

Employee Engagement for Sustainable Development in Hospitality Sector – A Study in Telangana State

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ABSTRACT

Employee Engagement refers to the emotional commitment of an employee has towards their organization and its goal. This study investigates the relationship between employee engagement and sustainable development in the hospitality sector in Telangana state. The hospitality sector is a significant contributor to the economy, but its sustainability is threatened by high employee turnover rates and low engagement levels. The findings of this study will contribute to the body of knowledge on employee engagement and sustainable development, providing insights for hospitality industry stakeholders to develop effective strategies for promoting sustainability and reducing turnover rates. The study's outcomes will have practical implications for hotel managers, policymakers, and sustainability practitioners seeking to enhance the sector's sustainability performance.

KEYWORDS

Employee Engagement, Sustainable Development, Hospitality, Relationship, Performance etc.

INTRODUCTION

Employee Engagement refers to the emotional commitment shown by an employee towards his organization and its goal where it is increasingly recognized as a critical factor in organizational success. Engaged employees tend to be more productive, provide better customer service, and are generally more likely to stay with their employer. Sustainable Development involves meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainability in the hospitality sector involves adopting practices that minimize negative environmental impacts, promote social well-being, and ensure economic sustainability.

In alignment with the concept of sustainable development, the workforce behavior of the existing employees in the hospitality sector influences their attitude towards environmentally friendly behavior and has the potential to play a significant role in reducing eco-unfriendly behavior. To realize sustainable development in the hospitality sector, it is imperative to examine the level of the employee engagement of the hospitality sector's existing employees in sustainable development as the first step to realizing the goal. The state of Telangana is a popular tourist and hospitality destination in India. Therefore, the state has been chosen as a study locale to conduct the examination of the existing employees.

The study examines various factors influencing employee engagement, including organizational culture, leadership styles, communication practices, and work-life balance. It aims to identify best practices and strategies that foster a culture of engagement among employees, which in turn supports sustainable development goals (SDGs) such as responsible consumption, inclusive growth, and environmental stewardship.

Data will be collected through a combination of surveys, interviews, and case studies across different hospitality establishments in Telangana, ranging from hotels and resorts to restaurants and tourism services. The findings will highlight the importance of aligning employee values with organizational sustainability goals and the impact of engaged employees on customer satisfaction, operational efficiency, and corporate social responsibility initiatives.

According to 2030 Agenda here is the global goals for sustainable development with the help of employee

engagement presented in the below picture for the development of our country.



LITERATURE REVIEW

An analysis of the literature on employee involvement in sustainable development looks at how workers engage with, support, and are affected by organizational sustainability activities. The definitions and theories of employee engagement, the significance of sustainability in this context, and the results of this type of engagement for enterprises and their workforces are just a few of the important topics that are often covered in this review.

Overview

Meaning of employee engagement is as follows: Generally speaking, employee engagement is the degree of zeal and commitment a worker has for their work and the company. Employees that are engaged at work are typically more motivated, productive, and dedicated to their job roles. Meeting current requirements without sacrificing the capacity of future generations to meet their own needs is known as sustainable development. It includes social, environmental, and economic aspects.

Conceptual Underpinnings

According to Kahn's Engagement Theory (1990), an employee's emotional and cognitive presence at work is a key component of engagement.

Maslach's Burnout Inventory draws a comparison between burnout and engagement, emphasizing the vital role that vigor and vitality play in engaged workers.

The Job Demands-Resources Model by Schaufeli and Bakker focuses on how demands and job resources

(including assistance and feedback) interact.

Connecting Engagement and Sustainability includes principles and ideas alignment. When working for companies that share their principles, employees on sustainability may be more engaged.

Purpose and Meaning of employee engagement involves improving workers' perceptions of the meaning and purpose of their employment, sustainability efforts can raise employee engagement. Green Practices consists of studies indicate that companies with robust environmental policies frequently have better levels of employee engagement. Engagement Policies and Programs enacting sustainability policies and programs (such as waste minimization and energy conservation) can raise employee engagement and job satisfaction.

Employee Involvement is when workers feel their efforts are recognized, they are more likely to be involved in sustainability activities. Staff Participation in sustainable performance and productivity leads to further growth and development. Engaged workers are more productive, which can improve the performance of the company.

Creativity leads to employee encouragement to contribute to fresh concepts and solutions, employee participation in sustainability can encourage creativity.

