

“Sustainable Human Capital: How Employee Voice Strengthens Mental Well-Being, Work–Life Integration, and Productive Workplaces.”

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable Human Capital (SHC) has become central to organizational sustainability, emphasizing the long-term preservation of employees' health, motivation, and capacity to contribute (Dyllick & Hockerts, 2002). Sustainable human resource management (SHRM) views employees as a very important resource for the organisation, while paying close attention to their preferences, needs, and perspectives. Sustainable Human Capital (SHC) has become a critical priority as organizations seek to build resilient, healthy, and high-capacity workforces. However, existing research has not fully explained how individual-level psychological and motivational processes contribute to long-term human capital sustainability. This conceptual paper proposes an integrative framework in which employee voice serves as a foundational driver that enhances motivation, which in turn strengthens mental well-being, work–life integration, and workplace productivity. Drawing on Sustainable HRM theory, Social Exchange Theory, Job Demand Resource Theory, Stakeholder Theory, and motivation-based perspectives, the model argues that when employees feel able to express ideas and concerns, their intrinsic and extrinsic motivation increases, leading to improved psychological health, reduced stress, greater balance between work and personal life, and higher engagement and performance. These individual outcomes accumulate to form Sustainable Human Capital, characterized by a healthy, motivated, and productive workforce capable of supporting long-term organizational sustainability. The paper concludes that employee voice strengthens sustainable human capital by increasing employee motivation, which enhances mental well-being, work–life integration, and workplace productivity—ultimately creating a healthy, motivated, and future-ready workforce.

Keywords— Sustainable Human Capital, Employee Voice, Motivation, Mental Wellbeing, Work-Life Integration, Workplace Productivity, Sustainable HRM.

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable Human Capital (SHC) has emerged as a central pillar of organizational sustainability, emphasizing the long-term preservation of employees' health, motivation, and capacity to contribute effectively (Dyllick & Hockerts, 2002). As workplaces confront rising psychological pressures, rapid technological change, and intensified performance demands, scholars highlight that organizations must build human-centred, socially responsible, and future-ready workforce systems (Bansal & Song, 2017; Silvestre & Fonseca, 2020). Sustainable HRM (SRHRM) literature increasingly recognizes employees as primary stakeholders whose well-being and participation shape organizational sustainability outcomes (Lynch-Fannon, 2004). Yet, despite this growing acknowledgment, there remains limited understanding of the *psychological mechanisms* through which workplace practices contribute to long-term human capital sustainability.

Employee Voice—employees' ability to express concerns, share ideas, and participate in decision-making—has gained prominence as a critical driver of empowerment, fairness, and psychological safety. Among these mechanisms, **Employee Voice** has gained prominence as a critical driver of empowerment, inclusion, and socially responsible work systems. SRHRM research shows that employee involvement, communication, and social dialogue form the foundation of people-centred, sustainable workplaces (Zaugg et al., 2001; Barrena-

Martínez et al., 2017). Voice practices enhance fairness perceptions and strengthen identification with the organization (Newman et al., 2016), yet their role in shaping **Sustainable Human Capital** pathways remains underexplored.

At the same time, **Motivation** has been identified as a major psychological engine of sustainability-oriented behaviour. Recent research shows that motivation-based perspectives are increasingly used to explain how employees respond to sustainable HR practices and how these practices influence their well-being (Rahman et al., 2023). However, prior studies have mainly examined motivation as an isolated construct, without integrating it with voice-driven influence processes. This creates a gap in understanding how employees' ability to express concerns and ideas may stimulate intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and, in turn, strengthen well-being and performance.

Additionally, research on social sustainability emphasizes Work–Life Balance, Occupational Health, and Supportive Employment Relations as essential to long-term workforce sustainability (Jamali et al., 2015; Barrena-Martínez et al., 2017). Yet existing studies typically examine mental well-being, work–life balance, and productivity independently, rather than viewing them as interconnected outcomes that collectively build Sustainable Human Capital. Taken together, these patterns reveal a significant theoretical gap. There is no integrative framework that links employee voice, motivation, mental well-being, work–life integration, and workplace productivity as combined pathways toward sustainable human capital. The absence of such a model limits scholarly understanding of how individual psychological experiences accumulate to support long-term organizational sustainability (Kozlowski & Klein, 2000; Molina-Azorin et al., 2019).

