

# SUSTAINABLE HRM PRACTICES AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING OF EMPLOYEES: A CASE OF PRIVATE SECTOR BANKS IN PAKISTAN

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**Abstract.** *The paper aims at investigating the relationship between HRM practices on the psychological well-being of employees. This research is explanatory in nature and deductive approach is being employed. This study used a survey questionnaire to gather information from the respondents on a Likert scale. For data analysis, SPSS was used. The target population for the study was the employees currently working in the private sector banks in Pakistan specifically Islamic banks. The outcomes of the studies show that there is a significant impact of all sustainable human resource management practices including sustainable recruitment and selection, sustainable training and development, and sustainable career planning except sustainable performance appraisal on the psychological well-being of employees. The outcomes of this research are specific to Islamic banks, so other organizations can only use them as guidance. Banking sectors need to recognize that sustainable HRM greatly affects the psychological well-being of employees. Human resource management in the organization must understand that having sustainable practices is crucial for promoting higher levels of psychological well-being among employees.*

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## Introduction

There is an encyclopedic agreement that the present direction of modern society is indefensible. For centuries, organizations and business sectors have been involved in practices that have led to prevailing environmental degradation, inequality, and social and economic crises. Yet, the preventative actions occur at a promising but insufficient rate by the organization and business sectors (Grainger-Brown &

Malekpour, 2019; Zia & Bibi, 2022). Organizations and business sectors are recognized as environmentally and socially responsible parties. It is a crucial concern for organizations and the business sector to adopt sustainable practices to prevent future risks. For this, human resource management is mainly responsible for the majority of working operations. Incorporating sustainable practices at such a level will enhance the overall performance and productivity of the organization while retaining natural resources and fulfilling social responsibility aspects (Tulsi & Ji, 2020). Hence, performance and productivity can only be achieved if the human resource working in that organization is psychologically satisfied with the work environment (Kundi et al., 2020). As happy and satisfied employees tend to be more productive at work than unhappy and unsatisfied employees (DiMaria et al., 2020).

When it comes to organizational performance and employee well-being several factors are involved including working conditions, personality attributes, employee satisfaction, organizational hierarchy, etc. (Diamantidis & Chatzoglou, 2018). To have psychologically satisfied employees, an organization must take effective steps to enhance work activities and operations. Therefore, organizations must adopt sustainable practices. As the world is moving towards sustainability due to the limitation of natural resources. Several organizations have identified the key human issues to cover the gap areas that are affecting employees as well as the environment (Naciti et al., 2022) and the psychological well-being of employees at work (Salgado et al., 2019). To resolve these issues, organizations are working on moving towards the execution of sustainable HRM practices including, sustainable recruitment and selection, sustainable performance appraisal, sustainable career planning, and sustainable training and development (Amjad et al., 2021). Furthermore, sustainable human resource management aligns with several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) established by the United Nations. The specific SDGs that relate to sustainable human resource management include decent work and economic growth, good health and well-being, reduced inequalities, and responsible consumption and production. Several firms are working on sustainable practices to retain highly efficient employees and to provide a healthy working environment to achieve sustainable organizational goals (Ybema et al., 2020).

However, sustainability in the context of organizational operation is still the biggest concern that needs to be resolved on a priority basis (Naciti et al., 2022). Without sustainable HRM practices, it will be the biggest challenge for organizations to achieve these sustainability goals. In especially developing countries, which are struggling for their survival and growth, sustainability is the biggest concern for these countries. Organizational operations may put many lives in danger, not only exposing individuals to health hazards but also will result in environmental degradation which will have a long-term impact on livelihood security, cultural and social ways of life, and economic development (Ali & Kaur,

2021). If these aspects are not resolved will also impact the psychological well-being of employees, putting the performance and productivity of the organization at risk.

Hence, our study will demonstrate the significance of sustainability in the organizational context and how sustainable practices can improve the overall psychological well-being of employees (Kundi et al., 2020). Furthermore, the study sheds light on the significance of human resource management in a sustainability context for the well-being of human resources in the banking sector of developing countries like Pakistan. The main objective of this research is: “To investigate the impact of sustainable HRM practices on employee psychological well-being”. The main objective has been divided into four sub-objectives:

- To determine the effect of sustainable recruitment and selection on employee psychological well-being
- To determine the effect of training and development on employee psychological well-being
- To determine the effect of sustainable career planning on employee psychological well-being
- To determine the effect of sustainable performance appraisal on employee psychological well-being.