Corporate Reputation involves businesses that encourage staff participation in sustainability initiatives frequently witness gains in their standing in the community.

RESULTS

Job Satisfaction leading to workers sustainability projects frequently expresses greater job satisfaction. Retention and Recruitment involves talent may be attracted and retained more successfully by companies with robust sustainability procedures.

Because of resource allocation some organizations may find it difficult to allocate the resources needed to implement and maintain sustainability projects.

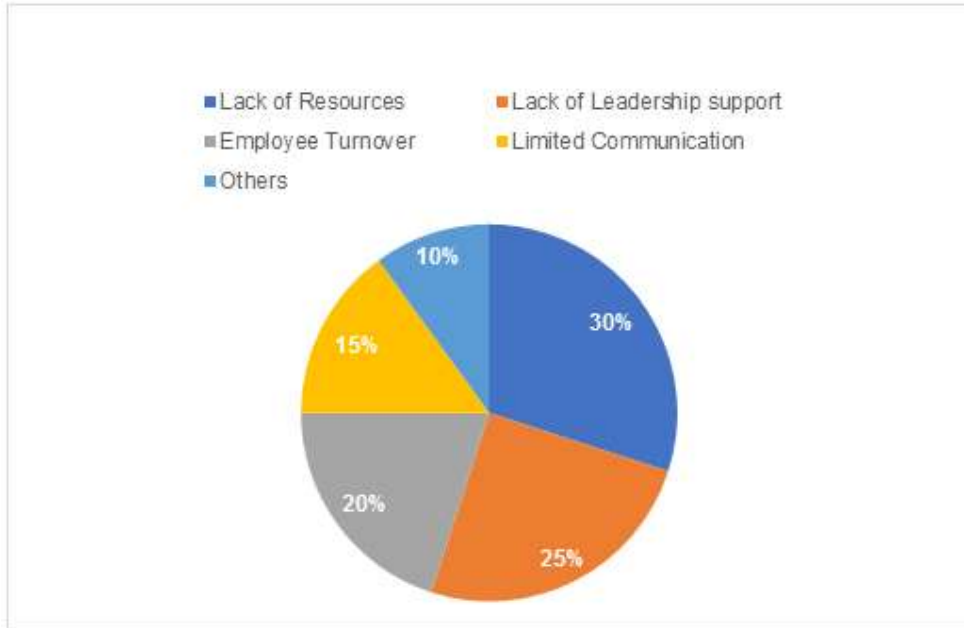
Measurement Challenges: Determining how sustainability affects employee engagement can be challenging and call for specialized instruments and techniques. Prospects for further research studies that track changes in staff involvement in sustainability over time are known as Sector-Specific Studies, Analyzing how employees in various industries engage with sustainability. Employee engagement has become a crucial aspect of organizational success, particularly in the hospitality sector. The hospitality sector is one of the fastest-growing industries in the world, contributing to international travel and tourism growth, particularly in developing countries. However, it faces competition from other sectors as employees view hospitality jobs as low-paying and offering minimal career growth. This literature review aims to explore the relationship between employee engagement and sustainable development in the hospitality sector.

- Social Exchange Theory (SET): suggests that employees engage in behaviours that benefit the organization when they feel supported and valued (Eisenberger et al., 1986).
- Employee engagement is critical in the hospitality sector due to its impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty (Hinkin & Tracy, 2000).
- The hospitality sector is characterized by high employee turnover rates and low engagement levels (Koys, 2001).
- Research suggests that employee engagement is positively related to sustainable development practices (Benn et al., 2015; Daily & Huang, 2001).
- Another study by Kim et al. (2018) found that employee engagement mediated the relationship between leadership support and sustainability performance in the hospitality sector.
- Engaged employees are more likely to participate in sustainability initiatives and exhibit pro-environmental behaviours (Tang et al., 2018).
- Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model: proposes that employee engagement is influenced by job demands and resources (Demerouti & Bakker, 2018).
- A study by Lee et al. (2019) found that employee engagement was positively related to sustainable practices in hotels.

The literature identifies several challenges in engaging employees in sustainability within the hospitality sector. Research indicates that sustainable development techniques and employee engagement are positively correlated. Engaged workers are more likely to contribute to sustainability objectives in a meaningful way, and organizations gain from higher levels of innovation, productivity, and improved brand recognition. Still, there are obstacles to overcome, and further study is required to fully comprehend and maximize this relationship.

