

# A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK ON COMPANY ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOUR FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND PERFORMANCE

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**Abstract:** *In the current situation of recession, fierce competition and European and global requirements for sustainable development, organizational behaviour becomes the key foundation in the efforts made towards performance. In this context, after a brief presentation of the literature review, the purpose of this paper is to highlight the main internal factors that influence organizational behaviour and to present a conceptual vision regarding the combined approach of organizational behaviour and the sustainable development of the company for performance.*

**Keywords:** *organizational behaviour, sustainability, performance, management, conceptual framework*

**JEL Classification:** L25, M14, O21, O44, Q56

## 1. Introduction

The performance and success of any organization depends on a number of internal and external factors. Internal factors are controlled by management and refer to the structure, culture, power of stakeholders,

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but also to the behaviour of the individuals and groups that make it up. External factors cannot be controlled by the organization's management, but they can be anticipated (political, economic, social, technological) and the organization can respond to them with appropriate behaviour.

Although the literature offers a multitude of opinions regarding organizational behaviour, but more regarding the various aspects of sustainability, the aim of the paper is to demonstrate that only an appropriate organizational behaviour leads to sustainable development and performance. Doubtlessly, the management of the organization is the decisive factor in this approach.

## **2. Literature review**

### *2.1. Organizational behaviour*

Large number of psychologists, social scientists and academicians has carried out research on various issues related to organization behaviour (Mahnek, 2023).

Behaviour is directly concerned with the understanding, prediction and control of human behaviour in organisations (Luthans, 2011). *Organisational behaviour can be defined as the study and application of knowledge about human behaviour related to other elements of an organisation such as structure, technology and social systems (Pasad, 2012).*

Organisational structure, power & politics, status, relation with juniors & seniors, conflicts and culture affect the individual behaviour in the organisation. The field of the organizational behavior does not depend upon deductions based on gut feelings but attempts to gather information regarding an issue in a scientific manner under controlled conditions (Mahnek, 2023).

Organisational behaviour exists at multiple like levels. Behaviour occurs at the individual, the group, and the organisational systems levels. Behaviour that is attributable to each of these levels can be both identified and isolated but at the same time these three levels interact

with each other and organisational behaviour being affected by the behaviour of individuals, group level behaviour is affected by the organisational level phenomena and so on.

## *2.2. Sustainable development*

In today's world, sustainability has become increasingly embedded in business campaigns and strategies. For a business, sustainability means operating without having a negative impact on the external environment, community or society.

A sustainable business strategy is one that seeks to create a positive impact on one or more of these groups. In practice, a sustainable business strategy can take many different forms and is unique to each organization. Companies can switch to using sustainable materials for their packaging, optimize their supply chains to reduce environmental emissions, and even sponsor programs to benefit the local community.

Sustainability is essential to maintaining the quality of our lives, the diversity of life on earth, and the health of the earth's resource-rich ecosystems. Sustainable environmental practices improve water and air quality, reduce landfills and increase long-term renewable energy sources (Sinha, 2023).

The reasons include the promotion of ecological practices in sustainable development, environmental protection and gender equality. These points are respected in any company that applies sustainable development management. The stake of sustainable development management goes far beyond the company in which society is also applied. They affect the environment and natural resources, but also the well-being of humanity. Its implementation benefits all of these elements, and its effects take time to be felt. It actually induces a whole process meant to last over time (Monaco.edu).

A commitment to sustainability is primarily a behavioural decision, because organizations that invest in sustainability and enshrine it in their mission, values and strategy depend on their employees to actually join and be actively involved in this goal. It is the synergy regarding the

behaviour of all those who belong to an organization that contributes to the achievement of the organization's sustainable objectives.

Creating sustainable businesses implies that the overall behaviour of an organization is oriented towards sustainability. We believe that "sustainability dimensions are not understood as business restrictions or policy or legal regulations, but rather are highly recommended as they generate business value" (Henriques et al., 2022: 5).

Consequently, combining business sustainability with organizational behaviour is a natural alliance. Such an alliance has the potential to contribute to the development of sustainable organizations based on their human capital (Henriques et al., 2022).