Mental well-being is increasingly recognized as a fundamental component of employee sustainability and organizational resilience. Contemporary HRM and sustainability scholarship positions psychological health—comprising low strain, emotional stability, and positive psychological functioning—as a necessary condition for long-term human capacity. Sustainable HRM frameworks argue that organizations have a social and ethical responsibility to protect workers' mental health, as it directly influences stability, retention, and overall human capital preservation (Kramar, 2014; Guest, 2017).

Employee voice plays a central role in mental well-being because it enhances psychological safety, autonomy, and perceptions of fairness—three core psychological resources identified in the JD–R theory as critical buffers against stress and burnout (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). When employees feel heard, valued, and capable of influencing their environment, they experience greater emotional balance and reduced strain. The Sustainable Human Capital perspective further emphasizes that mental well-being is not merely an individual outcome but a driver of long-term workforce sustainability and organizational continuity. Thus, mental well-being serves as an important mediating mechanism through which employee voice contributes to Sustainable Human Capital.

Work–life integration refers to the degree to which employees can harmonize work responsibilities with personal and family roles. Modern HRM and sustainability literature identifies work–life integration as a critical dimension of employee well-being and long-term employability. Socially Responsible HRM (SRHRM) and Sustainable HRM frameworks highlight flexible scheduling, autonomy, and participative decision-making as practices that reduce work–family conflict and create more humane workplaces (Kramar, 2014). Employee Voice is a key mechanism enabling work–life integration because it allows individuals to express concerns about workload, negotiate flexibility, and influence policies that shape work–family boundaries. Research on high-involvement and sustainability-oriented HR systems shows that participatory environments create conditions for better balance, lower exhaustion, and stronger attachment to the organization (Wood & de Menezes, 2011). By enabling employees to advocate for balance and shape their work structures, voice becomes an empowering tool that supports both personal well-being and long-term workforce sustainability. Thus, work–life integration is a critical pathway through which employee voice contributes to Sustainable Human Capital.

Workplace productivity remains a central outcome in HRM, but sustainability-oriented HRM reframes productivity beyond traditional short-term output measures. Instead, it focuses on *sustainable productivity*—performance maintained over time without exhausting employees' health, motivation, or energy (Appelbaum et al., 2000). Sustainable HRM and SOHRM research underscore the importance of combining participative

practices, high-involvement systems, and ethical HRM behaviors to create conditions where employees can perform effectively and consistently.

Employee voice is a powerful antecedent to sustainable productivity because it encourages employees to share improvement suggestions, identify inefficiencies, and participate in decision-making. Voice behaviors increase ownership, engagement, and proactivity—factors that have been empirically linked to higher task performance and organizational citizenship (Li et al., 2010). Through the JD–R lens, voice functions as a job resource that strengthens motivation, energizes performance, and reduces the negative impact of demands. This aligns with the Sustainable Human Capital perspective, which recognizes productivity not as an isolated metric but as an integrated outcome emerging from well-being, balance, and empowerment. Therefore, workplace productivity is a vital mediating outcome through which employee voice supports long-term human capital sustainability.

Sustainable Human Capital (SHC) is an emerging concept that reflects an organization’s ability to preserve and enhance the long-term health, skills, motivation, and productivity of its employees. Drawing on Sustainable HRM, Common-Good HRM, and Stakeholder Theory, SHC represents a paradigm shift in how organizations understand workforce value—moving from short-term utilization toward long-term protection and development (Kramar, 2014; Van Buren et al., 2011). Rather than viewing employees merely as resources, SHC considers them human stakeholders whose sustained capacity is essential for organizational resilience and societal well-being.

