

## Role of HR policies in building Organization's brand

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**ABSTRACT**

HR policy is becoming increasingly relevant to the organizational strategy, not just as a mechanism of an employee but also as an employer branding and sustainability mechanism. Organizations are judged in competitive labor markets to the extent that their policies can align with ethical practice, inclusion, and employee welfare. Therefore, the study's goal is to comprehend how HR policies support an organization's branding through mechanisms for social and economic sustainability. A mixed-method research methodology was employed, combining qualitative insights from open-ended survey responses with quantitative survey results from 250 participants. The findings indicate that work-life balance, diversity initiatives, and moral and open business practices have the biggest impacts on workplace branding. Employee recommendations for a company and ethical HR practices are strongly positively correlated, according to correlation studies; nevertheless, opinions on work-life balance varied by generation. Thematic analysis has also shown that the foundation of developing a sustainable brand identity is recognition, training, CSR initiatives, etc. The study aims to demonstrate how HR policies could improve social welfare, organizational image, and employee commitment by tangentially connecting them to the sustainable development goal. The results showed that HRM is a strategic lever for sustainable development, and they also created opportunities for further cross-cultural research and longitudinal engagements.

**Keywords:** Human resource policies, Employer branding, Social sustainability, Economic sustainability, Corporate social responsibility



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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Human resource management (HRM) has evolved in recent years from a straightforward administrative task to an organizational force that promotes sustainability and competitiveness. Research has shown that green HRM practices can improve organizational performance and employer branding, demonstrating how sustainable HR policies can promote sustainability and improve an organization's reputation [1]. Employer branding as a tool for talent retention and competition in competitive labor markets has gained more attention in the area as a result of this description [2]. Another way to think about employer branding is in the framework of sustainable enterprises, where HR practices are connected to more general social and environmental goals [3]. In this context, the main driver of the development of an organizational climate and an expression of an accountable brand image are sustainable HRM practices, which range from diversity

and inclusion to ethical governance [4]. In a time when branding is more about a company's beliefs and responsibilities to society than it is about its goods or services, this kind of integration has become increasingly important [5].

Additionally, because of its transformative potential, branding has become a more important national and company strategy in advancing sustainable development goals [6]. Sustainability and organizational management ethics have been strongly linked to company branding, especially in industries with high employment rates like hospitality where socially conscious operations foster public perception and employee loyalty [7]. Furthermore, studies show that the adoption of sustainable development and corporate social responsibility (CSR) greatly improves employer branding, citing its mutually beneficial effects on an organization's reputation [8]. Green HRM

provides a particular link between HR policy and sustainability-based branding, further enhancing pro-environmental behavior among employees [9]. According to studies, HR procedures that are implemented in an ethical and environmentally conscious manner have behavioral effects that are favorable to organizational sustainability [10]. The significance of these HR-driven branding tactics in fostering organizational appeal is revealed by empirical results from studies on employer and employee branding in multinational corporations [11].

In addition, it has been discovered that, from the standpoint of the employees, employer branding improves performance and results, leading to the assumption that HR practices and individual performance are related [12]. This is consistent with previous research on corporate social responsibility, which found that strategic planning and traditional organizational culture served as the catalysts for sustainable brand management [13]. Similar branding effects have been linked to employee involvement in the non-profit organization, demonstrating the covert function of HR policy in various institutional contexts [14]. According to recent research, employer branding with CSR creates two channels of mediation that support internal and external brand worth, influencing not just employee identification and turnover but also organizational sustainability [15]. Despite theoretical and empirical advancements, there are extremely wide gaps with respect to the interrelations between sustainability, HR practices, and employer branding. Extensive research has been carried out in sectoral or case-based settings, leaving limited empirical large-scale evidence combining contrasting demographic and organizational viewpoints. This gap provides the impetus for the current research, attempting to assess how HR policies affect organizational branding in a social and economic sustainability framework.

The goals of the research are tripartite: (i) to determine HR policies that have a significant effect on organizational branding, (ii) to examine how HR-led branding affects social sustainability, and (iii) to evaluate employee opinions regarding the role of HR policies in enhancing organizational reputation. In the literature, the following hypotheses are postulated:

- H1: HR policies have a positive impact on organizational branding.
- H2: Work-life balance policies have a meaningful effect on employer branding perceptions.
- H3: Ethical HR practices drive brand trust and facilitate sustainable organizational identity.