Sustainable development practices help countries and businesses develop in ways that adapt to the challenges of climate change. This protects important natural resources for our current and future generations and enables communities to thrive (Steinbrink, 2019).

Organizational behaviour refers to the research of environmental and social aspects that influence the way employees work in the organization (Kaifi & Noori, 2010). Therefore, organizational behaviour becomes key in determining the success of implementation and adherence to sustainable measures and policies. Sustainability dominates the decisions of many organizations around the globe. Boudreau & Ramstad (2005) describe sustainability as "future-performing" organizations.

### *2.3 Organizational performance*

Persistence in performance is a goal that any organization works towards to maintain a better position in the competitive world (Akram, 2018).

Organizational behaviour are implemented for human resource so that the performance, efficiency and the output can be maximized from individual group members (McShane & Von Glinow, 2013).

On the other hand, sustainability performance is the aggregate negative or positive bottom line of economic, environmental and social impacts of an entity against a defined baseline and is defined as the quantification

of an organization's total performance based on performance indicators, which can include its policies, decisions, and actions creating economic, social and environmental results (Büyüközkan & Karabulut, 2018).

In the achievement of organizational performance and sustainable competitive advantage, an overwhelming role, in the current era, is played by the development of the information and communication technology infrastructure (Akram et al., 2018). However, the investments in this field also influence organizational behaviour.

### **3. Scope and methodology**

The paper aims to highlight the main internal factors that influence the sustainable behaviour in companies and to presents a conceptual framework regarding the combined approach of organizational behaviour and the sustainable development of the company for performance.

The methodological approach applied in the work is based on theoretical investigations in the field of organizational behaviour and sustainability, on continuous observation of local and international companies' behaviour for sustainability and own opinions.

### **4. Results and discussion**

#### *4.1. Internal factors influencing organizational behavior*

As far as organizational behaviour is concerned, it can be influenced by nominated external factors or internal factors, such as: knowledge, organizational culture, moral identity, intellectual skills, adaptation skills or even emotions.

*Knowledge* means facts, information, and skills acquired through experience or education”. Knowledge helps people to understand their own behaviours, attitudes, ethical views, and performance, as well as those of the people with whom you'll be working. This type of

knowledge will assist you in working effectively with managers, colleagues, and subordinates” (MyEducator, 2023). “In organizations knowledge work is understood to comprise the creation of knowledge, the application of knowledge, the transmission of knowledge, and the acquisition of knowledge. Each of these activities is seen as a discretionary behavior” (Kelloway & Barling, 2000).

In any organization, *culture* is a complex and multisystem framework (Trevino & Nelson, 2018). An organizational culture that supports the sustainable development strategy contributes to ethical behaviour in terms of protecting the environment through actions to implement clean technologies, circular economy, waste selection, continuous training of employees and ensuring a safe and healthy work environment. Pro-environmental or sustainable behaviour is the behaviour that minimizes as much as possible damage to the environment or even benefits it (Steg & Vlek, 2009).

*Moral identity* helps people make moral judgments that then affect their ethical conduct. Individuals strive to engage in behaviours that are consistent with their moral identities (Blasi, 1984)

A company is driven to success if its staff, especially managers, have *intellectual ability*. This manifests itself in different dimensions: number of skills, verbal comprehension, speed of perception, inductive reasoning, deductive reasoning, spatial visualization and memory (Robbins & Judge, 2015). Moral identity helps people make moral judgments that then affect their ethical conduct. Individuals strive to engage in behaviours that are consistent with their moral identities (Blasi, 1984).

*Organizational adaptation* theory asserts that businesses must change to keep up with changing market conditions or shifting environmental factors to remain successful. They basically have to change based on outside forces (Claudia, 2022).

Organizational adaptation is equivocal. On the one hand, the concept is ubiquitous in management research and acts as the glue binding together the central issues of organizational change, performance, and survival. On the other hand, it lurks around in various guises (e.g., “fit,”

“alignment,” “congruence,” and “strategic change”) studied from multiple theoretical streams (e.g., behavioural, resource-based, and institutional), and at different levels of analysis (organization- and industry-level) (Sarta et al., 2021)

*Emotions* in organizational behaviour play a critical role in shaping an organization's environment, communication, and decision-making. “Emotions can shape how people communicate. A cheerful supervisor can boost the team's spirit, while a disgruntled co-worker might bring down the overall mood. Emotions in organizational behaviour can set the tone for interactions” (Testbook, 2023).