## **Review of Literature**

### **Sustainability in HRM Practices and Psychological Well-Being**

Employee psychological well-being plays an essential role in promoting a good healthy and productive environment. According to recent studies, it has been concluded that one out of four individuals suffers from mental illness and it can extensively impact the satisfaction and productivity of employees, thereby, putting organizations at challenge (Bufquin et al., 2021). Accordingly, Kundi et al. (2020) stated that employee well-being is one of the most essential aspects of an organization’s success as increased employee well-being leads to increased firm performance and productivity. Sustainability in HRM practices has balanced the valuation in the perspectives of economic prosperity, social quality, and environmental integrity (Macke & Genari, 2019), which leads to having a positive impact on employee psychological well-being (Bibi, Khan, & Idrees, 2020; DiMaria et al., 2020; Ishaq & Ikran, 2022). The next section entails the sustainable HRM practices dimensions and their link with psychological well-being.

### **Sustainable Recruitment and Selection and Psychological Wellbeing**

Sustainability in recruitment and selection is an emerging practice that is being followed by many HRM departments and is widely researched by researchers. It

involves green recruiting practices that are designed in a way that generates positive environmental, economic, and social outcomes. If the practice is followed well, at a later stage in the organizational entry it promotes sustainable employee development and practices that not only improve the environment of the organization but also regulate green practices for long-term employee engagement and performance (Pham & Paillé, 2019). To ensure the sustainability of recruitment and selection it is essential to concentrate on the core of HR management for more promising enterprise sustainability and improving business effectiveness. However, to acquire the desired outcome in a limited time the enterprise must manage its resources and human personnel in a way that achieves the greatest results in the briefest time (Makedon et al., 2019). Sustainable recruitment and selection focus on these three key areas sustainable criteria to attract candidates, sustainable awareness among employees, and sustainable employer branding (Saeed et al., 2019).

According to Piwovar-Sulej (2021), recently and during the last decades, researchers have started paying attention to rapidly emerging human resource management issues and focused on the performance management and motivation of the employees. It is viewed that the physiological and psychological aspects of employees should be taken into account during recruitment, selection, performance management, motivation, development, etc., as these practices can impact employee psychological well-being positively or negatively. As per Singh et al. (2019), organizations can work better by executing sustainable practices by protecting employee's psychological well-being as it is linked to productivity. Sustainable recruitment and selection help maintain and improve the employee's psychological well-being. These sustainable HR practices provide employees with a sustainable and healthy work environment representing good employee-centric practices, while at the same time promoting a culture to keep a long-term sustainable impact on employees to keep the well-being of their surroundings. Therefore, the following hypothesis is framed:

*H<sub>1</sub>: Sustainable recruitment and selection have a significant impact on employee psychological well-being.*

### **Sustainable Training and Development and Psychological Wellbeing**

Many organizations recently are focusing on enhancing their training and development practices to align with the sustainability concept to achieve higher efficiency and effectiveness in the context of their organization environment and long-term sustainable future goals. Sustainable training and development play a crucial part in achieving these sustainable goals. It involves training and developing the employees to perform sustainable practices to eliminate any process that could impact negatively the environment, and it also helps in improving the technical and managerial skills to preserve the natural resources and maintain a sustainable working environment (Amjad et al., 2021). Training is a crucial tool

for human development and it is the process through which people's choices are expanded. These choices can differentiate over time indefinitely. Therefore, sustainable training can impact people's choices towards adopting sustainable practices and choices in the long term (Burhan Ismael et al., 2021). An enterprise's human capital is predominantly responsible for maintaining and engaging the enterprise's potential to create valuable resources. Organization considering the sustainable aspect, training mainly revolves around three crucial steps, initiating, ensuring, and integrating. By initiating, the enterprise trains the employees to work with sustainable practices, whereas ensuring and integrating ensures that the employees are adopting sustainable practices to their existing operations (Kummitha & Kummitha, 2021).