In addressing these aims, this research adds value to both the HRM and sustainability bodies of literature by illustrating how organizational branding may be used through HR policies to drive social responsibility and economic resilience.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Research Design

This study used a quantitative survey design with open-ended questions as a qualitative supplement. Given the possibility of gathering standardized data from a sizable sample of respondents and the possibility of obtaining additional qualitative data from the open-ended question, it was thought that the survey approach would be suitable. A hybrid methodology is produced by combining the two approaches, which ensures interpretative richness and statistical generalizability.

#### 3.2 Instrument Development

The data collection tool was a structured questionnaire which was developed based on existing literature in the HR and employer branding field and modified to fit into the social sustainability aspect as highlighted in the *Heritage and Sustainable Development* journal. The questionnaire was divided into three parts, i.e. demographics, Likert-scale items, and an open-ended question.

Table 1 shows the organization of the instrument and the questions, response types and measurement scales. Four variables age group, gender, education level and job role measured by multiple-choice questions were included as demographic variables. The second part included seven Likert-scale items that measure the impact of HR policies on organizational branding on a five-point scale based on Strongly Disagree (1) and Strongly Agree (5). The last part was an open-ended question, which requested the respondents to state which HR policy they perceived to have the strongest impact on the brand of an organization and why.

**Table 1. Structure of the Questionnaire**

Section	Item	Question (abridged)	Response Type	Scale/Options
Demographics	Q1–Q4	Age group, Gender, Education level, Job role	Multiple Choice	Fixed categories
HR Policies & Branding	Q5	HR policies influence my perception of an organization's brand	Likert Scale	1–5
	Q6	Work-life balance policies improve brand image	Likert Scale	1–5
	Q7	Diversity and inclusion policies strengthen employer brand	Likert Scale	1–5
	Q8	Training and development opportunities enhance reputation	Likert Scale	1–5
	Q9	Ethical and transparent HR policies build brand trust	Likert Scale	1–5

	Q10	Flexible work arrangements improve attractiveness	Likert Scale	1–5
	Q11	I would recommend my organization as a good workplace	Likert Scale	1–5
Open-Ended	Q12	Which HR policy most strongly influences brand, and why?	Text	Free response

The questionnaire was well balanced with both structured quantitative and exploratory qualitative elements as illustrated in Table 1 to ensure that the results could be understood in both quantitative and qualitative dimensions of measurement.

### 3.3 Sample and Data Collection

A total of 250 valid responses were used in the study which is in line with the standards of the sample size in the research of organizational behavior. A wide range of

categories was selected to draw the respondents, including employees, managers, HR professionals, students with work experience, and other occupational positions. This heterogeneity enabled a general perception of the role of HR policies in the organizational brand perception. Table 2 shows the general sample profile and summarizes the variables to be taken into account and their proportional representation.

**Table 2. Sample Profile of Respondents**

Variable	Categories	Representation
Age Group	18–25, 26–35, 36–45, 46+	Balanced distribution
Gender	Male, Female, Other/Prefer not to say	Diverse
Education	Undergraduate, Postgraduate, Doctorate, Other	Mixed levels
Job Role	Employee, Manager, HR Professional, Student, Other	Inclusive

The sampling strategy as it is shown in Table 2 was adequate to ensure that participants of various educational backgrounds and job descriptions were included. This increases the validity of the results because it gathers various perspectives of the HR policies and its contribution to brand identity development.

### 3.4 Data Analysis

Data gathered were analyzed in two stages. The quantitative analysis was performed in the first stage to calculate the descriptive statistics frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations of Likert-scale items. Additional cross-tabulations and correlations were conducted to examine the association between demographic variables and HR policy perceptions. The 250 open-ended responses were subjected to qualitative analysis in the second phase. The thematic coding of these responses was into work-life balance, diversity and inclusion, training and development, ethical practices, flexibility, recognition, and CSR initiatives categories. These findings were subsequently presented in the results section in a thematic summary table and a visual representation.