CONCEPTUAL FRAME WORK

The conceptual frame work of the study comes out as an outcome of literature review and systematic analysis. It is a deeper analysis into the concepts, components, dynamics of the study variable and their impact on each other. It helps out in drawing the hypothesis, objectives, relationships and inferences of the study constructs. The above gives a proper design to understand the research methodology by using different statistical tools.



Hypothesis\Interrelationships

Hypothesis: High employee engagement positively impacts sustainable development practices in the hospitality sector. The following are the relationships of the research work

1. Leadership Support → Employee Engagement
2. Employee Empowerment → Employee Engagement
3. Sustainability Training → Sustainability Performance
4. Organizational Culture → Employee Engagement
5. Communication → Employee Engagement
6. Employee Engagement → Sustainability Performance
7. Employee Motivation → Job Satisfaction
8. Job Satisfaction → Organizational Commitment

Objectives of the study

1. To investigate the relationship between employee engagement and sustainable development practices in the hospitality sector.
2. To examine the current state of employee engagement in the hospitality sector in Telangana state.
3. To identify the factors influencing employee engagement in the hospitality sector.
4. To develop a framework for enhancing employee engagement to support sustainable development in the hospitality sector.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND MODEL

The Core Concepts of the study include the following

Employee Engagement:

Definition: The emotional and psychological commitment of employees to their organization. It involves dimensions like Motivation, Commitment and Involvement.

Sustainable Development:

Definition: Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It involves dimensions like Economic, Environmental Sustainability and Social Sustainability.