Sustainable training and development practices are directly linked with promoting and maintaining a healthy environment while promoting employees' good well-being and mental health. It is reported by Al-Swidi et al. (2021) that such sustainable activities enhance employees' behaviors and motivation as they are directly linked with the psychological well-being of an employee. An employee cannot work productively if they are not satisfied with the work environment. According to Zhang et al. (2021), well-being is a pursuit of both the organization and its human capital, human capital with positive well-being tends to have more positive energy and motivation which results in higher productivity. Employee well-being is not concerned with work satisfaction but is a matter of psychological experience at both work and non-work levels, when employees gauge themselves in sustainable practices and notice a potential change in the environment, it promotes their sensual efficacy and satisfaction, thereby, promoting higher well-being. The research also showed that sustainable training and development is an essential phase in any organization, it can train and develop employees on sustainable practices which not only create a positive work environment but will also enhance the well-being of employees. Therefore, the following hypothesis is framed:

*H<sub>2</sub>: Sustainable training and development have a significant impact on employee psychological well-being.*

### **Sustainable Performance Appraisal and Psychological Wellbeing**

Sustainable practices play a crucial role in environmental and organizational stability. As compared to traditional firms, sustainable organization tends to promote a more eco-friendly environment (Naciti et al., 2022). It is now the biggest concern of organizations to maintain a sustainable atmosphere to survive (Tulsi & Ji, 2020). During studies, it was concluded that businesses that adopted sustainable practices were prone to more cost-effectiveness and profits. Sustainable performance appraisal enhances the employee's sustainable practices to contribute towards a green environment. It includes praising the employees for participating

in the work operations which reduces the risk of harmful gas emissions, and environmentally hazardous practices and aligns with the environmental policies and legal concerns. The research of Amjad et al. (2021) stated that an organization must include sustainable performance appraisal to motivate the employees towards promoting a sustainable environment and to create a positive social outcome. The research added that performance appraisal is a part of performance management, which makes sure that employees are working well together toward achieving the organizational goals.

According to Tweedie et al. (2019), rewards and appraisal always have a positive and motivational impact on employees' well-being. Organizations appraising their employees on their operations tend to have more efficient levels of productivity and increase employee satisfaction. Such organizations also retain highly efficient employees and help them build sustainable careers. Abdelmotaleb and Saha (2020) have shown the impact of sustainable HRM practices and their impact on employee psychological well-being, attitudes, and behaviors, these studies concluded that performance appraisals play an essential role in employee psychological well-being as they are always associated with employee positive behavior and motivation. When an organization appraises its employees, it creates a positive working environment for both the employee and the organization, this perceived conception represents loyalty, trustworthiness, and sincerity of the organization to its employees. A research framework has been developed based on the above literature as shown in Figure 1. Thus, the following hypothesis is framed.

*H<sub>3</sub>: Sustainable performance appraisal has a significant impact on psychological well-being.*

### **Sustainable Career Planning and Psychological Wellbeing**

Sustainability is a long-term futuristic approach. Organization working with sustainable practices tends to think of a broader goal rather than a short-term objective as environmental impact is an essential part of an organization's social responsibility (Naciti et al., 2022). In this competitive and sustainable work era, employees must engage in activities that give them the desired competencies while constructing their careers. To construct their careers individuals, need to actively respond to the competencies, opportunities, and challenges evoked by the environment. Career competencies have been defined by the personal knowledge, skills, and attitude desired by the working conditions which eventually leads to higher career success and retention. For instance, a company working with sustainable environmental practices would want to retain employees who are efficiently changing their work practices to meet sustainable organizational goals (Blokker et al., 2019). The main reason for higher turnover rates in an organization is when employees don't foresee future career opportunities. It can be

addressed in a workplace through employee-manager discussions on career planning and changing future requirements (Lartey, 2021).

According to Santos and Miguel (2021), an employee's psychological well-being is essential to making a potential career decision. The research stated that career planning, social cognitive career, and motivation theory play an essential role as they include all the internal and external factors that influence the decision-making process and individual motivation. Psychological well-being is also considered one of these factors. As per Chin et al. (2022), sustainable career planning can have a positive outlook on an individual's psychological well-being as it is a salient concern for them as well as organizations. They concluded that for individuals, a sustainable career is a steady source of income and self-satisfaction, which contributes to moderating stress levels as there will be fewer chances of loss of livelihood. In addition to that Amrutha and Geetha (2020) stated that the corporate world is moving towards sustainability, promising extensive organizational productivity, long-term growth, and development of organizations. Therefore, this long-term sustainable growth of organizations will provide more sustainable career opportunities to its employees, which will ultimately result in higher employee satisfaction, hence, it will enhance the overall psychological well-being of employees.