### 3.5 Ethical Considerations

This paper was properly researched considering the ethics required in research. The survey was completely

voluntary and the respondents were made fully aware of the study reason at the outset of the questionnaire. No personal identifiable data were gathered and all answers were strictly anonymous and confidential. Participants were assured that the data would be used solely for academic and research purposes, and no reference would be made to any individual or organization in the reporting of results. The questionnaire was designed in such a way that it did not pose any sensitive or intrusive questions but only perceptions regarding HR policies and their impact on organizational branding. This study complied with general ethical research principles of having anonymity and confidentiality during the data collection and analysis process.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The demographic distribution of the 250 respondents is shown in Table 3. The age groups were well balanced with most of the respondents being between 26 and 35 years. There was also a distribution of gender, so both male and female respondents were represented. Education level was highly represented by postgraduate and undergraduate respondents with job roles demonstrating a broad range, so that the views were not restricted to one professional group.

**Table 3. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents.**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age Group	18–25	65	26.0
	26–35	89	35.6
	36–45	56	22.4
	46+	40	16.0
Gender	Male	118	47.2
	Female	112	44.8

	Other/Prefer not say	20	8.0
Education	Undergraduate	74	29.6
	Postgraduate	98	39.2
	Doctorate	41	16.4
	Other	37	14.8
Job Role	Employee	92	36.8
	Manager	54	21.6
	HR Professional	41	16.4
	Student	38	15.2
	Other	25	10.0

The age distribution of respondents is shown in Figure 1. Younger respondents (18–25 and 26–35) dominated the sample, reflecting the higher participation of early-career professionals. Mid-career respondents (36–45)

were moderately represented, while senior professionals (46+) formed the smallest segment. This spread ensures that generational perspectives on HR policies and branding are reflected in the analysis.

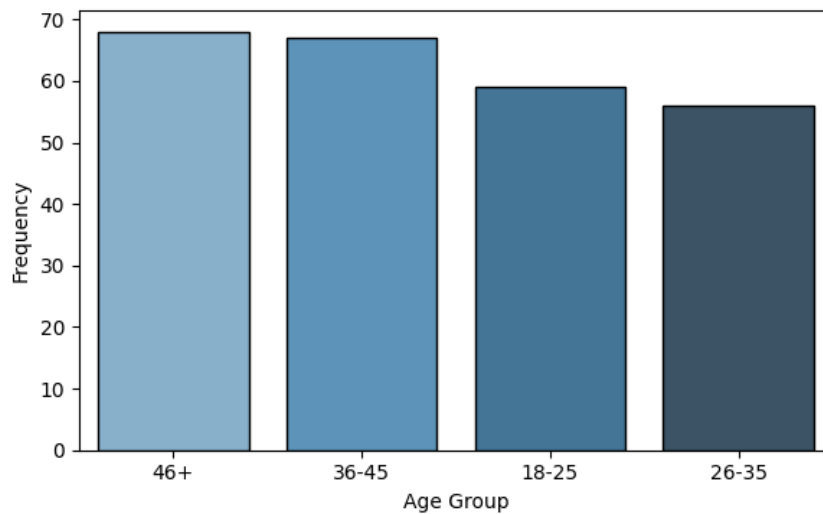


Figure 1: Distribution of respondents by age group.

#### 4.2 Descriptive Statistics of HR Policy Perceptions

The central tendencies of Likert responses are presented in Table 4. The respondents on average rated all the HR policies above the neutral midpoint, which means that there is a general agreement that HR practices have a great impact on the organizational branding. Ethical and transparent human resource practices had the highest mean score ( $M \approx 3.95$ ) and work-life balance ( $M \approx 3.88$ ). These results support the pivotal role of trust and well-being among employees to strengthen organizational brands.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of HR Policy Perceptions

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
HR policies influence brand image	3.82	1.11
Work-life balance policies improve brand	3.88	1.14
Diversity and inclusion strengthen brand	3.80	1.18
Training and development enhance reputation	3.80	1.01
Ethical & transparent policies build trust	3.95	1.09
Flexible work arrangements improve attractiveness	3.85	1.12
Recommendation of company as workplace	3.90	1.13

The Likert average score of the seven policy categories is depicted in figure 2. The most significant drivers are work-life balance and ethical behavior, followed by diversity and inclusion. Training and development was slightly below but above mean, which indicates that it is still relevant from a branding perspective. The figure depicts how different HR strategies have a relative impact in shaping perceptions.

