

The role of employee engagement in
sustainability programmes using
project management tools: a
mechanism for organisational
change?

Case studies from Saudi Arabia

Amina O. AbuShal

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sustainability programmes using project
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Amina Omar AbuShal

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Declaration

No portion of this thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university.

Messages To all mankind from the Quranic Verses:

“Thus We have made you trustees on the earth after them, to see how you would act.” (Quran - Surah Ibrahim, 10:14)

“Verily all things We have created in proportion and measure.” (Quran – Surah Al-Hujuraat, 54:49)

“And there is no creature on [or within] the earth or bird that flies with its wings except [that they are] communities like you. We have not neglected in the Register a thing. Then unto their Lord they will be gathered.” (Quran – Surah Saad, 6:38)

"Eat and drink, but do not waste. Surely He does not like the wasteful." (Quran – Surah Luqman, 7:31)

“Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by [reason of] what the hands of people have earned, so He may let them taste part of [the consequence of] what they have done that perhaps they will return [to righteousness].”

(Quran Surah Al-Roum (The Romans) 30:41)

Abstract

Organisations play a fundamental role in embracing sustainability – as the concept became a major concern on global and local levels by considering the three ‘bottom line’ dimensions of sustainability: economic, societal and the environmental. Although there has been a wealth of research looking at sustainability within large organisations, very little has focussed on the engagement of employees, and the contribution of systematic employee engagement, within the sustainability programmes of large organisations. This PhD therefore focusses attention on the role of employees within large organisations, specifically the engagement of employees with sustainability programmes in the context of large Saudi-Arabian multi-national corporations. Engaging employees may be considered a key part of the solution when it comes to corporations addressing their sustainability duties and responsibilities. creating a balance between economic success and ecological protection, through employees’ job duties and daily activities at the workplace (Exter 2013). This study further has a very practical orientation. It considers the extent to which project management can be considered as an assisting set of tools and techniques, to enhance the translation of sustainability programmes into actions, in order for employees to understand, apply and act at the workplace towards improved sustainability performance.

The phenomenon under study has been looked into through a constructivist-pragmatist philosophical lens. The employee experiences and their interactions with sustainability programmes have been empirically explored via an intensive qualitative mode of enquiry, through two in-depth corporate case-studies employing action research. The research results unearthed the vital components in employee engagement from the practical views of employees, their managers, and the corporations’ senior leadership. The

research further investigated how corporations can foster the engagement of employees in sustainability programmes, with a particular focus on the role of systematic project management, contributing to both academic knowledge and applied practice.

Initially, a conceptual framework was derived from the literature. This was iterated and developed into a conceptual model, by combining insights from the literature with the empirical findings from the Saudi corporate case studies, depicting the factors and conditions for successful employee engagement with sustainability programmes. In addition, on the practitioner level, a primarily decision-based framework has been produced, as a valuable start for practitioners, that can assist in improving the engagement of the employees with sustainability programmes, aided by practical project management tools.

Interestingly, when investigating the engagement of employees with sustainability within the Saudi Arabian context (including the Arabian Gulf region), it appeared that the engagement of employees with sustainability has been infused by Islamic faith principles and values, which granted the Islamic faith aspect to become a fundamental focal theme throughout this study.

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Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Long form
WWF	World Wildlife Fund
Three Ps	People, Planet and Profit
UWES-9	Utrecht Work Engagement Scale
IPBES	The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development - Brundtland Report
TBL	Triple Bottom Line
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibilities
CO2	Carbon Dioxide
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
G-20 Countries	Group of Twenties
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
Sgi	Saudi Green Initiative
KSA	Kingdom of Saudia Arabia
NREP	National Renewable Energy Programme
GACA	General Authority of Civil Aviation
CAPA	Centre for Aviation
PBUH	Peace Be Upon Him referring to prophet ‘Muhammad’
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
CIPD	Charted Institute of Personne and Development
COR	Conservation of Resources (theory)
SET	Social Exchange Theory
JD-R	Job Demands–Resources (theory)
SDT	Self-Determination Theory

HRM	Human Resource Management
OCB	Organisational Citizenship Behaviour
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease Pandemic (from 2019 – until the current time)
LED lights	Lights-Emitting Diode
ESG	Environmental Social and Governance
ART	Accountability, Responsibility and Transparency (synthesized by this thesis author)
5 Ps	People, Plante, Profit, Product and Processes
GPM	Green Project Management
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
ADKAR	Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, and Reinforcement
TLS	Theory of constrains, Lean and Six Sigma
TQM	Total Quality Management
DMAIC	Define, Measuring, Analysing, Improving and Control
PAR	Participatory Action Research

- Part A -

Chapter 1: Introduction

This introductory chapter outlines the background of the study in addition to providing an overview of the whole thesis. It begins with the thesis statement, which states my central points of the thesis along with the main claims (section 1.1). This is followed by the supporting theoretical foundations that have guided the thesis, elucidated by offering a brief synopsis of the relevant literature presented (section 1.2). Next, the research problem and controversies raised, along with the identified knowledge gap for the thesis, are addressed (section 1.3). Then, the rationale of my research study is described, accompanied by detailing the aims, objectives and research questions (section 1.4). In section (1.5), the employed research methods for the empirical part of the study are summarised. Next, the significance and contribution of the study is summarised, specifically how it is expected to be useful to academics, researchers, practitioners, decision-makers, policy-makers and leaders (in section 1.6). The chapter concludes with the last two sections. Section 1.7 presents the organisation (structure) of the thesis, along with a brief summary of each chapter. And finally, section 1.8 illuminates my main motives and personal interests in undertaking this research study.

1.1 Thesis statement: importance of the topic.

Sustainability has become one of the most highly sophisticated and challenging concerns of our times, globally. This research study embraces sustainability at its core, specifically, through the role of employees and their systematic engagement with corporate sustainability programmes, a so-far under developed topic of research , The study further investigates how

employee engagement with corporate sustainability programmes can be systematically implemented, managed, and monitored via the aid of systemic project management tools and techniques, framed by organisational change, while addressing such phenomena from the perspective of the Saudi Arabian and Arabian Gulf contexts.

This research studies and investigates how to effectively engage employees with sustainability programmes, via the aid of systemic project management tools and techniques framed by organisational change while centralising an Islamic faith lens. The thesis considers three relevant pillars: sustainability, employee engagement and project management, along with the additional fourth pillar being organisational change (see figure 1.1 below).



Figure 1.1 – My thesis research pillars

Sustainability, employee engagement, project management and organisational change

Sustainability, on the corporation level, has been bombarded with technical and political languages, which contribute adversely to its two most associated

characteristics of sustainability: complexity and uncertainty. This can have an impact on how employees embrace, practice and apply sustainability. Exter (2013) noted that one of the problems with sustainability is that it is an all-encompassing, which can cause confusion and can be irrelevant term. However, it is also claimed that employees are central key aspect to sustainability in corporations. The paradox between on the one hand, sustainability being a complex and uncertain concept for people to grasp in terms of its relevance and application within their everyday working practices, and on the other, considering that employees play a vital role in achieving sustainability at the corporate level, is taken up as a key challenge of the thesis. The thesis findings and recommendations propose that the introduction of systematic project management can help to address this challenge.

Applying this research study within a Saudi Arabian context, required a specific attention to the cultural context. This can have a direct influence and effect the way employees think, view and understand sustainability in Saudi Arabian multi-national corporations, which has been intensively investigated within this thesis, through a qualitative mode of enquiry.

The research examines the key features that can help employees embrace and apply sustainability, situated within their own working roles, functions and practices, within their own specific corporations, through engagement of emotional, cognitive and physical dimensions, following Kahn's (1990) theory as the pioneer of employee engagement. While project management tools and techniques are shown to assist in 'how' such engagement can be attained effectively. In addition, organisational change is proposed to be maintained and enhanced in a continuous manner, while offering a mode of reinforcement to the engaged workforce.

As a researcher, I investigated the role of project management tools and techniques in aspects such as conveying the sustainability message throughout corporate levels and hierarchy, establishing initiatives, setting goals and targets, raising awareness, providing follow-up, aligning sustainability, etc., designed and tailored to the employees' level to suit their abilities and needs to achieve successful engagements. The investigation also attended to aspects to meet engagement conditions such as meaningfulness (job enrichment and role fit), safety (rewarding co-workers and caring/helpful supervisors and exchangeable positive and supportive relations with colleagues) and availability (belief of having physical and mental resources) (May, Gilson and Harter, 2004), as essential needs for the employees to engage themselves effectively with sustainability programmes. In addition, organisational change is believed to augment project management by offering qualities of direction, guidance and continuity towards a sustainably engaged workforce.

1.2 Brief background, context and synopsis from the literature

The seriousness and criticality of the situation of our planet Earth has been stressed by various sources and actors, in regard to how much our planet has been suffering. This includes the impact on biotic (organisms, plants, and animals) and abiotic (non-living environment such as light, water or gasses in the system) environmental factors, and how the zone of life on earth (biodiversity) has been impacted significantly. According to Hinchliffe, Blowers and Freeland (2003), the Earth's environments are dynamic, and there is an interconnectedness between the natural and social processes. Therefore, O'Neill et al. (2018) stated that the recognition of the loss of biodiversity and climate change as being two irreversible environmental issues is vital.

The Earth has been experiencing the depletion of natural resources and the effects on its ecosystem and the consequent catastrophes, decade after decade. Therefore, attention has risen globally, due to the overwhelming statistical evidence, conducted by scientific studies that have been developed into facts (e.g. Saboori, Sapri and Bab, 2014; Liu, Wang, and Zheng, 2017; Harvey, 2018).

Forewarning reports assert that if the demands on Earth's natural resources continue to rise at the same pace, by 2030, humans will need an equivalent of two planets to meet their needs. And yet, the natural environment is still deteriorating in terms of a depletion of natural resources, air quality and greenhouse gas emissions, water, soil, food, photosynthesis, species loss and biodiversity, to name a few (Maxton and Randers, 2016; WWF, 2018, O'Niell et al., 2018). All things considered; this evoked the need for sustainability. By the twenty-first century, sustainability arose to the forefront of everyone's thinking, specifically within the leading discipline of management and business (Docherty, Kira and Shani, 2009).

According to Hart (1997), social and political reasons are related to environmental crises, as the emphasis here is on considering the corporation as the foundation of the solutions towards a sustainable and better environment. He added that corporations have the resources, global influence and motivation towards a sustainability agenda. Drawing upon this, the current thesis attempts to study sustainability in corporations, considering it as the foundation of the solution, being in line with Hart's way of looking at sustainability within the corporation's sphere, but with a focused on the employees. Corporations function in societies through established laws and regulations, whereby the degree of the social legitimacy can be the main motive towards better standards of environmental, economic and social dimensions (Moffat and Auer, 2006).

According to Exter (2013),

sustainability is not only about the environment and the climate change, eco-efficiency, shortages as exploitation results of (e.g. resources water & food), pollutions. It is also about how we treat people e.g. neighbours, our employees, suppliers. It is also how we act as citizens, paying fair tax, competing fairly and adhering to law and ethical norms of our societies. It is about long-term, inclusive and responsible thinking and action (p. 4).

Within the literature on sustainability in corporations, the part that has been neglected is the 'people' out of sustainability's three Ps: People, Planet and Profit (social, environment and economic). The focus on employees and their vital role towards sustainability has been underexamined, which highlights the second pillar of this thesis in presenting employee engagement at the heart of this research study.

According to the literature, employee engagement has gained momentum in contemporary business. It is considered to be one of the top three trends that modern companies are facing (Goodman et al., 2009), and has been addressed as one of the fundamental managerial programmes in any successful corporation. The GALLUP annual report's recent statistics in 2021 shows that only 20% of employees are engaged at their workplaces (GALLUP, 2021). The construct 'employee engagement' can be defined as harnessing an organisational staff member, which entails being fully attentive in an emotional, cognitive and physical manners, known as the psychological states of engagement (Khan, 1990).

Therefore, three psychological dimensions must be met, in order for corporations to effectively engage their employees. Firstly, Meaningfulness which encompasses job enrichment and role fit. Secondly, safety demands caring supervisors, and positive and supportive relationships with colleagues. And thirdly, availability refers to the person's/employee's required physical and mental resources in fulfilling a job role effectively (May, Gilson, and Harter, 2004). In essence, engagement is about commitment, passion, energy, enthusiasm and immersion, whereas disengagement is about ambivalence, anxiety and risk avoidance (Macey and Schneider, 2008).

According to the literature, it has been stated that in order for corporations to engage their employees, vital aspects have to be considered. Core elements such as involvement, commitment, passion, enthusiasm, focused efforts and energy (Macey and Schneider, 2008), have to be the centre of attention for the business, in order for the employees to engage with sustainability programmes. However, this lacks the question of 'how' such core elements of employee engagement can be attained, and which project management tools, techniques and organisational change can assist a successful achievement. In addition, at the initial stages, this research considered the essential elements at the intersection of the four pillars of this thesis (sustainability, employee engagement, project management and organisational change) which are: empowerment, alignment, monitor, review and feedback, and reinforcement. Such elements are directed by leadership, communication and management commitment, in a focused manner.

1.3 Indicating a problem, controversy or a knowledge gap in the field of the study

Although extensive research has been carried out on the concept of sustainability, the research of employee engagement with sustainability in corporations has been affirmed as emergent and nascent (Goodman *et al.*, 2009; Saks and Gruman, 2014; Knight *et al.*, 2017; Exter, 2013; Gallup, 2021). Thus, where the two literatures intersect, of sustainability in corporations and employee engagement, is the primary focus of this thesis.

However, employee engagement (emotional, cognitive and physical) states in addition to the conditions of engagement (as meaningfulness, safety and availability) have not been given fair attention in regard with whether they can have an impact on sustainability activities and, consequently, how they can make an overall positive impact on the corporation's sustainability performance. This thesis gives the role of engaging employees with sustainability, inclusive and systematic attention, while considering project management tools and techniques as contributing to the attainment of systematic and sustained organisational change.

In addition, within the literature on employee engagement with sustainability programmes in corporations, previous studies have not dealt with the enquiry of 'how' such engagement can be achieved in a balanced and continuous manner. Therefore, this research study seeks to answer such an enquiry by identifying the key role of project management tools and techniques complemented by organisational change towards a successful achievement. However, such phenomena have not been studied through the consideration of a specific context, since the engagement of employees is highly prone to cultural sensitivity. Thus, this thesis considers studying the engagement of employees with sustainability in Saudi Arabian corporations, within the Saudi Arabian context including the Arabian Gulf Region to investigate whether considering the cultural aspect within a specific context can be critical to the academic understanding of engagement of employees in sustainability programmes.

1.4 Stating the purpose of this study

Given the multiple-faceted complexity of the subject matter, my research engages with distinct streams of literature that have not been brought together before, i.e., the intersection of sustainability, employee engagement and project management. In order to develop insights from three disconnected literatures I shed light on the two main questions, in addition to the sub-question, which underpin this research study:

- i. How can employee engagement advance the organisational mission of a major Saudi multi-national corporation towards improved sustainability performance?*

And

- ii. How can the systematic development of project management tools advance this mission in order to advance organisational change oriented to improving sustainability performance through the process of sustained employee engagement?*

In Addition to sub-question one:

- iii. Would employees' faith influence their engagement with sustainability related activities at their workplaces?*

1.4.1 Research Aim and objective:

This research aims to develop a framework to explain how employees can become more effectively engaged with sustainability programmes in the

workplace. Through a programme of case studies and in-depth qualitative research with employees and managers of multi-national corporations, the study aimed to generate a set of findings, recommendations and practitioner guidelines in order to assist corporations to engage employees better in existing (or new) sustainability programmes. The overarching aim was to facilitate improved employee participation, sustainability engagement, wellbeing and positive orientation towards the corporation.

Therefore, the research objectives that served the achievement of the research aims were:

- a) Through a literature analysis, a conceptual framework was developed, comprising key features that are critical for engaging employees with sustainability programmes. Critical success factors were identified which foster or hinder the engagement of employees with such programmes, with a view to their transferability to employee engagement with sustainability programmes.
- b) Employing an intensive/in-depth systematic case study approach with multi-national corporations, the model was further elaborated and developed in the specific context of employee engagement in sustainability programmes, and how such engagement can be improved.
- c) Combining insights from the literature and the empirical case studies, a conceptual model was developed, accompanied by a set of guidelines to assist companies to improve employee engagement with sustainability programmes guided by project management tools and techniques along with organisational change.
- d) During the course of the research, the role of project management in employee engagement and change management processes was explored, in order to highlight their role in organisational change processes in general, and the potential contribution of project

management techniques to the specific context of improving employee engagement in corporate sustainability programmes.

1.5 Synopsis of the research methods:

The research study investigated sustainability at a deeper level, towards an effective emotional, cognitive and physical engaged workforce with sustainability programmes in corporations, while inspecting further the role of project management along with organisational change towards a successful engagement of employees. In addition, the research questions of this thesis are about corporations (specifically within Saudi Arabia) seeking to achieve sustainability through the sustained engagement of employees, with the aid of systemic project management framed by organisational change via the lens of faith. Such enquiry entailed a deeper understanding of the employees' perceptions, views and lived experiences, which this thesis attempts to illuminate empirically through qualitative modes of enquiry.

This research situates itself within the constructivist-pragmatist philosophical mode. Firstly, scholars assert that the core aspects to measure employee engagement are vigour, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002; Schaufeli et al., 2006; and Schaufeli and Bakker, 2003). However, when such core aspects of engagement are applied to sustainability with the guidance of constructivism, this thesis attempts to delve into the key features that foster employee engagement with sustainability. These are: (1) vigour towards sustainability in showing their highest levels of energy and mental resilience. Their willingness to invest efforts, while being persistent even when facing constraints. (2) Dedication towards sustainability-related performance and tasks. The degree of involvement through expressing enthusiasm, inspiration and pride even towards challenges. (3) Absorption shown in their strong level of concentration and happiness to practice sustainability at their workplaces. Additionally, this thesis explores and gives an account of how employees

make sense of their engagement with sustainability through the aid of project management tools and techniques within a specific timeframe (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 2006), In addition to how such engagement is constructed in their minds as socially experienced based (Guba & Lincoln 1994).

Furthermore, the core aspects to measure employee engagement have been adopted from Schaufeli et al. (2002), Schaufeli et al. (2006), the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9), and Schaufeli and Bakker (2003). In addition, the thesis investigates whether project management tools and techniques, along with organisational change, can advance and enhance the engagement of employees (through the identified and chosen conditions, states and core aspects to measure engagement for this thesis) with sustainability programmes in corporations. The philosophical mode of constructivism helped empirically to explore the phenomena under study from the employees' views, and the perceptions created in their minds via different social realms, organisations, cultures and experiences which can create multiple social realities (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight 2006; Dennis, 2011). This has been considered and has influenced this research study's findings and consequently the thesis outcomes.

Secondly, the utility of a pragmatist epistemology has been a viable methodological avenue for addressing the challenges associated with sustainability, employee engagement, project management and organisational change, and their intersections.

Pragmatism has a different way of supporting me as a researcher during this research journey. Generally, pragmatists are sceptical about other philosophical methods and that truth statements prove nothing significant (Baert, 2005). This indicates that they are in a state of a continuous critical investigation, which grant this mode the flexibility to comprehend various truths of enquiries, rather than the determination of only one truth.

The embraced pragmatism mode of research philosophy aided the researcher to illuminate the practical meanings behind the engaged employees with sustainability. As employee engagement and project management along with organizational change, embrace practicality at their core (e.g. Albrecht, 2012; Cameron and Green, 2015). Therefore, the viability of pragmatism for this research study offers the understanding of practical meaning of employee engagement within the context of Saudi Arabia, as theories and knowledge that are goal-oriented and enable successful actions, focused on problems, practices and relevance. In addition, this offers problem-solving research outcomes and informed future practice-oriented contributions to knowledge (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019; Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

In essence, pragmatist epistemology is an appropriate choice, since this research deals with three areas of literature sustainability, employee engagement, project management, in addition to the sub-fourth one as organisational change, which make them when combined altogether rich and complex, as the chosen field of my thesis. Therefore, pragmatism has been chosen for this thesis as the epistemological research lens, as it deals with complexity and richness. And in terms of the assumptions related to realities, pragmatism considers external reality/ies as practical consequences of ideas, considering reality-related assumptions presented in a flux of processes, experiences and practices (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019).

Correspondingly, the strategy of action research was considered, supported by a programme of case studies, to support problem-solving research outcomes, which has been applied to the selected two case studies within Saudi Arabia, one from aviation sector and the other from the energy sector. Eventually, the whole thesis process (from reviewing the literature critically, until the stage of coming up with the research findings), supported in contributing to future practices, in the most pragmatic and applied sense, as

supporting through practical guidance, the managers and decision makers who participated in the study. Additionally, adopting a holistic approach helped in the development of the my conceptual model along with the designed primarily decision-making based framework as guidelines for practice.

1.6 Significance and value of the study

The concepts of sustainability, employee engagement, project management and organisational change, have not previously been considered together. To understand better how employee engagement can help a corporation to address the sustainability challenges it faces, the research interrogates how project management can more effectively be mobilised to assist in raising awareness, encouraging and orienting action and changing the practices of the corporations' leaders, managers and employees, in order to advance employee engagement towards the improved sustainability performance of corporations.

The research study brought these dimensions together to offer a new conceptual model, and hence, gained insights from fieldwork, which supported the researcher to reflect and adjust the model. This research provided a primarily decision-making based framework as guidelines for practice, to help gain traction over the links between sustainability programmes and how to improve employee engagement and action, through the lens of project management, in order to advance organisational change.

According to the literature, employee engagement is increasingly recognized as a crucial managerial aspect in corporations. It has been considered as one of the foremost three trends that contemporary businesses are encountering

(Goodman et al., 2009). According to statical data, only 20% of the employees are actively immersed at their workplaces (GALLUP, 2021). Being engaged at a work environment, requires an emotional, physical and cognitive states of immersion, when performing job-related tasks (Khan, 1990). Therefore, employee engagement in this thesis has been considered as the heart of achieving sustainability in corporations, which consequently makes it the second pillar for this thesis after sustainability.

However, studying and understanding sustainability from an individual level does not address the question of 'how' corporations can engage their employees. This question can be addressed by drawing on insights from a project management perspective. Systematic project management tools and techniques support the successful engagement of employees in a continuous manner in various ways, which is the core focus of this research study.

With a specific attention to the fourth pillar as organisational change which offers guidance, continuity and circularity to an engaged workforce with sustainability programmes in corporations, along with the aid of project management tools and techniques. Therefore, organisational change is believed to be helpful for corporations in regard with such achievement, and must not to be treated as a final destination through a linear manner.

However, engaging employees with sustainability programmes in a corporate setting cannot be studied and sufficiently understood, while disregarding the cultural context. Therefore, the consideration of the Saudi Arabian context granted this research study an intensified aspect via the Islamic faith lens. Furthermore, the phenomena of this study within the Saudi Arabian context (and the Arabian gulf region) deepened and strongly influenced the understanding of sustainability and consequently supported the researcher to highlight and better understand this dimension of the study, which was not anticipated in advance. In addition this thesis designed conceptual model and the practitioners' primarily decision-making based framework as

guidelines for practice as two major research contributions (see chapter 8), can help as a guidance to improve employee engagement with sustainability programmes and practices, from both project management and organizational change perspectives, informed by the influence of the Quranic and hadith guidelines, to serve adequately that specific cultural context of Saudi Arabia and the Arabian Gulf region.

1.7 Organization of the study/thesis

The overall structure of the study takes the form of eight chapters, including this introductory chapter. The chapters have been composed into five parts; A, B, C, D and E (see below diagram 1.2). The thesis continues after this introductory part (chapter 1), with the following chapters:

Chapters 2,3 and 4 as the literature review: The literature review of this thesis is comprised of three chapters (chapter 2, 3 and 4). Altogether, they provide a comprehensive review of the literature, addressing employee engagement with sustainability programmes in corporations. This has been investigated further through the aid of project management tools and techniques, framed by organisational change, infused with a faith perspective. The collective aim of the literature review chapters is to establish a synthesis of the combined literature surrounding each of the four pillars that have supported me in developing conceptual framework. This has been achieved through critically reviewing the relevant seminal key research fields of sustainability, employee engagement, project management, and organisational change, in addition to addressing relevant raised arguments, while highlighting the addressed relevant literatures' strengths, challenges, and shortcomings. A conceptual framework has been proposed in order to provide a diagrammatic summary and synthesis of the literature (towards the end of chapter 4), comprising key features that are critical for engaging employees with corporate programmes. This was achieved by identifying

critical success factors which foster and/or hinder the engagement of employees with such programmes, with a view to their transferability to employee engagement with sustainability programmes, with the aid of project management tools and techniques, augmented by organisational change, with a specific focus on the Saudi Arabian context.

Chapter 5. Methodology: The fifth chapter is concerned with the employed methodology and research design employed for the empirical study. The chapter describes the research approach, the epistemological, ontological, and axiological underpinnings and research strategies. This is followed by the data collection instrument and data analysis technique. Finally, the chapter concludes with addressing the research ethics and the conducted pilot study.

Chapter 6. Data analysis and findings: This chapter analyses the results of the collected and transcribed data., This has been gathered from 44 semi-structured interviews undertaken during the empirical study, though a mono-qualitative study, while being guided by constructivist- pragmatist philosophical modes, from two corporations, as my chosen intensive case studies.

Chapter 7. Discussion and reflections: This chapter offers an evaluation and assessment of the findings and insights from the literature review (part B- Chapters 2,3 and 4) triangulated with the empirical findings (part D – Chapter 6) drawn from case study research and interviews (Chapter 5). The process of critically confronting the literature and empirical chapters unearthed the relevant aspects and components that support corporations to successfully achieve the engagement of employees with sustainability. The process of evaluating the findings of this empirical research, brings additional insights on the application of these considerations in the Saudi Arabian context, compared to how the topic has been addressed in the academic literature.

Chapter 8. Conclusion and contributions: The final chapter draws upon the entire thesis, tying up the addressed theoretical and empirical strands of how corporations can achieve efficient engaged workforce with sustainability programmes, through systematic project management, towards organizational change and infused by faith. Furthermore, the chapter gives a brief summary and critique of this thesis' synthesized key outcomes, contributions to knowledge and it concludes with identifying areas for future research.

The role of employee engagement in sustainability programmes using project management tools: a mechanism for organisational change? Case studies from Saudi Arabia

- Part A -

Chapter 1: Introduction

- Part B -

Literature Review Chapters

Chapter 2: Setting the context: Planet earth, earth systems and the biosphere

Chapter 3: The Saudi context, faith, national policy, industrial structure and corporations

Chapter 4: Sustainability in corporations and organizational change: the case for engaging employees in sustainability programs with the aid

- Part C -

Chapter 5: Methodology

- Part D -

Chapter 6: Data Analysis and Findings

- Part E -

Chapter 7: Discussion & Reflections

Chapter 8: Conclusion & Contributions

Diagram 1.2 - My thesis Structure

Source: Author's design

1.8 Reasons and personal interest in the research study topic:

Primarily, the inspiration for my chosen PhD topic came from my father whose wisdom had a strong influence on me to embrace a life of sustainability from a young age, as we (myself and my siblings) have been raised in a house that practises sustainability, as the decent Muslim. In Islam, sustainability is fundamental.

In addition, the research project was initially conceived in my MSc in project management 2009/2010. A lecturer who previously taught me, Dr. Garry Blair, inspired me to do my research on sustainability, as he continuously used to emphasise sustainability aspects in project management units. My first Master's dissertation was about the readiness of management and employees to adopt environmentally friendly changes (methods and practices) towards a green environment through a case study based on Saudi Arabian Airlines. Also, I worked on another piece of research for my second masters MRes 2013/2015. The dissertation for this was about employee engagement with environmental initiatives in corporations. Therefore, both Masters that I have done have driven this PhD research.

Not to mention that, the faith I embrace and practise is Islam, which offers a guidance towards sustainability on all levels. Islamic faith is a way of living, as it requires practicing human acts towards ourselves, the environment and the surroundings, as acts of worship. And now I am expanding further upon that previous journey.

- Part B -

Literature Review

Chapters 2, 3 and 4

This brief introduction to the three literature chapters that follow, provides an overview and justification of the critical literature review presented. The literature review comprises three chapters (chapter 2, 3 and 4). The literature review in total provides a comprehensive review of the literature addressing employee engagement with sustainability programmes in corporations with the aid of project-management tools and techniques, framed by organisational change. Sustainability, employee engagement, and project management have been considered as the three main pillars of this thesis, along with the fourth sub-pillar of organisational change. The overall aim of Part B is to come up with a synthesis of the combined literature surrounding each of the four pillars that has supported me in developing conceptual framework. This has been achieved through critically reviewing the relevant seminal key research fields of sustainability, employee engagement, project management, and organisational change, in addition to addressing relevant raised arguments, while highlighting the addressed relevant literatures' strength points, challenges, and shortcomings. In essence, the literature review demonstrates the achievement of the first objective of the research study, which has been accomplished through conducting a literature-review analysis: a literature-based conceptual framework has been proposed (towards the end of Part B).

The first section (2.1) of the literature-review chapter (**Chapter 2**) sets the scene of planet Earth, in respect of its environmental, social, and economic-related crises, through the exploration of sustainability at the biospheric level, and is concluded by providing a justification for the need for

sustainability. The second section (2.2) of **Chapter 2** identifies what sustainability means to this research study, through the addressed sustainability definitions and debates. Which assisted in articulating how sustainability is understood through the literature, informing the conceptual framework created for the purpose of synthesising the main literature-based findings relevant to the study.

Chapter 3 comprises two sections. The first (section 3.1) introduces highlights of sustainability within the context of Saudi Arabia, while focusing on Saudi Arabian multinational corporations, specifically corporations within the aviation and energy sectors, to reflect upon where the two case studies have been conducted as part of the empirical study for this research project. The second section (3.6) presents sustainability from inter-faith perspectives, and more specifically, sustainability has been addressed from an Islamic faith lens, with an explicit focus on the individual level (the employees).

Next, within **Chapter 4, section 4.1** begins by assessing sustainability within the corporate sphere, whereby light has been shed upon the neglected vital part of sustainability that is the 'People' out of sustainability's three P dimensions: people, planet, and profit (Social, environment and economic). However, sustainability in corporations at the micro-level, and the focus on employees and their vital role towards sustainability, has been underexamined, which highlights the second pillar of this thesis in presenting 'employee engagement' at the heart of this research. Which leads to **the second section (4.2)** of Chapter 4, that presents an understanding of the construct of employee engagement, the way it has evolved, its conceptualisation, key authors, and arguments raised, in addition to addressing the core elements of the way that employee engagement is measured. Since this research study's main focus is the engagement of employees with sustainability programmes in corporations, and by studying

the two literature/s (combined together), it appears that they both offer a confirmatory point, mainly through the social dimension of sustainability and employee engagement aspects.

Introducing sustainability with a specific focus on the engagement of employees provoked the enquiry of 'how' this can be achieved efficiently, as the employed primary elements, along with the sub-elements (specifically for this research study), cannot function without an operating system that shows how they can be applied and through which mechanism. **This section (4.3) of Chapter 4** introduces the role of project management tools and techniques in aiding the engagement of employees with sustainability programmes, since the literature lacks suggestions of how employees can engage with such programmes in corporations. Initially in this part, the project management literature has been reviewed on its own, then in relation to sustainability, along with the sufficient role of project management in supporting the employees to engage emotionally, cognitively, and physically with such programmes through the researcher's critical lens. In addition, the literature both of sustainability and of project management when combined together also offers insight in identifying areas of engagement for employees.

Then the role of organisational change, which was investigated in relation to the engagement of employees with sustainability programmes via the aid of project management, has been addressed in **section (4.5)** of this chapter (Chapter 4) of the literature review. According to the literature, organisational change supports corporations and their employees to engage, when applied through project-management tools and techniques. This is achieved by offering guidance and direction, specifically when the focus is placed on the reinforcement aspect of change, to achieve continues and successful change, to allow further suitable amendments and enhancements

of sustainability programmes that work in favour of employees and their engagement.

Finally, **the last section (4.6)** of the literature review has been divided into two sub-sections; as the first one, sub-section 4.6.2, and sub-section 4.6.3, introduce the identified elements for engaging employees with sustainability programmes, with the aid of project management, framed by organisational change. The researcher categorised these elements into two categories, primary elements and secondary elements, based on the extent of their emphasis within the relevant literature/s, whether solely, or in addition to where the pillars of this thesis intersect. The chosen primary elements for this research study have been addressed as: (1) management and leadership (2) communication, dissemination and translation, and lastly (3) teamwork spirit and collaboration. The second category identifies the sub-elements of engaging employees with sustainability which are identified as (1) the alignment of value, purpose and goal, (2) empowerment, (3) visualising, (4) incentives and rewards, (5) tracking and monitoring, and finally (6) review and feedback. The primary elements and sub-elements for engaging employees with sustainability programmes supported the researcher to employ those elements in the formation of her conceptual framework, as they have been grounded due to both literature confirmatory points, in supporting each other, by paving a path where they both intersect, as the research does not validate such confirmatory points, which confirms that employee engagement presents the centrality aspect of sustainability in corporations. Then, Chapter 4 concludes by offering a demonstration of the designed conceptual framework for this thesis, according to its validation of the suitable aspects and elements that have been identified by the researcher, which has been embraced as a major stage and step of the thesis, supporting the researcher in moving forward towards successfully and confidently conducting her empirical study to quantitatively investigate the framework.

The employed approach/es for conducting the literature-review chapter of this thesis:

As a researcher, I intended to employ a combination of both narrative and systematic approaches. My research study embraced three pillars named as sustainability, employee engagement, and project management, along with the fourth sub-pillar as organisational change. Therefore, due to the consideration of the multi-faceted subject matter of this research study, which imposed complexity and durability upon the nature of this research, an innovative style was required, which supported the researcher to conduct her literature-review chapter through a combination of the two styles, as she employed the systematic and narrative/traditional literature-review approaches.

Firstly, the narrative/traditional literature review style allowed me as a researcher to summarise and critique (Paré and Kitsiou, 2017) the literature/s of this thesis of sustainability, employee engagement, project management, and organisational change, in relation to the context of Saudi Arabia, by providing a comprehensive overview of the field under study, while highlighting the significant areas of the research (Paré and Kitsiou, 2017).

However, to avoid the shortcomings of such an approach (narrative/traditional), such as the selection criteria of the relevant literature not being open to the reader, I employed the systematic literature-review approach. For this reason, to avoid being biased, which is a major concern when conducting a narrative/traditional literature review (Paré and Kitsiou, 2017), the researcher employed the systematic literature review, in addition to the narrative. In this way, they could aid each other in supporting the researcher in coming up with an innovative outcome in regard to the literature review conducted.

Equally important, both styles (narrative and systematic) supported me in the identification of research gaps, which consequently supported the refining and defining of the research questions (Paré and Kitsiou, 2017; Denyer and

Tranfield, 2009; Hammersley, 2001). Both approaches supported me to identify the pillars the core and sub-pillars for this research study, with sustainability as the core pillar, and the sub-pillars being employee engagement, project management, and organisational change (refer the diagram below – diagram B.1).