H4: *Sustainable career planning has a significant impact on employee psychological well-being.*

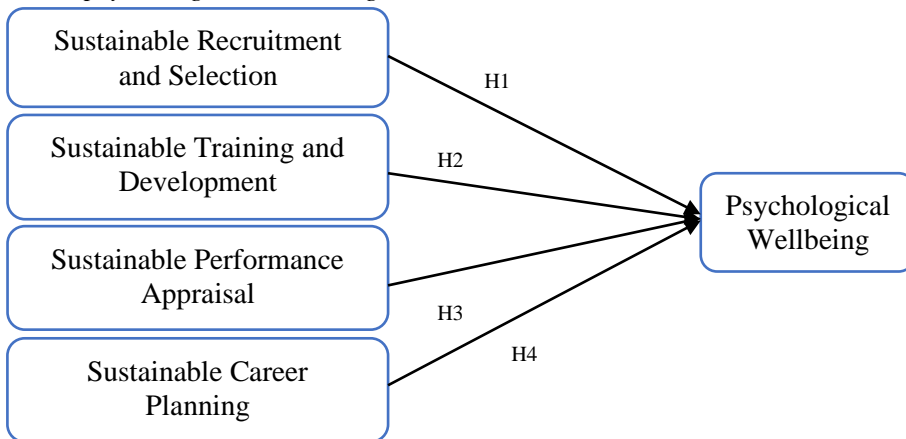


Figure 1: Research Framework

### Methodology of the Research

For this study explanatory research was conducted by opting deductive approach. For this research, the researcher has selected the quantitative examination plan. Data was gathered from all the employees working in private (Islamic) banks in Pakistan. Therefore, the investigator assured that all the participants were

participating voluntarily and not being forced to fill in the responses. Moreover, the sampling technique for this research design is nonprobability convenient sampling as it is most suitable for the designed research. Therefore, the selected sample size is 399 participants. The sustainable HR practices dimensions scale was adopted by (Mohiuddin et al., 2022) whereas to measure of the psychological well-being scale was taken by (Jena et al., 2018).

**Results**

**Descriptive and Reliability Statistics**

The demographic statistics of the respondents are presented in Figures 2 & 3. The following graph in Figure 2 indicates that 41.6% (n=166) respondents were the female representation and 58.4% (n=233) respondents were the male representation in the sample. Figure 3 shows that 22.3% (n=89) of respondents fell at 20-30 years of age whereas 37.8% (n=151) respondents fell at 30-40 years of age and the remaining 26.8% (n=107) fell at 40-50 and 13.0% (n=52) fell at >50 years of age category.