Fig 1 Dimensions of Employee Engagement

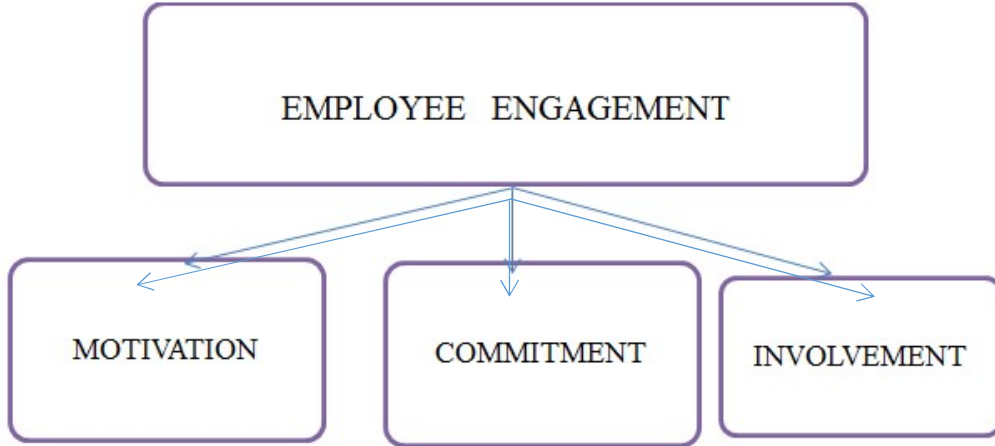


Fig 2 Dimensions of Sustainable Development

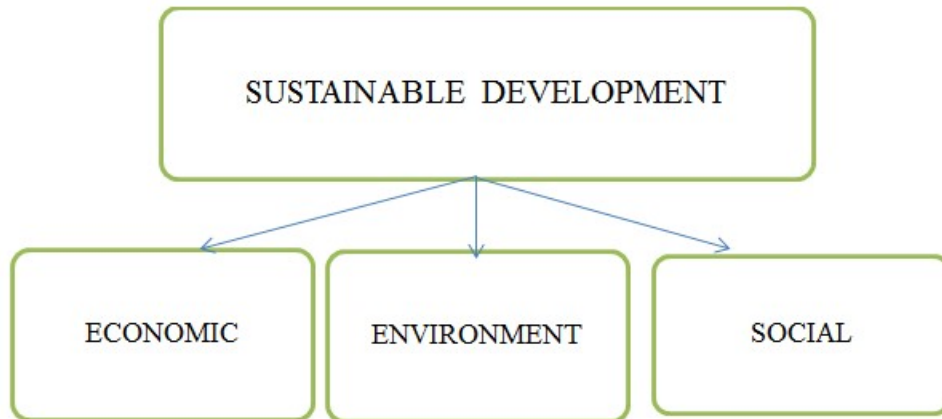
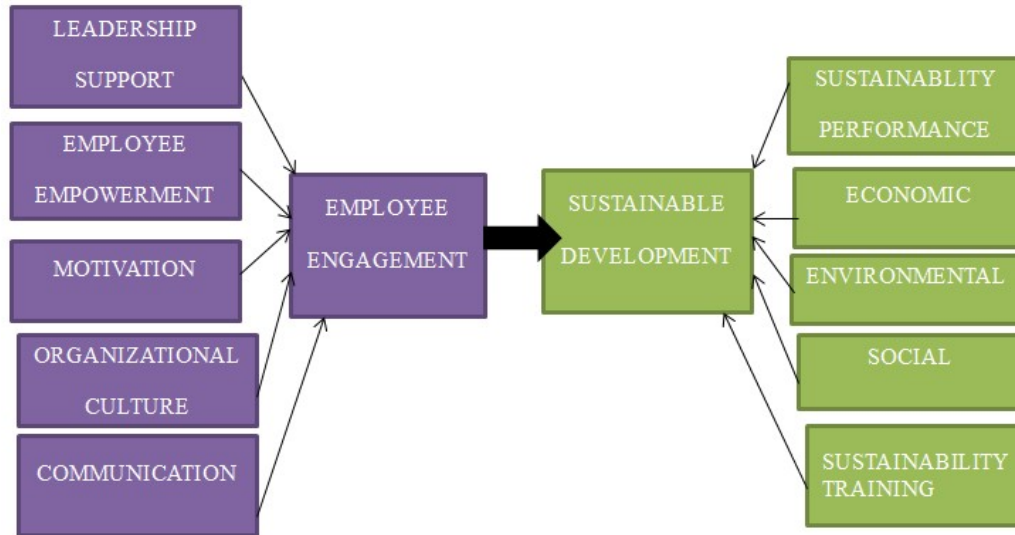


Fig 3 Research Model



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The type of research is said to be both descriptive and practical design. The main purpose of this research is it exists at present. Major methodologies it includes are as follows:

- **Survey:** Ask employees about their engagement and sustainability attitudes.
- **Interviews:** Talk to managers and employees about their experiences.
- **Observation:** Watch how employees practice sustainability.
- **Focus Group:** Discuss sustainability with employees in a group.

Determining Sample Size for Employee Engagement Studies in the Hospitality Sector

It depends upon the several factors like:

1. **Population size:** Estimated number of employees in the hospitality sector in Telangana state.
2. **Desired precision:** Level of accuracy required for the results (e.g., $\pm 5\%$).
3. **Confidence level:** Desired confidence level (e.g., 95%).
4. **Variability:** Expected variability in employee engagement and sustainable development practices.

Assuming a moderate level of variability and a desired precision of $\pm 5\%$ with a 95% confidence level, here are some sample size estimates:

1. **Small-scale study:** 300 employees (representing 10-20 hotels/resorts).
2. **Medium-scale study:** 200 employees (representing 30-50 hotels/resorts).
3. **Large-scale study:** 100 employees (representing 75-100 hotels/resorts).

Statistical Techniques for Analyzing Employee Engagement and Sustainability Data

Statistical techniques can be used to analyze the data collected. These techniques help to understand the relationships between variables, identify patterns, and draw meaningful conclusions. Below are some statistical techniques that could be employed:

Descriptive Statistics

Purpose: To summarize and describe the basic features of the data.

Techniques:

1. Mean, Median, Mode: To find the average levels of employee engagement and sustainability practices.
2. Standard Deviation & Variance: To measure the variability of employee engagement levels across different organizations.
3. Correlation Analysis (Pearson, Spearman) to examine strength and direction of relationships

Table 1 Mean, SD and inter correlation among study variables

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	Skewness (Std Error)	Kurtosis (Std Error)
Employee Engagement	600	78.06	9.45	61.79	-1.143 (.123)	1.418 (.234)
Sustainable Development	600	45.51	8.98	53.19	-1.236 (.133)	1.312(.234)

Table 1 presented descriptive data details supporting the notion that sustainable growth and employee engagement are fundamental to human resources in the hospitality industry. The employee engagement was found to have a variance of 61.79 and a mean and standard deviation of 78.06 and 9.45, respectively. The mean for sustainable development is 45.51, with a standard deviation of 8.98 and variation of 53.19. Standard error is also detected, along with skewness and kurtosis.