Diagram B.1 – Thesis core pillar and sub-pillars
Source: Thesis Author

In addition to the traditional literature approach, a systematic literature-review style has been conducted, which has supported me in identifying the key elements and related authors for the four pillars of this thesis through: (1) the matrix tool that helped identify this thesis' four-pillar approach and the literature-review matrix (sustainability, employee engagement, project management, and organisational change), (2) the research study-scope, through the inclusion and exclusion selection criteria, (3) the approach also helped identify what should be incorporated from part of the literature by one of its unique tools/principles as literature-review questions, and finally (4) identifying the research keywords (Denyer and Tranfield, 2009; Hammersley, 2001; Counsell, 1997) (Refer the diagram below – Diagram B.2), while the researcher excluded demonstration of the used databases as the search-selection criteria, as the researcher see it as insignificant.

(1) the matrix tool that helped me identify this thesis' four-pillar approach and the literature-review matrix (sustainability, employee engagement, project management, and organisational change)

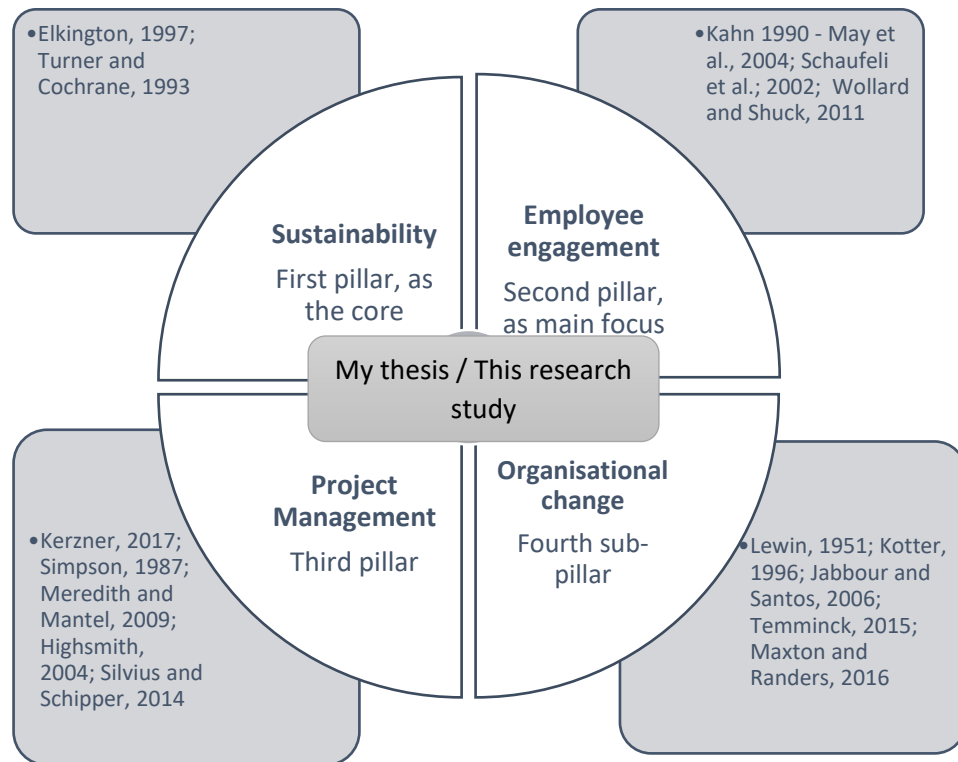


Diagram B.2 – Thesis four-pillar approach and the literature-review matrix (sustainability, employee engagement, project management, and organisational change)

Source: Thesis Author

(2) The planned research study scope through the inclusion and exclusion selection criteria:

Inside the thesis scope	Outside the thesis scope
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability in corporations • Sustainability and the evidence from the Quran and Hadith • Employee engagement • Project management • Organisational change • Islamic faith • The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental science • Environmental management system • Technical aspects in sustainability, project management, employee engagement, and organisational change • Types and styles of leadership in detail • Communication and teamwork literature • Total quality management • Readiness • Culture (management) • Circular economy • Branding • Benchmarking - Political Agendas • Psychology - Human Rights

Table B.3 – research study scope

Source: Thesis Author

(3) The approach also helped me in identifying what should be incorporated for part of the literature by one of its unique tools/principles as literature-review questions, or ‘the vexing question of synthesis’ as it has been introduced by (Denyer and Tranfield, 2009). According to scholars, ‘*A good systematic review is based on a well-formulated, answerable question. The question[/s guide[/s]s the review by defining which studies will be included, what the search strategy to identify the relevant primary studies should be, and which data need to be extracted from each study. Ask a poor question and you will get a poor review.*’ (Counsell, 1997: p.381). This consequently leads to a more focused research study investigation and outcomes (Light, and Pillemer, 1984), through clearly framed questions (Cooper and Hedges, 1994).

Therefore, the main Literature Review questions are:

1. Why does the world need sustainability, and why has there been a need for it?
2. Which sphere of sustainability will this research study? (Corporation)
3. What is the main focus of sustainability research for this study? Why the engagement of employees? And why would it matter?
4. How can the engagement of employees be achieved by corporations? And what is the role of project-management tools and techniques in engaging employees with sustainability programmes?
5. What is the role of organisational change in regard to the achievement of engaging employees with sustainability programmes, with the aid of project management, effectively, successfully, and with continuity?

<p>1) Sustainability in corporations: Social sustainability, environmental sustainability, economic sustainability, sustainability in Saudi Arabian context, evidence of Sustainability from the Quran & Hadith, Islamic faith and sustainability</p>	<p>2) Employee Engagement: Emotional engagement, cognitive engagement physical engagement, states and dimensions of engagement, meaningfulness, safety and availability, empowerment</p>
<p>- 3) Project Management: Project management tools, project management techniques, iron triangle of project management, review and feedback, monitoring and control</p>	<p>- 4) Organisational Change: Change management -Change in corporations, transformational change, resistance to change</p> <p><u>Reinforcement:</u> Re-alignment, augmentation, advancement, aid, supplement, re-applying enhancement</p>

B.4 - Keyword Search Table

Source: Thesis Author

Chapter 2:

Setting the context: planet Earth, earth systems, and the biosphere

2.1 - Catastrophes on planet Earth, the status quo, and the need for sustainability

This first section of Chapter 2 presents the setting of the scene of planet Earth and the status quo, in respect of its environmental, social and economic-related catastrophes, through the exploration of sustainability at the biospheric level, concluded by providing a justification for the need for sustainability. Remarkably, Earth's systems and natural resources can recover naturally over time, unless harmful human interventions exceed its regenerative capacity. According to Dryzek, Norgaard and Schlosberg (2014), human-driven climate change, driven by overconsumption and business activities, has exceeded Earth's regenerative capacity, causing suffering across all spheres. This is leading to another decade of ecological disasters and catastrophes.

With the aid of the employed systematic literature review approach, the question for this section is:

Q1. What is going on, on planet Earth; why does the world need sustainability?

Earth's situation is critical due to biotic and abiotic environmental factors, impacting biodiversity and ecosystem wellbeing. According to Hinchliffe,

Blowers, and Freeland (2003), the interconnectedness of natural and social processes is evident in Earth's dynamic environments. Recognizing loss of biodiversity and climate change as irreversible environmental issues is vital, as highlighted by Hinchliffe, Blowers, and Freeland (2003).

Furthermore, Earth's depletion of natural resources and ecosystems has led to global attention due to scientific studies (e.g., Saboori, Sapri, and Bab, 2014; Liu, Wang, and Zheng, 2017; Harvey, 2018) indicating deteriorating biospheres. According to Wackernagel *et al.* (2002), human overconsumption and business activities have exceeded Earth's regenerative capacity, causing catastrophes and highlighting the need for urgent action.

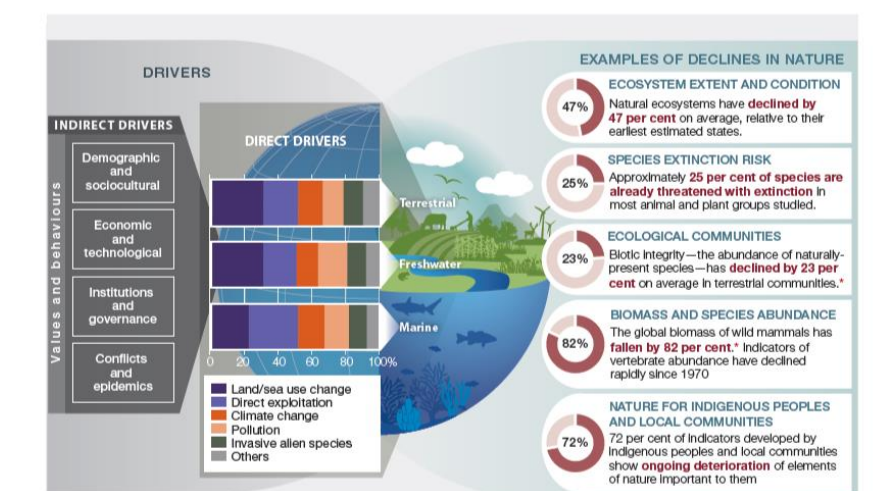


Figure 2.1 – Examples of the global decline in nature, emphasizing the decline in biodiversity, that has been and is being caused by direct and indirect drivers of change.

Source: The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES, 2019)

The Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) reports a significant decline in global animal and plant species, with one million threatened with extinction. This alarming situation affects three-quarters of the land-based environment and 66% of the ocean environment, with overfishing causing a climate crisis and impacting biodiversity worldwide. The IPBES emphasizes the need for urgent action to restore balance and protect ecosystems, see Figure 2.1 above (IPBES, 2019).

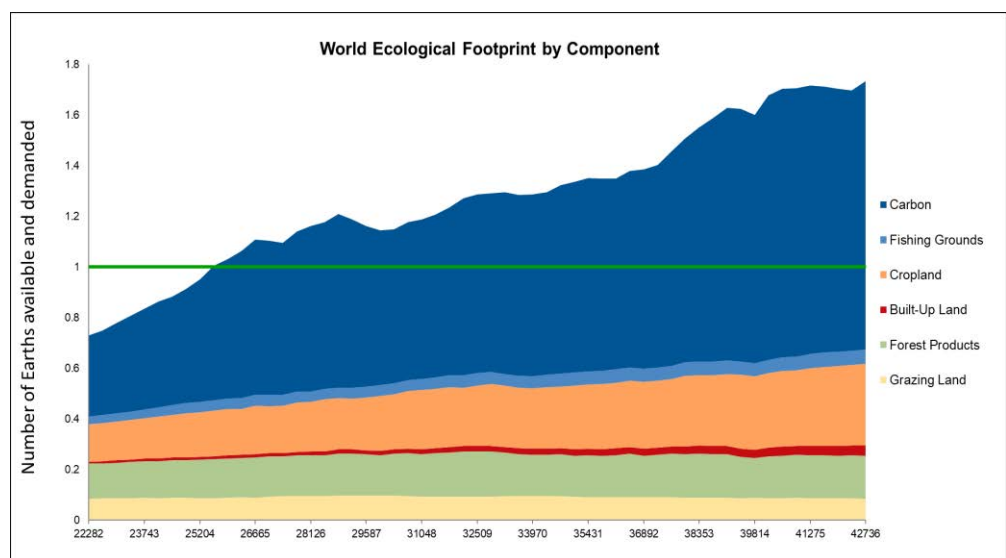


Figure 2.2 - World Ecological Footprint by Component
Source: Global Footprint Network (2021)

To put it another way, Figure 2.2 above shows that humanity’s total ecological footprint for 2007 was equivalent to 1.5 planet Earths, implying that humanity uses ecological services 1.5 times as quickly as the Earth can renew them (Global Footprint Network, 2021).

The current pace of demand on Earth's natural resources is escalating, causing deterioration in various aspects such as air quality, water, soil, food, and biodiversity, to name a few (Maxton and Randers 2016; WWF, 2018;

O'Neill *et. al.* 2018). All things considered, this evokes the need for sustainability.

2.2 Sustainability definitions and debates

The following section present a review about sustainability definitions, debates that have been addressed within the literature.

No.	Sustainability Definition	Author/s	From which perspective/s
1	'Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'	Brundtland Report (WCED, 1987: p.43)	Biospheric level Included the triple bottom line 'TBL' as sustainability pillar/dimensions - Definition category: under functional definitions
2	'Sustainability is defined as the persistence over an apparently indefinite future of certain necessary and desired characteristics of both the ecosystem and the human subsystem within'	(Hodge, 1997: p.9)	Biospheric level - Definition category/ies: under both functional definitions, and definitions orientated towards systemic approach
3	'Sustainability is defined as ability of dynamic, stochastic, purposeful system, its components, boundaries and hierarchical context to continue to the future'	(Hansen and Jones 1996: p.18)	Biospheric level - Definition category: systemic-orientated approach
4	Sustainability is simply the ability to maintain something undiminished over some time period. (From a conservation perspective – environmental discourse)	Lele and Norgaard (1996)	Biospheric level - Definition category: under functional definitions

5	Sustainable development comprises types of economic and social development which protect and enhance the natural environment and social equity.	(Diesendorf, 2000)	Biospheric level - Definition category: under functional definitions
6	Living well within the limits of nature. Considering Earth's regenerative capacity while living.	(Chambers, Simmons and Wackernagel, 2000)	Biospheric level - Definition category: under functional definitions
7	'Economic activities that should be in the service of all human beings while at the same time safeguarding the biophysical systems, necessary for human existence'	(Lehtonen, 2004: p.201)	Biospheric level - Definition category: under functional definitions
8	Preserving a particular civilization, while offering a range of choices to future generations, which can be securely constructed with care and balance. NO DEFINITION	(Vos, 2007)	Biospheric level - Definition category: under functional definitions
9	'Sustainability is the capability of an organization to transparently manage its responsibilities for environmental stewardship, social well-being, and economic prosperity over the long-term while being held accountable to its stakeholders.'	(Pojasek, 2007)	Corporational level (Leads to Biospheric level) - Definition category: systemic-orientated approach
10	Conserving the natural resources, human surroundings and overall ecosystem without compromising human development goals	Banerjee and Shastri (2010)	Biospheric level - Definition category: under functional definitions
11	Dobson (2012) summarises the attributes of the sustainability citizen NO DEFINITION	NO DEFINITION	
12	Sustainability strategy will relate to a set of strategic activities by which companies are following sustainability principles and contributing to sustainable development	(Epstein And Buhovac, 2014: p.2)	Corporational level (leads to biospheric level) - Definition category: systemic-orientated approach
13	Sustainability means enduring into the long-term future; it	(Robertson, 2017: p.3)	Biospheric level

	refers to systems and processes that are able to operate and persist on their own over long periods of time. The adjective 'sustainable' means 'able to continue without interruption' or 'able to endure without failing'. The word 'sustainability' comes from the Latin verb <i>sustinere</i> , 'to maintain, sustain, support, endure,' made from the roots <i>sub</i> , 'up from below,' and <i>tenere</i> , 'to hold.' The German equivalent is <i>Nachhaltigkeit</i> .		- Definition category: under both definitions: functional and systemic-orientated approach
14	The capacity of our human society to continue indefinitely within these natural cycles. Sustainable development would be a development towards this state of sustainability	(Broman and Robèrt, 2017)	Biospheric level - Definition category: under functional definitions
15	Strategic sustainability means developing the capability of the firm to understand and react to changes in the natural environment.	(Hart, 2005: p.337)	Corporational level (leads to biospheric level) - Definition category: systemic-orientated approach
16	Increasing the quality of life in equitable ways that maintain or reduce energy/matter throughout, in organizations that are in harmony with sustainability.	(Gladwin, Kennelly, and Krause, 1995)	Corporational level (leads to biospheric level) - Definition category: systemic-orientated approach
17	'sustainability is not only about the environment and the climate change, eco-efficiency, shortages as exploitation results of (e.g. resources water & food), pollutions. It is also about how we treat people e.g. neighbours, our employees, suppliers. It is also how we act as citizens, paying fair tax, competing fairly and adhering to law and ethical norms of our societies. It is about long-term, inclusive and responsible thinking and action.'	(Exter, 2013: p.4)	Corporational level (leads to biospheric level) - Definition category: systemic-orientated approach

Table 2.6 - Sustainability's definitions in common themes and elements
Source: Thesis Author

Most of sustainability's definitions and interpretations fundamentally share the core concept of the WCED's definition (Mebratu, 1998). Looking at the table of sustainability definitions above, common themes can be noted as development for the future generation (Brundtland Report, WCED, 1987), indefinite (uncertain) future (Hodge, 1997), long-term stability, with an explicit emphasis on long-term (Pojasek, 2007; Lele and Norgaard, 1996; Robertson, 2017); or not mentioned explicitly (Hodge, 1997; Lehtonen, 2004; Vos, 2007; Epstein and Buhovac, 2014; Broman and Robèrt, 2017; Hart, 2005; Gladwin, Kennelly, and Krause, 1995; Exter, 2013).

Name of the theme/element	References
development	(Brundtland Report, WCED, 1987)
Sustainable Development Goals	(Banerjee and Shastri, 2010; Robertson, 2017)
future generation	(Brundtland Report, WCED, 1987)
indefinite (uncertain) future	(Hodge, 1997)
dynamic	(Hansen and Jones, 1996; Robertson, 2017)
continue	(Hansen and Jones, 1996)

Table 2.7 - Sustainability definitions' themes
Source: Thesis Author

In addition, the triple bottom line appears to form the pillars of sustainability in almost all the definitions; however, they have been introduced differently. According to sustainability scholars, the triple bottom line 'TBL' entails economic and social development, enhancement of the natural environment, social progress or social equity (Brundtland Report, WCED, 1987; Hodge, 1997; Hansen and Jones, 1996; Lele and Norgaard, 1996; Chambers, Simmons and Wackernagel, 2000; Robertson, 2017; Broman and Robèrt, 2017; Hart, 2005; Gladwin, Kennelly and Krause, 1995).

	Explicitly mentioned	Implicitly mentioned
Triple Bottom Line	(Hodge, 1997; Diesendorf, 2000; Lehtonen, 2004; Pojasek, 2007; Banerjee and Shastri, 2010; Epstein and Buhovac, 2014; Exter, 2013)	Brundtland Report, WCED, 1987; Hodge, 1997; Hansen and Jones, 1996; Lele and Norgaard, 1996; Chambers, Simmons and Wackernagel, 2000; Robertson, 2017; Broman and Robèrt, 2017; Hart, 2005; Gladwin, Kennelly and Krause, 1995

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Table 2.8 - Explicitly and implicitly mentioned 'Triple Bottom Line' within sustainability literature

Source: Thesis Author

While studying sustainability's definitions, on the opposed side, there have been themes of differences between the definitions, as has been demonstrated in the table below:

<u>Systems:</u> (Hodge, 1997; Robertson, 2017)	<u>Purposeful system:</u> (Hansen and Jones 1996)	<u>Cyclic system:</u> (Broman and Robèrt, 2017)	<u>Stochastic:</u> (Hansen and Jones. 1996)	<u>Context:</u> (Hansen and Jones, 1996)
<u>Conservation perspective:</u> (Lele and Norgaard, 1996)	<u>Normative concept:</u> (Hodge, 1997; Exter, 2013 – norms)	<u>Value:</u> (Hodge, 1997; Pojasek, 2007) operating set of values.	<u>Security – sustainability balance and care:</u> (Vos, 2007)	
<u>Operational:</u> (Hodge, 1997)	<u>Strategy:</u> (Pojasek, 2007; Epstein and Buhovac, 2014)	<u>Sustainability citizen:</u> (Dobson, 2012)		
<u>Equity: equitable quality of life:</u> (Gladwin, Kennelly and Krause, 1995)	<u>Social wellbeing:</u> (Pojasek, 2007)	<u>Environmental stewardship:</u> (Pojasek, 2007)	<u>Responsibility:</u> (Pojasek, 2007)	<u>Quality:</u> (Gladwin, Kennelly and Krause, 1995)
<u>Sustainability defined at the corporate level:</u> (Epstein and Buhovac, 2014; Hart, 2005; Exter, 2013)				
<u>Sustainability in businesses, core strategy:</u> long-term shareholders (Pojasek, 2007; Gladwin, Kennelly and Krause, 1995)				
<u>Human activities:</u> in service of ALL human beings while at the same time safeguarding the biophysical systems (Lehtonen, 2004)				
<u>Context Dependent:</u> (Hansen and Jones, 1996) Due to sustainability stochastic characteristics > associated with uncertainty, randomness of the outcomes, non-deterministic, cannot be anticipated				

Table 2.9 - Sustainability definitions and themes of differences
Source: Thesis Author

In this thesis, the relevant aspects of sustainability have been considered and identified for the purpose of understanding sustainability as: (1) cyclic and systems (Hodge, 1997; Robertson, 2017; Broman and Robèrt, 2017), (2) wellbeing and a healthy society, as the heart of the triple bottom line (TBL) reflects that everything will be healthy, while taking into consideration the relativity and interconnectedness of the three pillar/dimensions; (3) the normative concept, (Hodge, 1997); and (4) considering Earth's regenerative bio-capacity while living (Chambers *et al.* 2000); in addition to the cultural aspects (Saudi Arabia) and Islamic faith.

The researcher did not attempt to define sustainability in relation to this research study, and preferred to identify the relevant aspects of sustainability through the identification of sustainability routes, for the following reasons:

- a) 'Sustainability is an emergent property of a complex system' (Allenby, 1999).
- b) Sustainability must be viewed as a journey, not a fixed destination (Harrison, 2000).
- c) It is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide a comprehensive content analysis or catalogue of sustainability definitions.
- d) There has been a lack of a shared ethos across all sectors of society, which is a primary factor that has granted 'sustainability' as a term to be redefined in various ways: as a term used with precision, or as a term that has been applied as a modifier in research not affecting underpinning (generally economic), or as a term that is employed as

a placebo, or a justifier for 'business-as-usual', or in a few cases, as a term that has been used in a deceptive way (Johnston, Everardet, Santillo, and Robert, 2007).

In essence, according to Lele and Norgaard (1996), sustainability is simply the ability to maintain something undiminished over some time period. Any definition of the concept therefore requires explicit or implicit answers to three kinds of question: (1) What is to be sustained, and at what scale, and in what form? (2) Over what time period, and with what level of certainty? (3) Through what social process and with what trade-offs against other social goals? These have also been identified and called parameters (Vos, 2007). However, all definitions lack in being defined from an individual level, that of employees and their role and responsibility towards sustainability in corporations, and the rights granted in return (from the corporations they work with) with regard to their engagement with such programmes.

The concept of sustainability and its constructed definitions affirm that the environment is at the centre of sustainability's concerns, in relation to the social aspect and the economy (Vos, 2007). The basic premises of sustainability theories, models, definitions, and raised arguments, address the well-recognised three pillars or dimensions of sustainability named as the triple bottom line (TBL). These three dimensions are prominent in the literature of sustainability. The interconnections between the three pillars or dimensions of sustainability are called a 'triangle', a 'three-legged stool', or demonstrated in a Venn diagram (Figure 2.10) as three circles, overlapping where they combine in meeting-points (Vos, 2007; Elkington 2012; Hitchcock and Willard, 2015), whether the pillars of sustainability are well-recognised as Environment, Social and Economy, known as 'TBL' (Elkington 2012; Hitchcock and Willard, 2015); as the three Ps of People, Planet and Profit

(Elkington 2012; Crals and Vereeck, 2005); or the three Es of Equity, Ecology and Economy (Elkington 2012).

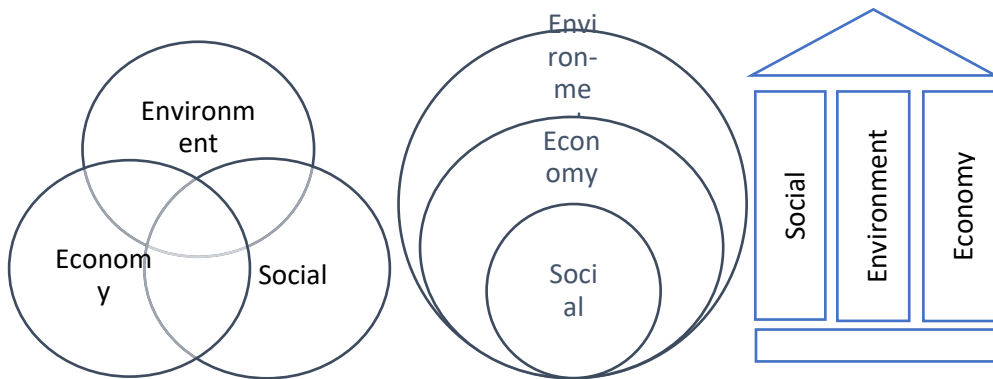


Figure 2.10
Sustainability's
dimensions in a
Classic Venn
diagram

Figure 2.11
Sustainability's
dimensions in a Venn
diagram as overlapping
three circles

Figure 2.12
Sustainability's
dimensions as
three pillars or
three-legged stool

Source: Adopted from
(Vos, 2007; Elkington 2012; Hitchcock and Willard, 2015)

In addition, these pillars of sustainability have been designed into different models and diagrams. To demonstrate further, in the 'concentric circles approach', the three pillars are replaced by three concentric circles depicting the environmental sphere in the outer, the social sphere in the middle, and economic sphere in the inner circle (Lehtonen, 2004; Lozano, 2008). This research study is in favour of the three rings model, where social is at the heart, demonstrated in Figure (2.11), and the three -pillar/-dimension, three-legged stool model (as seen in Figure 2.12), interconnected and addressed and considered in a balanced manner (ecology, social and economic).

Chapter 3:

The Saudi context, faith, national policy, industrial structure and corporations

This section of the literature review is divided into two sections. The first section introduces highlights of sustainability within the context of Saudi Arabia, while focusing on Saudi Arabian multinational corporations, specifically corporations within the aviation and the energy sectors, to reflect upon where the two case studies have been conducted as part of the empirical study of this research project. The second section talks about sustainability from an inter-faith perspective, specifically from an Islamic lens.

3.1 About Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is one of the top twenty nations in the world economically. The Kingdom comprises fourteen regions, with a population of over thirty-four million people (GASat, 2019). Furthermore, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. As an investment powerhouse, it connects Asia, Europe, and Africa, serving as a gateway to the world. This has supported Saudi Arabia in considering, handling, and sharing responsibility towards the world's most pressing issues, including issues of the environment and sustainable development. Valuable minerals such as gold, phosphate, uranium, and many others are found beneath Saudi Arabian land (Vision, 2030).

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is unprecedentedly going through a dramatic transformational change towards the best in all aspects, to levels that the country has never experienced before. Since the establishment of the Saudi Arabian Vision 2030, the country is working towards achieving a prosperous

future on both national and international levels, in various aspects, while being in line with the established national and regional Sustainable Development Goals, within the Saudi and the Arabian Gulf region, and globally (Vision 2030 of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2018).

3.2 Saudi Arabian Vision 2030 of sustainability – Sustainable Development Goals agenda

The Council of Ministers launched and approved Vision 2030 of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The promising vision has been designed to represent an ambitious methodology and a roadmap, which will support the Kingdom in gaining a prominent international standing in the economic, social, and cultural spheres (see Figure 3.1 below). It has been established to address current regional and international challenges, to maintain development achievements, to diversify and stimulate economic growth, and to re-shift the economy by ending its reliance on oil as the mainstay source of income (Saudi Vision 2030, 2018).

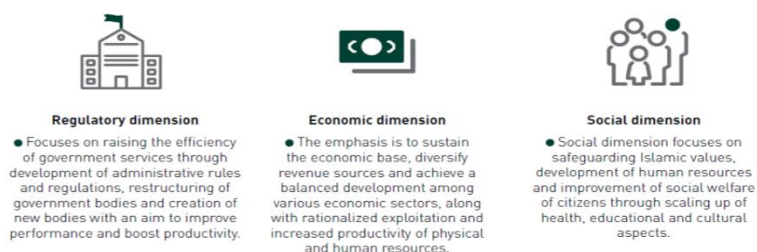


Figure 3.1

Source: Vision 2030 of The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (2018)

One of the foremost Saudi Visions statements states *'In the context of implementing its development strategy, Saudi Arabia draws upon Islamic principles and values as well as on economic freedom, so as to integrate the three basic dimensions of development: economic, social and environmental'*

(Saudi Vision 2030, 2018: p.18). The announced official statements emphasise that the Saudi Vision 2030 has been established with the consideration of the Saudi Arabia core cultural context which is the Islamic faith.

Furthermore, the vision aims at accelerating sustainable-development efforts, to support the achievement of a higher standard of living and improved quality of life for citizens. Eventually, Vision 2030 envisages three pillars, namely a vibrant society, a thriving economy, and an ambitious nation (see Figure 3.2 below) (Saudi Vision 2030, 2018).



Figure 3.2 - Looking Ahead with an Ambitious Vision
Source: Vision 2030 of The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (2018)

Along similar lines, Al Shehri and colleagues raised a recent argument that Saudi Arabia has been considered and still remained as an oil giant whose economy relies mainly on oil exportation. Oil production constitute 90% of the Kingdom's export. They added that, on numerous occasions, the reliance on single source has raised many concerns. As an example, during economic

recession, our oil price shocked the international market due to the increase in demand (Al Shehri, Xianhui and Shah, 2021).

It was against Saudi Arabia's will to produce and export the requested amount of oil restricted by the external controlled prices, as the country's mega projects (renewable energy, tourism attractions, etc.) after Vision 2030 diversified the country's revenues, supporting its shift away from its reliance solely on oil production. However, it has been under political pressure to obey the rules and export its oil according to other countries' demand, according to Al Shehri *et al.* who stated that, '*Saudi Arabia finds itself in a hard position. The oil prices are influenced by numerous economic and geopolitical factors which most of the time are beyond the control of oil producing countries.*' (Al Shehri, Xianhui and Shah, 2021: p.56219).

Nonetheless, switching to renewable energy forms is a major setback to oil production within the context of Saudi Arabia, which supports oil producers to become competitive enough in replacing their oil-production activities, which has made it more challenging for the countries who export oil to meet the Paris Agreement goal in limiting CO₂ emissions to below 1.5 °C, to mitigate climate change as a well-known massive threat to the world. Saudi Arabia is fully aware of that, taking into consideration that oil production is bleak (Shah, Zhou, Walasai, and Mohsin, 2019).

3.3 Sustainability in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and what has been achieved so far

It has been stated that Saudi Arabia has made significant progress towards the achievement of the SDGs (Towards Sustainable Saudi Arabia's Sustainable Tomorrow Report, Vision 2030). Aspects of achievements within the social

sphere were as follows: (1) the country provided and modernised an efficient and fair social-welfare system, (2) it provided a variety of social protection programmes by providing the population with adequate income, childcare, elderly pensions and care, support for women ,and other types of social assistance, (3) allocated governmental subsidies for fuel, water, food and electricity have been redirected to those in need and the less-privileged citizens, leading to a more equitable distribution (Saudi Vision 2030, 2018).

In the area of human development, Saudi Arabia has invested considerable resources in healthcare and education, which have resulted in significant improvements in health and educational outcomes. Improvements have also been evidenced in food and water security, sustainable agriculture, and labour market participation, in addition to the empowerment of women in all aspects (Saudi Vision 2030, 2018).

Saudi Arabia has undergone a remarkable transformation in the economic sphere, becoming a high-income country and a member of the G-20. The government is committed to diversifying the economy and labour force, investing in advanced transport, communications, e-government, water supply, sanitation, and energy. This has also fostered partnerships between public and private sectors, CSOs, research centres, and universities (Saudi Vision 2030, 2018).

With regard to the environmental sphere, Saudi Arabia has achieved significant investments in efficient waste management, the establishment of comprehensive recycling projects, and efforts to reduce desertification and various forms of pollution. One of the achievements has been to address global issues with regard to the exploitation of water as a common good; the country raised awareness with regard to reducing the consumption of high-

quality drinking water, as well as the utilisation of desalinated and treated water (Saudi Vision 2030, 2018).

However, few claims have been raised with regard to Saudi Arabia in regard of water scarcity, as such claims are invalid. According to Chowdhury, Al-Zahrani and Abbas (2016), geographically, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia covers the majority of the Arabian Peninsula. The country is surrounded by water from two sides; from the West, the coastal area is located on the Red Sea, from the East, the coastal area is located on the Arabian/Persian Gulf (Chowdhury, Al-Zahrani and Abbas, 2016). In addition, the country relies on water distillation to provide citizens with drinking water, and for other water usage purposes (Bali *et al.*, 2021). Therefore, to clarify further, there is no such water scarcity in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. However, according to the literature (e.g., Bali *et al.*, 2021), the issue is with altering the public's behaviour towards efficient water consumption and usages, through the adaptation of water-conservation techniques, rather than associating the problem with a lack of water resources.

Saudi Arabia has made significant investments in renewable energy, particularly solar power, to promote sustainable development. The country has also prioritized the protection and sustainable use of marine and coastal ecosystems. The Saudi government's Vision 2030 policy emphasizes environmental safeguarding, waste recycling, pollution prevention, and renewable energy generation from indigenous sources, including waste recycling (Saudi Vision 2030, 2018; Nizami *et al.*, 2017).

In addition, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as the fourth-largest aid provider globally, has been instrumental in providing humanitarian assistance to vulnerable communities worldwide, contributing significantly to poverty reduction and improved living conditions (Saudi Vision 2030, 2018).

In essence, Saudi Arabia will proceed on its development journey with the realisation of Vision 2030, which is already well underway. The country will carry on embedding Sustainable Development Goals into public plans via close collaboration between all relevant stakeholders (Saudi Vision 2030, 2018) (see table 3.3 below).

Saudi Vision 2030 and the prioritized areas of concentrated action in the coming years

Continuing the adaptation of the SDGs to the realities of the country through further alignment of national programs, plans and strategies with global development goals, targets and indicators. The concept of sustainable development will be further anchored as a guiding principle in all policy areas. This will require the further mapping of The SDGs at the level of targets and indicators, in close collaboration with the General Authority for Statistics.

Improving the quality and coverage of SDG indicators and analysis of data by strengthening the methodology and systems for data production and analysis, particularly in a disaggregated format. This will be linked with activities in support of the capacities of the national statistical system based on methodologies harmonized with international standards

Strengthening the monitoring of The SDGs at the national and sub-national level. Reviews of SDG implementation will be conducted on a regular basis to track progress towards the achievement of The SDGs, identify good practices and challenges, as well as undertake appropriate adjustments. Systems for monitoring and reporting on a regular basis will be strengthened. Particular attention will be paid to the adaptation and implementation of The SDGs at the sub-national level and establishing systems for tracking and using SDG-related indicators in local decision-making processes. The Ministry of Economy and Planning, as the coordinator for The SDGs implementation, will continue to offer capacity building support to relevant institutions, especially at the sub-national level. Main forms of support will be disseminating information to stakeholders, training on mainstreaming The SDGs in development plans, training on development of The SDGs indicators, training on action plan formulation, etc.