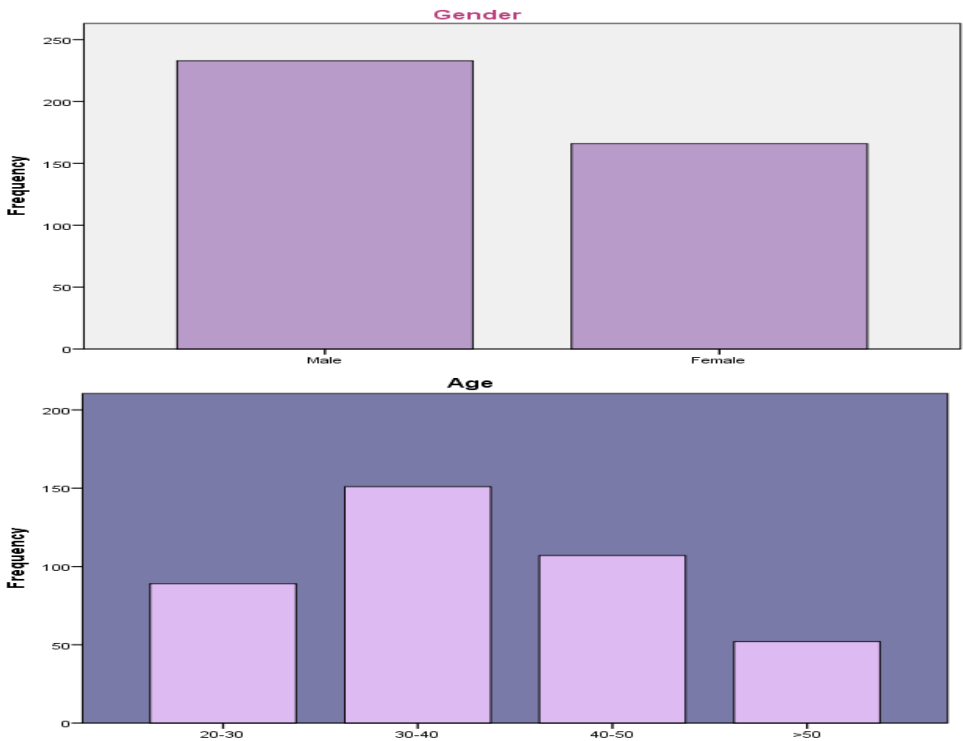


Figure 3 Respondent’s Profile - Age



The descriptive and reliability statistics of the study variables are presented in Table 1. The reliability of all the study variables is greater than 0.70. This means the instrument is considered reliable. Moreover, sustainable recruitment and selection has the highest mean value of 4.78 among all the variables.

Table 1 *Descriptive and Reliability Statistics*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Reliability</b>
Psychological Wellbeing (PWB)	4.24	1.05	0.754
Sustainable Recruitment & Selection (SRS)	4.78	1.57	0.904
Sustainable Training & Development (STD)	4.66	1.48	0.933
Sustainable Performance Appraisal (SPA)	4.72	1.38	0.912
Sustainable Career Planning (SCP)	4.47	1.46	0.921

**Correlation Analysis**

In the table below, the Pearson coefficient values indicate that each variable is significantly related to psychological well-being and there is no issue of multicollinearity as VIF values were <5.00 as per the recommendation of Rogerson (2001).

Table 2 *Correlation and Multicollinearity Analysis (n=399)*

	<b>SRS</b>	<b>STD</b>	<b>SPA</b>	<b>SCP</b>	<b>PWB</b>	<b>VIF</b>
SRS	1.00					2.776
STD	0.786	1.00				2.360
SPA	0.722	0.799	1.00			3.501
SCP	0.700	0.801	0.802	1.00		2.780
PWB	0.867	0.781	0.723	0.800	1.00	

**Regression Results**

Based on the below table, we can see that over 70.5% of the variation in the independent variable is explained by the dependent variable. Referring to the below table the research model is significant as the sig value is less than 0.05.

Table 3 *Regression Table*

<b>Model</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R. Square</b>	<b>Adj. R Square</b>	<b>Std. Error of the Estimate</b>
1	0.839	0.705	0.702	0.574

<b>Model</b>	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
1 Regression	310.709	4	77.68	235.07	.000
Residual	130.193	394	0.33		
Total	440.902	398			

Model		Unstandardized		Standardized	t	Sig.
		Coefficients		Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.339	0.106		12.68	0.00
	SRS	0.072	.031	0.107	2.35	0.02
	STD	0.234	.041	0.330	5.77	0.00
	SPA	-0.034	.043	-0.045	-0.79	0.43
	SCP	0.364	.039	0.503	9.33	0.00

In the above table, all variables significantly impact psychological well-being except sustainable performance appraisal as the sig value is greater than 0.05. There is a positive and significant impact of sustainable recruitment and selection, sustainable training and development, and sustainable career planning on employee psychological well-being in the banking sector. However, sustainable performance appraisal has an insignificant impact on psychological well-being.

