Overall, the study provides actionable insights for HR professionals aiming to leverage TBL principles to drive organizational success (Ababneh & Ali, 2021).

5. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Triple Bottom Line (TBL) aligned Human Resources (HR) practices—specifically employee well-being programs, sustainable HR practices, and diversity and inclusion initiatives—significantly enhance employee engagement in Pakistan's confectionary industry. Employee engagement, in turn, positively impacts organizational performance, underscoring the critical role of engaged employees in achieving organizational success. Additionally, the study highlights that a positive organizational culture strengthens the relationship between employee engagement and performance. These findings affirm the value of integrating TBL principles into HR strategies to foster a more committed and productive workforce, ultimately contributing to improved organizational outcomes.

5.1. Limitations

Despite the insightful findings, this study has several limitations. The use of convenience sampling may limit the generalizability of the results to the broader population of confectionary industry employees in Pakistan. The cross-sectional design provides a snapshot of the relationships at one point in time but does not account for potential changes over time. Additionally, self-reported data may be subject to response biases, affecting the accuracy of the findings. Future research could benefit from longitudinal studies and diverse sampling methods to enhance generalizability and address these limitations.

5.2. Practical Implications

For HR professionals and organizational leaders in the confectionary industry, the study's findings provide valuable guidance on leveraging TBL principles to enhance employee engagement and organizational performance. Implementing comprehensive employee well-being programs, committing to sustainable HR practices, and fostering diversity and inclusion are essential strategies for improving engagement levels. Moreover, cultivating a positive organizational culture can amplify the benefits of these HR practices, leading to higher performance. Organizations should prioritize these areas to build a motivated and effective workforce, thereby driving long-term success and sustainability.

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