Table 2 Testing Z score- The level of Employee Engagement and Sustainable Development

	Z-Score Range	Employee Engagement	Sustainable Development
High	Above 1.25	315	280
Average	-1.25 to 1.25	115	109
Low	Below -1.25	99	111
Total		600	600

Table 2 and Figure 02 use Z-score computations to indicate the level of Employee Engagement and Sustainable Development in the hospitality industry at Telangana. A standard score called the Z-score shows how many standard deviations there are from the mean. Depending on how the observed score compared to the mean, it displayed the observed score's departure from the mean, which may be zero, positive, or negative. It can be calculated using the formula (observed score – mean)/standard deviation. According to the data structure, the majority of the population under investigation had average levels of Employee Engagement and Sustainable Development; 08% to 15% had poor levels, and 4% had high levels.

Table 3 Correlation analysis between Employee Engagement and Sustainable Development

	Employee Engagement (600)	Sustainable Development (600)
Employee Engagement (600)	1	.432**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.002
Sustainable Development (600)	.238**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	

Notes: ** 0.01 level

A correlation analysis between employee engagement and sustainable development is shown in Table 3 for employees working in hospitality sector underperforming the above mentioned concepts. A significant linear link between the variables of the study done with SPSS version 26. Employee engagement and Sustainable development had a positive link, according to the correlation coefficient ($r = .432$, $p = .002$). The correlation coefficient value of .432 in this case indicates a positive and moderate link between study variables, which is significant at the .002 level.

The linear association between sustainable development and employee engagement showed a positive relationship, with a correlation coefficient of $r = .238$, $p = .001$. In this instance, the correlation coefficient value between sustainable development and employee engagement is .238, showing a somewhat favorable link that is significant at the .001 level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Impact of Sustainability Performance and Sustainability Training on Employee Engagement

A positive correlation between Employee Engagement and Sustainable Development practices. Organizations with strong leadership and a culture of sustainability have higher employee engagement. Industry type and size impact engagement. Training programs focused on sustainability significantly enhance employee engagement. Employee engagement mediates the relationship between sustainability initiatives and business outcomes.

Workers that participate in sustainability projects frequently show greater levels of drive and dedication to their jobs. Employees who take part in sustainability initiatives report feeling more motivated and committed because they have a greater sense of purpose and are in line with the organization's values, according to surveys and interviews.

The employment satisfaction of personnel engaged in sustainable development initiatives has significantly increased. Employees that participate in sustainability projects report higher levels of happiness than their non-participating counterparts, according to data from job satisfaction surveys. When workers are successfully involved in sustainability projects, organizations often witness gains in overall performance measures. The degree of employee involvement in sustainable practices is favorably connected with performance measures like productivity, efficiency, and financial performance.

Significant increased engagement give rise to employment satisfaction of personnel. Engaged employees in sustainable development initiatives participates in sustainability projects, report higher levels of happiness than their non-participating counterparts found from the data of job satisfactions.

Data from job satisfaction survey validates workers are successfully involved in sustainability projects; organizations often witness gains in overall performance measures. The degree of employee involvement in sustainable practices is favorably connected with performance measures like productivity, efficiency, and financial performance. Strong sustainability policies help organizations recruit top personnel more successfully and retain employees at better rates with strong sustainability initiatives are more successful in keeping their current workforce and drawing in new ones, according to recruitment and retention data. Engagement of employees in sustainability frequently results in improved innovation and creativity in hospitality sector.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Engaged employees are more likely to contribute to sustainability initiatives, improve service quality, and enhance operational efficiency. Influencing factors involves the following compounds for better growth and development. Organizational culture: How a culture of sustainability within the organization impacts employee engagement. Leadership emphasizes on its existence and the role of leadership in fostering employee engagement and supporting sustainable development goals. Training and development considers the influence of training programs on enhancing employee skills related to sustainability.

Outcomes:

Improved organizational performance: improved reputation, cost savings through efficient resource use, and compliance with regulatory requirements along with employee satisfaction, and community impact.

Key Factors Driving Employee Engagement through Sustainability Practices

Organizational Culture: A culture that prioritizes sustainability can significantly influence employee engagement. When employees see that their organization is committed to sustainable practices, they are more likely to feel a sense of pride and purpose. Leadership: Leaders who demonstrate a commitment to sustainability and employee well-being can inspire similar values in their teams. Transformational leadership, characterized by inspiration, motivation, and support, can enhance employee engagement. Communication: Open and transparent communication about the organization's sustainability goals and achievements can enhance employee engagement. Regular updates and feedback mechanisms ensure that employees feel informed and valued. Training and Development: Providing training on sustainability-related topics helps employees understand the importance of their roles in achieving these goals. It also equips them with the skills to implement sustainable practices. Work-Life Balance: Organizations that promote work-life balance tend to have more engaged employees. Flexibility, wellness programs, and a supportive work environment contribute to higher engagement levels.