Therefore, the regression equation is explicated below:

$$Y = a + BX_1 + BX_2$$

Consequently, the regression equation for our study is as follows:

$$\text{Psychological Wellbeing} = 1.339 + 0.072 (\text{Sustainable Recruitment and Selection}) + 0.234 (\text{Sustainable Training and Development}) - 0.034 (\text{Sustainable Performance Appraisal}) + 0.364 (\text{Sustainable Career Planning}).$$

## Discussion

Based on data analysis, it is found that sustainable HRM practices have a significant impact on employee psychological well-being. Sustainable recruitment and selection are the most promising features of sustainable HRM, among all practices, sustainable recruitment and selection procedures significantly impact psychological well-being. It helps in selecting and retaining a potential pool of candidates for the organization which leads to a higher level of satisfaction and psychological well-being of employees. Organizations must implement sustainable recruitment and selection practices to attract and retain potential candidates to improve organizational performance and efficiency and maintain the psychological well-being of their employees so that they can contribute their best efforts to the benefit of the organization as it links to the deliberations of Piwowar-Sulej (2021).

Sustainable training and development are another essential feature of sustainable human resource management that can enhance employees' knowledge and skills, provide growth opportunities, increase autonomy, and create a supportive work culture for individuals. These factors contribute to improved employee psychological well-being, leading to greater job satisfaction and an improved overall work environment. Our study results are in accord with the elaboration of

Al-Swidi et al. (2021) and Zhang et al. (2021). As per Ahmad (2015), sustainable training and development train employees on healthy organizational practices and educate them on environmental management to prevent the use of harmful substances and to promote practices that engage employees in environmental problem-solving.

Sustaining career planning is the utmost essential feature of sustainable HRM. Retaining the best talent and providing future career opportunities to potential employees is the best the organization can do for its employees. As per the current and predicted future economic environment career planning has become the most important part of sustainable human resource management. The performed data analysis also favors that sustainable career planning has a significant on employee psychological well-being, also supported by research such as Chin et al. (2022). As per Hassan et al. (2022), sustainable career planning and development incorporate developmental, sociological, and psychological perspectives of employees and organizations.

Lastly, in our study, sustainable performance appraisal has no impact on the psychological well-being of employees. The results are not in line with the study of Tweedie et al. (2019). This means sustainable performance appraisal also comes under sustainable human resource practices not only that, by incorporating sustainable performance appraisal practices that focus on clear feedback, expectations, fairness, recognition, development opportunities, goal alignment, and career development. This might lead to shaping psychological well-being, but not in the context of our study.

### **Implications and Limitations**

Based on conducted research and its analysis here are the following recommendations: Banking sectors and other sectors need to recognize that sustainable human resource management practices significantly impact the psychological well-being of employees so such practices should be incorporated into the corporate environment to improve the overall well-being of employees and to promote efficiency and effectiveness of the organization. Therefore, the primary objective of this topic is to generate significant knowledge among banking sectors of developing countries to focus more on their employee well-being, while adopting sustainable practices. This will not only help increase the productivity and performance of the banking sector but will also promise long-term sustainable habits to retain natural resources and stimulate a green environment.

Likewise, the research defined the significance of employee well-being and its association with the organization's operation. Several researchers have put forward the significance of happy employees and better organizational productivity at different levels. Employee psychological well-being is significant to all

organizations, whether it is the banking sector or any other sector. An employee with higher job satisfaction tends to perform better than those who are unhappy with their work environment (DiMaria et al., 2020). Therefore, this research has significance at different levels of an organization, from employee well-being to overall sustainable operations of organizations. The expected outcomes of this research particularly clarify in detail the impact of sustainable HRM practices on employee psychological well-being, organization performance, and productivity.

Besides, the research is narrowed to a particular industry, which is the banking industry, specifically the private Islamic banks. As a result, the discoveries of this research may not directly apply to other organizations, as it is specific to private Islamic banks. Besides, this research can be conducted in different sectors or organizations within the same region or even in different regions such as commercial banking, IT sector, Manufacturing, etc. Due to a particular sector, the sample size was also limited. Researchers can investigate this topic by making modifications to various factors in future research such as the role of sustainable leadership.

## **Conclusion**

This research study investigated the impact of sustainable HRM practices such as sustainable recruitment and selection, sustainable training development, sustainable performance appraisal, and sustainable career planning on the psychological well-being of employees. To achieve these objectives, the researcher used a quantitative research design and deductive approach. The outcomes of the studies showed that sustainable human resource management practices including sustainable recruitment and selection, sustainable training and development, and sustainable career planning have a significant impact on the psychological well-being of employees whereas sustainable performance appraisal has no impact on the psychological well-being of employees working in the banking sector.

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