#### *4.2. A conceptual framework on company's behaviour for sustainability and performance*

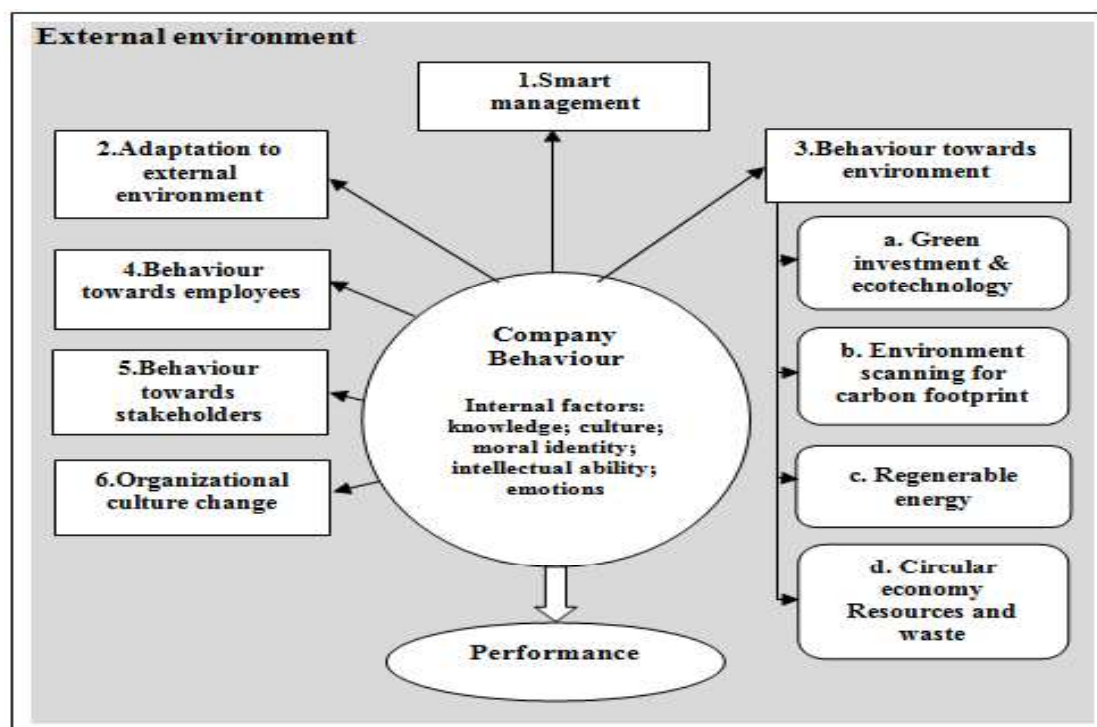
The combined approach of organizational behavior and the sustainable development of the company towards performance is presented six components of the approach to organizational behavior in the context of sustainability are identified: smart management (CEO), adaptation to external environment, behavior towards environment, behavior towards employees, behavior towards stakeholders, and organizational culture change (fig.1).

Each of these components manifests itself in conditions specific to companies, but, nevertheless, they have common features.

### **1. Smart management**

It is clear that a smart manager can lead the company towards performance. It has a number of characteristics, among which: strategic vision of the business, strong ethics, flexibility in thinking, openness to innovations and the implementation of new technologies, concern for the environment, employees and other stakeholders. “A manager is not only responsible for a team's output, but they are also responsible for supporting the individuals within their teams. This means understanding what drives and motivates them, what their strengths are, and how to guide them in areas they need to develop. Great leaders are good

communicators and display a high level of emotional intelligence” (Michael, 2023).