Strengthening collaboration among relevant stakeholders across public, private and non-profit sectors. This will be achieved by further building on existing governance frameworks, especially the institutional framework around Vision 2030 and developing strategies for strengthening collaboration among actors. More active engagement with the SDGs will strengthen the sense of ownership and commitment by the involved parties. Particular efforts will be made to strengthen the engagement of academia and non-profit sector with the SDGs.

Enhancing Saudi Arabia's role in the promotion of international partnerships around the SDGs, especially at the regional level. This will include the exchange of lessons, good practices and expertise through bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

Table 3.3 - Saudi Vision 2030 and the prioritised areas of concentrated action in the coming years

Source: Vision 2030 of The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (2018)

These statements identify the three pillars of Saudi Arabia Vision 2030, which have been introduced earlier in this chapter as a vibrant society, a thriving economy and an ambitious nation, in addition to the country being eager to gain economic growth, to become a global investment powerhouse. The focus is on leveraging citizens' strong investment capabilities to stimulate the economy and diversify revenues, while meeting national and international Sustainable Development Goals (Saudi Vision 2030, 2018).

Interestingly, collaboration was one of the major key aspects of the establishment of the Saudi Vision 2030, on the national, regional (Middle East), and international horizons. The researcher of this research project considers the importance of collaboration, specifically with regard to sustainability, as the core pillar for this thesis. Surf and Mostafa (2017) asserted that Saudi Arabian Vision 2030 has set the fourth roadmap for coming generations to flourish and live their lives within a stable economy, where private and public sectors collaborate jointly to support the country in development while maintaining a sustainable income and resources.

To elaborate further, the country is working at accelerating economic growth that meets global standards, through shifting its revenues towards non-oil commercial and trade activities in each of the following sectors: the mining and metals industry, tourism and hospitality, petrochemicals, construction, retail and wholesale trade, and the healthcare industry. Check the table 3.4 in appendix (I) for further information (Vision 2030 of The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2018; Al Shehri, Xianhui and Shah, 2021).

The Saudi Arabian cultural context has been addressed previously in this section, as the researcher conducted her empirical study in Saudi Arabia, and more specifically within the energy and transportation sectors, where her case study was employed. Therefore, a brief review of the energy sector and the aviation sector will be incorporated, respectively, in the following section.

3.4 The energy sector in Saudi Arabia and (the second chosen case study for this thesis)

The Saudi Green Initiative (SGI) is an initiative whose details were announced in October 2021. The initiative aims at promoting efforts towards the enhancement of quality of life, while protecting future generations in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, through harmonising sustainability-related plans, and maximising the utilisation of renewable energy, reducing emissions, and fighting against climate change (Ministry of Energy official website – The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2021).

The Kingdom plans to join the Global Oceans Alliance, the Global Methane Pledge, and the Alliance to Eliminate Plastic Waste in Oceans and Beaches to combat biodiversity loss and reduce CO₂ emissions. These initiatives include restoring degraded land, creating protected areas, and investing in sustainable tourism and non-profit foundations (Ministry of Energy official website – The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2021).

The energy sector, with 96% of annual spending on oil and gas, is a major contributor to harmful emissions. Companies like ExxonMobil, Aramco, Chevron, Shell, and Equinor often practice greenwashing by claiming they meet sustainability standards. ClientEarth calls for policymakers to ban fossil

fuel companies from advertising unless they provide health warnings about global heating risks (Carrington, 2021).

Furthermore, under the main energy sector, there are five sub-sectors have been categorised which are the oil sector, the gas sector, the electricity sector, the renewable energy sector, and the atomic energy sector.

The researcher of this thesis conducted her empirical study through a case study research strategy, which has been employed on two case studies. One of the case studies was employed on a corporation within the transportation/aviation sector, and the other case study was employed within the energy sector. In order to investigate sustainability-related matters in corporations, on the individual levels (the employees) and the role of project management to advance employees' embracement of sustainability programmes in their workplace, two case studies have been chosen for the conducted empirical study. The latter section talked about the corporation that is categorised under the energy sector, as the energy corporation reports and refers to, and gets supervised and monitored by the Ministry of Energy in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, the corporation follows the Ministry's legislation, laws, and regulations. Whereas, the following section talks about the other chosen case study in this thesis for methodology purposes, as the section provides an overview about the transportation/aviation sector.

3.5 The Transportation sector/Civil Aviation - Aviation industry and the first chosen case study for this thesis.

The General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA) oversees all aviation-industry-related matters in Saudi Arabia, including air-traffic control, safety, IT,

finance, operations, and development of air transport activities. GACA supports the country's global position, economic growth, and Sustainable Development Goals, ensuring air transport safety and compliance with international standards (GACA, 1977, 2011).

The Saudi Arabian General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA) is focusing on sustainability in the aviation sector, joining the Centre for Aviation (CAPA) to enhance its economic growth and meet national and international Sustainable Development Goals (CAPA – Centre for Aviation, 2019). To give a general overview, the diagram (3.6) below shows the aviation sector and its airlines as CO2 emitters.

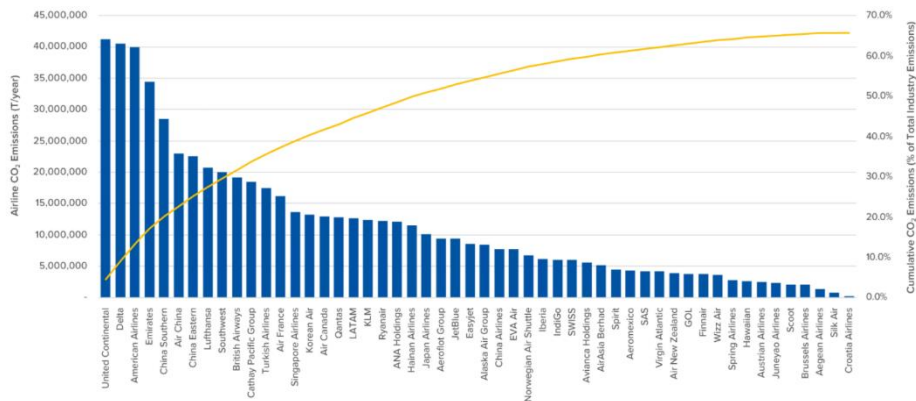


Diagram 3.6 – 2019 CO2 Emissions by Airlines
Source: CAPA Centre for Aviation – Sustainability Benchmarking Report

The Diagram (3.6) demonstrate the total CO2 emissions by airlines in 2019, highlighting the largest emitters, and the significance of the top 10 airlines relative to total industry emissions. By referring to the diagram, the data show that none of the Saudi Arabian Airlines (the main Institution Saudia SV. or the other national companies) that belong to Saudi Arabia or under the Authority of Civil Aviation have been considered as top CO2-emission-contributors in the world, according to the sustainability report by the Centre for Aviation CAPA, as the diagram shows that the top five airlines were United Continental, Delta,

American Airlines, Emirates, and China Southern (CAPA, 2019), which might come down to popularity, high demand, and the most required travelling airway routes for travellers.

Airlines are air polluters, with the industry's global emissions expected to increase to 3% by 2050 unless they meet Zero Carbon standards (Yan, 2016). Some argue that the aviation sector is greenwashing, claiming to be working towards a Net-Zero path (Leedham, 2021).

The Centre for Aviation (CAPA) has launched a sustainability benchmarking report for airlines, aiming to help them transition towards sustainability by proving climate plans and results, especially in the face of high costs and pressure to reduce emissions (CAPA, 2019). In this thesis, the first empirical case study has been conducted with a corporation that is categorised under the aviation sector and falls under the higher authoritative governmental body The General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA), which is categorised under the Ministry of Transport and Logistic Services, and follows the Ministry's legislation, laws, and regulations.

The empirical study for this research study has been conducted within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, involving two corporations in the energy and transportation sectors. As the study adhered to high confidentiality standards. Meanwhile I (as a researcher) have ensured anonymity by negotiating agreements with both corporations and participants, ensuring ethical research ethics (more details can be referred to in the methodology chapter (chapter 5), and findings chapter (chapter 6)).

The thesis focuses on sustainability in Saudi Arabia's energy and aviation corporations, specifically examining employee engagement and sustainability. Unlike previous research, which focuses on technical aspects

and Vision 2030's economic sustainability, this thesis emphasizes the social dimension.

Moreover, very few resources have been published within highly ranked or peer-reviewed academic journals (e.g., Shah, *et al.*, 2019; Al Shehri *et al.*, 2021; Kahia, Omri, and Jarraya, 2021). So far, however, most of the research conducted in Saudi Arabia has been descriptive. In addition to these points, the majority of the research has been not fully published nor peer-reviewed (e.g., symposia, university portals/websites, or conferences purposes, manuscripts, etc.) (e.g., AlArjani, *et al.*, 2021; Aldosari and Atkins, 2015; Al-Yami and Price, 2006).

Furthermore, research in Saudi Arabia has addressed sustainability through the lens of corporate social responsibility (CSR), which focusses mainly on the social dimension of sustainability by claiming that CSR serves the community, which entails the external side of stakeholders (e.g., Abro, Khurshid and Amir, 2016), whereas this research study focusses on the internal aspect of stakeholders, employees, and their engagement with sustainability.

3.6 Sustainability in the Quran and Hadith, from Islamic and inter-faith perspectives. Faith's role in (embracing) sustainability?

3.6.1 This research study – empirical study conducted in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The empirical study of this research project has been conducted in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which required the employment of a case study design on two Saudi Arabian multinational corporations, which has been stated earlier within this section of the literature review. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to consider the cultural context, since this study focusses on employees and their engagement with sustainability programmes in corporations.

3.6.2 Saudi Arabia, Islamic faith, main religion – central as a compass of the Islamic world

Exclusively, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the centre of the Islamic world. Scholars have stated that the culture in Saudi Arabia is based on Islamic values, and in conformity with Sharia (Islam, Murad, McMurray and Abalala, 2017). To clarify, Sharia is a set of laws that forms a system based on the Quran (the Direct Words of God/Allah – the only worshipped God by Muslims) and the Sunna (known as the Hadith – of the prophet Muhammad’s words and behaviour) (Grieve, 2006). According to the Quran: *{We made of you law. So follow the way. And not the fancies of those Who have no knowledge}* (Al-Jathiyah (the Kneeling Down) Surah 45, verse 18.). Markedly, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is located at the heart of the Arab and Islamic world (Vision, 2030; Grieve, 2006).

Saudi Arabia is revered by Muslim nations for its holy mosques, 'Masjed Al Haram' in Makkah and 'Al Masjed An-Nabawy' in Madinah, both considered the compass for prayers and the beloved city of the prophet (Sarkawi, Abdullah and Dali, 2016). Those two holy mosques are so dear to Muslims, according to their beliefs, that therefore, the researcher of this study considered exploring further what lies in the hearts of employees in Saudi Arabian corporations, and whether Muslims’ faith being Islam would foster or hinder their willingness and abilities to engage with sustainability programmes at their workplace.

3.6.3 The relationship between sustainability and inter-faith, with a specific focus on the Islamic faith

The study of theology embraces ethics and sustainability through responsibility towards nature, humanity and the universe. Humans hold

personal values, principles, and beliefs that present their mental and spiritual side, and which can have an influence on their behaviours and attitudes. Therefore, this section will entail the exploration of employees as humans, at a deeper level, and how this influences their sustainability-related behaviours and beliefs.

3.6.4 The employees in corporations as human beings, considering their spirit, soul, and mental side: beliefs, values, principles.

To begin with, numerous indigenous beliefs and traditions' (Hawaiian, African, etc.) main focus is about how the human is not the master of the universe, but rather, he is the centre. Based on this concept, humans must live in harmony with the universe (Dudley, 1996; Mbiti, 1996).

In addition, moral philosophies and religion consider sustainability at their core. For example, Buddhism, Shamanism, and nature-based religions hold that all creations are imbued with souls (rocks, mountains, phenomena such as storms, etc.). Buddhism, Shintoism and Taoism share in common this reference to nature, through connection and respect towards nature. In essence, a philosophy known as biocentrism states that all living things are held to be worthy of respect (Cunningham, Cunningham and Saigo, 2007).

Drawing on common historic origins, branches of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam share beliefs about human roles towards nature, through practicing stewardship, while viewing nature from the perspective of being partners with, rather than masters of, it (Cunningham, Cunningham and Saigo, 2007). In essence, inter-faith (moral philosophies, beliefs, religions) plays a vital role towards sustainability, via emphasising the role of humans as caretakers of nature, to sustain life and make the Earth a better place.

Religion refers to attitudes and beliefs in a search for meaning in life, seeking to be more in contact with a transcendent entity (James, 1997; Frankl, 1998; Ross, 1967). Spirituality is a quest or connection to the divine at a personal level, which can be either within or outside formal religion, whereas faith is a broader term, about the combined elements of religion and spirituality, that entails searching for, while being in relationship with, the sacred or divine, both within and outside an institutional context (Miller-Perrin and Krumrei Mancuso, 2016). However, it has been argued that scholars have rejected the idea of religion and spirituality as synonyms (Giacalone and Jurkiewicz, 2010). Other scholars affirm faith to be a universal entity that is vital to human experiences (Moreno 1977; Forsyth 1997; Dyess, 2011). Therefore, as the researcher, I consider the term faith throughout my thesis, as it is a broader term and inclusive, as it includes a combination of elements of both religion and spirituality.

3.6.5 Sustainability from a faith perspective – Why the Islamic faith?

A faith perspective is considered because this research study investigates sustainability at a deeper level – that of the employees and their emotional, cognitive, and physical engagement with sustainability in corporations through the aid of project-management tools and techniques – and the spiritual and mental sides of human beings (employees) are as highly important as the physical aspect. Therefore, this study further investigated whether the employees' faith, beliefs, values, and principles would influence the way in which they embrace and practice sustainability at their workplaces, as I would like to find out whether employees' faith, beliefs, values, and principles, can foster or hinder the employees from engaging with sustainability. In addition, the empirical study of my research study has been conducted within the Saudi Arabian context. Therefore, the following section of the literature review will critically review and address sustainability from

an Islamic faith perspective on the individual level, which in the case of this thesis, is the employees.

Islam, as a religion, helps individuals enhance their quality as human beings (Mohiuddin, 2012), as Islam guides their emotions, the way they think, attitudes, behaviours, and actions, by striving towards a better-quality version of themselves. Muslims follow the guidance of the Quran (the words of Allah) and Hadith (their beloved prophet Muhammad). In fact, 3% of the Quran is commands and prohibitions, whereas 97% of the Quran teaches ethics, morals, and the relationship between God (Allah) and man, the purpose of life, the history of nations in the past, the relationship between mankind and the universe, how to be self-critical, and how to use reason and faith (Lang, 2003). In essence, Muslims follows the model established by Almighty himself, through his prophet Muhammad (PBUH) (Lang, 2003).

To give a good reflection of the employees who embrace Islamic faith, and their roles towards sustainability from an Islamic faith perspective, this part of the literature review will embark on exploring the relationship between Islamic faith, sustainability, and human (as employees) roles towards sustainability. To begin with, markedly, sustainability is fundamental to Islamic faith, which has been reflected upon and summarised in the table below (Table 3.7).

Indeed, Islam principally asks human beings to consider future-based scenarios, while being mindful of the present. Al-Attas (2001) has asserted that in Islam, everything is ultimately focussed on the *akhirah*-aspect (the hereafter), as Muslims work on gaining good deeds and considering the *duniya*-aspect (worldly) as temporary and finite. Such consideration is demonstrated in their behaviour towards themselves, others, the planet, and the universe. The verse of the Quran says:

Invoke your Lord with humility [...] And do not do mischief on the earth, after it has been set in order, and invoke Him with fear and hope; Surely, Allah's Mercy is (ever) near unto the good-doers. (Q. 7:56–57)

3.6.6 Sustainability, Sustainable Development Goals, and the Evidence from the Quran and Hadith.

As has been stated earlier in the section on sustainability in this chapter (the literature review chapter), the researcher of this thesis found the enquiries, which have been developed into parameters, related to sustainability to be rather suitable to gaining a good understanding of what sustainability is about. Vos (2007) identified guiding parameters of sustainability and they are as follows. (1) What is to be sustained, and at what scale, and in what form? (2) Over what time period, and with what level of certainty? (3) Through what social process, and with what trade-offs against other social goals? These have been applied as guiding points, to understand how the concept has been perceived by the participants in the empirical study, with regard to their engagement with sustainability in their corporations.

This research study supports the view that affirms sustainability as a co-evolution of economic, social, and environmental systems with respect to a dynamic 'triple bottom line' (TBL): the three fundamental elements of sustainability, and their simultaneous interdependent characteristics in terms of quality and performance goals pertaining to each of the three spheres (Henriques and Richardson, 2005).

Sustainability stems from the so-called Sustainable Development Goals, which have been addressed earlier in more details in this chapter (the literature review chapter). However, in this section, the concept of sustainability, and the Sustainable Development Goals, will be addressed from the Islamic faith perspective, with the evidence from the Quran and Hadith. (Please see the table below.)

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Evidence from the Quran and/or Hadith	Comments
1 No Poverty	<p>‘Pay Zakat out of your property, for truly it is a purifier which purifies you, and be kind to your relatives, and acknowledge the rights of the poor, neighbors and beggars.’ (Prophet Muhammad) (Hadith)</p> <p>‘The best of you is he (or she) who is of most benefit to others.’ (Prophet Muhammad) (Hadith)</p> <p><i>‘Allah will deprive usury of all blessing, but will give increase for deeds of charity.’</i> (The Quran 2:276)</p> <p><i>‘If the debtor is in a difficulty, grant him time till it is easy to repay. But if ye remit it by way of charity, that is best for you, if ye only knew.’</i> (The Quran 2:280)</p> <p>Islam does not like abasement and does not encourage people to surrender to poverty. As the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) took refuge in Allah from the evil of the fitnah (hideousness) of poverty and from falling into poverty that makes man forget everything (Ibn Hanbal, Musnad, 6/57); he pointed out that poverty would be almost equal to contaminate a person’s faith and beliefs. (Bayhaqi, Shuabul-Iman, 5/267)</p> <p>‘Indeed, the men who practice charity and the women who practice charity and [they who] have loaned Allah a goodly loan - it will be multiplied for them, and they will have a noble reward.’ (The Quran 57:18)</p>	<p>‘Zakat’ means charitable act, and is performed once annually.</p> <p>Islam has views about the bitterness of poverty, and encourages people to seek any type of job and not to give up as much as possible.</p>
2 Zero Hunger	<p>‘He who sleeps on a full stomach whilst his neighbour goes hungry is not one of us.’ (Prophet Muhammad) (Hadith).</p> <p>‘A believer wants for his brother what he wants for himself.’ (Prophet Muhammad)</p>	<p>Human duty is towards his own family first, then neighbours, <i>let alone</i> the world.</p>

	<p><i>'Allah will deprive usury of all blessing, but will give increase for deeds of charity' (The Quran 2:276)</i></p> <p><i>'Indeed, the men who practice charity and the women who practice charity and [they who] have loaned Allah a goodly loan - it will be multiplied for them, and they will have a noble reward.'</i> The Quran 57:18</p>	
3 Good health and wellbeing	<p><i>'And if anyone saved a life (living thing), it would be as if he saved the life of the mankind/whole people.'</i> (The Quran 5:32)</p> <p><i>'Whoever relieves his brother of a trial or a difficulty in this life, God will relieve him of a trial in the next life.'</i> (Prophet Muhammad) (Hadith)</p>	
4 Quality Education	<p><i>In the name of your Lord who created (all that exists).</i> (The Quran: Surah Al'Alaq 96:1)</p> <p>Acquiring knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim, the Knowledge of Truth and Wisdom (Prophet Muhammad) (Hadith).</p>	<p>1) Iqraa (read as a commandment, as seeking knowledge is a sacred duty to all human beings, as it is obligatory. Reading '<i>Iqraa</i>' came as a commandment with inclusiveness to all, to value knowledge-gaining 2) teaching and passing knowledge and the benefit of teaching 3) no one to have ownership of knowledge, that is why it needs to be passed on and shared with others</p>
5 Gender Equality	<p><i>'O mankind! We...made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other)' (The Quran 49:13)</i></p> <p><i>'All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over black, nor a black has any superiority over white except by piety and good action.'</i> (The last Sermon of Prophet Muhammad) (Hadith)</p>	<p>Race and gender equality and rights</p>

	<p><i>'And in no wise covet those things in which Allah Hath bestowed His gifts More freely on some of you than on others, To men is allotted what they earn, and to women what they earn, But ask Allah of His bounty. For Allah hath full knowledge of all things'</i> The Quran, an-Nisa, 4:32)</p>	
6 Clean Water and Sustainability	<p><i>'The world is beautiful and verdant, and verily God, be He exalted, has made you His stewards in it, and He sees how you acquit yourselves.'</i> (Prophet Muhammad) (Hadith)</p> <p><i>'Say, Have you considered? If your water drains away, who will bring you pure running water?'</i> (The Quran, Surah al-Mulk: 30)</p> <p><i>'Do they not see how We conduct the water to a dry land, and with it We produce vegetation, from which their livestock eat, and themselves? Do they not see?'</i> (The Quran, Surah as-Sajdah: 27)</p> <p><i>'...and We send down from the sky pure water'</i> (The Quran, Surah al-Furqan: 48)</p> <p><i>Eat and drink: But waste not by excess, for Allah loveth not the wasters</i> (The Quran: Surat Al-A'raf 7: 31).</p>	<p>Be mindful and ponder upon the blessing of water we have been granted, and not to practice water over-usage</p>
7 Affordable and Clean Energy	<p><i>'And they as you what you what they ought to spend. Say: That which is beyond your needs- Thus, Allah makes clear to you His Laws in order that you may give thought'</i> (The Quran, Al-Baqarah 2: 219).</p>	
8 Decent work and economic growth	<p><i>'O People, regard the life and property of every Muslim as a sacred trust. Return the goods entrusted to you to their rightful owners. Hurt no one so that no one may hurt you. Remember that you will indeed meet your LORD, and that HE will indeed reckon your</i></p>	

	<p>deeds.’ (The last Sermon of Prophet Muhammad) (Hadith)</p> <p>‘The best of you is he (or she) who is of most benefit to others.’ (Prophet Muhammad) (Hadith)</p> <p>‘Each one of you is a shepherd and each one of you shall be asked for his sheep.’ (Prophet Muhammad) (Hadith)</p> <p><i>‘If the debtor is in a difficulty, grant him time till it is easy to repay. But if ye remit it by way of charity, that is best for you, if ye only knew’</i> (The Quran 2:280)</p> <p><i>‘Nor strain thine eyes in longing for the things We have given for enjoyment to parties of them, the splendor of the life of this world, through which We test them: but the provision of thy Lord is better and more enduring’</i> (The Quran, Taha, 20:131)</p> <p><i>‘And do no mischief on the earth after it has been set in order: that will be best for you, if ye have Faith’</i> (The Quran, Surat Al A’raf, ‘the Heights’, verse 85)</p>	<p>Whishing good upon others when they are granted wealth and blessings, and to practice envy because the granted wealth is indeed a test as well for staying pre and sharing the benefits of that wealth with others.</p>
9 Industry, innovation and infrastructure	<p><i>‘Verily! In the creation of heavens and earth and in alternation of night and day, there are indeed signs for men of understanding’</i> (The Quran, Ali Imran 3: 190).</p>	
10 Reduce Inequalities	<p><i>‘He (Allah) it is that has made you inheritors in the earth’</i> (The Quran 35.39)</p>	<p>Allah created all mankind as inheritors ‘Khalifas’ of Earth</p>
11 Sustainable cities and communities	<p>‘Each one of you is a shepherd and each one of you shall be asked for his sheep.’ (Prophet Muhammad)</p>	
12 Responsible Consumption and Production	<p>‘The world is beautiful and verdant, and verily God, be He exalted, has made you His stewards in it, and He sees how you acquit yourselves.’ (Prophet Muhammad)</p> <p>‘Each one of you is a shepherd and each one of you shall be asked for his sheep.’ (Prophet Muhammad)</p> <p>‘So when I am hungry, I would beseech You and remember You, and when I am full I would be</p>	<p>Stewardship</p> <p>Showing gratitude supports responsible consumption</p>

	<p>grateful to You and praise You' (Tirmidhi, Zuhd 35) <i>Eat and drink but not to excess (7.32), and Do not cast yourselves into destruction by your own hands (2.195)</i> 'The son of Adam cannot fill a vessel worse than his stomach, as it is enough for him to take a few bites to straighten his back. If he cannot do it, then he may fill it with a third of his food, a third of his drink, and a third of his breath.' Sunan al-Tirmidhī 2380 'Do not waste water even if you were at a running stream'(Prophet Muhammad) <i>Sunan Ibn Majah</i> <i>'Children of Adam, dress well whenever you are at worship, and eat and drink (as we have permitted) but do not be extravagant: God does not like extravagant people'</i> (Surat Al-A'raf 7:31)</p>	<p>Water and food consumption As overconsumption is harmful to human health, as over-eating is a cause of obesity A guide on how to consume Not only does Islam prohibit the exploitation and destruction of natural resources, but Islamic teachings also emphasise the important role of humans as stewards of the planet with an ethical and moral obligation to preserve and restore the environment.</p>
13 Climate Action	<p>'The world is beautiful and verdant, and verily God, be He exalted, has made you His stewards in it, and He sees how you acquit yourselves.' (Prophet Muhammad) <i>'And if anyone saved a life (living thing), it would be as if he saved the life of the mankind/whole people'</i> (The Quran 5:32)</p>	Stewardship
14 Life Below Water	<p>'The world is beautiful and verdant, and verily God, be He exalted, has made you His stewards in it, and He sees how you acquit yourselves.' (Prophet Muhammad) 'If any Muslim plants a tree or sows a field, and a human, bird or animal eats from it, it shall be reckoned as charity from him.' (Prophet Muhammad) <i>'And if anyone saved a life (living thing), it would be as if he saved the life of the mankind/whole people'</i> (The Quran 5:32)</p>	Stewardship
15 Life and Land	<p>'The world is beautiful and verdant, and verily God, be He exalted, has made you His stewards in it, and He</p>	Stewardship

	<p>sees how you acquit yourselves.’ (Prophet Muhammad)</p> <p>‘If any Muslim plants a tree or sows a field, and a human, bird or animal eats from it, it shall be reckoned as charity from him.’ (Prophet Muhammad)</p> <p>‘And if anyone saved a life (living thing), it would be as if he saved the life of the mankind/whole people’ (The Quran 5:32)</p> <p>‘The earth is green and sweet and verily Allah has installed you as trustees in it to see how you act.’ (Prophet Muhammad)</p> <p>‘Verily, there is heavenly reward for every act of kindness done to a living animal.’ (Prophet Muhammad)</p> <p><i>Do they not see that the heavens and the earth were one mass, and We tore them apart? And We made from water every living thing. Will they not believe?’ (Surah al-Anbiya, 30).</i></p> <p>‘Whoever plants a tree and diligently looks after it until it matures and bears fruit is rewarded,’ (Prophet Muhammad, source: Musnad)</p>	
<p>16 Peace, Justice, and strong institution</p>	<p>‘He (Allah) has set up the balance (of justice), in order that ye may not transgress (due) balance. So establish weight with justice and fall not short in the balance’ (The Quran 55: 7-9)</p> <p>‘Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion (In seeking corruption)’ (The Quran: 16:90)</p> <p>‘And do good as Allah has been good to you. And do not seek to cause corruption in the earth. Allah does not love the corrupters’, (Surat Al Qasas 28:77)</p> <p>‘If the debtor is in a difficulty, grant him time till it is easy to repay. But if ye remit it by way of charity, that is best for you, if ye only knew’ (The Quran 2:280)</p>	

17 Partnership to achieve the Goals	'Whoever relieves his brother of a trial or a difficulty in this life, God will relieve him of a trial in the next life.' (Prophet Muhammad) <i>'If the debtor is in a difficulty, grant him time till it is easy to repay. But if ye remit it by way of charity, that is best for you, if ye only knew'</i> (The Quran 2:280)	
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Table 3.7 – Sustainability Development Goals according to Quran and Hadith
Source: Thesis author (Gathered information from following sources: Abu Da'ood (Unknown date), AlBukhari (Unknown date, 1987), Ahmad (Unknown date), AlAhdal (2009))

The Sustainable Development Goals have been addressed from an Islamic faith perspective and have been explained comprehensively 1400 year ago by Almighty Allah, in the Holy Quran and through the Hadith, which reflects on Prophet Muhammad's traditions (Mukhtar, Zainol and Jusoh, 2018).

Although the researcher has reviewed sustainability from an Islamic faith perspective, The researcher does not intend to consider enforcing the Islamic aspects prior to conducting the data-collection stage, and specifically while designing the interview-topic guide for the empirical study. However, such aspects will be considered at the data analysis stage, upon the occurrence of such aspects.

3.6.7 Sustainability at the workplace from an Islamic perspective

Due to the notion that sustainability-related issues, specifically the environmental ones, are global and tend to cross cultural boundaries,

therefore, sustainability is correspondingly multicultural (Rizk, 2014). This thesis focuses on individual employees' beliefs, values, and principles as part of sustainable corporate solutions. It argues that excluding faith and religion from the workplace can be problematic (Delbecq, 2005).

Interestingly, in the literature of sustainability and spirituality, there has been a need for adopting spirituality by inviting it into sustainability at the workplaces, as according to Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003), there has been a growing interest in adopting aspects of faith and spirituality in corporations.

Corporations need to go beyond the financial bottom line, abstaining from greed in the form of excessive materialism through careers that are pursued for money's sake, and instead helping individuals seek more meaning through interconnectedness with others (More and Todarello, 2013).

The consideration of faith, religious, and cultural aspects help in developing a source/sense of value that guides decision making (Mohamed Wisnieski and Syed 2004), which can also be ideal for sustainability in corporations.

In reality, people are hungry for meaning in their lives, and it is crucial for corporations; thereby, this type of support is needed at their workplaces (Klenke, 2003), specifically when it is designed for sustainability purposes. In parallel, this also resonates with the concept of employee engagement, which is the main focus for this thesis. In order for employees to engage themselves at work, they seek meaningful work (Wollard and Shuck, 2011) as meaningful emotionally, meaningful cognitively, and meaningful physically, to meet the conditions and statuses of engagement (Kahn, 1999). This requires a spiritually informed management that integrates traditional and spiritual approaches (Delbecq, 2005), which can be enhanced and developed into the shape of faith-based initiatives.

Corporations must strive to shapeshift, in order to rethink the purpose of business grounded in a real sustainable and responsible ethos (Visser, 2011), which is another call for a shift towards spiritually-informed management theories that may stimulate profound new models, ones that are infectious in a way that influences a positive evolution of people and the planet (Delbecq, 2005). Such a faith-orientated shift, that is, in favour of engaging employees with sustainability programmes in corporations, cannot be attained without the vital role of leadership. According to the literature (e.g., Klenke, 2003) it has been confirmed that the roots of effective leadership might be grounded in faith-based or spiritual dimensions, while leadership is considered as the next frontier in leadership thinking.

With regard to faith, there have been four key attributes of faith: (1) focussing on beliefs, (2) foundational meaning for life, (3) living authentically in accordance with beliefs, and (4) interrelating with self, others and/or the Divine (Dyess, 2011), as they added that faith-based thinking attracts us to create a connection with the self and with the other. This can be utilised, by all means, to serve sustainability purposes, by focusing on the connectedness with ourselves and with others (living and non-living things).

From the perspective of engaging employees with sustainability through the lens of faith, this might be attainable when the components of faith are considered. According to Paul and Treschuk's (2020) study, the attributes of faith evolve patterns of belief that create the grounds for authentic living, and give meaning to the present moment and the inter-relating ones (see the model below – Figure 3.8).



Figure 3.8 - Attributes of Faith
 Source: Paul and Treschuk (2020)

However, when faith-based sustainability-related models are addressed within the context of Saudi Arabia, Sarkawi A.A. and Abdullah A., (2015), set a good example with their developed conceptual framework. The conceptual model has been developed to address sustainability's triple bottom line (TBL) within the built environment concept, based on the Islamic faith, as they connected the three dimensions of sustainability as economic, environmental, and social, informed by Islamic perspective.

Likewise, another example has been presented by Islam, Murad, McMurray and Abalala (2017), who addressed sustainability and procurement while considering the cultural aspects of Saudi Arabia, such as the macro rules, regulations, and policies, while lacking clarification from the Islamic faith perspective.

Therefore, little is known about how (Islamic) faith informs sustainability programmes in corporations when it comes to engaging their employees with such programmes. Up to date, there has not been a single research study that includes the role of employees' beliefs, values, and principles, and inter-faith; and their engagement with sustainability programmes through the aid of

project management framed by organisational change; as is the main focus of this thesis.

In addition, there has been a need for integrating a holistic approach that considers traditions and beliefs to augment sustainability related models (Mebratu, 1998). Thus, the researcher adopted a holistic approach, in her final conceptual model towards the end of the discussion chapter (Chapter7).

Chapter 4:

Sustainability in corporations and organisational change: the case for engaging employees in sustainability programmes with the aid of project management?

4.1 Sustainability on the corporation level

The focus of this research study emphasised the incorporation of addressing sustainability on the corporation level, which is presented in this section of the literature. According to Hart (1997), social and political reasons are related to environmental crises, as the emphasis here is on considering corporations as the foundation of solutions towards a sustainable and better environment. He added that corporations have the resources, global influence, and motivation towards a sustainability agenda. To introduce the systematic literature review question for this section:

Question: Identify in which sphere this research studies sustainability?

In spite of the visibility of the problem in the biosphere, Earth's deteriorations, evident throughout its spheres, come down to corporations and the way they operate, if we would like to open sustainability's black box agenda, and investigate further within the heart of the problem of 'corporations and business activities'. The three-factors interrelationship scenario between the modernistic lifestyle, human demands, and commercialistic activities has consequently led to disastrous impacts on the environment, evident as climate change, the exploitation of resources, and biodiversity loss, according to Kishita, Hara, Uwasu and Umeda (2016), and Cramer (1998), who stated that there was overwhelming evidence that

technological inventions, along with industrial activities, were developing at ultimate speed to cope with the so-called globalisation shift. Similarly, Diesendorf (2000) emphasised the notion that shifting our minds towards achievement, while being inconsiderate of Earth's biocapacity, has led us to over-consume blindly. Furthermore, the investment and innovation of industries have played a role in economic growth to satisfy consumer demand. Because of this, and because of resource consumption and the production process, business activities have become a major contributor to environmental consequences (Welford and Starkey, 1996; Schmidt-Bleek, Wiegandt. and Lustig, 2009).

Yet, in spite of accusing business entities of playing a major role in harming the environment, on the contrary, it has been argued that they can be the cause and the cure at the same time, just like the 'two sides of the coin' analogy. According to Hart (1997), social and political reasons are related to environmental crises, as the emphasis here is on considering corporations as the foundation of the solutions towards a sustainable and better environment. He added that corporations have the resources, global influence, and motivation towards a sustainability agenda. Drawing upon the latter-mentioned points, this thesis attempts to study sustainability in corporations, considering it as the foundation to the solution, being in line with Hart's way in looking at sustainability within the corporation sphere, but with a focussed level, as 'the employees'.