The Sustainable Human Capital paper you provided highlights that SHC emerges when organizations create conditions in which employees remain psychologically healthy, capable, balanced, and productive over time. The model positions mental well-being, work–life integration, and workplace productivity as core components of SHC, emphasizing that sustainability cannot be achieved without protecting the full spectrum of human functioning. The role of employee voice is especially critical; voice represents a participative mechanism that strengthens empowerment, fairness, and mutual respect—all essential foundations for sustainable workforce systems. As such, Sustainable Human Capital stands as the ultimate outcome of a workplace ecosystem in which employee voice, supportive HRM practices, and employee-centered policies work together to ensure human flourishing and organizational continuity.

To address this gap, the present conceptual paper proposes a unified framework in which employee voice enhances motivation, which subsequently promotes mental well-being, work–life integration, and productive performance. These outcomes collectively shape Sustainable Human Capital—defined as a healthy, motivated, and high-capacity workforce capable of supporting long-term organizational goals. Grounded in Sustainable HRM theory, stakeholder perspectives, and motivation-based approaches, this paper advances a holistic understanding of how human centered practices drive sustainability at the individual level.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee voice

Employee voice—employees’ discretionary expression of ideas, concerns and suggestions aimed at improvement—is framed in the SOHRM literature as both an ethical right and a strategic resource. Voice is treated as a form of participation that enables bottom-up co-creation of HR practices and helps organizations detect and solve problems early. The Sustainable Human Capital paper emphasizes voice as a driver of empowerment and motivation that enables employees to influence job design and organizational policies. Reviews of sustainability-oriented HRM also identify employee participation and communication (voice) as central components of socially responsible HRM and multilevel SOHRM systems.

Mental well-being

Mental well-being in the HRM literature includes psychological health, reduced strain/burnout and positive affect/engagement. Sustainable HRM and SRHRM reviews explicitly list occupational health, psychological safety and well-being as core social sustainability outcomes and objectives of responsible HR practices. The conceptual paper you provided links voice (via increased autonomy, fairness and psychological safety) to

improved mental well-being, and situates well-being as a foundational element of Sustainable Human Capital. . The SOHRM integrative review likewise highlights well-being as a frequent and robust outcome in quantitative studies of sustainability-oriented HR practices.

Work–life integration (work–life balance)

Work–life integration—the degree to which employees can harmonize work and non-work responsibilities—is repeatedly identified in SRHRM and SOHRM literatures as a key social sustainability practice and outcome (e.g., family-supportive policies, scheduling autonomy). Reviews emphasize that SRHRM practices include work–family balance and participative arrangements, and that these practices reduce conflict and support long-term employability.

Workplace productivity (sustained performance)

Productivity in the SOHRM and HRM literatures is treated broadly to include task performance, engagement, innovation and retention outcomes. Evidence from high-involvement and SRHRM studies shows that participative practices (including voice) are associated with improved learning, process improvements and performance metrics. The conceptual paper argues that voice raises motivation and engagement, which in turn increases productivity and contributes to long-term human capital capacity. . The integrative SOHRM review also links responsible HR practices with organizational performance and identifies productivity as an outcome in many quantitative studies.

Sustainable Human Capital (SHC)

Sustainable Human Capital is defined in your documents as the long-term preservation of employees' health, motivation, skills and capacity to contribute—i.e., a workforce that remains capable, engaged and healthy over time. The SHC manuscript situates SHC as the accumulation of individual outcomes (mental well-being, work–life integration, productivity) and links it to the triple bottom line and stakeholder obligations: organizations must protect employee stakeholders to preserve future capacity. . The SOHRM evidence synthesis underlines that SHC (or related constructs) is a focal outcome of sustainable HR practices in multilevel analyses and recommends mediators/moderators (e.g., motivation, culture) be examined to understand how SHC emerges