*Fig.1 A conceptual framework on company’s behaviour for sustainability and performance*

There are differences between a good manager and a smart manager. The latter has a positive attitude, gets totally involved, puts his soul into everything he does for the good of the company and has "the ability to make decisions with empathy and knowledge" (Hogan, 2016). On the other hand, a smart manager "is mostly about making the most of the working hours by learning three crucial aspects: delegating, prioritizing and simplifying" (Jain, 2019). In the current conditions, the management of companies that "don't take reasonable action to meet sustainability goals are falling behind. Therefore, organizations must build new modes of operation that support the interdependent systems of business, humanity, and the global environment by cultivating decision-makers who share the qualities of sustainable leaders” (Jain, 2019). Khadem



(2023) proposes seven types of behaviour for managers, among which: “making a proactive action plan; responding to new ideas with openness, collaboration, learning, responsibility; following through with commitments; make decisions based on facts and not emotions. These behaviours, when adopted, will promote a sustainable and positive environment that is guaranteed to attract and keep top people”.

## **2. Adaptation to external environment**

The complexity and instability of the external environment of companies brings new challenges to their management and determines the adaptation of organizational behavior to the new requirements. Strategies are constantly changing. "Globalization, new technologies, and greater transparency have combined to upend the business environment and give many CEOs a deep sense of unease" (Reeves & Deimler, 2011).

In this risky and uncertain context, companies must act quickly with the most effective capabilities and competences in order to preserve the performance gained. "In order to adapt, a company must have its antennae tuned to signals of change from the external environment, decode them, and quickly act to refine or reinvent its business model and even reshape the information landscape of its industry" (Reeves & Deimler, 2011). Thus, the responsibility of the company's management is continuously increasing. "Strategic leaders have to adapt their actions to the basic characteristics of the organization's environment. Their task is to find a way to get the organization harmonized and almost imbued with its overall surroundings, both present and future (Tipuric, 2022).

## **3. Behaviour towards the environment**

“Sustainable development is an obligation of present generations to ensure a future for generations to come, both ecologically as well as socially and economically. The green organization, as a modern organization has to be ecologically clean. Thus, organizations have to adopt, besides classic economic objectives related to making profit, a

series of objectives related to environmental protection” (Dragomir, 2021).

In order to create an environmentally friendly company, its organizational behaviour is aimed at achieving the following objectives: green investment and ecotechnology; environmental scanning regarding pollution of water, air, soil, biodiversity; renewable energy to reduce the carbon footprint, circular economy to save resources and recycle waste.

### ***a. Green investment and ecotechnology***

Sustainable investments can be found in: non-polluting factories, machines and equipment with reduced consumption of materials and energy, in last generation IT systems, in control and management systems, as well as in eco-technologies.

The creation of any eco-product is the result of an eco-production process, defined as a complex technical-economic process, which includes all the activities carried out in one or more workplaces, with the aim of making the eco-product.

The main component of a production process is the basic eco-processes, which contribute directly to the transformation of raw materials into finished eco-products or to its repair/reconditioning/recycling in order to regain or change its functional role (Amza, 2011, p7).

Also, the adoption of digital solutions is part of the strategy to make the activity more efficient and eliminate the probability of doing mistakes. Likewise, "digital transformation will trigger a revolution in all sectors, including the financial one, which will bring innovation, speed, but will also lead to increased risks, operational risks in general and cyber risks in particular" (Negrea, 2022).

### ***b. Environment scanning for carbon footprint***

The environment of companies is extremely dynamic and turbulent, thus determining a continuous flow of changes in organizational behaviour.

Therefore, companies must understand the environment in which they operate and take advantage of the opportunities that arise. "Environmental scanning meaning is the gathering of information from organizations internal and external environments, and careful monitoring of these environments to identify future threats and opportunities. It is the analyses of all factors that may affect the future of the organization" (Firdausi et al., 2023).

Since the current requirements for sustainability are increasingly tough, companies are interested in analysing, controlling and monitoring the impact of their activities on water, air, soil and biodiversity, internally and in their external environment to avoid damages and to protect natural environment and resources. The target is of course zero carbon emissions.

### *c. Energy from renewable sources*

Renewable energy technologies play a crucial role in sustainable development, regardless of its source (solar energy, wind energy, geothermal energy or bio energy). They reduce greenhouse gas emissions and provide many communities with access to energy. The positive effects materialize in improving energy security and ensuring access to energy for communities that previously lacked it. Renewable energy technologies play a crucial role in sustainable development by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving energy security and providing access to energy to communities that previously lacked it. (Verma, 2023).