When sustainability is embraced in corporations, they pursue the following benefits: they reduce energy, waste and costs; it grants them a way of differentiating themselves from competitors; they get ahead of the curve in meeting sustainability's governmental policies; it supports the creation of an atmosphere of innovation for new products and processes; it opens new market opportunities and revenues; it supports attracting and retaining the

best employees; it improves the corporation's image with shareholders and the public; it reduces legal risk, and the associate cost of its insurance; and it supports decision-making that enhances quality of life (Hitchcock and Willard, 2009; Epstein and Buhovac, 2014).

However, when performing in a sustainable manner, corporations can, whether intentionally or unintentionally, engage in an undesirable act called 'greenwashing', which can cause harm to the business, rather than gaining a reputation in the market through deceit. Greenwashing has been defined as 'the intersection of two firm behaviours: poor environmental performance and positive communication about environmental performance' (Delmas and Burbano: p.65). According to research, greenwashing makes corporations lose the trust of their stakeholders. Greenwashing can be performed through the corporate system, specifically when presenting and publishing corporate environmental reports related to their actions towards, for example, climate change (Carlson, 2009).

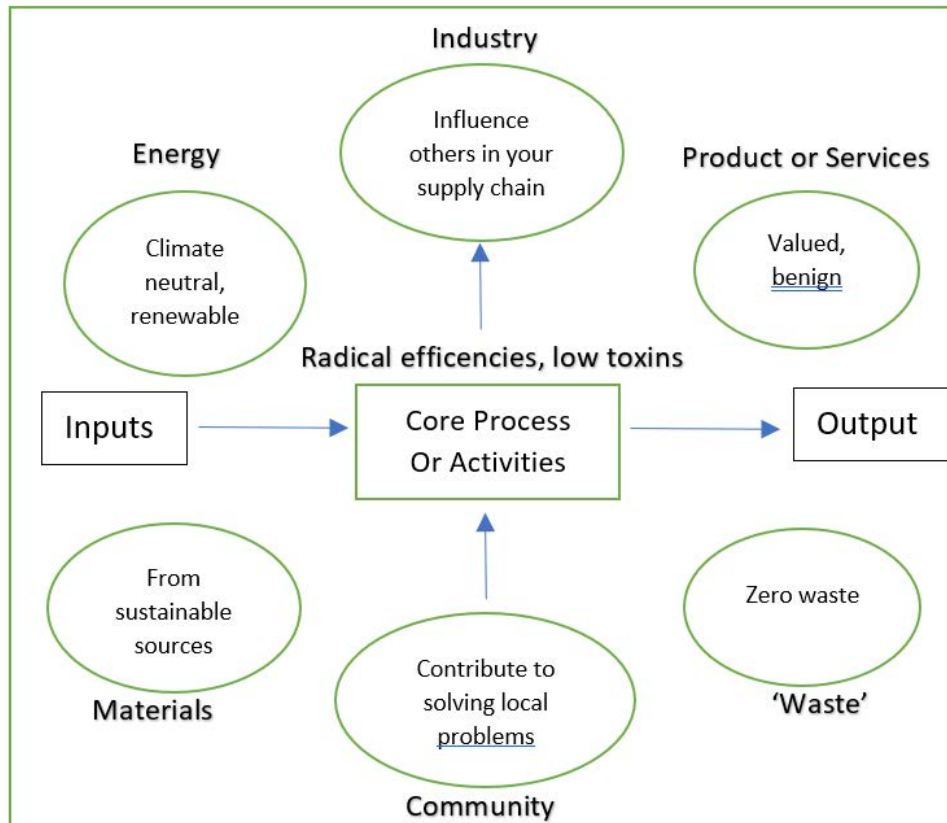


Figure 4.1 – Bubble Diagram tool (Where and how sustainability can be identified in corporations?)

Source: Adapted from Hitchcock and Willard (2009)

The ‘Bubble Diagram’ tool (Figure 4.1) supports organisations in developing a clear vision of how they would like to be sustainable. The tool helps organisations examine their inputs, outputs, processes, and effects on the larger system in which they operate, and with which they interact. For example, in the process box, organisations list their primary processes. Then, in each circle, the most prominent examples can be listed, such as what form of energy is purchased, or materials the organisation purchases the most, and then they begin to describe the sustainable state. Then, outside the circle, ideas for projects can be listed, to reduce major impacts (Hitchcock and Willard, 2009).

4.1.1 Sustainability approaches, measuring and reporting tools in corporations

Since the development of sustainable development, industries and businesses have adopted the triple bottom line approach, as it became the norm for businesses reporting on sustainable development performance (Ahmad, Wong, and Rajoo, 2019). The approach has been designed to strategically detect and assess practices to meet their own needs without causing a negative impact on the future, which can be achieved by engaging businesses to perform sustainably, while considering the social, economic, and environmental dimensions known as the triple bottom line 'TBL' approach (Elkington, 1994).

Most sustainable development and sustainability, specifically within corporations and organisations, build their sustainability strategies upon the triple bottom line approach, elaborating further on its three dimensions, the social, environmental, and economic dimensions, as the main pillars of their sustainability performances. Pádua, and Jabbour (2015) affirmed that most academic and practitioners' studies use the TBL as a conceptual basis to support the development and enhancement of sustainability practices.

In addition, further indicators and indices have been developed, based on the pillars of sustainability, the 'TBL', to support and guide organisations and corporations to plan, measure, monitor, and assess their organisational outputs. Fine distinctions have been drawn with regard to the differences between an indicator and a matrix. Ahi and Searcy (2015) defined an indicator as a parameter that provides information about, or a description of, a state, whereas a matrix is a measurable quantity that track an indicator, as the indicator normally gives a broader focus. A matrix can also include a composite made up of two or more measures, whereby the measures are the magnitudes or values of actual gathered data.

A growing number of tools and approaches have been designed for assessing, measuring, monitoring, and reporting sustainability activities and practices, and their alignment with sustainable development goals, up to a global acceptance, to certify products, services, practices etc. in accordance with sustainability standards and criteria, such as the overview in the table below (Table 4.2).

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISO 9001 for Quality Management (QM) Systems standard for approving quality purposes. • ISO 30301 for businesses' information, documentation, and records. • ISO 55001 Assets Management System for finance purposes. • the ISO 14000 family, as an Environmental Management System (EMS) standard (See table XX below). • ISO 45001 as a Health and Safety Management system for health and safety purposes. • ISO 26000 for Social Responsibility Guidance. • Fair Trade, which sets producers' rights and economic benefits. • LEED for building design and construction. • Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) methodology, or an analysis tool to systematically record the life cycle of a product or a service, with regard to its impact on the environment; also known as Product Carbon Footprint (PCF), which assesses the generated greenhouse gas emissions from a product or a service. The analysis tool depends directly on the international recognised standards (e.g., ISOs and product life cycle standards) • GRI as a tool for sustainability reporting. • Natural Step Framework as a methodology that supports organisations in successful planning via a shared mental model to support the understanding and exchange of a common language, and foster cooperation amongst organisations, disciplines, and cultures. |
|--|

Table 4.2 - Tools and approaches to assess, measure and monitor sustainability activities and practices

Source: (Robert et al., 2002; Henriques and Richardson, 2004; Castka and Balzarova, 2008; Yudelso, 2008; Robertson, 2017; Murray and Boron, 2019)

The consistent and standardised application of sustainability indicators (in terms of terminologies, measurements, boundaries, etc.) supports industries, businesses, organisations, and corporations in monitoring and comparing their performance (Eastwood and Haapala, 2015).

ISO stands for the International Organization for Standardization, whereby thousands of various standards cover almost every aspect of modernised daily life. ISO considers the environment as the surroundings in which an organisation operates, including air, water, land, natural resources, flora, fauna, humans, and their interrelations. The standards for the environment are defined, from within an organisation to the global system as, for example, some ISO standards deal with the assurances that the company achieves by meeting specific environmental goals (Sayre, 1996; Castka and Balzarova, 2008).

In quality management, ISO management standards represent a familiar cycle known as Plan-Do-Check-Act. Demonstrating steps of establishing objectives and processes, implementing, measurement and evaluation, and adaptation and improvement (Robertson, 2017).

The ISO 14000 Family for environmental management:

ISO 14001: Environmental Management Systems Requirements
ISO 14004: Implementation Guidelines
ISO 14006: Eco-Design Guidelines
ISO 14010: Environmental Auditing
ISO 14020: Environmental Labels – General Principles
ISO 14021: Environmental Labels – Self Declared Environmental Claims (Type II)
ISO 14024: Environmental Labels – Type I Environmental Labelling
ISO 14025: Environmental Labels – Type III Environmental Declarations
ISO 14031: Environmental Performance Evaluation
ISO 14040: Life Cycle Assessment
ISO 14050: Terms and Definitions
ISO 14060: Inclusion of Environmental Aspects in Products Standards
ISO 14062: Product Design and Development
ISO 14063: Environmental Communication
ISO 14064: Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Accounting and Verification
ISO 14065: Accreditation
ISO 14067: Carbon Footprint of Products
ISO 14069: Greenhouse Gas Reporting
ISO 19011: Auditing 14000 and 9000

Table 4.3 – ISO 14000 Family for Environmental Management
Source: Adapted from Robertson (2017)

In essence, sustainability indicators (as parameters of information or a description of a state) support the assistance of policy-makers in developing and implementing sustainable strategies only if they have been applied with consistency (Azapagic and Perdan, 2000). The following indicators were designed, constructed upon the sustainably main three pillars: the environment, the social, and the economy, as follows.

The environmental indicator: such indicators are in association with prevention actions, as early warnings to prevent damages to the natural environmental system. *Environmental indicators* are known as the physical dimensions of sustainability. Indicators deal with, for example: air emissions per produced product, quality of produced water, water consumption, and the amount of materials used and recycled (Huang, Yeh, Budd and Chen, 2009). *The economy indicator:* in general, economy-related indicators are based on costs and profits.

The social indicator: the available evidence seems to suggest that social-related indicators are still at their developmental stage. The social dimension indicates the attitude towards indicators and businesses activities with regard to their employees, customers, and the bigger social aspect, the society (Butnariu and Avasilcai, 2015).

4.2 Sustainability in corporations through the engagement of employees

Within the literature of sustainability in corporations, light has been shed on the neglected vital part of sustainability that is the 'people' out of sustainability's three 'P' dimensions, people, planet, and profit (social, environment, and economic). However, sustainability in corporations at the micro-level, and the focus on employees and their vital role towards sustainability, has been underexamined, which highlights the second pillar of

this thesis, in presenting employee engagement as a focal point of this research, leading to this section of the literature review chapter. In addition, this section presents an understanding of the construct of employee engagement, the way it has evolved, its conceptualisation, key authors, and raised arguments, in addition to addressing the core elements of the way that employee engagement is measured. The literature of employee engagement initially was explored from the employee engagement literature alone. Employee engagement became increasingly important in modern businesses. It is considered as fundamental for corporation's success (Goodman et al., 2009). Recent statistical report reveals that a mere of 20% of employees are engaged in corporations (GALLUP, 2021).

According to Khan (1990), being engaged must be achieved through three psychological states, which are about being physically, cognitively and emotionally present when occupying and performing a job role in a work environment (Kahn, 1990). He elaborated further by highlighting the psychological conditions of an individual occupying a job role. Kahn (1990) believes that, in order for an individual to be engaged, three psychological dimensions must be met: meaningfulness (job enrichment and role fit), safety (rewarding co-workers and caring/helpful supervisors, and exchangeable, positive, and supportive relations with colleagues), and availability (belief of having physical and mental resources) (May, Gilson and Harter, 2004). In essence, engagement is about energy, enthusiasm, and immersion. Whereas, disengagement is about ambivalence, anxiety and risk avoidance (Macey and Schneider, 2008). Therefore, the literature review question for this section is:

Literature review question:

What is the main focus of sustainability for this research study?

Why the engagement of employees, and why would it matter?

4.2.1 Sustainability on the micro-level with a specific focus on the employees

Within sustainability literature, what has been neglected on the micro-level or the individual level is the individual's interpretation, understanding, and embracement towards sustainability, which is disseminated to them via both the macro- and meso-level. Therefore, sustainability is fundamentally about what makes us individuals as human beings. Through applying it organically, sticking to the human side for employees, without complicating the concept and making them feel that sophistication is a requirement for embracing sustainability. This is necessary, for the application and practice of sustainability to sound more simplistic, attainable, and achievable.

Exter (2013) sheds light on the most forgotten, vital part of sustainability that is the 'people' out of the three P dimensions of people, planet, and profit. She added that 'It is also about how we treat people e.g., neighbours, our employees, suppliers. It is also how we act as citizens, paying fair tax, competing fairly and adhering to law and ethical norms of our societies. It is about long-term, inclusive and responsible thinking and action.' (Exter, 2013: p.4). The latter statement emphasises the importance of employees in sustainability, which emphasises the main focus of this research study.

However, it has been argued that employees, and their vital role in sustainability, demonstrate how deeply sustainability programmes are embedded, as they have been the most continually neglected aspect in corporations, specifically when it comes to organisational structure, and processes that are in favour of successful sustainability implementation (Wolf, 2013). Nevertheless, when employees perceive adequate support from their corporation, they are more likely to engage with sustainability programmes (Paille and Raineri, 2016).

Hence, to engage employees with sustainability, corporations, and employees, we need to understand the meaning of the concept of sustainability. Therefore, there is a heightened need for sustainability to be explained, with specific identification of the relevant aspects and components whenever sustainability is presented and implemented at both the corporation and individual levels, specifically that of the employees, instead of the unattainable aim to reach the approval of a universal definition, which cannot be achieved without the occurrence of conflicts and disagreements, which has become one of sustainability's definition-related norms.

4.2.2 The employees and their engagement with sustainability, and why would it matter? Why employee engagement has been considered as the main focus of this thesis: (employee engagement as the second pillar to this thesis)

4.2.2.1 Why an engaged workforce in corporations?

Within the business context, the construct employee engagement acquired a surge of being well-acknowledged, in regard with its importance in modern management (Goodman et al., 2009). Data shows that 80% of the employees are disengaged at their workplaces (GALLUP, 2021). Apparently, at the work environment, helping and supporting the employees to enjoy their job roles, consequently leads to the achievement of their employees' wellbeing. In return, employees support their corporations to achieve goals, and consequently help to drive the desired business results.

Employee engagement is a key factor in organisational success and competitive advantage. In addition, organisations with engaged employees gain higher shareholder returns, profitability, productivity, and customer satisfaction (Harter, Schmidt and Hays 2002; Macey *et al.*, 2009; Welch, 2011; Schneider *et al.*, 2009; Rich *et al.*, 2010, Vance, 2006). However, a decline in the level of employee engagement has a negative impact on productivity, customer service, and performance (Crawford *et al.*, 2010; Mone *et al.*, 2011, Harter, Schmidt and Hays, 2002).

Globally, figures have indicated that only 13 percent of the workforce are engaged with their organisations (MacLeod and Clarke, 2011). According to Gallup annual report's recent statistics in 2021, only 20 percent of employees are engaged at their workplace (Gallup, 2021) (Figure 4.4 below).



Figure 4.4 - Employee engagement percentage at the workplace
Source: Gallup (2021)

Statistics signify that recently there is, disappointingly, only a slight increase in the percentage of the engaged workforce since 2009 (with a percentage of 12), which has increased and reached 20 percent; however, the increase is still poor globally. Refer to Figure 4.5 below that shows the employee-engagement trend globally, according to the Gallup report covering the period between 2009 and 2020.

In the United States of America and the United Kingdom, as examples, half of the entire workforce are not fully engaged or are disengaged. This apparent problem has been referred to as a gap in engagement that is excessively costing businesses a lot annually, due to the decline in productivity (Richman, 2006; Bates, 2004; Johnson, 2004; Kowalski, 2003; Huckerby, 2002). Statistical evidence about employee engagement status demonstrates that it is a global phenomenon, regardless of geographical location, culture, and market contexts (Gallup, 2021).

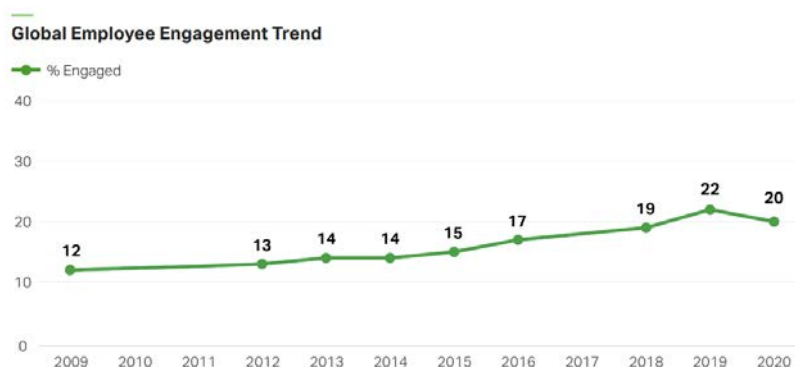


Figure 4.5 - Global Employee Engagement Trend
Source: Gallup (2021)

According to Gallup's (2020) meta-analysis, reasons for, and elements of, disengaged employees, and/or low engaged employees, vary and appear as follows (Gallup, 2020; Employment Hero Blog, 2020):

- (1) Employees view their workplace negatively.
- (2) Employees leave their jobs for the right offer, not even due to money.
- (3) Employees are actively in a job search if their co-workers are as well, which speaks to the importance of company culture to avoid a domino effect of staffing losses.

(4) Low engagement means that employees show elements of less responsible, poorly behaved work performances, a lack of motivation, and consequently, a drain on the overall productivity of the team and company.

(5) In addition, employee distrustfulness appears in 1 in 3 employees at work. Firstly, this includes ensuring employees have the best knowledge and tools, while being aware of what is expected of them, with full support in their professional development. Secondly, management teams lack communication skills with 1 in 3 employees, claiming that they do not actually trust their employers (see Figure 4.6).

(6) Moreover, 1 in 3 employees claim to feel boredom, which is one of the main reasons for employees to look for another job and leave their companies (see Figure 4.6).

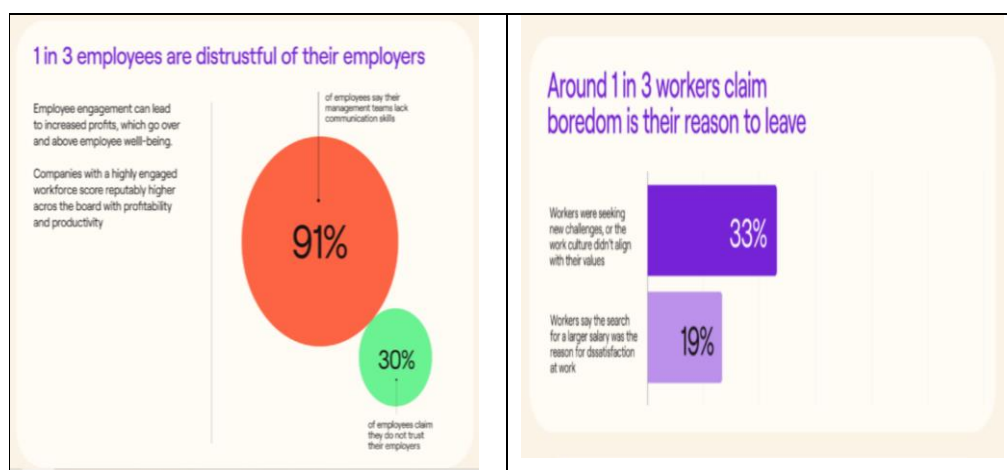


Figure 4.6 - Employees feeling distrust and boredom at work
Source: Employment Hero Blog (2020)

In accordance with employee engagement, whether the statistics are global, local or regional, mostly they are gathered and assessed from the side of leading reliable practitioners, as the academic side lacks in providing such important statistics. Practitioners' sources function as leading academies and

consultancy bodies, such as Gallup or CIPD, which academic researchers rely on as practitioner and non-academic sources.

On the other hand, the notion has been agreed upon that too much engagement is an unhealthy sign. Employee engagement scholars (e.g., Macey and Schneider, 2008) warned that it is impossible for the highest level of engagement to happen constantly, as corporations have to consider the human ability and energy factor, and the need for a recovery period, to ensure employee wellbeing. This resonates with the facts that Schaufeli (2002) stated in their research, which affirms that employee engagement is a pervasive positive psychological state that is likely to persist over days and weeks.

However, research in relation to the engagement of employees in general is academically still in its developmental stages, and more specifically, research in relation to the engagement of employees with sustainability is emergent and nascent, and that is where this research study makes its academic impact, by positioning itself within this academic realm.

4.2.2.2 Conceptualisation of Employee Engagement

A broad range of theories have led the construct of employee engagement to evolve and gain its strength in the literature. Theories such as the conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll (1989), the social exchange (SET) theory (Blau, 1964), the job demands–resources (JD-R) model (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007), and the self-determination theory (SDT) (Deci and Ryan, 1985). There might be other theories that have been mentioned within the employee engagement literature; however, the researcher will address the most relevant in brief.

- (1) Hobfoll's (1989) theory of conservation of resources (COR) talks firstly about how employees try their best to maintain and protect their gained resources. Secondly, the theory also helps in explaining the reasons behind employees' efficient performance when they are granted access to a range of individual and organisational resources.
- (2) The social exchange theory (SET) by Blau (1964) talks about the provision of values resources from an external source, such as resources from organisations, which when gained by the employee, make him/her develop a sense of obligation to reciprocate, with prosocial attitudes and engagement-related behaviour.
- (3) The job demands–resources (JD-R) model by Bakker and Demerouti (2007) is the most heavily cited and employed theoretical engagement model. It talks about how job resources (such as autonomy, feedback, and support) and personal resources (such as self-efficacy, optimism, and resilience) have direct positive relation with work engagement, and consequently influence the outcomes of role performance, creativity, and eventually, organisational financial outcomes.
- (4) The self-determination theory (SDT) states that employee engagement requires the satisfaction of basic psychological needs (such as competence, autonomy, and relatedness) (Ryan and Deci, 2018).

Gaining prior knowledge, before going deeper into employee engagement theories and models, is an important step for the researcher of this study to understand the roots of employee engagement and how it has been constructed based on previous theories. This allows an understanding of the components of employee engagement, and the gaining of stronger ground, which has supported the researcher to develop her own theoretical model, as employee engagement has been employed in this research as the second sub-core pillar. Albrecht (2012) emphasised the importance of reviewing individual theories, adding that the emerging research within employee

engagement can be firmly supported and grounded in well-established theories and frameworks.

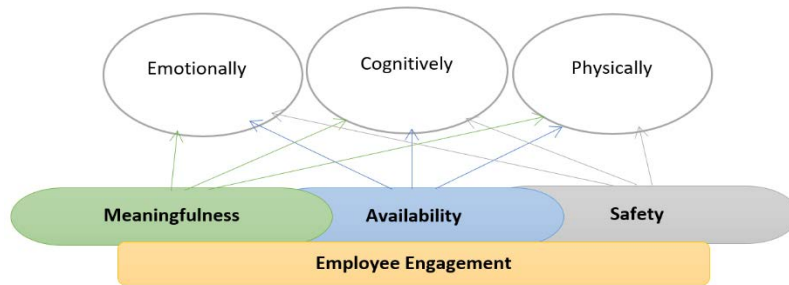


Figure 4.7 - Employee engagement model
Source: adapted from Kahn (1990)

It has been almost three decades since the employee engagement construct was pioneered by William Kahn in 1990, yet it had not been addressed until recently by academics. Scholars (e.g., Kahn, 1990; Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002; Robinson *et al.*, 2004; Macey and Schneider, 2008; Shuck and Wollard, 2010; Saks and Gruman, 2014; Knight *et al.*, 2017) have asserted that the notion of employee engagement is relatively new, and has been heavily marketed by human resource consulting companies, focussing on how the engagement of employees can be leveraged. Saks and Gruman (2014) added that increasing interest has heightened the need for empirical studies by academics to be employed, in terms of the meaning, theories, and measurement of employee engagement.

It has been argued that the meaning of employee engagement is problematic due to two issues. The first is about a lack of agreement on naming the construct 'employee engagement', due to the several identified referents,

which happen to be also overlapping, and claim to be alternatives to engagement. The second issue is that there is a lack of agreement about the definition of employee engagement. This will be discussed further in more detail, in the following sections.

The lack of agreement regarding the name of the construct itself appeared due to existing referents of engagement within the human resource management (HRM) literature. Several referents to employee engagement were addressed, for example, job engagement (Rich *et al.*, 2010) and work engagement (Schaufeli and Salanova, 2011). In addition, from a practical/operational perspective, scholars have explained that each referent of employee engagement has a specific associated outcome, as these referents together, depending on which referent an organisation is considering, will eventually lead to the engagement of employees (Saks, 2017).

Furthermore, each referent leads to a predicted outcome. For example: (1) task engagement as a task performance outcome; (2) job engagement as a job satisfaction outcome; (3) team engagement as an outcome of a group performance; (4) learning engagement as a training outcome; (5) organisation engagement which has to be in line with the organisational outcome as an organisational citizenship behaviour (Macey and Schneider, 2008; Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002; Byrne *et al.*, 2016; Saks, 2017; Byrne, Peters and Weston, 2016; Christina *et al.*, 2011). Therefore, when considering the referent of engagement to focus on, organisations also need to think about the outcomes they want to improve and/or achieve (Saks, 2017).

Similarly, it has been argued that employee engagement is a newly labelled construct, that it is redundant, considering other previously existing

constructs such as organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB), job involvement, commitment, and job satisfaction (Shuck *et al.*, 2012; Knight *et al.*, 2017, Harter *et al.*, 2002). This may put forward the claim that the construct of 'employee engagement' is replaceable in the literature of HRM by some scholars. However, Kahn's (1990) affirmation of employee engagement does seem to signify that it is unique and distinct in comparison to other constructs (Saks and Gruman, 2014). In essence, Lee *et al.* (2017) remarked that there is no perspective that is superior to another, or fits well in all HRM conditions.

There is a lack of agreement in defining employee engagement. Kahn's (1990) definition is relied on as the foundational base, which addresses the psychological conditions of being personally engaged at the workplace. These are the foundational conditions/factors to be considered while studying employee engagement.

Kahn pioneered the idea of 'engagement' as being personally engaged. He defined employee engagement as, an employee utilizing effectively the oneself in being mentally (as both emotionally and cognitively), as well as, being physically present while performing a corporation's role (Khan, 1990). Furthermore, three psychological dimensions must be satisfied: (1) meaningfulness which encompasses job enrichment and role fit (2) safety that entails freely expressing the oneself without being judged or criticised (3) availability which refers to the employee's abilities, qualifications and competencies (i.e. physical and mental ones) (May, Gilson, and Harter, 2004).

Moreover, these psychological conditions of engagement are also well-known as the antecedents and drivers of employee engagement (Shuck *et al.*, 2011), which will also be addressed, and elaborated upon further, later in this research study. This research study will embrace these three psychological dimensions, which will be adopted partially for developing the conceptual framework for this research study, mainly by Kahn (1990), in addition to the

elaboration model developed by (May, Gilson and Harter, 2004) of employee dimensions as meaningfulness, availability, and safety. The researcher of this research study also considers studying employee engagement at both the organisational and individual levels, by sharing Wollard and Shuck's (2011) line of thought.

The employee engagement construct and its definition began evolving, as scholars expanded further upon Kahn's foundational definition and model. Maslach and Leiter's (1997) main focus was regarding work engagement, as they viewed engagement as the positive antithesis of burnout, whereby energy, involvement, and efficacy are the three direct opposites of the burnout dimensions of exhaustion, cynicism, and difficulty towards accomplishments. Drawing on similar lines of work engagement, Schaufeli *et al.* (2002) defined engagement as a positive fulfilment for a work-related state of mind, characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption. They explained further that vigour refers to high levels of energy and mental resilience, the willingness to invest effort, and being persistent even when facing constraints; dedication describes an employee's degree of involvement through expressing enthusiasm, inspiration, and pride even towards challenges; and absorption indicates a strong level of concentration and happiness at work, where an employee struggles to detach themselves from work.

4.2.2.3 Employee engagement dimensions, states of engagement, and drivers

Several dimensions, drivers, and antecedents for the engagement of employees have been identified and developed by scholars who studied the field of employee engagement by taking the path paved by the pioneer Kahn (1990).

Research conducted by Robinson *et al.* (2004) on the views of authors indicates that there is considerable variation in regard to what drives engagement. The research pointed out that 'there is no straight forward answer to what determine the levers that raise engagement levels', as an effective 'one-size-fits-all' approach. Therefore, drivers vary in relation to the organisation, employee group, the individual, and the job itself. Drawing on similar lines, CIPD affirmed that there is 'no ultimate all-purpose list of engagement drivers' (CIPD, 2007), as the engagement of employees can be influenced by many interrelated factors.

Kahn (1990) believes that, in order for an individual to be engaged, three psychological dimensions must be met: meaningfulness (job enrichment and role fit), safety (rewarding co-workers and caring/helpful supervisors, and exchangeable, positive and supportive relations with colleagues), and availability (belief of having physical and mental resources) (May, Gilson and Harter, 2004). This research study is employing Kahn (1990)'s critical engagement questions as follows. (1) Is it meaningful? (2) How available am I? (3) How safe is it to do so? Check employee engagement dimensions Figure 3.16 below.

To elaborate further, the engagement of employees is vital via meeting the engagement dimension (meaningfulness, availability, and safety). Employee engagement is about the engagement of the self at work, when organisations create the suitable environment for three fundamental key features of engagement to develop and flourish. Each employee engagement dimension requires emotional, physical, and cognitive elements that support the employee to be present when occupying a job role. For example, when performing a job role, in order for employees to meet the meaningfulness dimensions, it has to be emotionally meaningful, cognitively meaningful, and physically meaningful. The same applies to the remainder of the three

dimensions (availability and safety). Check employee engagement dimensions Figure 4.8 below.

1. Meaningfulness (emotionally–cognitively–physically)
2. Safety (emotionally–cognitively–physically)
3. Availability (emotionally–cognitively–physically)

(Kahn, 1990; May, Gilson and Harter, 2004)

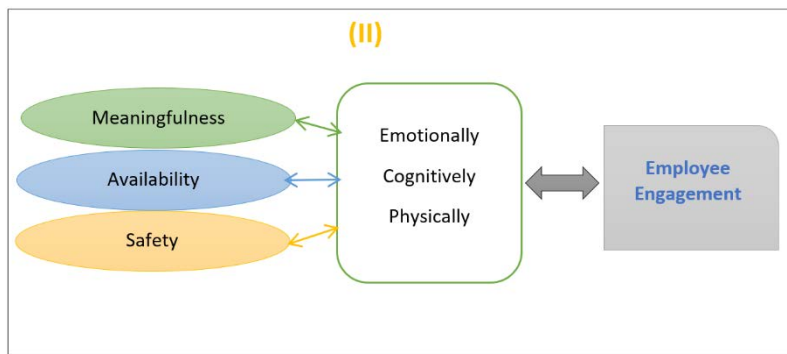


Figure 4.8 - Employee engagement dimensions
Source: (Kahn, 1990; May, Gilson and Harter, 2004)

Kahn's three dimensions of employee engagement are comprehensive, as many drivers and antecedents of engagement, within the literature, can be categorised under the umbrella of those three fundamental dimensions of Kahn's model. All lead to the conditions of meaningfulness, availability, and safety, as further drivers and antecedents will be elaborated upon later in this section.

The first dimension as meaningfulness, and the second one as availability, of employee engagement in Khan's (1990) model, have been given adequate attention in the literature. However, the last dimension as safety has been given less attention in employee engagement studies. The dimension of safety has been defined as 'feeling able to show and employ one's self without fear of negative consequences of self-image, status or career' (Kahn, 1990: p.708).

Despite the lack of attention towards the safety dimension, other research studies have confirmed its importance in engaging employees. The safety dimension of engaging employees has been emphasised as an important dimension in the following studies as examples. (1) Pink (2011) stated that feeling safe to express oneself at work boosts confidence, which leads to autonomy, one of the vital drivers of employee engagement in his research study. (2) Another research study identified safety as the relationship between co-workers and team members, in addition to the relationship with one's manager infused by trust and integrity (The Conference Board, 2006). (3) Moreover, Wollard and Shuck (2011) stated that safety begins at the organisational level, as employers must work on enhancing perceptions of work safety and a positive work climate. At the individual level, they emphasised employees' motivation, optimism, self-esteem, and self-efficacy, which cannot happen without feeling encouraged and supported to express yourself at work. (4) Lastly, May, Gilson and Harter (2004) stated that individuals feel safe at work when they perceive that they will not suffer for expressing their true selves at work, as they identified conditions related to the safety dimension of engagement as co-workers' relations, supervisor relations, co-workers' norms, and self-consciousness. Therefore, the researcher in this research study has given full and fair attention while equally considering the three conditions as dimensions of employee engagement, of meaningfulness, availability, and safety, along with its associated engagement states of being emotionally, cognitively, and physically engaged, of both Kahn's model (1990), and May, Gilson and Harter's (2004) one.

Furthermore, Christina *et al.* (2011) emphasised the commitment element of performing a job, describing engagement as a high degree of commitment, and Robinson *et al.* (2004) explained the exchangeable interaction between the employees and the organisation, describing it as a two-way relationship. Similarly, Hughes and Rog (2008) confirmed the views of Robinson *et al.*,

stressing the exchangeable relationship between employees and organisations.

In consideration of the variation in drivers of employee engagement, which has been summarised in the work of 'The Conference Board' (2006), 26 different drivers of engagement were proposed to 12 largely consultancy-based studies of engagement. The most commonly reported drivers were as follows:

- i. Trust and integrity
- ii. The nature of the job
- iii. The line-of-sight between individual performance and company performance
- iv. Career growth opportunities
- v. Pride in the company
- vi. Relationships with co-workers/team members
- vii. Employee development and the personal relationship with one's manager

(The Conference Board, 2006)

With regard to levels of commitments within corporations, Wollard and Shuck (2011) identified the elements of engagement as a commitment from both the individual level (the employees) and their organisations (refer to the table 4.9 below).

Individual Antecedents to Employee Engagement	Organisational Antecedent to Employee Engagement
Absorption	Authentic corporate culture
Available to engage	Clear expectations
Copying style	Corporate social responsibility
Curiosity	Encouragement
Dedication	Feedback
Emotional fit	Hygiene factors
Employee motivation	Job characteristics
Employee/work/family status	Job control
Feelings of choice and control	Job fit
Higher level of corporate citizenship	Leadership
Involvement in meaningful work	Level of task challenge
Link individual and organisational goals	Manager expectations
Optimism	Manager self-efficacy
Perceived organisational support	Mission and vision
Self-esteem and self-efficacy	Opportunities for learning
Vigour	Perceptions of work safety
Willingness to direct personal energies	Positive work climate
Work/life balance	Rewards
Core self-evaluation	Supportive organisational culture
Value congruence	Talent management
Perceived organisational support	Use of strength

Table 4.9 – Antecedents to Employee Engagement on the individual level and organisational level

Adopted from (Wollard and Shuck, 2011)

To conclude, this last part addresses the latest statistics and status of the engagement of employees, in relation to the latest global state, which the whole world faced with COVID-19, from when the pandemic began in 2019, until now, 2022.