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Socially Responsible HRM

As Aust et al. (2020) stated, in its early stages of development, SOHRM took the form of socially responsible HRM (SRHRM) activities. SRHRM is derived from various fields such as CSR, ethics and organizational behaviour. It focuses on the organization's emphasis on employees and its efforts to encourage employees to implement CSR policies through the application of HRM policies (H. Zhao et al., 2019). Zaugg et al. (2001) define SRHRM through a set of policies and practices related to the traditional HR function. According to them, this type of SOHRM includes 'the long-term socially and economically efficient recruitment, development, retainment, and dis employment of employees' (p. II). Jamali et al. (2015) indicated the need to include occupational health and safety practices in the architecture of SRHRM. Barrena-Martínez et al. (2017) further extended the list of SRHRM policies and practices to include the management of employment relations (including employee participation), communication, transparency and social dialogue, diversity and equal opportunities, fair remuneration and social benefits, prevention and work-family balance. In turn, in their literature review on SRHRM, Omid and Dal Zotto (2022) found that SRHRM also covers the practice of giving priority to vulnerable local people and offering longer work contracts to secure jobs. In the opinion of Aust et al. (2020), SRHRM is an outward phenomenon from an organizational viewpoint. An economic goal specified by an organization covers the respective social objective as well. The ultimate purpose is to reduce business threats and expand shareholder gains

Job Demand Resource Theory

Job demands-resources (JD-R) model has significantly explained the impact of job dimensions at the workplace on psychological work states of an individual. This model claims that irrespective of occupation-specific causes of employee well-being; engagement and burnout for an incumbent could be predicted based on job demands and resources (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007). It asserts that high job demands would result in depleted energy levels, consequently impacting the well-being of the individual, while high job resources could foster extra work engagement (Demerouti et al., 2001; Bakker et al., 2005; Bakker and Demerouti, 2017; Bakker et al., 2011). Additionally, it argues that job resources provide a cushion against the adverse impact of job demands on employee burnout (Bakker et al., 2003; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). The research also highlights the motivational potential of job resources for engagement, which gets triggered only in the presence of enough critical job demands (Hobfoll, 2001; Hakanen et al., 2005; Bakker et al., 2007). It also discusses the importance of personal resources from personal dimension at work such as optimism and self-efficacy, which are assumed to play a similar role in job resources regarding enhancing the motivational experience of an incumbent at work (Xanthopoulou et al., 2013). However, JD-R model can be expanded further by including factors of personal demands which count for individual's idiosyncratic performance and behaviour expectations which pushes an individual to put efforts in their work (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007).

Sustainable and Common Good HRM

Ehnert et al. (2016) defined sustainable HRM (S-HRM) as 'The adoption of HRM strategies and practices that enables the achievement of financial, social and ecological goals, with an impact inside and outside of the organization and over a long-term time horizon and while controlling for unintended side effects and negative feedback' (p. 3). Gangi et al. (2021) emphasized the environmental and social bottom line in the definition of SRHRM, stating that S-HRM addresses 'the integration of CSR values and drivers within traditional HR core practices to strengthen employees' orientation and awareness toward both social and environmental corporate values' (p. 3). Taking the above into account, one may assume that the term S-HRM should reconcile different points of view presented in the SRHRM and GHRM literature. The TBL elements and the characteristics of sustainability provide the key to understanding the purpose of S-HRM and the processes which could be included in this approach to HRM (Kramar, 2022). S-HRM should refer to HRM practices which contribute to both positive environmental and social outcomes, with the intended purpose of achieving economic results both in the short term and the long term (Kramar, 2022). All three forms of SOHRM mentioned earlier have, to varying degrees, adjusted their traditional business-oriented goals of economic profit to align with external pressures for increased social and ecological responsibility, reflecting an 'inside-out' perspective. However, in the context of common good HRM (CHGRM), the emphasis is on giving equal or even higher priority to collective interests compared to individual (including organizational) preferences, needs, and desires. In CGHRM, 'inputs' refer to the use of HRM competencies, skills, knowledge, and attitudes to actively contribute to the betterment of society and address the major challenges of our time. Thus, it can be regarded as more advanced form of S-HRM (Aust et al., 2020, 2024).