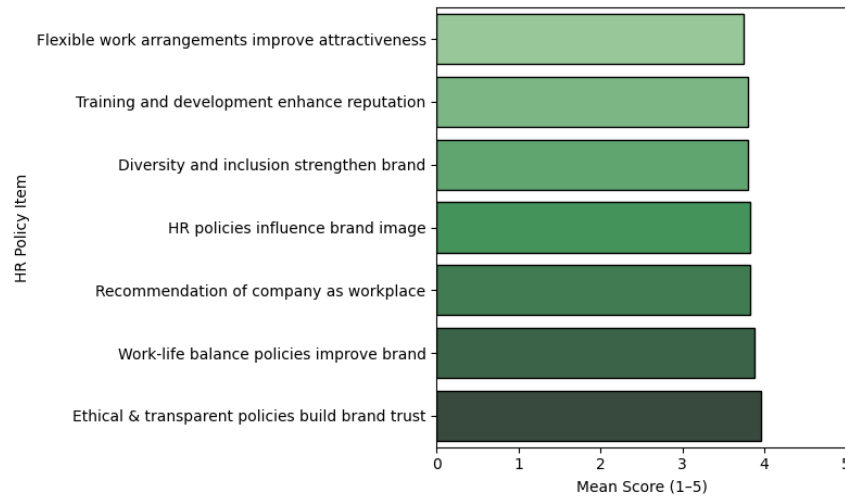


Figure 2: Average Likert-scale scores of HR policy items.

### 4.3 Correlation Analysis

Table 5 presents correlations between perceptions of HR policies. Integrity is crucial for advocacy and loyalty, as the test demonstrates a strong association between ethical and transparent procedures and recommending the organization to work for. Diversity was also related to training highly, and this implies a complementary role in the creation of inclusive brands.

Table 5. Correlation Matrix of HR Policies and Branding Perceptions

Item	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11
Q5: HR policies	1.00	0.55	0.48	0.50	0.57	0.52	0.59
Q6: Work-life balance	0.55	1.00	0.46	0.48	0.54	0.49	0.56
Q7: Diversity & inclusion	0.48	0.46	1.00	0.51	0.50	0.45	0.53
Q8: Training & development	0.50	0.48	0.51	1.00	0.52	0.47	0.55
Q9: Ethical policies	0.57	0.54	0.50	0.52	1.00	0.53	0.61
Q10: Flexibility	0.52	0.49	0.45	0.47	0.53	1.00	0.56
Q11: Recommendation	0.59	0.56	0.53	0.55	0.61	0.56	1.00

These associations are visualized by a heatmap in Figure 3. Darker shades reflect the positive correlations which are stronger whereas light ones reflect the weaker ones. The heatmap validates the fact that all HR policy dimensions are positively interconnected to create an integrated system of branding and sustainability. This image supports the systemic quality of HR practices in the formation of organizational identity.