According to a recent report by the specialised institutional body Gallup, as leading experts in employee engagement, and people-and-work-related

matters, the engagement of employees has decreased since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic. Some COVID-19 related insights are as follows:

- 1) Globally, employee engagement decreased by 2 percent, from 22% in 2019 to 20% in 2020, following a steady rise over the last decade, as employees reported higher worry, stress, anger, and sadness in 2020 than they had in the previous year.
- 2) Given hospitalisations and deaths due to COVID-19, as well as lockdowns, closed schools, increased remote work, and unemployment, the frustrations and struggles of millions of workers across the planet were presented.
- 3) However, significant differences appeared in how employees across regions and countries experienced 2020.
- 4) The experience of stress before the pandemic, in 2019, as in general there were even more feelings of stress in 2020, with 57% reporting high stress – far above the global average.
- 5) Statistically, 45% of people say their own life has been affected massively by the coronavirus situation. It was found that 50% of workers received less money than usual from their employer or business; 49% of workers worked fewer hours at their job or business; 53% of workers temporarily stopped working at their job or business; and 32% of workers lost their job or business.
- 6) Almost one in three people who had a job at the time of the pandemic said that they lost their job or business because of the coronavirus situation, translating to just over 1 billion adults.
- 7) Global trends of negative emotions: from 2019 to 2020, negative emotions increased more for female employees than male employees, and more for employees who are younger than 40 than those who are 40 and older. Globally, the occurrence of experiences of worry has increased from 35% to 41% from 2019 to 2020, and 43% employees experienced stress. Feelings of anger among those who are employed reached a record high in 2020. A higher percentage of

employees who are younger than 40 experienced anger a lot during the previous day, than did older employees, in nearly every region. Sadness among employees increased by 4 points globally in 2020. Some regions saw significantly above-average increases, reaching 25%.

(Gallup, 2021 - State of the Global Workplace Annual Report)

4.2.3 Sustainability and employee engagement in corporations: the intersection of the two literatures

To recap, the following section recalls the main focus of this research study, which is the employees' roles in regard to sustainability, with the main research objective of engaging employees with sustainability programmes in corporations. The following section will entail who needs to be engaged with sustainability, and using which of the elements of engaging employees with sustainability programmes in corporations that have been addressed and adopted so far in the literature. This is, according to the core focus of this study, the engagement of employees with sustainability programmes in organisations, which demonstrates the zone where the two pillars (sustainability and employee engagement) of this research intersect. This section emphasises the importance of corporations identifying the elements and aspects that support the engagement of employees with sustainability in corporations, which identifies the two enquiries of 'who' and 'in what ways' to engage employees with sustainability.

Although extensive research has been carried out on the sustainability concept, the research of employee engagement with sustainability in corporations has been affirmed as emergent and nascent. According to the literature where the two literature/s intersect (of sustainability in

corporations and employee engagement), the engagement of employees is fundamentally prominent in sustainability (in corporations) literature, which has been incorporated under this section of this thesis, with the core pillar being sustainability, and the sub-core pillar being employee engagement, due to the following aspects.

Firstly, despite extensive efforts to find academic literature which brings sustainability and employee engagement together, this literature review confirms that is a limited number of sources available. The researcher spent extensive research efforts searching for academic reliable resources that incorporate the engagement of employees with sustainability in corporations, since the beginning of her PhD journey, in 2018. However, recent research results in 2022 came up with very few directly relevant academic resources; however, not all of them address employee engagement explicitly in relation to sustainability. Only a few academic sources as key resources were relevant to this research study (e.g., Glavas, 2012; Exter, 2013; Govindarajulu and Daily, 2004; Temminck, Mearns and Fruhen, 2015; Wolf, 2013), although not all of the latter sources addressed employee engagement explicitly with sustainability programmes in corporations. Furthermore, the engagement of employees demonstrates how deeply sustainability is embedded in corporations. Wolf (2013) argued regarding how deeply sustainability programmes are embedded in organisations; she emphasised the point that the role of employees is the most constantly neglected when it comes to organisational structure and processes that are in favour of successful sustainability implementation.

The literature has been dominated by corporate social responsibility and the role of employee research studies (e.g., Low, and Spong, 2022; Gao, Zhang and Huo, 2018). Although this research shares a common premise, which is

the employees and their engagement, this research project is incorporating sustainability as the core pillar.

The majority of research studies have focused on corporate sustainability (e.g., Dyllick, T. and Hockerts, 2002). Corporate sustainability has been excluded from this research scope, as corporate sustainability talks about Environmental Management Systems, which are formed exclusively on the executive level, where decision, rules, and regulations are formed and approved to be disseminated, as a top-down approach that eradicate innovation specifically at the employees' level. In addition, previous studies have dealt with sustainability related to employees in their workplace at the macro-level and meso-level (Daily *et al.*, 2009). However, the micro-level has been under-examined. Contributing to micro-level analysis, this PhD focuses on individuals, by considering the role of employees in corporations engaged with sustainability.

The existing studies focus on stakeholder engagement in relation to sustainability in corporations (e.g., Talley, Schneider and Lindquist, 2016), which deal with the individual level (stakeholders) in a broader sense; however, this research focuses on the employees, as internal stakeholders, without rejecting the fact that employees are an integral part of stakeholders. Even studies that have claimed to investigate and study the employees' roles within sustainability, have also relied on stakeholder-related literature in their own ways (e.g., Coutinho, *et al.*, 2018).

A lot of studies came up with typologies of employees when engaged with sustainability, whether as their main research outcome, or as one of their research outcomes (e.g., Greene, Crumbleholme, and Myerson, 2014; Pacheco, *et al.*, 2018; Exter, 2014). This research study has excluded typology

as part of its research outcomes, with the avoidance of incorporating categories of employees' personality-related matters, as there are so many studies about typology that exist already in the literature about sustainability and employees. Although it is useful to understand types of individuals, which can be helpful to understand how to engage them, the issue is that people themselves can change over a small period of time (Albrecht, 2012), or different tasks they perform could require them to perform in a different type of personality and behaviour; also, people might show a combination of two types, which makes it unfair for corporations to label them under a specific type. Additionally, for some people, it can be a sensitive matter, as labelling them within a specific typology can make them sound more superior to others within a specific typology metric, which can restrict their ability to engage efficiently, which affects their safety dimension of employee engagement.

Most studies that have been carried out focusing on employee engagement with environmental initiatives or environmental aspects in corporations, have been restricted to tackling only the environmental dimension/pillar of sustainability (e.g., Peeters, Diependaele and Sterckx, 2019; Benn, Teo and Martin, 2015). This is typical, as research tackles aspects at a narrow angle; however, when conducting such research, the interconnectedness factor between the three pillars (social and economy) should not be neglected, as it looks more like researchers tackle one pillar in an enclosed zone/space.

In regard to sustainability and its 'TBL' triple bottom line, much of the research considering employee engagement and sustainability has taken into account the financial or economic pillar of sustainability deceiving sustainability, by claiming that it can be achieved through profit gain while practicing cost-saving (e.g., Margolis, Elfenbein and Walsh, 2009). Such research ignores the most vital pillar which is the 'social', as the researcher

for this research study argues that the social pillar of sustainability constitute the heart of the model of 'TBL' that has been chosen for this research study (Which has been previously addressed under point 2.4 p. 63), as the researcher puts forward the claim that when the social pillar is addressed sufficiently and adequately, then the rest of the pillars will follow positively, in a relative relationship.

In regard to the main focus for this research study, which is the employees and their engagement, there is sufficient evidence about employee involvement with only the environmental pillar of sustainability (e.g., del Brío, Esteban and Junquera, 2007). However, employee engagement and employee involvement are two different constructs, although in some cases, they have been confused and used interchangeably in the literature. Although they are somehow related, as involvement leads into engagement, involvement is not as comprehensive as employee engagement. One of the ways to achieve engagement is to support their involvement (Cox, Zagelmeyer and Marchington, 2006; Truss *et al.*, 2013)

Therefore, the researcher intended to pave her own path, in regard to employee engagement and sustainability, and where the two literatures intersect, by addressing relevant aspects, elements, and dimensions that support the engagement of employees from the combined perspective of employee engagement and sustainability in corporations, with the guidance of the most relevant previous studies, in spite of the scarcity in the literature of related studies that address the intersect zone of sustainability and employee engagement.

In regard to the engagement of employees with sustainability, the researcher considered the three dimensions of engagement as meaningfulness,

availability, and safety, and the associated emotional, cognitive, and physical states of engagement of Kahn's (1990) model. Although an adequate number of research studies have encountered the 'meaningfulness' dimension when studying the engagement of employees with sustainability in corporations (Glavas, 2012), the 'safety' dimension of employee engagement with sustainability has been hardly addressed, and/or has not been treated in much detail. In addition, the 'safety' dimension has been misrepresented in some studies, confusing it with health and safety at work, and meeting ISO standards of quality management (e.g., Fonseca and Carvalho, 2019), whereas the safety dimension of engagement is about the employee's ability to express and apply his/her/their capabilities, without the apprehension of negative consequences (e.g. self-image, status or career) from their managers or co-workers (Kahn, 1990).

Both the literature of 'employee engagement' and of 'employee engagement with sustainability' reached a meeting confirmation point, as they both lack in addressing the safety dimension of employee engagement. The researcher considered the important dimension of safety in this study of engaging employees with sustainability, so that employees can feel safe to express themselves emotionally, cognitively, and physically within sustainability-related practices at their workplace, without the fear of being criticised or misunderstood by their colleagues and managers, by being praised, recognised, or receiving support when needed.

In addition, the dimension of availability of Kahn's (1990) model has been studied indirectly within the literature of employee engagement with sustainability in corporations, as it has been included under training, knowledge gaining, learning, and competencies (Teixeira *et al.*, 2012; Jackson *et al.*, 2011), as the availability dimension is related to the availability of both personal (emotional, cognitive, and physical resources) and organisational resources (May, Gilson and Harter, 2004).

The engagement of employees with sustainability programmes relies heavily on the corporation and its commitment to create an engaged workforce; therefore, the primary commitment comes from the corporation towards empowering, motivating, and supporting the engagement of their employees. However, employees also show a commitment in return, once they receive sufficient support from their corporation. In essence, engaging employees with sustainability programmes can be identified as a multiple-level and two-way-level commitment.

Starik and Rands (1995) noted that in order for an organisation to achieve sustainability, it should include multiple levels. Their theoretical model (the middle of the model) demonstrates the two middle levels demonstrated as the organisational and individual levels. They stressed the point that within the individual level, motivated employees bring the ideas and efforts needed to enhance the sustainability of their organisation. This supports the study of Wollard and Shuck's (2011) line of thought from an employee engagement perspective, as they both emphasise the notion of conducting studies that include both levels, the organisation and the individual level. Although they both come from different fields, as Starik and Rands (1995) talks about it from a sustainability point of view, whereas Wollard and Shuck (2011) come from the employee-engagement field, they both share an important premise, of including the two levels, the corporation and the individual one. The researcher has considered this double confirmation from the two different literatures' meeting point, as the engagement of employees with sustainability programmes has been addressed at both levels, the corporation and individual levels, for this research study. This is because commitments

can be demonstrated in both an organisation's performance, and its employees, when embracing sustainability.

One of the foundational/guiding, well-known traditional principle in relation to the individual level that demonstrates sustainability activities in corporations is the 3Rs: reducing, reusing, and recycling, in addition to a fourth dimension, as the sub-facet of repurposing (Micklethwaite, 2021). Scholars expanded further, validating and articulating another five dimensions. The so-called 'five taxonomies of green behaviour' have been identified as: (1) conserving, (2) harm avoidance, (3) working sustainably, (4) being influential towards others, and (5) taking initiative (Ones and Dilchert, 2012; Ones *et al.*, 2018).

As articulated under the umbrella of the 3Rs of reducing, reusing, and recycling, further sustainability practices have been addressed. Norton *et al.*, (2015) reported that double-sided printing and/or copying of paper, waste separation, utilisation/usage of resources, usage of smart LED lamps, faucets, and turning off the lights and electrical systems after work hours are examples of some practical activities that are performed by employees who engage with sustainability at their workplace. However, this cannot be possible without prior knowledge, along with an engaged workforce.

By digging and investigating deeper into the two pillars of this research study, 'sustainability' and 'employee engagement', various meeting points can be explored, as they both share common elements, dimensions, and aspects.

Even Gallup (2021), who are a leading accredited institutional body specialised in employment, have adopted the concept of sustainability with employee engagement, by recognising their identified three pillars related to sustainability as 'ESG', which refers to environmental, social, and governance criteria for evaluating organisational success beyond profit. The identified sustainability pillars challenge leaders to move away from a sole focus on short-term profit, towards long-term sustainability and the interests of all stakeholders. In the long run, it is a redefinition of success in business, that goes beyond the creation of wealth, towards making the world, the planet, and its people better over the long term.

Kamali *et al.* (2018) say that social sustainability appears to be the least developed out of the three sustainability dimensions/pillars, and call for the urgent need for social sustainability, to gain a better understanding. They put forward the claim that processes for determining social issues, however, are subject to relatively arbitrary decisions, and lack comprehensive structure. Their research outcomes recommend more research to explore the identification of the most important and relevant social and governance issues.

It is important to address the social sustainability pillar according to the Sustainable Development Goals as: human rights, fair labour practices, living conditions, health and safety, wellness, diversity, equity, work-life-balance, empowerment, community engagement, and volunteerism (Diesendorf, 2000; Huq, Stevenson, and Zorzini, 2014). Although it has been addressed on the macro-level (external to corporations), many corporations embrace it in their internal macro-level (internal to corporations) as guidance to be adopted to meet the corporation's outcomes and goals (Sarkis, J., Helms and Hervani, 2010; Frandsen, Morsing and Vallentin, 2013; Epstein and Buhovac, 2014). In addition, the social pillar of sustainability is not easily quantifiable

(Robertson, 2017), which is a shared common characteristic with employee engagement as well.

Interestingly, according to the researcher of this thesis in her synthesis research efforts, it appeared that the social sustainability (e.g., Huq, Stevenson, and Zorzini, 2014) and employee engagement (Albrecht, 2012; Wollard and Shuck, 2011; Christina *et al.*, 2011; The Conference Board, 2006; Robinson *et al.*, 2004) elements and aspects (from both sides) support and confirm each other where they meet, and create a powerful component in engaging employees with sustainability, which eventually feeds and reflects positively on the remainder of the sustainability pillars (economy and environment); see table 4.10 below.

Sustainability – the social pillar	Employee Engagement
Human rights	Supportive organisational culture
Fair labour practices	Supportive organisational culture
Living conditions	Employee/work/family status
Health and safety	Perceptions of work safety
Wellness	Employee wellbeing - Emotional fitness
Diversity	Authentic corporate culture - Value congruence
Equity	Perceived organisational support - Clear expectations - Opportunities for learning - Career growth opportunities - Positive work climate - Rewards - Person–job fit - Person–organisation fit - Willingness to direct personal energies- Value congruence
Work-life-balance	Work/life balance - Employee/work/family status - Link individual and organisational goals
Empowerment	Encouragement - Feedback - Leadership - Opportunities for learning - Career growth opportunities - Positive work climate - Rewards Two-way relationship - Emotional fit - Employee motivation - Supportive organisational culture
Community engagement	Corporate social responsibility
Volunteerism	Corporate social responsibility
Uncategorised elements	Higher level of corporate citizenship - Mission and vision - The line-of-sight between individual performance and

	company performance – Dedication - Two-level commitment (corporation and employees)
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Table 4.10 – Common elements and aspects where the social pillar of sustainability and employee engagement meet

Created, combined and synthesised by the researcher of this thesis.

Adopted sources for Employee engagement (Albrecht, 2012; Wollard and Shuck, 2011; Christina *et al.*, 2011; The Conference Board, 2006; Robinson *et al.*, 2004)

Adopted sources for social sustainability: (Diesendorf, 2000; Huq, Stevenson, and Zorzini, 2014; United Nations, 2015)

In addition to the mentioned elements (above- table 4.10), sub-dimensions, and aspects, social sustainability and employee engagement meet and share common aspects which the researcher has considered in her journey of exploration within the progressive phases of her Ph.D., including the academic conceptualisation, her developed theoretical framework, and her empirical study-related aspects. However, it is beyond the scope of this research study to address the mentioned elements in detail.

The previous part of this literature review chapter addressed the engagement of employees with sustainability, by identifying the vital elements and aspects of engaging employees. However, identifying those elements and aspects lacks in the ‘how’ enquiry that will explain how the engagement of employees can be operationalised and practiced effectively in regard to sustainability programmes in corporations, and how this can be achievable, which will be explained in further details in the following section. The ‘how’ enquiry can be answered and articulated by introducing project-management tools, methods, and techniques (first as a literature on its own), then the project-management role in engaging employees with sustainability at their workplace will be explored, while providing a justification for its relevancy to this thesis.

4.3 How can corporations engage their employees with sustainability? The need for project management as an operating system

Introducing sustainability with a specific focus on the engagement of employees provoked the enquiry of how this can be achieved efficiently, as the employed primary components along with the sub-components (specifically for this research study) cannot function without an operating system that shows how they can be applied, and through which mechanism. In this section of the literature (the sixth section), the role of project management has been introduced, to aid the engagement of employees with sustainability programmes, since the literature lacks in suggesting how employees can engage with such programmes in corporations. As initially in this section, project management literature has been reviewed on its own, then in relation to sustainability, along with the sufficient role of project management in supporting employees to engage emotionally, cognitively, and physically with such programmes, through the researcher's critical lens. In addition, both the literature of sustainability and of project management, when combined together, also identify the areas of engagement for employees, which have to be within the 5Ps concept of people, planet, profit, product, and processes, while the ART of accountability, responsibility, and transparency criteria have to be met in corporations. The ART acronym has been emphasised in the literature of sustainability, employee engagement, and project management, but in this exact order, as re-organising the acronym in 'ART' has been synthesised by the researcher's research efforts. However, corporations do not want to treat this achievement as a final destination, as the engagement of employees with sustainability programmes through the aid of project-management tools and techniques, when it becomes a successful achievement, needs to be continuous, as sustainability has a dynamic nature. Hence, the literature review question for this section is:

How can the engagement of employees with sustainability programmes be successfully and effectively achieved?

4.3.1 The role of project-management tools and techniques towards engaging employees with sustainability programmes

To begin with, the project-management concept has been considered by the researcher for two reasons. The first reason is that sustainability programmes are established as project-based programmes. Scholars (i.e., Terrapon-Pfaff *et al.* 2014; Epstein and Buhovac, 2014) have addressed sustainability as project-based programmes. This research study supports and adopts this notion.

The second reason is that project management has supported the researcher to answer the enquiry of how to best engage employees with sustainability programmes in corporations, as solely identifying the elements, dimensions, and aspects of engagement leads the research to be stagnant in relation to sustainability programmes, which will be explored and addressed in more detail in the following section.

To begin with, a system has been defined as a group of elements, whether human or non-human, arranged and organised in such a way that the elements act as whole towards achieving common integrated goals and objectives. In addition, a system consists of sub-systems that, when properly organised, can lead to achieving synergistic outputs. Therefore, the exact definition of a system depends on how the user designs and establishes the system (i.e., open systems and closed systems). Organisations are social

systems, for example; the majority of them are open systems that must have permeable boundaries (Kerzner, 2017).

A programme, on the other hand, is “An [organisational] framework for grouping existing or defining new projects, and for focusing all the activities required to achieve a set of major benefits. These projects are managed in a coordinated way, either to achieve a common goal, or to extract benefits which would otherwise not be realised if they were managed independently.” (Maylor, 2010: p.60). Furthermore, programmes are constructed as the necessary first-level element of a system that is considered as a sub-system. Programmes are restricted by time-phased efforts, whereas systems have a continuous basis (Kerzner, 2017). In regard to sustainability in organisations, sustainability is designed as programmes, demonstrated as organisational/business activities, whereby the way it operates as a whole rotates around how sustainability can be employed according to the designed programmes and their objectives (Wiek *et al.*, 2014; McCarty *et al.*, 2011).

Some mistakenly argue that there are no major differences between projects and programmes, apart from the time duration. However, projects, in common with programmes, share the same time-phase and efforts. Thus, projects are designed to be accomplished in a much shorter period than programmes, and are considered as the first breakdown of a programme. Projects have single objectives, whereas programmes have dual objectives, with heavy orientation towards a business. Projects have become an important way to structure work in most organisations (Bakker, 2010).

Project management has been defined as the planning, organising, directing, and controlling of company resources for relatively short-term objectives, designed to meet targeted goals and objectives. Phases of a project have

been identified in project management as: initiating, planning, executing, monitoring, reviewing, feedback, and closure. These have also been known as the project-management principles (Simpson, 1987; Meredith and Mantel, 2009; Kerzner, 2017).

Furthermore, three main success factors for a project were identified in traditional project management, which demonstrate three primary objectives that have to be met to reach project completion, through the allocation of time and budget, at a specific performance and specification level (Turner and Cochrane, 1993; Kerzner, 2017).

There are two perspectives of sustainability in project management: the internal and the external. The internal is related to the project-management process, whereas the external is related to sustainable development from a broad perspective, connecting the project with the three sustainability dimensions of 'TBL' (the social, environmental, and economic impacts) (Dyllick and Hockerts, 2002). However, the combined fields of sustainability and project management in regard to employee engagement is still developing.

It is a vital stage to identify where sustainability is established (usually in the higher level of the hierarchy in a corporation), and how its projects are integrated throughout all departments and staff.

Kerzner (2017) asserted that organisations apply project management to utilise their systems' approaches, by having functional personnel (the vertical hierarchy) where projects are assigned (the horizontal hierarchy). (Figure 4.11 below) Therefore, project management supports organisations in tackling gaps when integrating projects. The researcher considered this confirmatory ground of project management, as she believes that sustainability as project-based programmes has to be integrated, established, and conveyed all over the organisational hierarchy (vertically and

horizontally), with an inclusiveness to all employees to engage with the programme.

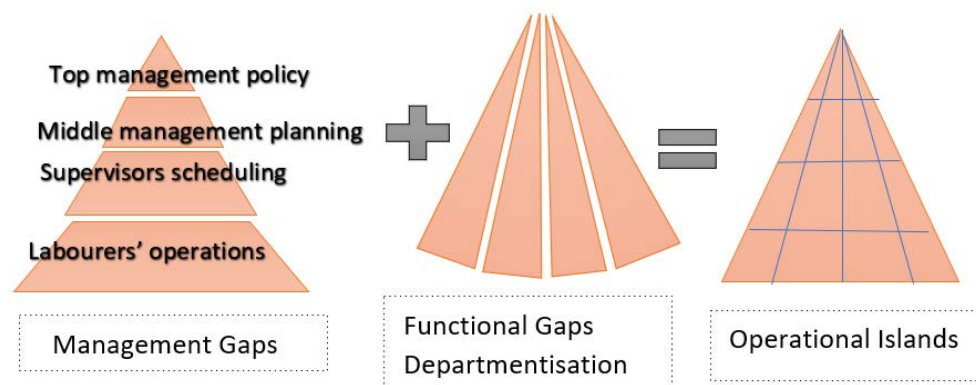


Figure 4.11 - Organisational gaps
Adopted from source: Kerzner (2017)

Studies state that there is a lack of integration of sustainability and project management, emphasising that project management can support corporations that are keen on achieving sustainability in their businesses; however, more guidance is needed on how this can be achieved, as the gaps still need to be tackled and addressed (Marcelino-Sadaba *et al.*, 2015; Goel, Ganesh and Kaur, 2019; Friedrich, 2021). The statement of Turner *et al.* (2010) affirms that new schools of thought evolve through combining tools and methods, and can build upon each other's body of knowledge. For example, sustainability and project management, when combined together, show how the 'TBL' of sustainability can influence all aspects of project management when designing, implementing, and integrating projects, and hence its selection criteria will be determined accordingly.

Silvius and Schipper (2014) are among the leading authors that paved a solid base for the literature of sustainability and project management. They based their study on a review of 164 academic publications on the topic. They identified 14 sustainability dimensions that are relevant to project management (see table 4.12 below). These result in delivering projects that meet sustainability criteria. The researcher considered these dimensions comprehensively, which supported her to critically identify how project-selection criteria foster the engagement of employees with sustainability programmes in corporations.

Dimension	Meaning	Source
An economic dimension	Considering economic effects and benefits.	Elkington (1997)
A social dimension	Considering human and societal interests.	Elkington (1997); Labuschagne and Brent (2006)
An ecological dimension	Considering effects on nature and earth.	Elkington (1997)
A time dimension	Considering also long term effects.	Meadows et al. (1972); World Commission on Environment and Development (1987); Gareis et al. (2013)
A values dimension	Understanding sustainability as a normative concept.	Schieg (2009); Gareis et al. (2013)
A geographical dimension	Considering both local and global effects.	Hurrell and Kingsbury (1992); Gareis et al. (2013)
A performance dimension	Considering failure and non-performance as a waste of resources and energy.	Silvius et al. (2012)
A participation dimension	Sustainable development requires inclusion and participation of stakeholders.	Freeman (1984); Eskerod and Huemann (2013)
A waste (reduction) dimension	Reducing and, if possible, preventing waste.	Braungart and McDonough (2002); Ma (2011); Maltzman and Shirley (2011)
A transparency dimension	Openly and proactively providing information to stakeholders.	International Organization for Standardization (2010)
An accountability dimension	Being willing and available to be held accountable for decisions and actions.	International Organization for Standardization (2010)
A cultural dimension	Respecting differences in values and culture.	Schieg (2009); Gareis et al. (2013)
A risk (reduction) dimension	Reducing and, if possible, avoiding certain risks.	Godfrey et al. (2009); Silvius (2016a)
A political dimension	Recognizing different interests of stakeholders.	Eskerod and Huemann (2013)

Table 4.12 - Sustainability dimensions
Relating to project management – Silvius and Schipper (2014)

4.3.2 The 'ART' as Accountability, Responsibility and Transparency:

It is believed that transparency, accountability, and responsibility are dimensions that have been emphasised as dimensions of both sustainability and project management when addressed together (Pojasek, 2012; Silvius and Schipper 2014) as, with a touch of innovation and critical thinking skills, the researcher of this thesis, by setting the letters' order, came up with the acronym 'ART' as accountability, responsibility, and transparency.

Accountability is about the willingness to be held accountable for decisions and actions, while adhering to laws and regulations and other requirements to meet sustainability targeted outcomes (Silvius and Schipper, 2014; Pojasek, 2012). Corporations are ultimately accountable for the impacts of their decisions and activities towards the social, environmental, and economy pillars of sustainability. Nowadays, there is a call for more demand of accountability by stakeholders. Corporations strive to achieve accountability by monitoring a lengthy list of metrics of sustainability -related activities and practices (Pojasek, 2012).

Responsibility: Acting responsibly comes at the core of sustainability, as corporations show their commitments and responsibilities towards sustainability's three pillars of social, environmental, and economy. According to Pojasek (2012), responsibilities from the corporation level are as follows.

Firstly, responsibilities towards environmental stewardship are to: reduce the use of all resources, eliminate waste, pay attention to the prevention of pollution, respect the need for climate change mitigation and adaptation, protect natural habitats and biodiversity, and consider each of these items throughout the value chain. Secondly, responsibilities towards social wellbeing are to: protect human rights, ensure fair operating practices, assess labour practices, including health and safety, evaluate consumer issues associated with products and services, optimise community involvement and awareness, and consider each of these items throughout the value chain. Thirdly, responsibilities towards economic prosperity are to: create top-line growth (brand), ensure bottom-line growth (profits), improve governance and maintain the organisation's 'license to operate', contribute to community development, and consider each of these items throughout the value chain.

However, he also identified the responsibilities of the employees, suppliers, and other stakeholders as: doing what you have committed to do, always giving your best effort, being held accountable for your choices, helping others when they need help, being fair, and helping to make a better world Pojasek (2012).

In addition, transparency is about proactively providing information and reflecting it openly without restrictions (Silvius and Schipper, 2014). To Pojasek (2012), transparency serves as a 'self-regulating mechanism' for corporations. It is also important for maintaining ethical behaviour, and is often mentioned in a corporation's code of conduct. Information relevant to demonstrating corporation transparency includes: the purpose, nature, and locations of organisational activities, the identity of any controlling interest in the activities of the organisation, the manner in which organisational decisions are made, implemented, and reviewed, the definitions applicable to roles, responsibilities, accountabilities, and authorities across the different functions of the organisation, the standards and criteria used to evaluate sustainability performance, performance with regard to relevant and significant interests of stakeholders, the sources, amounts, and application of funds expended on sustainability efforts, the known and likely impacts and risks to society, the environment, and the economy from organisational decisions and activities, and the specifics of the stakeholder-engagement process (Pojasek, 2012).

All three dimensions of sustainability and project management combine the concepts of accountability, responsibility, and transparency, support the employees to ensure and maintain their psychological states emotionally, cognitively, and physically to reach and achieve the engagement of states of finding their engagement with sustainability programmes meaningful, along

with being available, and feeling safe to embrace and practice sustainability at their workplace.

4.3.3 Circular process instead of dead-end linear processes

It is also vital to develop a critical understanding of how sustainability is operationalised through processes characteristic identification. Sustainability is problematic because processes are designed in a linear way rather than circular, leading to a dead-end after reaching the targeted goals. Bell and Morse (2005) confirmed that sustainability requires more circular processes to support those who are trapped in the system. Labuschagne and Brent (2005) also confirmed the circular processes point. In this research study, the circularity of the developed conceptual framework has been applied, towards the initial formation stage of the conceptual framework at the early stages of this research study (before embarking on the empirical study), as well as towards the last finalised version of the theoretical conceptual model, towards the final phases of the research study (see Chapter 8).

Sanchez (2015), and Schneider and Meins (2012) noted that although numerous studies have proposed frameworks, various gaps remain, as practitioners also affirm that organisations still face the challenges of dealing with sustainability in their business performance at a practical level, lacking comprehensive strategic integration. However, within the project management literature, little attention has been paid to sustainability, although recent developments have considered sustainability as an emerging school of thought, but it is still lacking empirical evaluation (Silvius, 2017; Marcelino-Sádaba *et al.*, 2015; Brones *et al.*, 2014). Sustainable project management lacks focus on the soft aspect (the human factor), specifically in regard to the phases, tools, techniques, scope, outcomes, etc., as the research tends to focus on project managers, rather than end-users. For

example, Carvalho and Rabechini (2017) affirmed that the soft side of project management (the human aspect) is critical in introducing sustainability, emphasising the need for stakeholders' attention. In the case of this research study, the researcher focuses on one aspect of stakeholders, which is employees and their engagement.

Similarly, Silviu *et al.* (2017) have considered project managers and the involved project-team members in organisations, and how they can engage with sustainability through considering the 'TBL' (environmental, social, and economic dimension of sustainability) when designing projects. However, Silviu and colleagues' focal point is project-management activities, and how they can be in favour of sustainability, focusing only on the project-management aspect. However, this research argues that the role of project management here is to support employees to engage with sustainability efficiently, inclusive to all employees in the corporation, whether they are working on projects, or any other aspects of corporation activities and practices, throughout the corporation's hierarchy (and not exclusive to project managers and project team members, and specific to task outcomes that take the nature of a project). Zhou and Mi's (2017) study confirms that there is a gap within the three domains of project management, sustainability. and the social aspect, the employees, as the employees need to be aware and form knowledge of their corporation's sustainability-related practices, in order to engage with them, from sustainability through to project-management perspectives, along with the associated areas of practice, which will be identified in the following section.

4.3.4 The 5Ps of People, Planet, Profit, Products, and Processes, throughout the corporation's aspects, practices and activities

When it comes to sustainability integration, and with which aspects to engage employees, in regard to sustainability in corporations, the three pillars of sustainability of 'TBL' (social, environmental, economic) should permeate throughout the corporation, via sustainability's 5Ps of people, planet, profit, product, and processes, as areas and practices for employees that can contribute to the enhancement of employee productivity and wellbeing (Lee 2008), and eventually support their engagement with sustainability programmes at their workplace.

There has been an increase in a global shift that focuses on sustainable development, climate change, ethics, social responsibility, and supply chains in recent years, which has put pressure on businesses to make their practices sustainable, and to become more responsive towards the environment and the community in which they operate.

The sustainability commitment of individuals and organisations is to build skills that empower them to participate in, and contribute to, a healthy economy, with a commitment to environmental and social stewardship. As a steward of innovation, with representation in every industry worldwide, project management, as a discipline, is uniquely suited to address challenges related to the sustainability pillars (Carboni and Gonzalez, 2014), through the designed GPM P5 Standard as a tool that supports the alignment of portfolios, programmes, and projects with the organisational strategy for sustainability, and focuses on the impacts of project processes and deliverables on the environment, society, the corporate bottom line, and the local economy, as GPM P5 provides guidance on what to measure and how to integrate P5 into business activities (Carboni and Gonzalez, 2014).

4.4 How project management aids the engagement of employees with sustainability programmes in corporations:

Project management methods, sets of techniques, and tools can aid corporations to engage their workforces with sustainability in the following ways:

(1) Project management helps in organising related work tasks and assignments at the individual, and the departmental level, including the corporation's branches, whether as SMEs or multinational corporations. This can only be applicable and achievable because project management is a unique method with a set of techniques and tools via the principles of planning, estimating, executing, monitoring and controlling, and reviewing and feedback, as these support the achievement of the desired end results on time, within budget, and according to specifications. This has been referred to as the project-management iron triangle of scope, quality, and budget, in addition to the recently added fourth one, people (Bell and Morse, 2005; Kerzner, 2017; Friedrich, 2021; Wysocki, 2019).

(2) Project management can tackle gaps, and connect and unify efforts through its methods, tools and techniques, instead of keeping such efforts fragmented, which hinders the reaching of associated outcomes, and eventually departmental and corporation targeted goals as a whole (Kerzner, 2017), and not only corporation gaps, but also the motivational gap at the individual level (Peeters, Diependaele, and Sterckx, 2019).

(3) Project management has the ability to break down the complexity of sustainability programme language/s into a simplified one by translating the related language into actionable language that supports in raising employee

awareness and understanding of sustainability, which leads to their engagement efficiently, in order for sustainability, according to Kahn, 1990 and May, Gilson and Harter, 2004, to sound meaningful, in order for them to embrace it as one of the important conditions of employee engagement, which can reflect positively on the other two engagement conditions of availability and safety. Govindarajulu and Daily (2004) stressed the issue that technical language is associated with sustainability programmes in organisations, which hinders employees from giving sustainability their priority attention.

(4) Project management helps in transforming sustainability-related programmes, strategies, policies, and initiatives to be operationalised, and turns them into actionable language which supports the employees in understanding them, and embracing and applying them effectively (Govindarajulu and Daily, 2004).