Stakeholder Theory

Its linkage with sustainability was broadly discussed by Schaltegger et al. (2019) and Valentinov (2023). This theory emphasizes that businesses should consider the interests of all stakeholders (employees, communities, etc.) rather than focusing solely on shareholders. Some studies use broader definition of stakeholders, indicating that the natural environment is a company stakeholder (Haigh & Griffiths, 2009). At the same time, employees are associated with the most significant corporate Stake holding group (Lynch-Fannon, 2004). Therefore, as a theoretical foundation for implementing SOHRM, the literature proposes mainly stakeholder theory (Gomes et al., 2024). This theory is also supplemented by paradox theory which help to understand and manage competing demands, tensions, and contradictions within organizations. It suggests that rather than resolving tensions by choosing one side over another organizations can embrace and navigate paradoxes to achieve long-term success (Ehnert, 2009).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

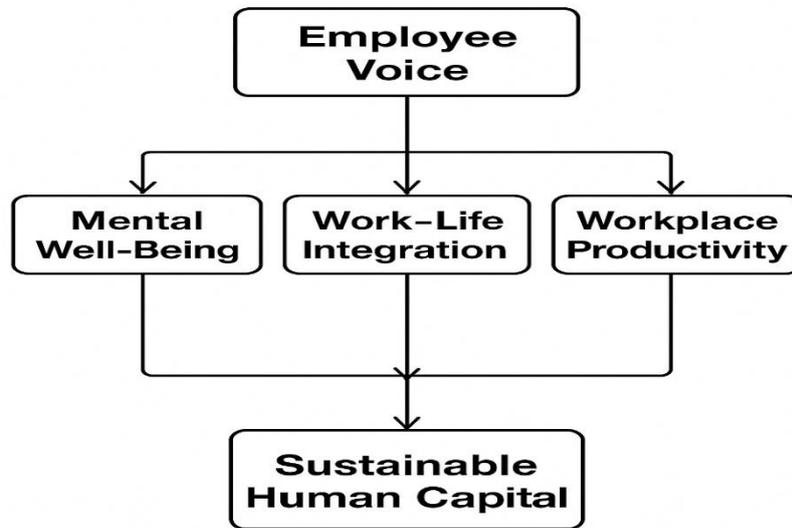


Fig.1

Hypotheses

H1: Employee voice is positively associated with employee motivation.

H2: Employee motivation is positively associated with mental well-being.

H3: Employee motivation is positively associated with work–life integration.

H4: Employee motivation is positively associated with workplace productivity.

H5: Mental well-being, work–life integration, and workplace productivity are positively associated with Sustainable Human Capital.

H6: Mental well-being, work–life integration, and workplace productivity jointly mediate the relationship between motivation and Sustainable Human Capital.

H1: Employee voice is positively associated with employee motivation.

Employee voice enhances employee motivation because it increases autonomy, psychological safety, and feelings of being valued—all of which are key motivational resources in the JD–R model (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). When employees are encouraged to express suggestions or concerns, they perceive greater influence over workplace decisions, which activates intrinsic motivation (Dutton & Ashford, 1993). High-involvement HRM research shows that participatory practices such as voice enhance empowerment and psychological ownership, leading to stronger motivational states (Appelbaum et al., 2000).

Further, Sustainable HRM and SRHRM perspectives emphasize that listening to employees is an ethical and socially responsible practice that signals organizational respect, which is strongly associated with higher motivation and engagement (Kramar, 2014; Van Buren et al., 2011). The Sustainable Human Capital paper also highlights that voice fosters self-determination and motivation by giving employees control and influence over their work environment.

H2: Employee motivation is positively associated with mental well-being.

The JD–R theory asserts that motivation is a core psychological process through which job resources translate into positive well-being (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Motivated employees experience higher levels of energy, engagement, and psychological resilience, all of which protect mental well-being. Supporting this, Hakanen, Bakker, and Schaufeli (2006) found that motivational states buffer against burnout and enhance emotional health.

Sustainable HRM literature identifies motivation as a key driver of long-term employee well-being, arguing that motivated employees are more capable of coping with work demands and maintaining mental health over time (Guest, 2017). The Sustainable Human Capital framework also treats motivation as an internal capability that supports psychological stability and reduces strain.

H3: Employee motivation is positively associated with work–life integration.

Motivation enhances employees’ ability to manage work and non-work responsibilities by increasing psychological energy, focus, and personal resourcefulness (JD–R theory). Motivated employees experience higher levels of vitality, which supports better boundary management and reduces work–family conflict (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Sustainable HRM and SRHRM research show that empowered and motivated employees are better positioned to negotiate flexibility, seek accommodations, and utilize supportive work–life programs effectively (Kramar, 2014; Wood & de Menezes, 2011). Work–life integration is enhanced when employees feel motivated to coordinate their roles and when organizations allow participative behaviors that increase control—both of which emerge from motivation.