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Strategies for Effectively Implementing Sustainability Practices in the Workplace

Implementing this kind of things are not an easy task, some of the following strategies which are important for implementing such things are as follows:

Communication: Regularly communicate sustainability goals, progress, and achievements to employees.
Training and Development: Provide training on sustainability practices and encourage employee involvement.

Recognition and Rewards: Recognize and reward employees for their sustainability contributions.
Empowerment: Empower employees to make decisions and take actions that support sustainability goals.
Well-being: Support employee well-being through wellness programs and work-life balance initiatives.

Benefits of Employee Engagement and Sustainability Development on Organizational Performance

Improved Customer Satisfaction: Engaged employees provide better service, leading to enlarged customer loyalty and retention. **Reduced Turnover Rates:** Engaged employees are more likely to stay with the organization, reducing recruitment and training costs.

Enhanced Sustainability Performance: Engaged employees are more likely to participate in sustainability initiatives, leading to reduced energy consumption, waste, and water usage. **Increased Productivity:** Engaged employees are more motivated and productive, leading to improved operational efficiency.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE PROSPECT

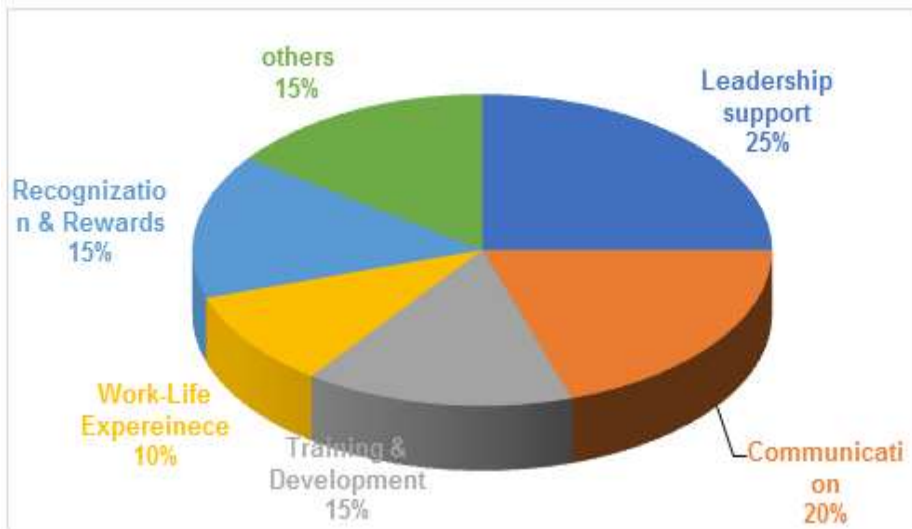
This study summarizes the literature to offer a thorough understanding on employee engagement in sustainable development. In order to give readers a thorough grasp of how sustainability might improve employee engagement and vice versa, this review synthesizes the available evidence. Subsequent research endeavors may provide additional insights into the subtleties of this correlation and pragmatic recommendations for establishments aiming to incorporate sustainability into their staff engagement tactics.

LIMITATIONS

1. The study is limited to Telangana state, which may not be representative of the entire hospitality sector in India.
2. The sample size may be limited, which can affect the generalizability of the findings.
3. The study may be cross-sectional, which may not capture changes in employee engagement and sustainable development over time.
4. The findings may not be generalizable to other states or countries.
5. Employee engagement is a complex construct, and the study may use limited measures to assess it.

CONCLUSION

Employee Engagement is a critical factor in achieving sustainable development in the hospitality sector by providing several opportunities which are essential for the successful implementation of sustainability initiatives, which in turn can enhance organizational reputation. By implementing effective employee engagement strategies, hospitality organizations can improve customer satisfaction, reduce turnover rates, and enhance sustainability performance. However, achieving this requires addressing the unique challenges of the industry, particularly in regions like Telangana. Future research should focus on developing tailored strategies to foster employee engagement in sustainability, and have practical implications for hotel managers, policymakers, and sustainability practitioners seeking to enhance the sector's sustainability performance by considering the specific socio-economic and cultural context of the region.



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