(5) Project management offers monitoring and control systems to support the employees to stay on track in regard to their efforts, to support their engagement to be in line with the goals and purposes of sustainability programmes. Moreover, the corporation can have up-to-date information in regard to the progress of engaging employees with sustainability programmes, through project-management tools such as reporting (graphical and non-graphical), the consideration of high and low risks, etc., which supports the individual and departmental achievements to become unified, towards serving one holistic goal of sustainability programmes in corporations (Wysocki, 2007).

However, project management is mainly designed to support the achievement of targeted goals in the short-term, which highlights one of

project management's shortcomings, according to project-management scholars, who put their emphasis on the role of project methods, tools, and techniques of being relatively associated to meet short-term objectives and targeted goals (Simpson, 1987; Meredith and Mantel, 2009; Kerzner, 2017). Therefore, a continuous achievement has to be created, and this would only be possible through the existence and support of organisational change, which will be addressed in further detail in the following section, which entails how organisational change can support the achievement of engaging employees with sustainability programmes in a continuous manner.

4.5 Organisational change as the fourth sub-pillar for this thesis

This section investigates the role of organisational change in relation to the engagement of employees with sustainability programmes, via the aid of project management. According to the literature, organisational change supports corporations and their employees to engage with sustainability programmes when applied through project-management tools and techniques, by offering guidance, and direction, specifically when they focus on the reinforcement aspect of change, to achieve continuous and successful change, and to allow further suitable amendments and enhancements of sustainability programmes that are in favour of the employees and their engagement. The literature review question for this part is:

What is the role of organisational change in the achievement of engaging employees with sustainability programmes, with the aid of project management achieved effectively, successfully, and with continuity?

4.5.1 Why organisational change?

Change is an integral part of everything; even non-living things are exposed to change, due to various reasons and factors (internal or external forces).

Cameron and Green (2015) acknowledged that the world we live in is continuously changing at an intense rate, and that the rate of change, accompanied by discoveries, outpace our ability as individuals to keep up. In addition, rapid technological and non-technological developments that organisations are going against, have determined that change has become an ever-present feature in the way businesses function (Burnes, 2004). Although organisations show their recognition of the need for change, statistics disappointingly indicate that 70% of change programmes do not achieve their intended outcomes (Balogun and Hope Hailey, 2004). However, in response to this, organisational change literature has been bombarded with many contradictory and confusing theories and research findings, which causes change to be unachievable (Todnem, 2005), or maybe deviating in the wrong direction, which does not help in achieving the targeted outcomes. Since the characteristics of 'the need for change' as unpredictable, appear as reactive, discontinuous, *ad hoc*, while mostly being triggered by crises that organisations face (Burnes, 2004; Cameron and Green, 2015; Nelson, 2003; Luecke, 2003). Therefore, organisations must make change an integral part of their strategies. Change-management scholars (e.g., Burnes, 2004; Rieley and Clarkson, 2001) have emphasised the point that organisations cannot separate change management from their strategies, and vice versa.

Change management has been defined as the process of continually renewing an organisation's direction, structure, and capabilities, to serve the ever-changing needs of external and internal demands (Moran and Brightman, 2001). Remembering the purpose of the change efforts constitutes a vital point towards a successful change. Bloom (2020) affirmed that organisations need to constantly remember that the purpose of their change efforts rotates around seeing the problem, feeling the problem, and changing the organisation to create a new normal.

There are mutual benefits for both the organisation and its employees in regard to considering, applying, implementing, executing, and achieving the desired change. According to the literature, there are organisational–staff mutual benefits of pursuing change, such as: (1) organisations develop and maintain their competitive edge by being able to survive and thrive against rapid (external and internal) changes; (2) it supports the organisation to remain relevant in their business; (3) to gain better business opportunities; (4) it supports organisations in becoming aware of their ‘SWOT’ which includes strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and to face and deal with them positively, with loss avoidance; (5) change also encourages innovation, enhances skills, develops staff loyalty, and improve staff morale (Kotter, 1996; Jacobs *et al.*, 2013; Will, 2015).

4.5.2 Organisational change’s role in engaging employees with sustainability through project-management tools and techniques

It has been argued that both the literature of sustainability and of organisational change have two main common characteristics of uncertainty and complexity. According to the literature of sustainability, organisational change forms an integral part of sustainability; without organisational change, sustainability cannot be achievable. Robertson (2017) emphasised the notion that the implementation of change has been acknowledged as one of the most visible steps in sustainability, where most people recognise it and want to get involved. A further argument has been presented asserting that protecting the natural environment, social wellbeing, and a striving economy must be considered a higher priority by all human beings and organisations operating within a range of interdependent natural and human systems. By proposing possible entry points, such as change management, Maxton and Randers propose that reflective insights can be consciously nurtured, which

will bring forward transformation towards improved sustainability (Maxton and Randers, 2016).

Sustainability and change, when they are both applied on the organisational level, share some common aspects, such as rapid pace, in motion and unsteadiness, complexity, uncertainty, sometimes beyond the ability to cope with that pace, whether this happens in corporations at the strategic or operational levels, and/or at the individual level, which is the employees. The following elements affirm the common aspect of both organisational change and sustainability, according to scholars: (1) both literatures agree that change is a departure from a usual static position of an organisation, whether from an organisational-change perspective (e.g., Nelson, 2003; Burnes, 2004), or from a sustainability perspective (e.g., Hitchcock and Willard, 2009); (2) both organisational change (e.g., Nelson, 2003) and sustainability (e.g., Hitchcock and Willard, 2009; Bell and Morse, 2008) are seen as continuing phenomena (3) another main characteristic that organisational change (e.g., Todnem, 2005) and sustainability (e.g., Maxton and Randers 2016) share is complexity; and (4) uncertainty appears to be a common challenge for both organisational change (e.g., Todnem, 2005) and sustainability (Coutinho *et al.*, 2018). The mentioned aspect has allowed the researcher the confirmation to consider the importance to consider studying sustainability as the core pillar, from an organisational-change perspective, in this research study.

The intersection of organisational change and employee engagement support creates empowered employees who can grab opportunities and take challenges, while being able to deal with risks.

Organisational change has been extensively studied by scholars and practitioners. Although a considerable amount of research has been devoted to organisational change on the strategic level, focusing on organisations

achieving the outcomes of the planned change, rather less attention has been paid to the employees and their role in the change process. Choi (2011) argued that many change efforts fail because organisations underestimate the vital role of individuals and how they can embrace the change, and support and reinforce the success of the change. The majority of the empirical research focuses on 'sustainability and change' at the macro-level (organisations in relation to political and economic systems); to the micro-level (employees), less attention has been paid. Supporting Temminck (2015), this Ph.D. will focus on the micro-level, by concentrating the research on the role of employees in the uptake and reinforcement of corporations, in regard to their sustainability programmes. Therefore, this research project studies sustainability and change at the micro-level, by considering employees and their vital role when engaged with sustainability programmes, which confirms here that change is also studied at the micro-level, and all the related factors and elements that support their engagement.

In an organisation, the transformation achieved towards an improved sustainability performance can be both organisational and individual/employee success (Exter, 2013). Employees who work in organisations that adopt sustainability feel proud to talk to others about their organisation. Similarly, Hitchcock and Willard (2009) noted that many executives have found that sustainability motivates people in a way, or other organisational change programmes have. In essence, sustainability in corporations, including every element inside it (systems, programmes, policies, human assets, etc.), is in a state of continuous transition (Bell and Morse, 2005).

In addition, it has been affirmed that only the human element plays a vital role in maintaining the stability of change. Frances (1995) shed lights on this, by stating that when change is implemented, it creates an imbalance between the challenges and the comfort of the staff, as the human factor is the most

impacted, as organisations do not consider the staff and their status (as emotional, cognitive, and physical) as a priority. Organisations focus on the preparations for change with an emphasis on structural issues, and task-driven schedules aspects, neglecting the most important factor, which is the employees, as they have a vital role in providing stability during the change. Bloom (2020) confirmed this by stating that empowered employees have been considered as one of the prime components of organisational change. Being empowered while change is happening in organisations grants the employees a certain power of autonomy and responsibility for decision-making in the assigned tasks.

Griffith (2002) stated that change is usually constituted of three major parts: programme, action, and skills. A programme is designed to take a system from point A to point B, or from state Y to state Z in a crude way. Actions, on the other hand, are specific, and usually employed by an individual or group responsible for bringing about change, whereas a set of skills together constitutes action, as these sets of skills are associated with specific actions. For this research study, we are considering sustainability programmes in corporations, and the associated and related skills and actions at the employee level, and their interactions that can lead to an efficient engagement while it is meaningful, and they feel safe to express themselves (without the negative fear of criticism), and while they are available to do so, meeting Kahn's model (1990) of employee engagement.

Project management is essential in organisational change, as is impossible for any change to occur without the aid of project-management tools, techniques and/or methods. According to the following points by scholars of both organisational and organisational change literature, and just to give a few of them:

- Project management is a core component of organisational change. Organisations are increasingly employing project management in their projects and programmes as their delivery mechanism for making change happen. According to Bell and Morse (2005), sustainability will largely continue to be carried out through projects.
- Project management leads the change-related processes to be action-based, as it provides the practical side of any change.
- Project management can cope with the organisational change aspects of uncertainty and dynamic nature, through contingency and risk methods, for example, when resistance occurs.
- Project-management tools and techniques can keep up with the change process through the tracking, monitoring, and review and feedback techniques and tools, and also by offering support and alteration to the change, by applying corrective actions when things do not go according to plan, in order to achieve a successful implementation of the change.

(Donaldson, 1999; Cameron and Green, 2015; Padar, Robertson, 2017; Pataki, and Sebestyen, 2017; Mirza, 2018)

4.5.3 Organisational change theories, models, and framework

From the foundational model that Kurt Lewin developed in the middle of the 1990s, until now, organisational change theories, models, and frameworks have been in a continuous evolution, developed within associated criteria, to meet desired and specific change purposes and goals implemented on different levels and for various reasons. Organisational change theorists have expanded further, following the path of Kurt Lewin's foundational model (1947, 1958). Some organisational change scholars have developed their models as stages and steps (e.g., Lewin, 1947/1958; Kotter, 1996/2006;

Bullock and Batten, 1985), while others have designed their models taking a pyramid shape (e.g., Siegal *et al.*, 1996), with a rare example of introducing change as a formula (e.g., Beckhard and Harris, 1987), in a word, altogether they have shared the move and transition towards successful change outcomes.

We start with Lewin's model that have been embraced by scholars and practitioners, which presents three fundamental change-stages of unfreeze, transition/move, and refreeze (Lewin, 1947, 1958), whereby unfreeze deals with de-stabilising the status quo, then transition/move presents the change phase, and lastly, refreeze is the final phase of change, stabilising the new equilibrium (Lewin, 1947, 1958) (see the diagram below 4.14).

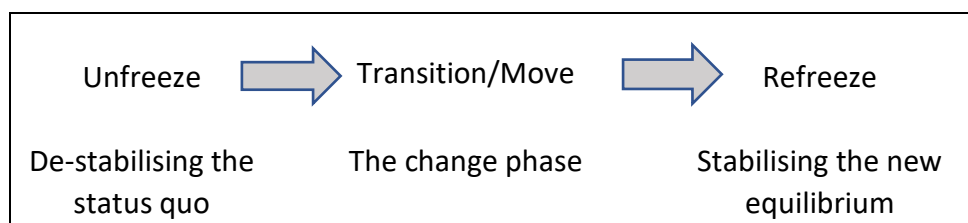


Diagram 4.14 - Lewin's three stages of change
Source: Adopted from (Lewin, 1947, 1958)

Drawing on similar lines, Kotter (1996, 2006) introduced a detailed eight-step change model towards achieving a successful change in organisations. The model's eight steps, briefly, are: (1) creating a sense of urgency, (2) forming powerful guiding coalitions, (3) developing a vision and a strategy, (4) communicating the vision, (5) removing obstacles and empowering employees for action, (6) creating short-term wins, (7) consolidating gains, and (8) strengthening change by embedding change in the culture. In parallel, Hughes (2007) developed tools and techniques that support the reconciliation of theory with practice, through a classificatory framework which features eight questions that could be considered as a change management tool/technique, in order to inform understanding about its

utilisation. While taking a different route for achieving a successful change, Beckhard and Harris (1987) designed a change formula as $C = [AxBxC] > X$, by reframing problems as opportunities or challenges, as C = change, A = level of dissatisfaction with the status quo, B = desirability of proposed change and X = cost of changing; this supports leaders in managing change. Likewise, Carnall (2003, 2007), for example, considered change from a leadership perspective, as his model entailed managing organisational politics in the model, the creativity of risk-taking and learning, external and internal pressures, and organisational culture. It is beyond the word limit of this thesis to address organisational change theories comprehensively, as the researcher intended to address the most relevant ones to this research study.

From a communication lens towards organisational change, Quirke (1996) developed a change escalator that offers a five-step model for change, for thinking through the communication needed around change and transformation. The steps entail: (1) basic awareness; have we explained what we are all about? (2) Understanding; do they get it, and do we know if they understand? (3) Support; do they believe, and have we excited them about it? (4) Involvement; can they actually do it, and are they able to deliver? (5) Commitment; is it business as usual, and does it feel like the right thing? (Quirke, 1996) On these grounds, Siew (2015) observed Quirke's change escalator framework, as their research study affirms that awareness, understanding, support, involvement, and commitment offers supportive communication channels for employees to engage themselves effectively, while achieving successful change outcomes. This thesis shares and support Siew's line of thought, by considering the vital role of communication towards the engagement of employees with sustainability programmes from a change perspective, via Quirke's change escalator, which requires employees' sustainability-related awareness, understanding, support, involvement, and commitment, aided by project-management tools and techniques, to achieve

a successful and full engagement that include the three states of employee engagement which are emotionally, cognitively, and physically.

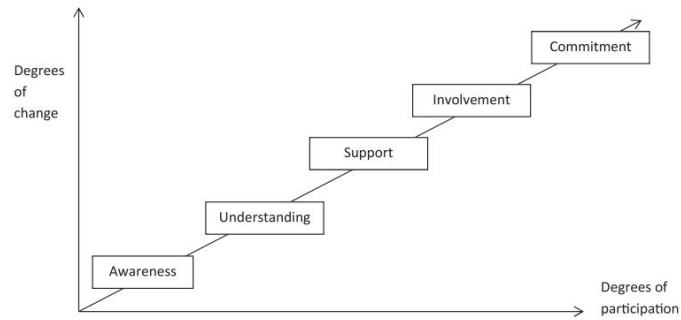


Figure 4.15 - Quirke (1996) change escalator

However, the majority of models have been portrayed in a linear-shaped way, lacking the cyclic aspect that presents a loop to return back to the change phases and re-address, re-assess, enhance, and apply the required amendments to the implemented change phases. Organisational change scholars have stressed the notion that change should not be perceived as a series of linear events within a specific period of time, but should be considered as a continuous, open-ended process of adaptation to changing circumstances and conditions, so that it can accommodate the nature of change (Burnes, 2004; Dawson, 1994; Todnem, 2005). Due to this shortcoming in change theories, the phase of reinforcement has evolved, presenting a vital role to address and tackle this aspect of change demonstrating a loop manner/shape. According to Totterdill and Exton (2014), innovation cannot be pursued via traditional linear change models by organisations. They added that, as innovation is an inherently social process, organisations need to create innovative and self-sustaining processes of reflection, learning, and change, which requires a commitment to learning

from diverse sources, to enable employees to challenge established practices, and to experiment.

Within organisational-change literature, and in relation to the cyclic/loop model, it has been argued that reinforcement has been one of the most neglected aspects in most of the implemented change, since reinforcement demonstrates the role of reinforcing, and its ability to support reviewing all the previous implemented change processes, and to grant a ramification effect for re-implementation in an enhanced version of change (Cameron and Green, 2015), whereby the cycle of change can continue and keep on going. The researcher of this study embraced this point as one of her main arguments, considering the engagement of employees with sustainability programmes as a changing phenomenon that requires continuity and adaptation, which has been applied in her developed theoretical model for this thesis, presented in the reinforcement phase. Monk and Wagner (2008) stated that change management deals with human behaviour, specifically the employees during change, where they need support and security to meet a successful adaptation when change is implemented. Likewise, such a point has been also stressed through the quality-orientated model by Pfeifer *et al.* (2005), as they enhanced the eight steps model by Kotter (1996, 2006) by infusing it with the total quality management (TQM) perspective, with a unique phase that emphasises the role of reinforcement in organisational change models, as the majority of organisational change models present sequential linear procedures that do not meet the dynamic nature of change. In addition, the Pfeifer *et al.* (2005) model has been ranked as one of the first of its kind to meet the requirements to deal with the continuous change that businesses face (see Figure 4.16 below), yet the validation in Pfeifer *et al.*'s model was employed at the macro-organisational level, in regard to how organisations can operate when adapting change, as it has not been designed to focus on employees and their engagement, specifically during the change.

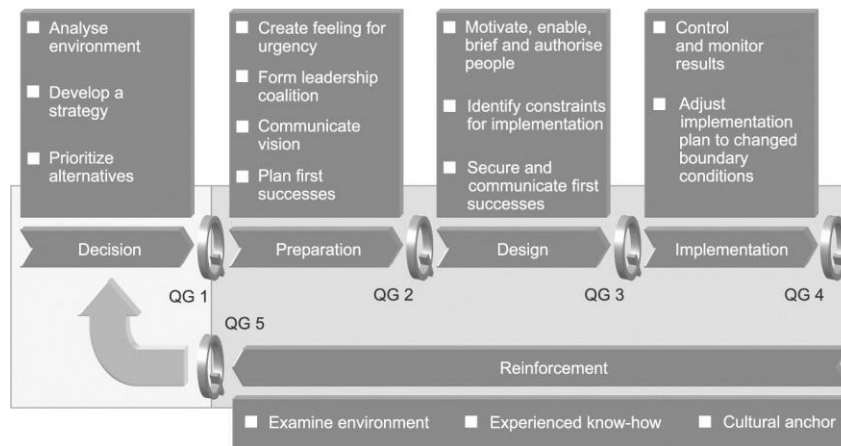


Figure 4.16 - Quality-orientated design of strategic change processes
Source: Pfeifer et al. (2005)

In a similar manner, one of the widely embraced models for change has been introduced through Prosci's ADKAR framework to change practitioners, in addition to its three-phase process (see Figure 4.17). Prosci's ADKAR framework offers ways of managing and directing change efforts, by applying an outcome-orientated approach that can be used to empower stakeholders towards a proposed change (Hiatt, 2006). Although most organisational change models and theories pay attention to strategic change that entails changing the business model of corporations, the Hiatt and Creasey (2012) work/model focuses instead on the individual, by providing a set of tools for leading the people side of change, to achieve a designed outcome during the application of a structured change, while leadership within all levels of the organisational hierarchy, including executives, senior leaders, middle managers, and line supervisors, support the engagement of employees towards the change process, and ensure the achievement of working collectively towards a common objective. This refers to the quote 'Successful change, at its core, is rooted in something much simpler: How to facilitate change with one person' (Hiatt, 2006: p.1).

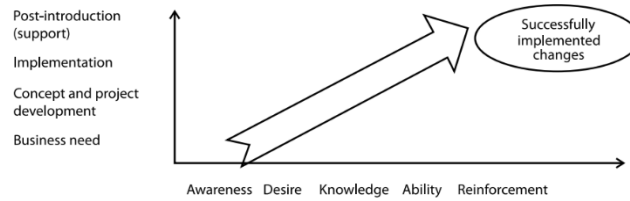


Figure 4.17 – ADKAR Model
Source: Hiatt (2006)

Furthermore, 'ADKAR' is an acronym that represents five outcomes an individual needs for the achievement of a successful change, awareness, desire, knowledge, ability, and reinforcement, by providing guidance for employees when they go through a particular change, and supporting them to address roadblocks or barriers that occur along the way (Hiatt and Creasey, 2012; www.prosci.com). According to a recent study on the components of the ADKAR model, Antoniadou *et al.*, (2022) affirmed that knowledge, awareness, and reinforcement are statistically significant factors, and have a strong positive effect on change performance within the public sector.

In regard to organisational change as the embraced fourth sub-pillar, this research project intended to focus on reinforcement as one of the most vital aspects of organisational change. As in most cases, a lot of effort is dedicated towards the implementation and execution of change, and once change outcomes and goals are met and achieved after success, change becomes abandoned, without being reinforced to re-enhance and apply amendments towards the change process, to achieve the continuity of change. In this thesis, change goals and their continuity, in regard to the engagement of employees with sustainability programmes, have been considered and employed as a central aspect of change, since the sustainability literature has also affirmed the dynamic nature of sustainability (Bell and Morse, 2005; Exter, 2013; Epstein and Buhovac, 2014; Cameron and Green, 2015; Robertson, 2017). Therefore, reinforcement has been addressed within the

literature of organisational change as one of the most underexamined aspects, as a vital change component, as this research study also shares this premise. A theorist within psychology affirms that 'reinforcement evolved as a mechanism to insure species-typical responses to appropriate stimuli' (Glickman and Schiff, 1967: p.81).

Reinforcement has mainly been introduced through psychology and behavioural science (Tennov Jacobson and Trinidad, 1976). It is commonly associated with learning known as 'reinforcement learning' (Daw, 2008), whereby Richard Sutton has been considered as the father of reinforcement learning (Sutton and Barto, 1998). This research study intends to consider the managerial implications of reinforcement, and its vital role in supporting and maintaining the engagement of employees with sustainability programmes, with the aid of project-management tools and techniques, as addressing reinforcement from psychology and behavioural science perspectives, and its associated physiological implications in a deep or direct way, are beyond the scope of this thesis.

Reinforcement learning has been developed and applied through the computer-science field (e.g., Winde, 2020; Doya, 2007), in addition to its evolution as reinforcement in machine learning, robotics, and games (e.g., Krakovsky, 2016; Doya, 2007). However, reinforcement from a managerial perspective has not been given fair attention, specifically within the organisational change research. Therefore, this thesis intends to address the role of reinforcement in relation to considering the topic of this thesis, from an organisational-change perspective.

Reinforcement theory is about the process of shaping behaviour by controlling the consequences of the behaviour, as it can be divided into positive and negative (Skinner, 1938). According to Skinner, reinforcers

encourage and maintain positive behaviour and strengthen it, whereas punishers support in wiping out or eradicating a behaviour and weakening undesired behaviour (Skinner, 1938). Reinforcement, in other words, can mean augmentation, supplementing, boosting, advancement, and aid (Collins's Dictionary). In addition, according to Water (1956), reinforcement has the effect of re-alignment, after the implementation of change.

Reinforcement can be applied on different levels and can be provided in various shapes and ways. Reinforcement at the strategic level of change plays a role in re-assessing, enhancing, and applying ramifications towards the implemented change (Pfeifer *et al.*, 2005), whereas reinforcement at the employees level has a positive effect on their performance, as it can come as positive and constructive feedback embedded in the organisation's appraisal system, presented as rewards to incentivise the employees, recognise a desirable performance outcome and maintain it or, in the case of an undesirable performance outcome, enhance it to meet the required outcomes (Knippen J. and Green, 1997; Merriman *et al.*, 2016).

It is worth mentioning that reinforcement also has a vital role in employees' motivation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction (Kimble, 1956; Brief and Aldag, 1981), which are main elements that support the engagement of employees, as a confirmatory point of being in line with employee-engagement theories (Wollard and Shuck, 2011; Albrecht, 2012), as this has been addressed previously under the employee engagement part within this literature review chapter. More importantly, reinforcement has a role in facilitating change and easing resistance to change when it occurs (Hiatt and Creasey, 2012). All things considered, reinforcement has been considered as a main part in the consideration of organisational change as the fourth sub-pillar in this research study.

In addition, empowering employees appears to be fundamental when implementing and executing change, in order to achieve a sustainable change, and the meaning of sustainable change here is to sustain change in general, and maintain successful outcomes, and as here they do not mean sustainability in its well-known meaning, which is related to the three dimensions/pillars of social, environmental, and economic, according to Bloom (2021), who studied organisational change focusing on employee empowerment, via developing the TLC Continuum Empowerment model. T stands for theory of constraints by Goldratt, about critical-thinking-based system for identifying where the obstacles are in the process. L stands for Lean, which is centred on eradicating waste from the system, and S represents the concept of Six Sigma, which helps in removing variation from a process.

Furthermore, Bloom (2021) further developed a toolbox, by combining the three aspects of Constraints, Lean, and Six Sigma into DMAIC, as a set of toolboxes. D represents define, M is for measuring, A is for analysing, I stand for improving and, finally, C presents control. The Lean toolbox should be the organisational first call when solving the problem, describing it as the low-hanging fruit solutions, whereas, the theory of constraints invites critical-thinking tools to the table. They assert that when employees are empowered, and they collaborate together while handling the knowledge of applying the TLC continuum empowerment model, this supports them in identifying suitable solutions when approaching change (see table 4.18 below).

DMAIC Step	SIX SIGMA Tools	LEAN Tools
DEFINE	Voice of customer Project charter Project critical to Quality Definition High Level Process Map	Value Definition
MEASURE	Quality Function Deployment Measuring System Analysis	Value Stream Mapping
ANALYSE	Process Capability Analysis	

	FMEA Benchmarking Hypothesis Testing Graphical Tools	Line Balance Takt Time Calculation
IMPROVE	Regression Analysis Design Of Experiments Risk Assessment	5S Establish Flow/Pull System Score Events
CONTROL	Determine New Process Capability Statistical Process Control Control Plans	Poka-Yoke Visual Management

Table 4.18 - Lean Six Sigma Toolbox
Adopted from Bloom (2021)

Bloom's TLC Continuum Empowerment model that is in favour of change, is one of the unique models that address change at the employees level, which leads to their engagement at their workplace, via entailing the project-management perspective, which can be noticeable in the key aspects of Lean and Six Sigma as main tools that have been designed into programmes to be applied and used through technical means. This proves the important role of project management in empowering, and consequently engaging, employees through change implementation; however, in the case of this thesis, the consideration is of change that is in favour of sustainability in corporations.

4.6 Thesis-designed conceptual framework

This last section/part of the literature review has been divided into two parts; the first one introduces the identified elements of engaging employees with sustainability programmes, with the aid of project management, framed by organisational change, as the researcher of this thesis has categorised these components into two categories, of primary elements and subordinate elements, based on the extent of their emphasis within the relevant literature/s, both solely (for each chosen literature of this thesis on its own),

in addition to where they intersect. The chosen primary elements for this research study that have been addressed are: (1) management commitment and leadership, (2) communication, dissemination, and translation, and lastly (3) teamwork spirit and collaboration. The second category identifies the sub-elements of engaging employees with sustainability, identified as: (1) the alignment of value, purpose, and goal, (2) empowerment, (3) visualising, (4) incentives and rewards, (5) tracking and monitoring, and finally (6) review and feedback. The primary elements and sub-elements of engaging employees with sustainability programmes supported the researcher to employ those elements in the formation and design of her theoretical framework, as these elements have been grounded due to both literature confirmatory points, in supporting each other, by paving a path where they both intersect, since the research does not validate such a confirmatory point, as combined together for the purpose of this thesis. Which confirms that employee engagement presents the centrality aspect of sustainability in corporations. Then, the second part offers a demonstration of the designed conceptual framework for this thesis, according to its validation of the suitable aspects that have been identified by the researcher as elements (of her theoretical model) from the relevant literature, which has been embraced as a major step of the thesis, which supported the researcher to move forward towards conducting her empirical study successfully and confidently, to study the designed framework qualitatively.

4.6.1 The chosen employee-engagement dimensions and engagement states:

Although this section might look like a replication of the employee-engagement part (that I have addressed previously in this literature review chapter), it is more focused and condensed, as it highlights the exact identified employee-engagement dimensions and elements/drivers that have

been adopted for my research study's conceptual framework, which will be introduced at the end of this section.

For the purpose of my research study, I intended to adopt the employee-engagement dimensions as meaningfulness, availability, and safety, with the consideration of the states of engaging the employees emotionally, cognitively, and physically. The chosen employee-engagement states and conditions for my study have been adopted following Kahn (1999), and May, Gilson and Harter (2004). It has been stated by employee engagement scholars that, in order for employees to engage at their workplace, a suitable environment for the employees has to be created. In order for the following dimensions and associated engagement states to be met, as follows (see Figure 4.19 below):

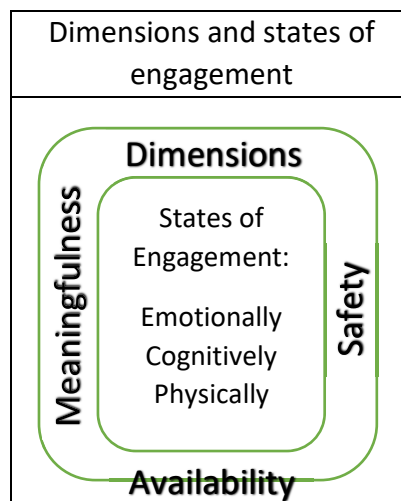


Figure 4.19 - Employee engagement dimensions and associated states
Adopted from (Kahn, 1990; May, Gilson and Harter, 2004; Albrecht, 2012)

(1) **Meaningfulness:** the employee-engagement dimension of 'meaningfulness' can be achieved when corporations support employees to feel that the job they are performing is emotionally meaningful, cognitively meaningful, and physically meaningful. This can be achieved when a

corporation's values, goals, and purpose are aligned (Kahn, 1990; May, Gilson and Harter, 2004); see Figure 4.20 below.



Figure 4.20 - The alignment of a corporation's value-goal-purpose for meaningful engagement

Source: (Kahn, 1990; May, Gilson and Harter, 2004)

In addition, employees will engage when they are empowered by being encouraged, motivated, and being involved by their corporations (Kahn, 1990; May, Gilson and Harter, 2004; Wollard and Shuck, 2011). Additionally, the engagement can be meaningful to employees when a two-way, multi-layered commitment method is created and designed by corporations (Wollard and Shuck, 2011) (see Table 4.21). One of the points that has also been emphasised related to the meaningfulness dimension is job enrichment and role fit (May, Gilson and Harter, 2004).

(2) Availability: in regard to availability, employees bring their emotional, physical, and cognitive resources to the workplace, as these three elements of availability must also keep on being developed, maintained, and nurtured by their corporation (Kahn, 1990; May, Gilson and Harter, 2004).

(3) Safety: safety is associated with employees feeling safe to express themselves emotionally, cognitively, and physically without being reluctant to do so. Safety is also related to rewarding co-workers and caring/helpful supervisors, and exchangeable, positive and supportive relations with

colleagues. Employees have the right to feel safe at work, when they perceive that they will not suffer for expressing their true selves at work. Conditions of the safety dimension of engagement are co-worker relations, supervisor relations, co-worker norms, and self-consciousness (Kahn, 1990; May, Gilson and Harter, 2004; The Conference Board, 2006; Pink 2011).

In addition to the status of engagement (emotionally, cognitively, and physically) and the conditions of engagement (meaningfulness, availability, and safety), corporations have to consider drivers/ antecedents of engaging employees (summarised in the table below), which elucidate further on how the sufficient atmosphere for engaging employees can be created (Albrecht, 2012; Wollard and Shuck, 2011; Christina *et al.*, 2011; The Conference Board, 2006; Robinson *et al.*, 2004). This has also been adopted to achieve the engagement of employees with sustainability as the foundational base for my empirical study and, consequently, this study as a whole.

<u>Organisational antecedent:</u>	<u>Individual antecedent:</u>
Authentic corporate culture	Dedication
Clear expectations	Emotional fit
Corporate social responsibility	Employee motivation
Encouragement	Employee/work/family status
Feedback	Higher level of corporate citizenship
Leadership	Link individual and organisational goals
Mission and vision	Willingness to direct personal energies
Opportunities for learning	Work/life balance
Career growth opportunities	Value congruence
The line-of-sight between individual performance and company performance	Perceived organisational support
Perceptions of work safety	Commitment
Positive work climate	
Rewards	
Supportive organisational culture	
Person–job fit	
Person–organisation fit	
Two-way relationship	
Commitment	

Table 4.21 - Drivers of Employee Engagement

Source: (Albrecht, 2012; Wollard and Shuck, 2011; Christina *et al.*, 2011; The Conference Board, 2006; Robinson *et al.*, 2004)

The foundations for this study were established by identifying the core pillar as sustainability in corporations, and the second pillar as employee engagement's identified status, conditions, and antecedent. However, after critically reviewing the relevant literature for this study, two enquiries arose as to: (1) what is needed to attain an effective engagement of employees, and (2) how this can be achieved efficiently. Therefore, the researcher (I) identified primary elements and sub-elements that answer these two enquiries, via the guidance of the sustainability, employee engagement, project management, and organisational change (literature/s), precisely where the four pillars of this thesis intersect, which is demonstrated in the designed conceptual framework, by the end of this literature review chapter. To begin with, this section is structured by the identified elements and aspects that have been considered for this thesis, as well as in my empirical study's topic guide tool for my data collection process that aided me to meet the aims of my study. Those elements, dimensions, and aspects demonstrate and determine the 'through what' enquiry, as engaging employees with sustainability programmes, and answer 'what exactly is needed' as to achieve a successful engagement. For my study, I have determined and identified two categorised elements as primary and subordinate ones, that I believed would assist me throughout my research study, based on the chosen literatures of this study. The primary elements appeared to have a vital role in every sub-element. Firstly, the primary elements have been identified and addressed as management commitment and leadership, communication, and teamwork and collaboration. Secondly, sub-elements will be addressed as the alignment (of value–purpose–goal), empowerment, visualising, incentives and rewards, monitoring and control and, lastly, review and feedback.

4.6.2 Firstly, the employed primary elements for the conceptual framework (for this thesis):

According to my research synthesis efforts, three primary elements have been chosen for the designed conceptual framework, named as: (1) management commitment and leadership, (2) communication, and (3) teamwork and collaboration. These elements have been considered as primary elements, based on my critical review of the literature relevant to my thesis.

Management commitment has been defined as 'generating human energy and activating the human mind. Without it, the implementation of any new initiative or idea would be seriously compromised' (Argyris, 1998: p.99), as he added that commitment from top management forms a framework for sustainability improvement.

The corporation's management must have commitments in creating an atmosphere of encouragement, innovation and risk-taking, values, norms, attitudes, and behaviours that promote sustainability improvement efforts, and have to be nurtured and maintained (Ramus, 2001). Likewise, Wilms *et al.* (1994) stated that people will follow management's direction, in whatever management does, pushing towards a specific direction, as the way they push hard dictates where the corporation goes. However, management commitment requires efficient leadership to steer, keep up, support, and foster sustainability commitments, throughout the corporation (Ramus and Steger 2000; Egri and Herman, 2000; Kane, 2011; Haddock-Fraser *et al.*, 2018; Muller and Kolk, 2010).

Different characteristics of leadership have been identified and classified as transactional or transformational, according to leadership theorists (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978). Leadership is associated with goal orientation. Transformational leadership is associated with learning goal orientation. According to the literature, transformational leadership adopts a motivational, inspiring, and influential type of approach, whereas transactional leadership is associated with a performance–goal orientation, while granting support to employees to meet performance goals (Avolio, Bass and Jung, 1999).