The exploitation of renewables is to a high extent characterised by being site-specific, tailoring to locally available renewable energy sources. Thus, transitioning to renewable energy supply requires resource assessments, appropriate technologies, and systems that can properly integrate the renewable energy sources by meeting demands with the right temporal profile (Østergaard, 2020).

### *d. Circular economy*

Organizational behaviour in the circular economy implies the economy of resources, especially of scarce ones, by reusing them in the creation of

new products with positive effects in sustainability. A circular economy reveals and designs out the negative impacts of economic activity that cause damage to human health and natural systems. This includes the release of greenhouse gases and hazardous substances, the pollution of air, land, and water, as well as structural waste such as traffic congestion. A circular economy favours activities that preserve value in the form of energy, labor, and materials. This means designing for durability, reuse, remanufacturing, and recycling to keep products, components, and materials circulating in the economy (Macarthur, 2023).

Implementing circular economy (CE) requires complex and dynamic changes in technical and behavioural aspects (Bertassii et al., 2021). For this purpose, the companies concern themselves with the creation of sustainable products, checking their quality on the flow, selecting waste and their separate storage and recycling. Also, flexible and biodegradable packaging is used.

#### **4. Behaviour towards employees**

Organizational behaviour includes the behaviour of employees who carry out company activities without expecting other rewards (Organ, 2018).

In relation to employees, organizational behaviour takes into account the development of their skills, motivation and recognition of merits, responsibility strategies in solving tasks and involvement in the development of initiatives in the interest of the company, training programs to enrich professional knowledge, teamwork and communication, but also offering opportunities for career development.

In correlation with sustainable development, the company is concerned with ensuring safe and healthy workplaces.

#### **5. Behaviour towards stakeholders**

The behaviour towards the other stakeholders (suppliers, clients, shareholders, community) in the conditions of sustainability is open, of collaboration and continuous information. The transparency of decisions

and activity results, the high level of data provided, ethics and good business practices, as well as risk management, must be the main directions of behaviour towards stakeholders.

Involvement in the community means supporting initiatives in various forms of artistic and cultural expression, sports activities, educational or scientific activities, and it is considered that their impact on the innovative character and competitiveness of society is part of companies' mission and development strategy.

## **6. Organizational culture change**

Culture is a belief about ethics, behaviours and values and it is part of people and organizations' identity. "People in a company experience the organizational culture through their interactions with their manager and team members. They experience the company culture through the systems and tools they use" (Stevenson, 2021).

Company's culture influences organizational behaviour through the diversity of practices. In critical situations, such as financial crises, pandemics, the rapid evolution of technology, the need for cyber security, the loss of competitiveness and other causes, organizational culture and behaviour change at the same time as culture.

"Promoting a successful and innovative cultural environment often requires changes in current behaviours and attitudes" (Khadem, 2023).

The companies' behaviour towards the harmonization of environmental and financial objectives in the delivery of core business activities to maximize value for partners and community is the true performance for sustainability.

## **5. Conclusion**

So far, the companies and their management concern towards sustainability has grown continuously, because the international targets for a clean environment with zero carbon emissions are getting closer in

time. But, the sustainable development of companies implies a specific organizational behaviour to obtain performance.

The paper highlights the main internal factors that influence the organization's behaviour towards sustainability, respectively: knowledge; cultures; moral identity; intellectual ability; emotions, as well as the organization's adaptability to changes in the external environment. These factors make sense in organizational behaviour, as is illustrated in a conceptual framework. It refers to six directions of organizational behaviour that should be implemented in any company aiming for success and performance.

First of all, companies must recruit or train a smart management that takes into account the technical, social, economic and political transformations in the world and adapt the companies' strategies to them.

Then, the behaviour towards the environment, employees and other stakeholders is changing compared to the traditional one to ensure the sustainability of the companies.

However, all these changes lead to a new organizational culture, in which responsibility, transparency, integrity and commitment to the protection of the natural environment prevail.

The conceptual framework on company's behaviour for sustainability and performance proposed in the paper can be useful to companies in any industry, as it takes into account general aspects necessary for companies to implement this approach.

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