The Sustainable Human Capital paper also highlights that motivation strengthens employees’ capacity to balance personal and work lives because motivated individuals are more proactive and capable of mobilizing resources to handle life demands.

H4: Employee motivation is positively associated with workplace productivity.

Employee motivation is one of the strongest predictors of sustainable performance. Empirical work consistently shows that motivated employees display higher task performance, proactive behavior, and engagement (Li, Liang & Crant, 2010). JD–R theory also specifies that motivation drives the “motivational process,” leading to increased performance and reduced withdrawal.

High-involvement HR systems show that participatory environments enhance motivation, which in turn boosts productivity and quality outcomes (Appelbaum et al., 2000). Sustainable HRM research further argues that productivity is only sustainable when it is driven by employee motivation rather than pressure or exhaustion (Kramar, 2014).

The Sustainable Human Capital framework confirms that motivated employees are more innovative, consistent, and productive over time, making motivation a critical antecedent of productivity.

H5: Mental well-being, work–life integration, and workplace productivity are positively associated with Sustainable Human Capital.

Sustainable Human Capital (SHC) refers to employees’ long-term capacity, health, and productivity. Sustainable HRM and Common-Good HRM frameworks argue that SHC emerges when employees are mentally healthy, well-balanced, and capable of sustained performance (Kramar, 2014).

Mental well-being contributes to SHC by reducing burnout, enhancing resilience, and supporting long-term employability (Guest, 2017). Work–life integration strengthens SHC by lowering stress, improving recovery, and promoting sustainable engagement (Wood & de Menezes, 2011). Productivity is essential for SHC because sustained performance ensures employees remain valuable organizational assets without depleting their health

or motivation (Appelbaum et al., 2000). The Sustainable Human Capital paper clearly states that SHC is the combined outcome of well-being, work–life balance, and productivity because these variables determine whether the workforce remains capable and healthy over time.

H6: Mental well-being, work–life integration, and workplace productivity jointly mediate the relationship between motivation and Sustainable Human Capital.

JD–R theory explains that motivation drives positive outcomes through enhanced well-being, balance, and performance. Therefore, these three variables are natural mediators of motivational effects. Motivated employees experience higher well-being, achieve better integration of work and family demands, and perform more effectively—each contributing to SHC. SOHRM and SRHRM evidence shows that employee sustainability is not a direct result of motivation alone but emerges through improved well-being and work–life outcomes (Van Buren et al., 2011; Kramar, 2014). Likewise, the Sustainable Human Capital paper explicitly positions mental well-being, work–life integration, and productivity as *mechanisms* through which motivational resources translate into long-term human capacity.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a **qualitative conceptual research design** grounded entirely in **secondary data sources**. Conceptual research is appropriate because the purpose of the study is to integrate existing theoretical and empirical insights to develop a new framework explaining how employee voice contributes to Sustainable Human Capital (SHC) through motivation, mental well-being, work–life integration, and workplace productivity.

A **purposive theoretical sampling strategy** was used to identify high-quality peer-reviewed literature on employee voice, motivation, well-being, work–life balance, productivity, Sustainable HRM, Socially Responsible HRM, Common-Good HRM, Stakeholder Theory, and JD–R Theory. The sample included conceptual works, systematic reviews, meta-analyses, empirical studies, and sustainability-oriented HRM research, ensuring comprehensive coverage of relevant constructs. Sampling continued until **theoretical saturation** was reached—when no additional literature offered new conceptual insights.

A **thematic synthesis approach** guided the analysis. First, key constructs were identified and compared across studies. Second, theoretical integration was conducted by examining convergences among Stakeholder Theory, SRHRM, Sustainable HRM, and JD–R Theory. Third, these insights were abductively combined to build the conceptual model positioning motivation as the mechanism linking voice to well-being, work–life integration, and productivity, which in turn contribute to SHC.

This methodology uses **secondary data from international sources** to empirically test the conceptual model linking employee voice to Sustainable Human Capital. It employs robust analytical techniques, validated measures, and multi-theoretical grounding to ensure rigor and relevance.