In addition, Johannsdottir, Olafsson, and Davidsdottir (2015) highlighted leadership roles as: establishing a sense of urgency, acting as role models, sharing a vision, providing necessary resources, empowering employees to act, and showing commitments by themselves wholeheartedly towards the implementation of successful sustainability strategies.

Although it has been argued in the literature that a transformational leadership style is the foremost suitable style of leadership to sustainability-related aspects in corporations (e.g., Johannsdottir, Olafsson, and Davidsdottir, 2015), I am (as the researcher) not in favour of recommending one style of leadership for my research project, due to the complex nature of sustainability itself. More unusual leaders with extraordinary leadership abilities have been recommended to lead sustainability-related activities and performances in corporations, as their role mainly aims at engaging groups of employees, and thinking through complex problems, while working as a key interpreter of sustainability to the employees, and reflecting upon the wider systems in which their organisation sits (Metcalf and Benn, 2013; Hersey and Blanchard, 1969). This thesis supports this line of thought, as I believe that in order to achieve a workforce engaged with sustainability, through the aid of project management, framed by organisational change, a combination of leadership styles is required, since they are context-dependent.

It is beyond the scope of this research study to address and identify the required leadership style and characteristics, since it is a rich and broad field. However, leadership is needed for engaging employees with sustainability, through offering support and guidance, directing, raising awareness, and motivating the employees, where leaders can supervise, connect employees, create teams and teamwork and, most importantly, it requires leaders who lead by example.

Communication plays a vital role, as the blood flow and circulation of any corporation, specifically when the goal is to engage employees with sustainability. Scholars have emphasised considering the types of audience when corporations plan to engage their employees with sustainability programmes. They also recommended the application of employing various communication methods (Greene *et al.*, 2014; Potoski and Callery, 2017).

According to Gupta and Sharma (1996), sustainability goals should be communicated to employees. Standards of performance, especially with respect to sustainability concerns, have to be subject to continuous improvement. Corporations must consider applying frequent communication of their sustainability programmes, initiatives, and goals, so that employees can know what they are expected to accomplish. Statistics indicate that employees do not feel that they have been informed properly in regard to sustainability-related matters in their corporations (Madsen and Ulhoi, 2001). Finally, it has been recommended that leaders in corporations must embrace a democratic and open style of communication in regard to sustainability ideas (Ramus, 2001; Ramus and Steger, 2000), as well as leaders who lead by example (Markos and Sridevi, 2010). However, communication requires individuals to disseminate, liaise, and convey sustainability throughout the corporation's hierarchy, which is impossible without the role of teamwork.

Teamwork and collaboration: communicating sustainability to employees has to be applied throughout the corporation, through the formation of cross-

functional teams focused on corporation-wide sustainability in work-related activities. A green team has been defined by Beard and Rees (2000: p.27) as 'Dedicated individuals to help with a corporate move towards sustainability'. They added that teams generate ideas, enhance learning experiences, identify issues and conflict, and focus actions to enhance understanding about why, what, how, where, and when to pursue the best practicable sustainability options, support the involvement of employees, make them responsible, and empower them to be part of sustainability (Beard and Rees, 2000).

4.6.3 Secondly, sub-elements chosen for the conceptual framework:

For the purposes of developing the conceptual framework for my thesis, and based on my critical review of the literature, I determined the sub-elements that have been chosen in designing my conceptual framework as: (1) the alignment of value–purpose–goal, (2) empowerment, (3) visualising, (4) incentives and rewards, (5) monitoring and control and, lastly (6) review and feedback.

(1) The alignment of value–purpose–goal

The literature of sustainability alone, or when combined with that of employee engagement, hardly shows consensus on the alignment of sustainability's value–purpose–goal in corporations. It has been studied more on the strategic macro-level of the corporation, when Daily and Hung's (2001) study appeared to cover this gap, by confirming that corporations should include the alignment of their human resource functions, by considering the ways in which subsidiaries are able to engage their workforce in sustainability practices, as the area is still underexamined.

However, the alignment of a corporation's value–purpose–goal appears to be a more significant factor that contributes to the engagement of employees. Sahoo and Sahu (2009) affirmed that the employee looks for an alignment of value–meaning, located right at the top of their pyramid model, which presents a true sense of connection, a common purpose, and a shared sense of meaning at work. In addition, it has been proved by scholars of employee engagement that the alignment of corporation value–goal–purpose is vital for creating the meaningfulness dimension of engaging employees (Kahn, 1990; May, Gilson and Harter, 2004), which highlight the heightened need for sustainability to consider the alignment of these triple elements of value–goal–purpose to achieve an effective engagement of their employees, which has been considered of highly importance in this research study; see Figure 4.22 below.



Figure 4.22 - The alignment of corporation value–goal–purpose for meaningful engagement

Source: (Kahn, 1990; May, Gilson and Harter, 2004)

It has been stated that value alignment is important for employee motivation (Kristof 1996). Yet, corporations often focus on a one-way alignment of corporate values, which are often solely profit-driven, without attempting to tap into the core of human values and emotions that employees might have (Glavas, 2012).

(2) Employee empowerment:

Employee empowerment is about 'the importance of giving employees both the ability and the responsibility to take active steps to identify problems in the working environment that affect quality or customer service and to deal effectively with them' (Leitch *et al.*, 1995: p.72), as empowering employees is essential to the implementation of a corporation's goal to be fiscally sound and sustainability responsible (Enander and Pannullo, 1990), as it is impossible for a corporation's vision and strategy to be achieved without empowered employees (Argyris, 1998).

When it comes to sustainability goals, these can only be achievable with empowered employees who have autonomy and decision-making power, by being part of sustainability programmes in their corporations. An employee is keen on feeling a sense of having a bond with the organisation they work for. Empowered employees feel in control of their opportunities to prove themselves at work; they become aware of the task assigned to them to be accomplished, as they are willing to commit the necessary emotional and personal energies to excel in their jobs, by showing that they are emotionally, cognitively, and physically involved while performing their tasks (Buhler, 2006; Govindarajulu and Daily, 2004).

Two distinct conceptualisations of empowerment have been developed, as structural and psychological empowerment. Structural empowerment is related to organisational conditions that contribute to a sharing of power, decision-making, and control over resources (Maynard *et al.* 2012), while psychological empowerment is focused on "the state or set of conditions that allow for employees or teams to believe that they have control over their work" (Maynard *et al.*, 2012: p.1235). Sustainability-related empowered

employees are beneficial to corporations, as they lead to job satisfaction and organisational identification, and/or reducing turnover within their organisation (Lamm, Tosti-Kharas, and King, 2015). The researcher valued both types of empowerments (the structural and the psychological) in her research study, due to their relevancy in engaging employees with sustainability programmes in corporations. However, empowered employees can be achieved when their sustainability awareness is raised, when they are educated and trained, and when they receive support from their corporations, by getting incentivised and rewarded.

Awareness: Knowledge, and raising awareness, is one of the most critical basic key features that has been emphasised in motivating employees to engage with sustainability programmes. Employees need knowledge and awareness regarding what sustainability programmes are about, in order for them to understand the reason behind the establishment of sustainability programmes. This consequently supports employees to identify their commitment and responsible roles towards such programmes. Studies have analysed the impact of environmental knowledge and awareness on employee green behaviour, with respect to behavioural intentions, environmental attitudes, and sustainability commitment as the mediating roles. The results affirm that employee knowledge and awareness have a positive influence on employees' daily sustainability-related activities at work. At the same time, by doing so, they support their organisation in achieving desirable sustainability goals (Safari *et al.*, 2018; Teixeira *et al.*, 2012; Jackson *et al.*, 2011).

Learning and Training: The employee-engagement dimension of availability of the Kahn (1990) model has been studied indirectly within the literature of employee engagement with sustainability in corporations, as it has been included under training, knowledge-gaining, learning, and competencies

(Teixeira *et al.*, 2012; Jackson *et al.*, 2011), as the availability dimension is related to the availability of both personal (emotional, cognitive, and physical) resources, and organisational resources (May, Gilson and Harter, 2004).

Learning and training makes employees feel empowered: Increasing the level of employee awareness and knowledge in regard to sustainability programmes makes them feel motivated and empowered, as this can be achieved by applying frequent and appropriate methods of training.

According to scholars (Fernandez, Junquera, and Ordiz, 2003; Govindarajulu and Daily, 2004; Greene *et al.* (2014), training in the context of sustainability is about learning opportunities for employees that support them in gaining knowledge about sustainability-related policies, environmental, economic and societal aspects, procedures, instructions, and non-conformity reporting. However, employees can receive different types of training, according to their roles.

Sustainability training and learning processes should suit the nature of the employees' jobs, without adding pressure to their daily work activities. Ramus (2002: p.154) asserted that training helps to 'improve employee's abilities to give high quality contributions to sustainability activities'. Hence, to teach, train, and raise awareness, in order to achieve the outcomes of employee empowerment with sustainability, corporations have to have associated tools, such as the powerful tool of visualising.

Visualising sustainability and 'walking the walk': There is no sufficient evidence that has studied and emphasised visualisation as a powerful tool to empower employees, and consequently engage them with sustainability programmes at their workplace, due to the fact that visualisation as a tool requires semiotic methods when it comes to studying this topic, in general,

and in relation to the engagement of employees with sustainability in corporations. In fact, the literature of sustainability is dominantly bombarded with quantitative studies (e.g., Merriman *et al.*, 2015; Coutinho *et al.*, 2018) and secondly, with qualitative research (Greene *et al.*, 2014; Haddock-Millar *et al.*, 2016), as the few leading key articles were conceptual papers in nature, lacking the conduction of any empirical studies (e.g., Daily and Hung, 2001; Calvas, 2012; Govindarajulu and Daily, 2004). The literature that addresses the powerful tool of visualisation, along with the 'walk the walk' method that can contribute and support the engagement of employees with sustainability, is still developing, as the research is still descriptive in nature.

The power–knowledge model argues that it is not adequate to participate in knowledge production without an equal emphasis on action, as both participation and action are necessary to achieve the power–knowledge loop (Stoecker, 2009), which supports shifting our thinking even further to look at the stages of a social-change process, as diagnosis, prescription, implementation, and evaluation, that support our intended action outcomes (Stocker, 2005).

According to Kanashiro, Rands and Starik (2020), due to the fact that sustainability challenges have almost exclusively increased in terms of quantity, intensity, and complexity during our careers, we all need not just to talk the sustainability talk, but also walk the sustainability walk in corporations, to encourage employees to turn that talk into action. This encourages leaders to embrace and apply it first, then have an influence on their employees to follow their lead, as this type of tool and method is mainly related to decision-making and action-taking, while considering both short- and long-term horizons.

In addition, Kanashiro, Rands and Starik (2020) have defined personal sustainability actions as ‘individual efforts that demonstrate care for self and others, and especially the planet and its biospheres, while acknowledging the interconnectedness of all living entities at all levels. By impact, we mean our ability to model behavior, and to enlist other individuals to engage in, personal sustainability actions that will result in a positive, collective transformation’ (Kanashiro, Rands and Starik, 2020: p.824).

Therefore, corporations have to adopt the introduction, presentation, and visualisation of sustainability to employees, and its three pillars of care – for the environment, care for the social elements, and the economic ones – as well as including Sustainable Development Goals and the corporations using them as guidance to apply at the organisational level (Kanashiro, Rands and Starik, 2020). Both in-person, and via virtual methods, e.g., meeting, presentations, events, workshops, campaigns, formal and informal talks, creating an environment of knowledge-sharing, film, audio and video clips, leaflets, signs and banners, etc., support employees to realise and imagine what is going on in regard to sustainability at their corporation, and at the national, regional, and global level. Geller (1991) recommends that top management could give formal presentations using films, lectures, and demonstrations to educate employees on the importance of safety in the workplace. These same techniques should also apply when engaging employees with sustainability initiatives.

Incentives and rewards: Reward systems have to be well-designed, to support promoting employees to perform their sustainability practices, which can be implemented in various forms, as financial rewards and recognition awards. Award and recognition programmes, profit-sharing programmes, increases in pay, benefits and incentives, and suggestion programmes are some of the

systems that can be used to reward employees for demonstrating a good quality of sustainability practices (Laabs, 1992; Marks, 2001).

However, it has been argued that employees are not likely to be motivated by money most of the time. Ramus (2001) has shown that supervisory behaviours that encouraged daily praise, and sustainability awards, were ranked as being among the most important factors for sustainability innovativeness and problem-solving by employees. An example of a non-monetary reward has been suggested by McConnell (1997), who states that group meetings could help employees get a better focus of what to do.

It has also been suggested that feedback ensures that employees know their responsibilities, and communicates the link between their performance outcomes, and rewards in sustainability endeavours (Chinander, 2001; Denton, 1999; Merriman *et al.*, 2015). Feedback can take the shape of verbal, informal, and/or through formal ways (soft or hard copies), to support the motivation of employees in regard to engaging with sustainability at their corporation (Ramus, 2001).

Tracking and monitoring: Monitoring and control systems support employees to stay on track in regard to their efforts to support their engagement to be in line with the goals and purposes of sustainability programmes. Moreover, corporations can have up-to-date information in regard to the progress of engaging employees with sustainability programmes, through project-management tools, such as reporting (graphical and non-graphical), the consideration of high and low risks, etc., which supports individual and departmental achievements to become unified, towards serving one holistic goal, of sustainability programmes in corporations (Wysocki, 2007).

Review and Feedback: Project management tools and techniques exclusively can support keeping up, and provide updates, to employees in regard to their

engagement efforts towards sustainability, whether they achieve minor or major goals, through the tracking, monitoring, and review and feedback techniques and tools, and also by offering support and alteration to change, by applying corrective action when things do not go according to plan, in order to achieve a successful implementation of change (Donaldson, 1999; Cameron and Green, 2015; Padar, Robertson, 2017; Pataki, and Sebestyen, 2017; Mirza, 2018). However, corporations need to be careful with the way they introduce and provide such updates, as the technical language related to sustainability can be confusing, which might cause disappointment and disengagement from the employee. Therefore, corporations, when they aim at engaging employees with sustainability, must have a tailored approach to the people of the corporation (Carlson, 2009).

To conclude with, this part of the literature review chapter talks about the three main pillars of this thesis as sustainability, employee engagement, and project management, along with the fourth sub-pillar as organisational change. To the researcher's knowledge, there are hardly any research studies that incorporate these three pillars along with the fourth sub-pillar altogether. The researcher investigated and explored how corporations can efficiently engage their employees (emotionally, cognitively, and physically) with sustainability programmes, through the aid of project-management tools and techniques, framed by organisational change, via the academic aspects during her literature exploratory phase. The following important thesis-related points can be acknowledged in regard to how the four literatures, as sustainability, employee engagement, project management, and organisational change are combined together, in regard to their enterlincture points:

- i. The dynamic nature and continuous qualities of the four pillars of this thesis, sustainability, employee engagement, project management, and organisational change:

All the pillars of this thesis are dynamic in nature, with a desire for long-term achievements to happen, or even be everlasting as long as the corporation exists. All of the four concepts of sustainability, employee engagement, project management, and organisational change are desired to be continuous when achieved efficiently, especially when they are achieved together, so corporations strive to engage their employees with sustainability through a continuous change, which can be achievable through project-management tools and techniques, as one of this thesis' main arguments (Bell and Morse, 2005; Exter, 2013; Epstein and Buhovac, 2014; Cameron and Green, 2015; Robertson, 2017).

- ii. Due to the practicality of the two constructs of 'employee engagement' and the concept of 'project management'-granted sustainability:

Because employee engagement and project management are both practical constructs (e.g., Albrecht, 2012; Cameron and Green, 2015), without them (employee engagement and project management), the sustainability concept will take a state of being stagnant and not in motion, without denying the fact that organisational change is also gravitated towards practice, when the change success is determined (Govindarajulu and Daily, 2004; Todnem, 2005).

- iii. In regard to the four incorporated literature for this thesis (sustainability, employee engagement, project management, and organisational change), numerous pieces of research have been applied within the four mentioned literature on the macro-level (e.g., Temminck, 2015; Appelbaum *et al.*, 2016; Daily *et al.*, 2009) as there has been less focus on the micro-level of corporations, which is the

employee and their engagement, which has been the main focus on which the research efforts have been concentrated for this research study.

- iv. In addition, this research aims to tackle and address the inclusiveness in engagement of employees, which can be demonstrated in the following: (1) employees within all of the organisational hierarchy (multi-level), whether horizontal or vertical, including employees with any job nature (not only technical or vocational sustainability-related), (2) with a multi-system via the combined four pillars of sustainability, employee engagement, project management, and organisational change, (3) via an inclusive change approach, which has been emphasised in each literature, (e.g., Starik and Rands, 1995) in the sustainability literature, (Wollard and Shuck, 2011; Aguilera, *et al.*, 2007) in the employee-engagement literature and, finally, (Kerzner, 2017) in the project-management literature.
- v. This research study employed the formation of a cyclic model for the chosen and designed theoretical model, as the researcher has been inspired by scholars in the four literatures (sustainability, employee engagement, project management, and organisational change) who have emphasised the importance of the cyclic model, which enhances the process through a loop phase that connects the whole process together for further enhancements and amendments when engaging the employees with sustainability, presented in the change-augmented phase of 'reinforcement', such as the Hiatt (2006) and Gallon (2005) models. As it has been stated in organisational change research that reinforcement has been one of the most neglected aspects in most of the implemented change (Cameron and Green, 2015), this research study considered reinforcement in the theoretical model, for the achievement of continuity with enhancement towards

the engagement of employees with sustainability programmes, with the aid of project-management tools and techniques.

- vi. Equally importantly, this research considered both the pillars of project management and organisational change, as they both (when combined together) play a role in creating a balance between flexibility and control, specifically when engaging employees with sustainability. Cameron and Green (2015) affirmed that project management and change management support the achievement of reaching a balanced approach between flexibility and control, as project management supports the implementation of change in dealing with variable goals, and unpredicted external and internal influences, while considering multiple inputs along the way, towards achieving the targeted change outcomes.
- vii. In the light of organisational change consideration in the thesis, this concept specifically has been chosen, as it offers guidance to employees when they engage with sustainability programmes, to make their embracement to such a change meaningful, and to support them to feel safe and available to carry on without any accompanied hesitancy, as they are aware of the direction in which their corporation is heading in terms of sustainability.
- viii. And lastly, all four pillars determine the important role of leadership, teamwork, and communication as their core components (Kotter, 1996; Glavas, 2012), which have been considered by the researcher in her theoretical model in Chapter 8.

Therefore, based on the synthesised aspects, along with the chosen elements that have been discussed within this literature review chapter, the conceptual framework for this thesis has been designed (see below diagram 4.23), as the

designed conceptual framework will guide me throughout my empirical study.

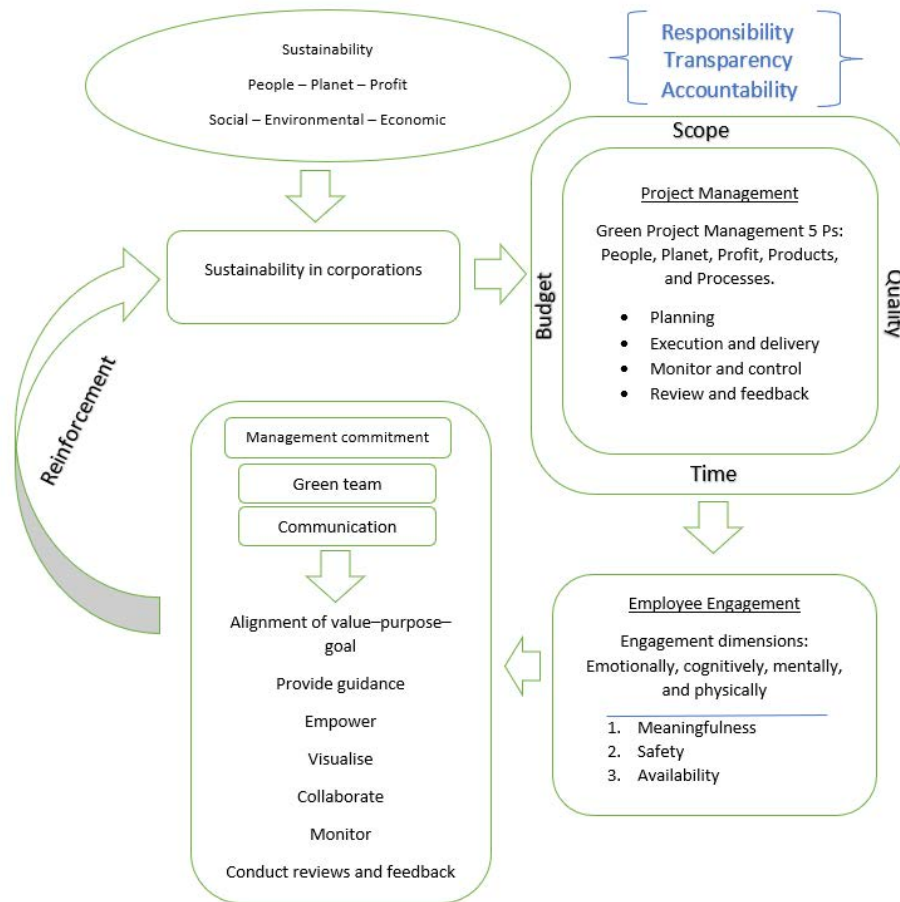


Diagram 4.23 - Conceptual framework designed by the author of this thesis, Amina AbuShal

- Part C -

Chapter 5: Methodology

The methodology chapter sets out the chosen research philosophy along with the research design for my empirical study, to establish where this research situates itself.

The chapter outline is as follows. First, the theoretical and philosophical perspectives will be addressed in relation to the ontological, epistemological and axiological philosophical stances underpinning the research. Second, the research approach is addressed, which is exploratory in nature. Third, the applied research techniques and procedures are conveyed through the identification of the chosen research instrument and the data analysis technique. Fourth, ethical considerations are articulated by providing the steps that ensure the empirical study is ethical. The final section reflects on the pilot study that was conducted prior to the actual empirical study, to check the feasibility of the research instrument (interview topic guide) and its alignment with the adopted qualitative constructivist-pragmatist stance.

For my empirical study I have considered Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill's (2019) model as the guiding model (figure 5.1), to address each research component in more detail in general, then those specific to this research study. In addition, this model provided a justification to the chosen research philosophies, research strategies, and the related research techniques and procedures, that helped in serving the research questions and, consequently, supported me the researcher in the achievement of the main research aims and objectives. The study followed the flow of the model below:

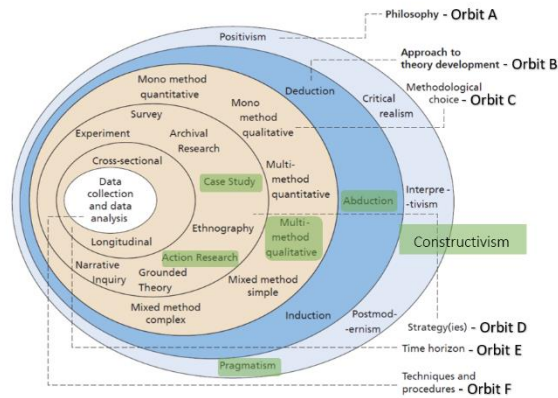


Figure 5.1 - Empirical research related components
 Adopted from the sources: Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019)

5.1 Philosophical and Theoretical perspectives

This section addresses the research philosophy that underpinned the study, as presented in orbit 'A' in figure 5.1. Any research project is considered as a journey towards developing and gaining adequate knowledge, mainly for the purpose of searching for the truth/s and realities, in regard to a particular field of study, which can be referred to as the term research philosophy (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). Research philosophy provides triple fundamental research pathways in any research study, known as: ontology, epistemology and axiology, as they complete each other.

I have embraced specific and relevant research philosophical stance, which supported me as a researcher to build assumptions throughout the development of this research study. Furthermore, each assumption was explained in relation to what it represents. According to research philosophers, assumptions that are related to realities represent the ontological assumptions, whereas assumptions that are related to human knowledge represent the epistemological assumptions. And lastly, assumptions related to the ways research is influenced by personal values represents the axiological assumptions (Crotty, 1998; Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Kent, 2007).

Therefore, I have embraced suitable philosophical stances as a guidance that supported me to employing adequate research strategies, data collection techniques and data analysis procedures, which, in essence, shaped my empirical research design as a whole. All of which, will be explained in more detail in this chapter.

Performing empirical research can be accomplished through applying methodological techniques and procedures that are designed in relation to the suitable research philosophies (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019), which must be in line with the research study's questions, aims and objectives. According to Johnson and Clark (2006), business and management researchers need to become aware of their research's philosophical positions, as a commitment towards achieving their research strategic choices, as this can have a substantial impact on what needs to be done (throughout the research process) and how researchers understand their journey of investigation (throughout the developmental phases of their research projects). Primarily, ontological and epistemological philosophical stances are commonly debated in regard to researchers' 'constructions of meanings' (Crotty, 1998).

The following section will address the research philosophy, which identify where my research study situate itself, along with the justification of each research philosophy according to its relevancy. The chosen research philosophies have been highlighted in the below table (table 5.2) and will be explained in more detail in forthcoming sections.

Ontology (nature of reality or being)	Epistemology (what constitutes acceptable knowledge)	Axiology (role of values)	Typical methods
Pragmatism			
Complex, rich, external 'realities' is the practical consequences of ideas Flux of processes, experiences and practices	Practical meaning of knowledge in specific contexts. 'True' theories and knowledge are those that enable successful action. Focus on problems, practices and relevance. Problem solving and informed future practice-oriented contributions to knowledge	Value-driven research initiated and sustained by researcher's doubts and beliefs. Reflexive researcher	Following research problem and research question Accommodates a variety and/multiplicity of methods: mixed, multiple, qualitative, quantitative, action research. Emphasis on practical solutions and outcomes
Adopted from Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019)			
Constructivism			
Relativism, local and specific constructed 'realities' exploring and giving an account of how people make sense of a situation at a particular point in time	Transactional/ Subjectivist created findings	Value-constituted research Reflexive-researcher Values are included - formative	Dialectical Hermeneutical Qualitative
Adopted from Guba and Lincoln (1994)			

Table 5.2 – The chosen philosophical stances and where this research project situate itself within research philosophical paradigms. Adopted from source: (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019; Guba and Lincoln, 1994)

5.1.1 Constructivist – Ontology

Ontology is a branch of philosophy that is concerned with the existence and the nature of things that exist (Williams, 2016). The root definition of ontology has been described as, ‘the science behind the being’ which has been developed into this description for the social sciences to encompass ‘claims about what exists, how it looks like, what units make it up and how these units interact with each other’ (Kuhn, 1962; Blaikie, 1993). My research situates within the constructivist-pragmatist philosophical paradigm, which will be explained in the following section, along with providing the justifications for the appropriate ontology, which have been highlighted in the table above (5.2).

To reiterate, this research study is about engaging employees with sustainability programs via the aid of project management tools and techniques, framed by organizational change. Therefore, the incorporated three pillars for my thesis are: (1) sustainability in corporations (2) employee engagement (3) project management tools and techniques, in addition to the fourth sub-pillar as organizational change.

Scholars measured the engagement of employees through hypothesised psychometric dimensions such as vigor, dedication and absorption which demonstrate a positivist approach. As their studies have been statistically analysed accordingly, while such approach supported each study in seeking one single truth (Schaufeli et al., 2002; Schaufeli et al., 2006; and Schaufeli and Bakker, 2003). However, positivist philosophical mode is insufficient for my study. Due to the fact that, a positivist ontology assumes that the “social

world exists independently of an individual's appreciation of it" (Burrell & Morgan, 1979: p. 4). Positivist's assumptions within that paradigm are based on facts, while seeking a single truth, and their affects are measured through a process of statistical validity and reliability (Burrell & Morgan, 1979/2016).

With the guidance of constructivist ontology (the understanding of being), I have delved into exploring and investigating 'what' could make: (1) sustainability related work tasks, activities, and messages meaningful to the employees (job enrichment and role fit). (2) what ways can make the employees available to practice sustainability (encourage the employees belief in their physical and mental resources). (3) whether it is essential for a safe atmosphere to be created in order for the employees to express themselves without being judged or criticised when they act or talk in a sustainable manner. And more importantly, a constructivist lens, aided me to gain an in-depth understanding of how each condition (meaningfulness, availability and safety) can be achieved through an emotional, cognitive and physical engagement statuses (on the individual level) (Kahn, 1990; May et al, 2004). Looking at my research phenomenon from a constructivist philosophical lens, helped me with exploring and giving an account of how employees make sense of their engagement with sustainability through the aid of project management tools and techniques within a specific timeframe (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight 2006), along to how such engagement is constructed in their minds, by considering multiple realities, based on the employees socially lived experiences (Guba & Lincoln 1994).

Furthermore, the core aspects of employee engagement have been adopted from both Schaufeli *et al.*, (2002), Schaufeli *et al.*, (2006), the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9), and Schaufeli and Bakker, (2003). In addition, through the embraced constructivist ontology, I have investigated whether project management tools and techniques, along with organizational change, can advance and enhance the engagement of the employees (through the

identified and chosen engagement conditions, states and core aspects for this thesis) with sustainability programs in corporations. The philosophical mode of constructivism helped me empirically to explore the phenomenon under study from the employees' views and perceptions that are created in their minds via different social realms, organisations, cultures and experiences. In addition, such a philosophical stance supported me in viewing the related realities, while gaining in-depth understanding of how those realities are constructed intersubjectively (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight 2006; Dennis, 2011).

5.1.2 Pragmatist-epistemology

Epistemology is an integral part, along with ontology, as they both equally play fundamental roles in any undertaken research, whether researchers intend to identify them explicitly or not. Epistemology is a branch of philosophy concerned with the study of knowledge. It is a term that is frequently embraced in social science research that indicates the philosophical underpinnings of the methodology (Williams, 2016). In particular, epistemology is about 'the theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective and thereby in the methodology' (Crotty, 1998, p. 3). Epistemology, in other words, has been explained further by Burrell and Morgan (2016), who state that it is related to the assumption of knowledge through the enquires of what constitute valid, acceptable and legitimate knowledge, through the consideration of the way that specific knowledge is communicated to others. With attention to the range of knowledge within the field of business and management specifically, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019), affirm that different types of knowledge – ranging from numerical data to textual and visual data, from facts to opinions, and including narratives and stories – can all be considered within the legitimacy of knowledge and its meanings under the multidisciplinary context of business and management.

In regard to the philosophical stance, I have employed a pragmatists-epistemology throughout, since such a philosophy is inclined to support social scientific methods (Blaikie, 1993; Baert, 2005; Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

Pragmatism is considered as one of the most productive schools of thought in philosophy (Stuhr, 2003). The key philosophers within this school of thought are William James (1979), Dewey (1916) and Peirce (1950). However, from an epistemological stance, pragmatism (the understanding of knowledge) deals with complexity and richness (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019; Biesta, 2010). This is compatible with the complexity, uncertainty and richness of sustainability (Pater and Cristea, 2016), as the core pillar of my research study. In addition, this philosophical stance, allowed me as a researcher to consider assumptions related to realities, through the practical consequences of ideas, presented in a flux of processes, experiences and practices (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019; Biesta, 2010), associated with the engagement of employees towards sustainability programmes, via project management tools and techniques, from an organisational change perspective.

Epistemological pragmatism supported me not to give full attention to the pre-determined theories and frameworks, nor to rely on individuals to construct the truths out of nothing. The key point in pragmatism is based on the idea that any structured meaning is based upon the individual's lived experiences (Easterby-Smith, Thorp and Jackson, 2012), via investigating how things are defined and understood (Dennis, 2011: p. 464), more specifically in regard to the roles of project management tools and techniques and organisational change. Eventually, the outcomes of such a philosophical stance allow the outcomes of the research to be problem-solving oriented, and able to inform future practices as a contribution, which has been also supported by the strategy of action research, which will be explained in

further detail later in this chapter. As has been argued, by using pragmatism, the researcher, working in organisational settings, can move beyond conceptualisations, which have dominated research in the organisational sciences, to explore and understand the connections between knowledge and action in context. 'Knowing', in this sense, has the potential to transform practice (Biesta, 2010).

The field of sustainability is in alignment with pragmatism, as it offers an open-ended inquiry into the real-life problems of humans' relationship with the environment (Light and Katz, 1996). This research investigates the interactions of employees towards sustainability programmes, both inside their organisations and their broader relationship towards the environment, society and the economy; therefore, pragmatism was chosen as a philosophical mode. I believed that pragmatism aided me throughout my empirical journey and processes, and consequently supported me to bridging the gap between theory and what exists in the practical world. Pragmatic research, in essence, is about conceiving knowledge as a form of action, active in nature and, therefore, existing realities might be changed. This method emphasises the notion that knowledge is about coping rather than copying (Baert , 2005).

5.1.3 Axiology

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019), axiology concerns the role of values and ethics and the key choices researchers will face that might have an impact and influence on their research studies.

It has been affirmed that researchers must take into consideration that their philosophical ontology, epistemology and axiology are consistent and harmonise with each other (Patterson and Williams, 1998; Laudan, 1984) (see the figure below).

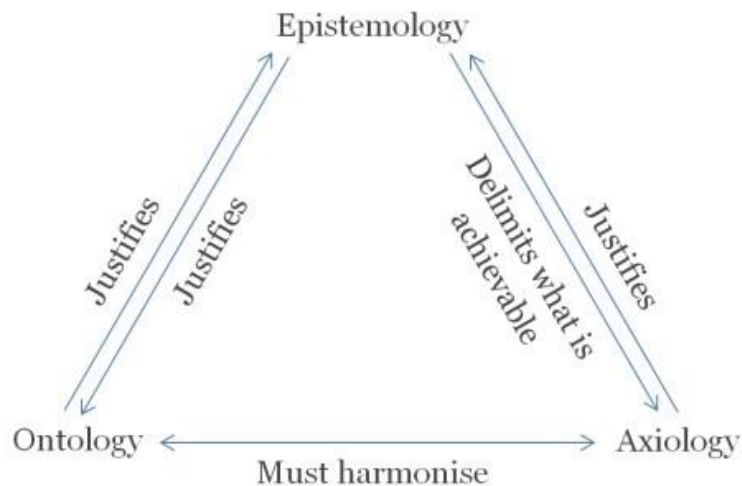


Figure 5.3 - Research Paradigmatic commitments
Source: Patterson and Williams (1998); Laudan (1984)

Therefore, I have adopted the axiological commitments have been adopted in the following aspects of this research as: my research aims, research design, the analysis of the findings. This was done through the consideration of not imposing my personal views and beliefs by following Biedenbach and Jacobsson's (2016) line of thought which emphasises considering the axiological dimension in the following:

- Within which context is the research situated (paradigmatic influences)?
- Defining the philosophical values chosen followed by justifications (guiding the inquiry)?
- Justifying the chosen specific inquiry/ies (focus of research)?
- What claims are made (and suggestions to practitioners)?
(Biedenbach and Jacobsson, 2016).