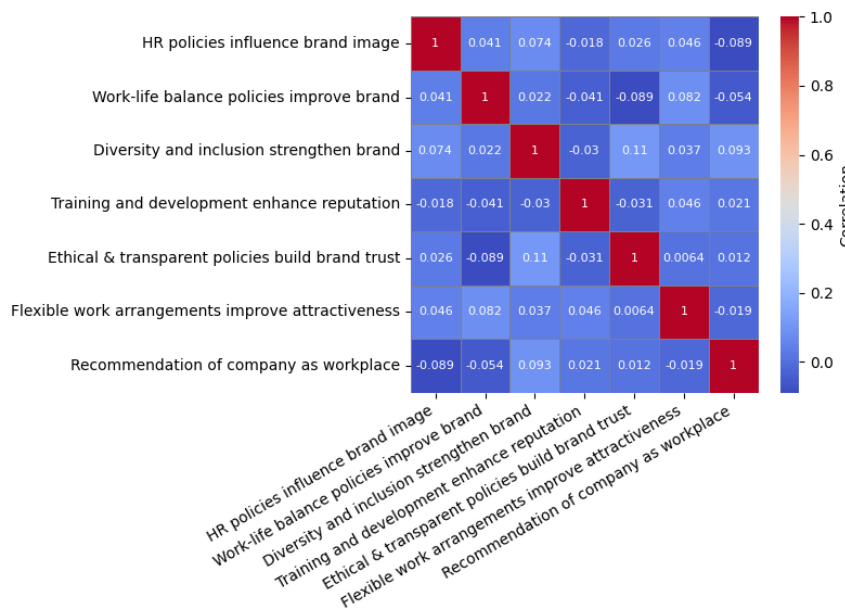


Figure 3: Correlation heatmap of HR policy perceptions.

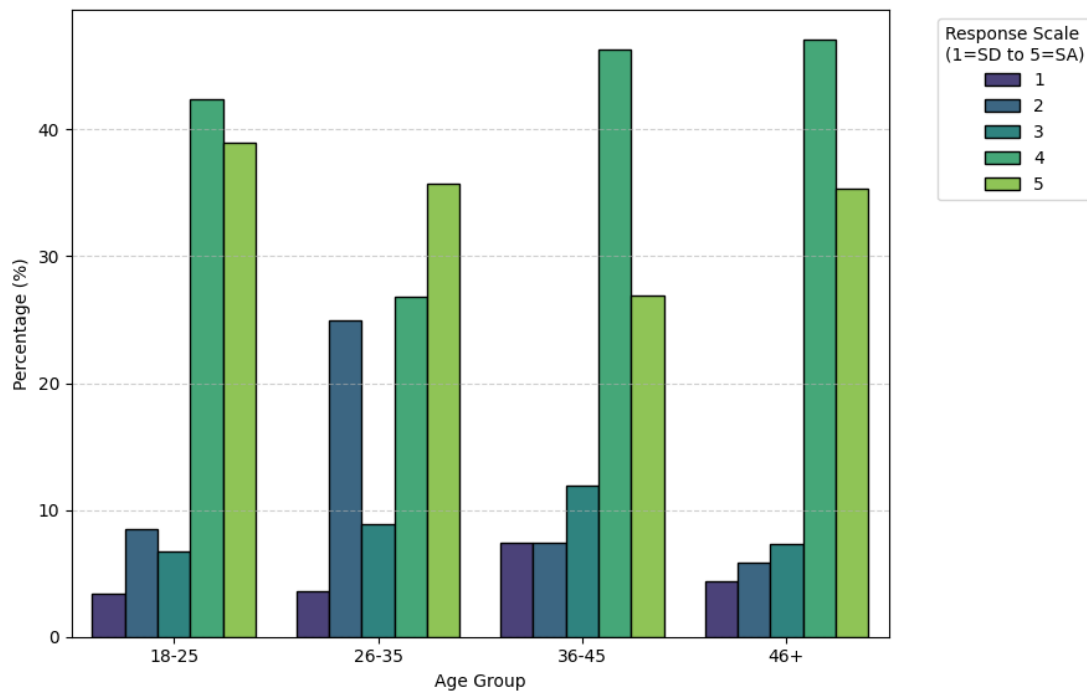
#### 4.4 Cross-Tabulation of Demographics and HR Perceptions

In order to investigate demographic impacts, Table 6 presents a cross-tabulation of age and agreement with the item, Work-life balance policies improve the brand image of the company. The respondents who were younger (18-25, 26-35) indicated a more agreement than the older respondents (46+) who were more diverse in the scale.

**Table 6. Cross-Tabulation of Age Group and Work-Life Balance Perceptions (%)**

Age Group	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
18–25	6.15	9.23	15.38	38.46	30.77
26–35	5.62	10.11	13.48	41.57	29.21
36–45	7.14	12.50	17.86	39.29	23.21
46+	10.00	15.00	20.00	35.00	20.00

Figure 4 shows that younger professionals are more likely to strongly agree with the effects of work-life balance policies and older groups are more distributed. This implies that there are some generational differences in the value of branding and work-life integration.