CONCLUSION

This study develops a comprehensive conceptual model that deepens understanding of how employee voice contributes to Sustainable Human Capital (SHC) by integrating insights from Stakeholder Theory, Socially Responsible HRM, Sustainable and Common-Good HRM, and the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) framework. The model positions employee voice as a strategic and ethical organizational practice that activates employee motivation, which in turn enhances mental well-being, work–life integration, and workplace productivity. These three outcomes jointly form the core pathways through which voice-driven motivation contributes to the long-term preservation, health, and capability of human capital.

The argument advanced in this paper emphasizes that SHC is not a product of isolated HR practices, but rather the cumulative outcome of supportive, participative, and sustainability-oriented organizational environments. By highlighting motivation as the central mechanism linking employee voice to sustainable outcomes, the model extends existing HRM and sustainability scholarship and provides actionable direction for designing human-

centered workplaces. Organizations that encourage voice not only foster immediate engagement but also build healthier, more balanced, and more productive employees—conditions essential for long-term workforce sustainability.

Creating environments that encourage open communication and meaningful voice not only enhances employee motivation but also strengthens the conditions needed for long-term human capital development. Organizations that prioritize sustainable HRM must therefore view voice, motivation, well-being, and balance as interconnected elements rather than isolated initiatives. The model suggests that HR leaders should integrate participative HR practices with wellness programs, flexible work policies, and performance systems that prioritize long-term capability over short-term output.

This framework offers a theoretically sound basis for future empirical testing. Researchers can validate the proposed relationships using qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-method approaches, and organizations can use the insights to design HR systems that strengthen both individual well-being and organizational resilience. Ultimately, this study contributes to the growing call for sustainable HRM by illustrating how employee-centered practices create enduring value for employees, organizations, and society.

In summary, this research advances theoretical understanding and provides a refined conceptualization of how employee voice contributes to Sustainable Human Capital through motivational and sustainability-oriented mechanisms. By integrating multiple theoretical traditions and synthesizing evidence from diverse HRM fields, this study underscores the importance of employee-centered practices in creating healthy, capable, and resilient workforces for the future.

LIMITATIONS

Despite its contributions, several limitations warrant acknowledgment. First, this study is conceptual in nature and thus lacks empirical testing. While conceptual models are foundational for theory development, empirical validation is required to verify the strength, direction, and boundary conditions of the proposed relationships. Second, the study is based solely on secondary literature sources, meaning that the findings rely on the quality, availability, and potential biases within existing research. Third, the model does not incorporate potential moderating variables—such as leadership style, organizational culture, industry characteristics, or digital work environments—which may influence the strength of the proposed relationships. Fourth, although employee voice and SHC operate across individual, team, and organizational levels, the model primarily emphasizes individual-level pathways. Finally, temporality is not addressed empirically, even though the development of SHC is inherently longitudinal and cumulative.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Empirical validation of the full model is a priority. Quantitative studies using structural equation modelling (SEM), hierarchical regression, mediation analysis, or multilevel modelling could test the direct, mediating, and sequential pathways proposed in the framework. Qualitative studies—such as interviews, focus groups, or case studies could enrich understanding of how employees experience voice and how motivation evolves over time.

Future research should also consider potential moderators that may shape the impact of employee voice on motivation and subsequent outcomes. Variables such as leadership behaviours (e.g., empowering, ethical, transformational), psychological safety climates, job design features, remote work contexts, and national culture may significantly influence the effectiveness of voice practices. Additionally, multi-level investigations are needed to explore team-level voice climates, organizational HR systems, and industry-specific factors that may interact with individual-level motivation.

Longitudinal research is particularly important for capturing the temporal nature of SHC. Studies could examine how improvements in well-being, work–life integration, and productivity accumulate over time to build sustainable human capital. Experience sampling methods (ESM) or panel data designs would help track the dynamic interplay between voice, motivation, and sustainability outcomes. Furthermore, as SHC remains a

concept with evolving definitions, future studies should develop and validate multidimensional measures that capture its health, capability, and performance components.

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