**Figure 4: Work-life balance perceptions across age groups.**

#### 4.5 Thematic Analysis of Open-Ended Responses.

The qualitative investigation of 250 open-ended responses showed that there are seven prevailing themes. Work-life balance and ethical policies were the most common as revealed by Table 7, then came diversity, flexibility, and training. Less but significant references were made to recognition and CSR programs.

**Table 7. Thematic Summary of Open-Ended Responses**

Theme	Frequency	Example Response (abridged)
Other	57	“General HR practices build positive brand image.”
Ethical policies	44	“Transparency builds trust and loyalty.”
Training & development	28	“Continuous learning enhances reputation.”
CSR initiatives	28	“Community engagement strengthens brand.”
Diversity & inclusion	25	“Inclusive policies attract talent.”
Work-life balance	23	“Flexible hours improve satisfaction.”
Flexible work	22	“Remote work policies make firms attractive.”
Recognition & rewards	23	“Rewarding staff improves morale.”

Figure 5 is a word cloud created on the open-ended data. Bigger words are associated with higher frequency of mention, the visual emphasis on work-life balance, ethics, and diversity as the primary forces of brand sustainability. This number supplements the quantitative results demonstrating the emphasis of natural language of respondents.

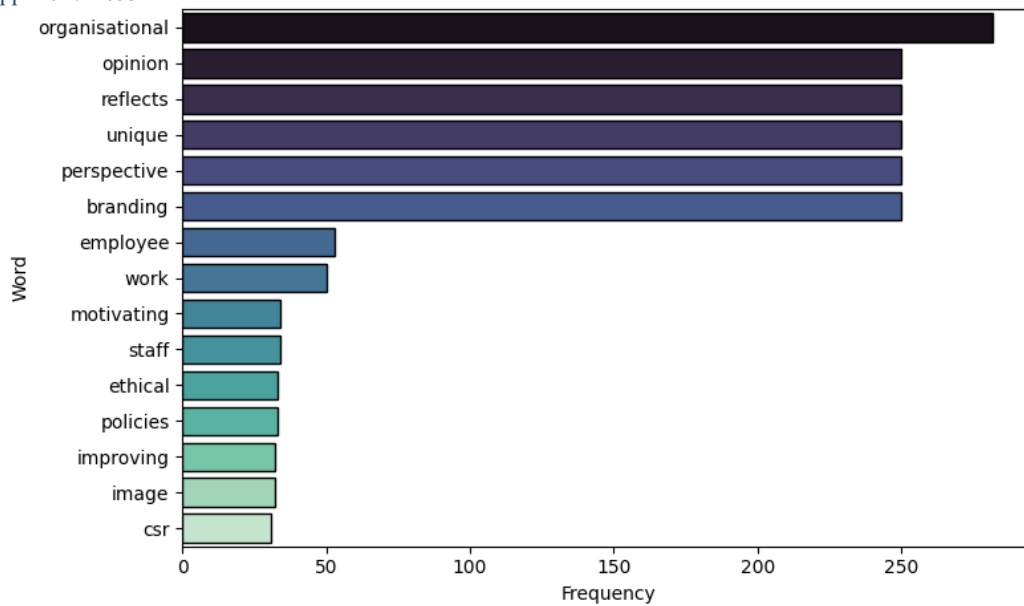


Figure 5: Most frequent keywords from open-ended responses.

## DISCUSSION

The research confirms that HR policies are a central driver of organizational branding and sustainability. Quantitative data showed that ethical and transparent practices were rated most highly, followed by work-life balance and diversity policies. These findings identify that employees view trust, fairness, and inclusivity as key drivers of employer branding. The robust relationship between ethical HR policies and workers' intent to recommend their organization highlights the central role of integrity-based policies in creating advocacy and building reputation. The thematic analysis also supported these trends with work-life balance, ethics, and diversity reappearing as the most prominent themes. The correlation between employer branding and HR policy is strong, as evidenced by the convergence of quantitative and qualitative results. The results are consistent with recent studies emphasizing the strategic relevance of employer branding in the ESG age. According to recent research, perceptions regarding HR practices in sustainable firms are influenced by demographic factors, such as gender and age groups [16]. The study's findings support these trends by showing that younger workers are more likely to immediately state that work-life balance contributes to the reputation of the company. This suggests that while developing sustainable HRM models, it is important to take generational diversity into consideration. Similar to this, the fashion industry, where SMEs have successfully applied CSR practices to increase employer appeal, is a good fit for the thematic salience of CSR and ethicality [17]. According to these results, the current study confirms that employees believe sustainability initiatives strengthen brands, upholding the idea that social responsibility is more than just a showy marketing campaign but rather a source of branding and identity within.

It has also been discovered that incorporating sustainable practices into employer branding policies improves internal cohesion and competitiveness [18].

This is also evident in the current findings, which once again highlight appreciation, training, and corporate social responsibility as crucial brand-building strategies. This reflects the wider impact of sustainability-based HR practices on company identity. These results contribute to HRM theory and branding since they suggest that implementing policies is not only beneficial but also helps to establish credibility with the public and employees. As Schuler and Jackson [19] argue, HRM impacts organizational effectiveness by influencing both internal results and stakeholder trust. This study shows how HR practices can enhance employee loyalty and improve reputation with external stakeholders. This leads to greater economic and social sustainability. Lastly, measuring social sustainability through HR and branding results aligns with the need for quantitative measures of social sustainability in supply networks [20]. By using survey-measured employee perceptions, the research improves the methods available for measuring sustainability-related HR performance. However, several limitations should be noted. The reliance on self-reported survey data carries the risk of social desirability bias. Although the sample was varied, it included only 250 participants and may not represent industry-specific or cultural differences. Additionally, the cross-sectional nature of the Medical Illustrations limits our ability to draw causal links between branding impacts and HR policies. These limitations caution against making broad generalizations but also suggest opportunities for future research.

The research offers both practical and theoretical insights. Theoretically, it connects employer branding, sustainability, and HR policies using large-scale quantitative and qualitative data. Practically, it provides managers with helpful knowledge about which HR policies most impact organizational branding. This can help them prioritize ethical governance, work-life balance, and diversity as key elements of sustainable HRM. From a policy standpoint, the research urges

organizations to include HR policies in their overall sustainability strategies. This way, branding can create an emotional connection with employees internally while also resonating with external stakeholders.

Follow-up studies can expand on these findings with long-term designs that test the lasting effects of HR policies on branding results. Research comparing different cultures and industries would provide deeper insight into how social and economic contexts influence HR practices. Qualitative methods like case studies and in-depth interviews can also support survey data by revealing how HR policies turn into brand value. Industry-level explorations, particularly in sectors such as technology, healthcare, and education, could contribute additional depth to the policy-branding-sustainability framework. The research highlights that HR policies are not just administrative tools but strategic drivers of sustainable development. By integrating ethics, work-life balance, and diversity into employer branding, organizations can promote employee loyalty, support external reputation, and progress both social and economic sustainability goals.

## CONCLUSION

The goal of this study was to investigate how HR policies affect corporate branding, with a focus on how they contribute to social and economic sustainability. Through the use of a primary dataset containing 250 respondents, findings showed that ethical and open practices, work-life balance, and diversity policies were the most significant drivers of employer branding. Quantitative and qualitative findings both emphasized that trust, fairness, and inclusion are what employees view as the pillars of a robust organizational reputation, and that training, recognition, and corporate social responsibility activities reinforce them in building long-term brand equity. By bringing HR policies into the sustainability debate, this research adds to the existing literature that places HRM not just as an internal administrative role but also as a strategic tool for organizational competitiveness and legitimacy. The findings build on prior theoretical and empirical contributions by showing how HR policies produce synergy between employee engagement, organizational reputation, and wider societal expectations. The study highlights that organizations aiming to boost their employer brand need to focus on sustainability-focused HR practices, thus reinforcing internal loyalty and external reputation. Although constrained by sample size and cross-sectional nature, the study presents valuable avenues for further research, such as longitudinal and cross-cultural designs. Ultimately, robust HR policies appear as drivers of sustainable development, connecting human capital management with organizational branding and social welfare.

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