In addition, my research aims do not impose any of my personal beliefs or values, and do not restrict the outcomes of the research with anticipated conclusions. Rather, I was willing to embrace the emerging themes and outcomes of my research according to what I have been informed by the findings, while being guided by the major and minor aspects from the relevant literature. Thereupon, the designed topic guide of my data collection instrument did not include one single word related to the faith I embrace and the Saudi Arabian culture where the empirical study was conducted. From an axiological point of view, this branch of research philosophy attempts to provide researchers with clarifications on whether they are trying to explain or predict the world, or if they are only seeking to understand it (Lee and Lings, 2008).

Axiology deals with what values might result from, and might have an impact on, the outcomes of the research, the extent to which this research can be totally neutral or whether the researcher's opinions come into play, and the extent that personal values shape the way the research is conducted and written up (Patterson and Williams, 1998; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). Furthermore, the researcher Therefore, I have detached myself as a researcher from imposing my personal values and beliefs. As it important to reveal that I personally embrace the Islamic faith, and I also come from the same country and cultural background, where the empirical study has been

conducted. I have intentionally invited diversity into my research agendas by engaging participants from different background to participate in my empirical study.

Eventually, the constructivist-pragmatist philosophical stance supported me to employ a reflexive mode throughout research processes, in spite of both constructivism and pragmatism being value-driven (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019; Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

5.2 Type and approach to theory development (Deductive, inductive or abductive reasoning) (Presented in orbit B in figure 5.1)

One of the main aspects in research projects is the involvement of theories and the formation of theory-related assumptions. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019), the involvement of theory usage in research projects (thesis, academic journal articles, etc.) may or may not be made explicit in the research design, although it is usually made explicit in the presentation of the findings and conclusion. They articulated further by noting that, where the research process entails theory testing or theory building, it is often portrayed in two contrasting approaches towards the reasoning the researchers adopt: deductive or inductive – or alternatively, in a more flexible logic called abductive.

Instead of trying to impose an abstract theoretical template (via deduction reasoning), or plainly extrapolating propositions from facts (which is the case in induction reasoning), the adopted process of theory building was through adopting an abductive reasoning logic (Bowker *et al.*, 2008; Kelly and Cordeiro, 2020).

This research adopts an abductive logic, which allowed flexible and adaptive techniques in collecting and analysing the data to capture the experiences related to engaging employees with sustainability programmes in corporations. Abduction logic allows researchers to move from observations to theories flexibly, by reasoning at an intermediate level (Friedrichs and Kratochwil, 2009).

In addition, abductive logic supported me with an appropriate reasoning logic in interpreting and analysing data through the qualitative research approach, which has been adopted for my empirical study, through an iterative style (Bowker et al., 2008). In addition, the applicability of this reasoning logic was a way of pragmatic problem solving (Strübing, 2007) and adopting abductive logic supported me with identifying emerging themes with engaging employees.

At an advanced stage of my thesis, I was able to develop a comprehensive picture of my study phenomena, and assess the emergent aspects in terms of the success of its practical application. As the constructivists-pragmatists stances that I have employed was vital in ensuring me in delivering practical research outputs (Kelly and Cordeiro, 2020).

5.3 Type of the undertaken research study: exploratory or explanatory

An exploratory study is a pathway that allows various questions to be asked to understand and know the subject matter. If the questions being applied are exploratory, they will most probably begin with 'what?' and 'how?' (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019).

My research study is exploratory, as I have recognised and acknowledged that the nature and purpose of my research study requires an exploratory reasoning logic, which supported me to clarify the best practices and ways for employees to embrace sustainability programmes effectively in organisations via the aid of project management tools and techniques. Following Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill's (2019) proposed steps as ways to support researchers in conducting exploratory logic, I have employed the following steps:

1. A search for the relevant literature about sustainability on the micro-level (the employees); with a specific focus on employee engagement theories and frameworks in regard with the key features of engaging employees with sustainability programmes, in addition to project management methods and techniques as the vital vehicle to support the engagement of employees with such programmes, while taking into consideration organisational change literature to meet the dynamic nature of the phenomenon and the problem under study.
2. An intensive semi-structured interviews were conducted as the research instrument for my empirical study, which will be addressed in a detailed manner later in this methodology chapter. The interview topic guide I have designed for my empirical study research instrument, adopted the exploratory research type, which helped to understand where the participants and their views are coming from.

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019), the most suitable research method for collecting data is the unstructured or semi-structured interviews to allow the researcher to explore the phenomena under study to support researchers in gaining good quality contributions from the participants.

An exploratory type of research was chosen due to its feature of high adaptability and flexibility to change. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019), exploratory studies are adaptable and flexible to change, as researchers who are conducting an exploratory study have to consider that the direction of the study can change according to new data that appears and new insights that occur while conducting the research study.

In essence, the philosophical foundations must be reviewed when arriving at a decision for the research methodology, which in turn influences the research method (Knight and Ruddock, 2008). Therefore, the methodology should not be discussed in isolation without building the knowledge of both the ontological and the epistemological stance, in addition to determining the research styles (exploratory) and the reasoning logic (e.g. abductive).

5.4 Methodological Choice (Qualitative approach) (Presented in orbit C in figure 5.1)

The qualitative approach is about 'an ongoing process of questioning' as an integral part that supports researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of the unfolding lives and perspectives of those experiencing them (Agee, 2009).

Drawing on similar lines, a more comprehensive definition has been introduced by Denzin and Lincoln (2011: p. 3):

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

According to the presented definitions, the key characteristics of qualitative research are identified by Snape & Spencer (2003: pp. 4- 5) as follows:

- Providing an in-depth understanding of the social world of the research participants' lived-experiences, perspectives and histories is one of the main objective in qualitative approach.
- The selection of small and purposively research participants or informants.
- Incorporate data collection method/s within the qualitative approach involve close contact with the participants via the research instrument/s that is/are flexible and interactive.
- Provide researchers with Richness and extensiveness of the collected and interpreted data.
- The data analysis process allows the identification of emergent concepts and ideas, produce detailed descriptions and classifications.

- The main focus is based on the interpretation of social meanings via the process of mapping the research participants' world, which influence the outputs of the research study.

For this research study, I have employed a qualitative approach as the research approach embraced subjectivities, acknowledges the existence of multiple realities, calls on abductive logics and values the richness of depth in quality over quantity. This allowed me as a researcher to gain a more in-depth understanding about the employees' experiences, perceptions and views.

I have applied a style that is iterative in nature throughout the process of this research project, demonstrated in the mechanism of conducting my research study. This helped in accomplishing the research project with flexibility in moving back and forth between the different phases of the research process, without a rigid one-way direction of a research project plan.

The research question for this study has been considered as the main central pillar throughout the development of the research project, which helped me to maintain compatibility and harmony between the reviewed literature, ontological, epistemological and methodological aspects, following Berkowitz (1997) who emphasised the iterative process in qualitative research.

The research process adopted the design of a loop-pattern of various circles to support the researcher in revisiting the data during the complex formulation of the research project, to ease that development of the research and support the researcher to gain a deeper understanding and to stay focused in order to achieve the aims of this research project. This has been

applied through a course of action research from an action-in-reflection mode, which will be explained in more detail later in this chapter.

5.5 Research Strategies_(case study and action research) (Presented in orbit D in figure 5.1)

5.5.1 Two case studies

This section will address the employed research strategy as a programme of case studies and Action Research, which will be explained along with its relevancy and usefulness towards the outcomes of my empirical study and consequently, my research project outcomes, in further details within this section.

For the purpose of my research study, an exploratory intensive case study was employed. Researchers who adopt this method should take into consideration the process of the case study selection. Firstly, defining the case, or setting boundaries will give meaning to the class or elements a researcher wishes to explore (Yin, 1994; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). It has been argued that one of the major epistemological issues to be addressed with a case study is where to draw the boundaries – specifically about what to include and what to exclude. Additionally, drawing boundaries around a problem under study is not so straightforward, since it involves crucial decisions. Therefore, one of the key elements that must be considered is the focus to gain depth over coverage (Stark and Torrance, 2008; George and Bennett, 2005; Yin, 1994).

The table below shows how I have drawn the researcher boundaries drawn for two case studies for this project, specifically the research settings, which

also inform the implications for the applied research design, which will be explained later.

Case study boundary name	Definition
The main focus for this research study: phenomena or research problem under study	The researcher is looking into how employee engagement can advance the organisational mission of a major Saudi multi-national corporation towards improved corporate sustainability performance. In addition, how the systematic development of project management tools can advance this mission in order to advance organisational change oriented to improving sustainability performance through process of sustained employee engagement.
Concepts for this research study	Core concept: sustainability, corporate sustainability. Concepts: employee engagement Project management Organisational change.
Settings	Corporations, Saudi Arabian multi-national companies. All the corporation's national and international branches are included. First corporations: corporation within the aviation-transportation (service) sector. All the corporation's national and international branches are included. Second corporations: corporation within the energy (service) sector.
How many case studies?	Multiple case studies – exactly two case studies.
How much time to be spent on fieldwork	Planned time from December 2019 to 2020. Actual time for the empirical study from January 2020 to 2021.
Method of investigation to employ	Constructivist-pragmatist qualitative study Case study approach-strategy In addition to the action research method.
Unit of analysis	Inclusive to all employees from all levels of the organisational hierarchy.
Participants	23 participants.
Data analysis procedure/technique	Thematic analysis.
Empirical study conducted in which languages	Arabic and English.

Research outcomes	<p>A course of action research framed by organisational change theories and frameworks, along with project management concepts granted the researcher the role to be a change-maker.</p> <p>Also, through combining insights from the literature and the empirical case studies, a theoretical model has been developed, accompanied by a set of guidelines to assist companies to improve the engagement of employee with sustainability programmes.</p>
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Table 5.4 - boundaries associated with the chosen two case studies for my research project

Adopted from source: Yin (1994); Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019)

I have conducted my qualitative exploratory study through a programme that entailed two case studies on Saudi Arabian multi-national corporations in the Western province of Saudi Arabia. This is the place of residence for me and my family. This has been expanded upon further to include the capital city, which is located in the middle province of the country.

More specifically, the case studies involved employees from all levels of the organisational hierarchy regarding their interactions, commitments and any related activities towards the sustainability programmes in their corporations, with a specific focus on the role of project management tools and techniques to support the effectiveness of engaging the employees with such programmes. The second consideration in selecting the case studies involves selecting an individual case study, or a series of cases that meet the case study boundaries (O’Leary, 2014), as I have considered applying the method of multiple-case studies which has been chosen as two multi-national corporations located in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The first corporation is categorised within the aviation-transportation (service) sector, and the second case study was conducted on a company within the energy (service)

sector. The names of both businesses were not revealed to meet confidentiality in regard to identity-related conditions which were requested by the gate keepers of both companies. Both case studies were chosen for two reasons: first, corporate sustainability became one of the main heated concepts in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as the country is going through a transformational phase in all aspects, in trying hard to meet the standards, regulations and laws related to Vision 2030 and its targeted goals. The second reason was the ease of access to conduct the empirical study which was facilitated by family members and friends' connections for the formal approval to be achieved.

I have employed a multiple-intensive case studies method conducted on two corporations located in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Yin (1994) stated that a theoretical framework should inform the research questions for case study research, as the theory will help to define the selection and parameters of the cases.

An example for adopting the method of using multiple case studies can be found in the work of Haddock-Millar *et al.* (2016), as they conducted exploratory comparative case studies to identify how employees engage with sustainability in their daily work activities. Because sustainability researchers commonly undertake research that is in favour of how to promote higher levels of sustainability, the case study approach seems to be in line with that because of its ability to handle social flux (Franklin and Blyton, 2011).

5.5.2 Action research method

Since qualitative research involves a variety of different approaches (Silverman, 2010), I attempted to employ a qualitative approach to interrogate the current norms in Saudi Arabian multi-national corporations. With a focus on the engagement of employees with sustainability programmes through the aid of project management tools and techniques, through employing a multiple-case study strategy along with a course of action research. This supported me in exploring each concept and its functionalities separately as an initial stage, and then in exploring those concepts combined together. Which can assist me in finding gaps, errors, hinderers/obstacles and enablers/fosterers in order to identify the key features that support the engagement of employees with sustainability programs, from the participants points of views, perceptions and personal practical experiences (pragmatism), that have been developed as given meanings constructed in their minds (constructivism).

Action research is a process of enquiry that is conducted in an emergent and iterative way to develop solutions to real organisational problems via a participative and collaborative approach, whereby different forms of knowledge are considered and used, which have implications for participants and their organisation that go beyond the research project (Coghlan, 2011; Coghlan and Brannick, 2014).

To convey clearly the meaning of action research in relation to this study, Reason and Bradbury's (2001) action research definition has been followed, as I have been seeking to:

- (1) Bring together action and reflection built on academic theories and practice related to the core concepts of this research study which is sustainability, along with the secondary concepts that specifically focus on the engagement of employees supported by project management tools and methods via the consideration of organisational change;
- (2) Apply this through the participants' active roles, directed and organised by me as the researcher;
- (3) Pursuing a theoretical framework to meet the main aim of this research project, along with providing practical solutions via developing practical guidelines on issues of pressing concern to the employees and their engagement with sustainability programmes through the application of project management method and tools at the workplace.

One of the pioneers in action research is Kurt Lewin (1946), considered as its 'founding father'. His study has been applied through an action research study, as an example attempting to change the organisation from the outside and then measuring the results. He implemented an action research study through an experimental design that investigates the efficacy of different ways that housewives can apply healthy habits when feeding their family during the Second World War (Krech, Crutchfield and Ballachey, 1962).

Three forms of action research have been considered as approaches to participative enquiry: (1) co-operative inquiry, (2) participatory action research (PAR) and (3) practice of action inquiry. In common, those worldviews see human beings as co-creating their realities through participation, their experiences, thinking and performed actions. This participative worldview is at the heart of inquiry methodologies that emphasise participation as the core strategy (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998).

This research study rejects the first two forms of action research due to their incompatibility with the nature of this research study, and the reasons are as follows: (1) the first form of action research, co-operative inquiry, is not compatible for this research study as it requires a full commitment in becoming part of the research study with an assigned group to conduct the research, working with them as a co-researcher (Reason, 1998; Heron, 1996). The other reason for not considering this form of action research for this research study is that co-operative inquiry can be applied to researching human actions mainly at an individual or community, rather than an organisational level (Reason, 1998; Heron, 1996). Therefore, it is not applicable for my research, although this form of action research supports the constructivist philosophical stance, as chosen for this research study. According to Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2012), co-operative enquiry is about the ability to be self-directing in choosing how to give meaning to their own experiences, which fits with a stronger version of constructivism. (2) The second form of action research, PAR, is employed through establishing liberating dialogue with impoverished and oppressed individuals and focuses on the political aspects of knowledge production. It is also concerned with social action to combat oppression and eventually empowers people with social and political freedom and rights. In addition, the popularity of this form of action research was acknowledged, as it has been one of the most widely practiced participative research approaches (Reason and Bradbury, 2001; Somekh and Lewin, 2006). This type of action research movement developed into searching for a new type of a scientific activist mission (Borda, 2001). Although PAR allowed me as a researcher to be a change agent, as I have employed a dialogic and involved critical interactions, which has been empirically based on a subject-subject approach (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998; McNiff and Whitehead, 2000) which meets partially the nature of my research study.

However, other criteria of this PAR are not applicable to this project. This form of action research requires setting the agenda in advance to achieve specific controlled outcomes (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998), whereas this research project does not restrict the outcomes of the research, but rather considers setting boundaries as the research scope within the concepts of sustainability, employee engagement, project management and organisational change, that has been considered within a process of slight flexibility (by being reflective, which will be explained further in this chapter) with an openness towards the research outcomes.

However, one mode of action research is called 'reflection-in-action and action-in-reflection'. Somekh and Lewin (2006) stated that this has been considered as an important strand of action research. The work of Schön (1999) has been influential in developing concepts of 'reflection-in-action and action-in-reflection'. The strategy entails knowledge of action-oriented character that is embedded in professional practices, which at its core is about reflective practices based on academic knowledge.

The reflection-in-action mode has been chosen and employed as a research strategy along with the case study strategy for my empirical qualitative study which was conducted for my research project. This granted me the ability to develop a deeper understanding of the most effective and resourceful ways to engage employees with sustainability programmes in their corporations, via the aid of project management as the vehicle towards successful implementation of such programmes. In addition, I have considered granting myself the role of change agent via my duty as a researcher through walking with people (employees in both chosen case studies) in their practices in order to create change in their workplace, by following Schön's (1999) school of thought via applying the reflection-in-action mode of Action Research.

Although reflection-in-action can be feasible, one of its constraints can be time, as one of its vital components requires a stop-and-think then reflect technique (Schön, 1999). As described by Schön (1999), applying pauses to stop-and-reflect can be problematic in specific situations where there is limited time and when swift decisions and actions need to be taken. Sometimes, rescuing a situation does not grant the time to practice stopping, thinking and reflecting which is a main requirement for this form of action research (Schön, 1999). Such a technique can lead to innovative solutions, decisions and procedures, when researchers are not under the pressure to consider a strict time constraint, while bearing in mind that deadlines exist and need to be met. There are five dimensions of traditional action research along with the action-in-reflection mode, that I have considered and applied in my research empirical study. Which will be demonstrated in the followings that have been adopted from: Somekh and Lewin, 2006; Lewin, 1946; Coghlan and Brannick, 2014; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019; Schön, 1999, all the five dimensions and the related elements can be found in figure (5.5).

The first dimension is the cyclic technique, which is a traditional process in acquiring and producing knowledge that is designed to be applied in practice settings are applied in a linear way. However, for my research project, the applied research process has been applied in a cyclical design, as it supported the development of the research project and the related practice aspects towards achieving the targeted research outcomes. In addition, the cyclic design supported the researcher to achieve the construction of knowledge throughout the research project process meeting the action research strategy (Somekh and Lewin, 2006). Although there have been issues on deciding how many cycles are sufficient (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019), I have come to the decision that three cycles are sufficient, and did not hesitate to follow the traditional cyclic spiral model of Lewin (1946), as I found designing it into three cycles was applicable in offering me achieving a worthwhile richness of

the research outcomes. The whole process entailed the following themes: purpose, participation, knowledge and implication (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014) in an iterative style. In addition to applying a case study strategy also Action Research has been applied as a research strategy for the employed qualitative approach. The Action Research study has been applied in the traditional Action Research way, which has been applied in cyclic spiral model demonstrated in figure 5.5 below. Lewin (1946) stated that action research proceeds in a spiral of steps, each of which is composed of circles of planning, action and fact-finding about the result of the action.

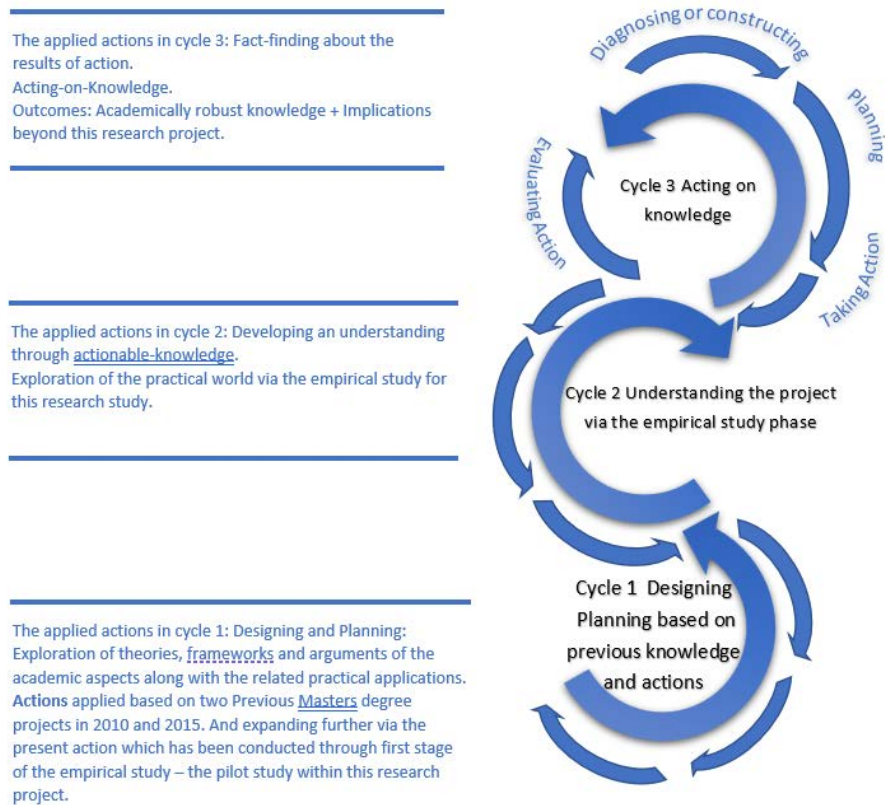


Figure 5.5 Iterative – Cyclic – interactive & reflective. Action Research Strategy, adopted from Somekh and Lewin (2006), Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019), Coghlan and Brannick (2014) and Lewin (1946)

This diagram above (5.5) has been extracted from the work of Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019). The second dimension is the iterative process. The action research strategy was applied in an iterative style while considering its emergent characteristics (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). The action research strategy commenced by identifying (a) the context, which was the engagement of employees with sustainability programmes in corporation, via the aid of project management tools and methods, framed by organisational change. The context was identified at several levels and from different perspectives. The chosen context for this research study is sustainability in

corporations, specifically in Saudi Arabian Multi-National Corporations, including all its departments and employees (who would like to take part in the study). (b) The purpose was also identified prior to the empirical study, as I was exploring key features that support or hinder the engagement of employees with sustainability programmes. (c) The research question investigates how project management tools and methods can support in conveying the message of sustainability to employees in simple, clear and understandable ways, and the role of project management tools and methods to support employees in embracing and applying sustainability in their corporations through the consideration of the whole phenomena as change, from the organisational change perspective.

In addition to that, I have taken into consideration that action research can be emergent (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019), as my research study progressed into several stages and went through iterations, commencing from the research question as the starting point, while being open and flexible to slight changes while the research study was developing, which was compatible with abduction logic as the chosen and applied way of reasoning for my research study, as they both share the requirement that research be flexible and open to change.

The third dimension is that it has an interactive style: Research is usually conducted on people in a specific social setting (Somekh and Lewin, 2006). In the case of this research study, it was conducted on employees in two chosen corporations which can be considered as a specific social setting. In addition, action research granted me the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding about the participants who expressed their views and perceptions in relation to their lived experiences about sustainability programmes and their engagement with them, through a specific emphasis on whether a project management role contributed to and played a vital role in their engagement

with such programmes. All of this has been achieved via applying action research strategy with a reflection-in-action mode. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019), my research strategy has the potential to offer a worthwhile and rich experience for those involved, for me as a researcher, the participants and the positive impact I have pursued on both the academic and the practitioners' aspects in this research project.

The fourth dimension is that the research strategy has been applied in a reflective mode. I have embraced the action-in-reflection mode that aided in developing a comprehensive understanding for the phenomenon under study, by following Schön's (1999) stop-and-think then reflect technique, which is considered as a vital element in action research strategy. According to Schön (1999), this mode of research strategy helps researchers deal with vagueness, uncertainty, complexity, awareness related aspects and instability (Schön, 1999). Such characteristics have been identified and recognised in two stages in my research project. Firstly, during the exploratory mission within the literature of sustainability, employee engagement, project management and organisational change theories, frameworks and raised arguments, specifically when all four concepts are combined together. And secondly, during the data analysis stage presented in the outcomes of the findings which have these characterises in both case studies.

Furthermore, participation has been considered, encouraged and valued during and after conducting the empirical study in my research project. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019), in action research, participation is considered as the critical component. Similarly, Greenwood and Levin (2007) stressed that action research is a social process in which an action researcher works with members in an organisation, taking an influential role as a facilitator and teacher. They work collaboratively with employees in the organisation who have accepted to take part in a research

study as participants, and the researcher's role is to make improvements to those participants and their organisations.

According to the literature within practice situations are not problems to be solved. It is not easy as it appears. But with an action in-reflection-mode they have been identified as problematic situations characterised by uncertainty, disorder, indeterminacy and uniqueness accompanied by a multiplicity of conflicting views (Schön, 1999).

Also the reflection-in-action mode helped me to gain a better understanding and a holistic view towards the phenomenon under study. Schön (1999) explained that knowing is associated with action, as knowing-in-action is a kind of knowing that is inherent in the intelligence of action.

Furthermore, while applying action research strategy, with a mode of reflection, I have considered the following questions during the collection and analysis of the data by embracing Schön (1999): (1) What are the noticed features related to sustainability programmes while focusing on the engagement of employees and what role does project management play? (2) What are the criteria that have been relied upon when judgments have been made? (3) How is the problem framed while the researcher was trying to solve it?

The fifth dimension is that the outcome of the research is in favour of creating a change or causing improvements. Action research assumes that social phenomena are continually changing rather than static and the researcher is part of this change process itself (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2012).

In addition, I have considered the two beliefs that are normally associated with action research:

1. The best way of learning about an organisation or social system is to change it and should be considered as the main objective of any action research study.
2. The people who are most likely to be affected by or involved in implementing these changes should, as far as possible, become involved in and become part of the research itself, through their participation and valuable inputs.

(Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2012).

In terms of change, the outcomes of this research were in favour of making an impact and developing improvements in regard to engaging the employees with corporate sustainability and practising it in their daily work tasks and performances, through the aid and support of project management tools. Such elements of change can be identified in: (1) the development of a theoretical framework that contributes to the academic realm and (2) developing guidelines that can help practitioners (as they were considered in both, my conceptual model and decision-based framework as guidance for practitioners, developed as context-specific) which would not be possible without applying the strategy of action research via a reflection-in-action mode. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) and Schön (1999), academics use the results from undertaking action research to develop theories that can be applied more widely. Practitioners and consultants will transfer the gained knowledge to inform other contexts.

5.6 Research techniques and procedures (data collection and data analysis) (Presented in orbit F in figure 5.1)

5.6.1 Research instrument – data collection: the design of the topic guide for the semi-structured interviews

At the heart of the qualitative approach are methods for representing ‘microscopic’ details of the social and cultural aspects of individuals’ lives (human behaviours) (Geertz, 1973).

My qualitative study entailed collecting data from two case studies, via conducting intensive interviews which took a semi-structured style. According to O’Leary (2014), the interview is a method of collecting data that involves researchers seeking open-ended answers according to a related set of questions, topics, areas and themes.

In regard with the designed topic guide, I have designed, I have employed a semi-structured enquiry. I have asked questions and opened discussions with the participants about the employees’ experiences and perceptions in regard to sustainability programmes, to identify what foster or hinder their engagement with such programmes. In addition, I have designed the interview questions around whether the sustainability programmes meet the three ‘employee engagement’ dimensions: meaningfulness, safety and availability, as a two-way and multi-level commitment in organisations, in line with how the message of sustainability is disseminated throughout the organisation. In addition to asking the employee if project management tools and techniques would support the employees to embrace sustainability in their daily work. Furthermore, the interviews were conducted in both Arabic and English. Some participants preferred the interview to be only in Arabic,

some preferred it to be conducted completely in English, while some interviews were conducted in a combination of both Arabic and English languages.

The topic guide I have designed are based on the following principles:

1. The topic guide was designed to reflect on my research approaches that allowed me to bridge between pragmatism and constructivism, that meets the abducted reasoning logic.
2. I have also considered designing the topic guide while considering the objectives of my research study as my research scope.
3. I have assumed that the participants held no knowledge about each concept, relevant to my study, specifically at the beginning of each section of the topic guide. Then I have gradually designed a built-up style of questions. Such technique assisted me in creating a much better landscape for my case studies through what, where, why and how the key elements of my research project reside in the corporations (i.e. Sustainability and CSR); Employee Engagement; project management; organisational change). While drilling down to the next step, that took me through snowballing, to where the actual practice and expertise lies.
4. My interview topic guide was intensive, through a technique that encouraged the interviewees to gradually open up, through a conversational and colloquial style. Interviews with each participant took more than one session. Some of the interviews had to be conducted in three or four sessions. Each session took forty-five minutes to an hour.

5. I have patiently listened to the interviewees while they were talking. The conversation took the shape of a give and take. I have also provided the participants with the terminologies and constructs relevant to my research study, without imposing or directing the participants' answers.

The topic guide as the data collection research instrument was designed in compatibility with action research from a reflection-in-action perspective. The participants showed interest from the beginning in various ways: (1) participants showed eagerness to learn and an interest in the concept of sustainability specifically, (2) there were swift responses and time arrangements and availabilities to attend the interviews to participate in the empirical study. (3) The participants showed interest in giving the interview a lot of their time with sessions conducted over several appointment separately on different days, as the interview questions and the topic guide were intensive. (4) Also the participants showed interest to attend and learn while in the interview as a training course and they were encouraging each other to attend and recommending the interviews.

The interview topic guide has also been designed based on action research elements from a reflection-in-action perspective. General questions about each concept were introduced first for the participants to answer from what came up in their minds as information related to their basic views and perceptions. In the second stage, I have introduced the academic definition to the participants and asked the question again, which helped them to recall specific information about their experiences, gained knowledge, personal views and experiences about each concept separately and combined together, reflecting on how knowledge has been constructed. According to scholars such as Arendt (1971) and Schön (1999), reflections that do not serve knowledge and have not been guided by practical needs and aims must be

accompanied by a stop-and-think technique. As I intentionally shaped my interview topic guide by a moving forward into a wavy motion way, in order for the participants to capture and reflect on the complexity of the concepts and the related work tasks and activities to help the participants to convey their feelings.

I have explicitly and implicitly showed my gratitude towards my participants, as they gave up their precious time, whilst having busy hectic work schedules due to Covid-19 pandemic. Participants were keen to provide me with their valuable work experiences. In addition, there was a feedback looping technique from the participants at the end of the interviews and after. According to the participants views and feedback, they described my interviews as interactive. Participants were grateful as they thanked me for proving them with academic guidance and knowledge, as they found it very useful.

5.6.2 The recruitment of participants

Stringer (2007: p. 11) asserted that participants, those who are affected by the problem under study, should be engaged in the processes of investigation.

For my empirical study, I have conducted 44 semi-structured interviews in total. The interviews were intensive, as each interview per one participant has been conducted into two or three sessions intensively. Each session took around an hour or an hour and a half (see appendix G). The intensive interviews were conducted with 23 participants in total from both the aviation and the energy corporations, as the chosen case studies for my

empirical study, within the Saudi Arabian context. Participants were invited to participate from across the organisational hierarchy, from the senior leadership, executive, middle and operational management members and staff.

Participants' input in this case were explored in terms of their vital role and contribution in making sustainability a success in their corporations (Wolf, 2013), through effective ways of engaging themselves with sustainability programmes.

I was planning to conduct the interviews in-person, through direct face-to-face interaction, however, due to the Coronavirus pandemic, I was unfortunately unable to travel to Saudi Arabia. Therefore, I decided to conduct the interviews virtually, via social media applications, including Skype, Google Meet, WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger. I have expressed and offered my flexibility to the participants in regard to conducting the interviews via any platform, according to what would be convenient to them.

The participants were approached and consequently recruited through a combination of both snowballing and purposeful techniques. I have employed a snowballing technique to approach the participants, mainly through social networks (family members and friends, who are staff and ex-staff within the two corporations). Snowballing is one of the most common qualitative participant recruitment techniques, central to which are the characteristics of networking and referral (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

Additionally, I have employed a purposeful participant recruitment method (Suri and Clarke, 2009), as I aimed to gather data from the executive management level, policy and decision makers, to gain an understanding of the established sustainability programmes, and whether it targets the

engagement of employees or not, and if they are employing (awareness, knowledge and skills) project management techniques and tools. As well as, I intended to gather data from middle and operational management levels to investigate if are they in line with the ambitious goals and aims of the executive management and board decisions and plans. The aim was to know more about how and to what extent the message of sustainability is well disseminated throughout the organisational hierarchy, whether it is sufficient enough for the engagement of the employees, and eventually, whether project management, along with organisational change, assists them to engage efficiently.

The participant recruitment tool was mainly through emails (Curtis and Curtis, 2011), as a formal channel. I have contacted the participants and emailed them with a formal invitation letter to participate in my empirical qualitative study. I have also asked participants from both the energy and aviation corporations to offer me assistance in reaching out for more participants. Those key participants were very kind, as they encouraged and persuaded their colleagues to come along for my interviews. Although I have struggled initially to find participants, I would say that the process went effortlessly, later on, due to the implementation of plan B, as I have decided to include the second case study which is the energy company, in addition to the aviation corporation.

Eventually, in order to adhere to the requested anonymity and confidentiality that have been emphasized upon by the two corporations, as my empirical case studies. I have granted each participant (who participated in my study) a unique identification number/code. Which can be noticed in the findings chapter (chapter 6) associated to each quote (as an evidence) relevant to each finding/s accordingly. I have designed the interviewee's identification system as follows:

1. The first digit has been given to identify the participants who attended in order (1: first, 2: second ,3: third ,4: fourth, etc.).
2. The second digit represents the corporation. As the first corporation (within the aviation sector) for my case study has been given the letter Y, and the second corporation (within the energy sector) has been identified as Z.
3. The third digit has been given to differentiate whether the participant works within the headquarters or the branches of each corporation.
4. The fourth digit represents the level of management (executive, senior, middle or operational).
5. The fifth digit refers to the management function (human resource, finance, etc.)

5.6.3 Research settings

The case study was conducted in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, specifically within the Western Province, in the commercial capital, Jeddah. Due to the ease of access and since I hold the Saudi nationality, I have decided to conduct my research study in this specific country. Also, coming from the same background as the majority of my participants, helped unlock cultural related aspects, while gathering my data and during the data analysis process.

An initial verbal agreement was discussed and approved to conduct the research in the aviation corporation as my first case study. I have secured this access mainly via family connections. Later on, also through social connections, I have managed to secure another access to the energy

corporation as my second case study, which worked perfectly well, due to the execution of plan B for my empirical study.

Prior to commencing my empirical study, I have commenced obtaining formal agreements for access, which has been established while meeting the MMU research ethics guidelines, through the major empirical research milestone which has already been met via completing EthOS online application form via Manchester Metropolitan University credentials.

5.7 Data analysis technique

The collected data has been analysed using the thematic analysis method. Gibson and Brown (2009) noted that thematic analysis is a common key aspect for every qualitative enquiry. It plays an important role in understanding the phenomena under study by searching for emerging themes (Daly et al., 1997).

In this research, the process of analysing data has been influenced heavily by applying Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis technique, which guided me during the exploration of the collected and transcribed data. Despite the consideration that Boyatzis (1998) was one of the pioneers for this method of analysis, the method is commonly applied as a tool to be used across different methods and not a specific method on its own (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Another way of applying thematic analysis has been introduced by Gibson and Brown (2009), through their three steps, which were introduced as three major sets of aims and analysis of data by: the examination of commonalities, differences and relationships. Furthermore, I have employed the six-step technique introduced by Braun and Clarke (2006), which paved the way and

guided me during my data analysis procedure (Table 5.6). The table demonstrates how the phases of analysing data were applied.

No.	Phase	Description of the process
1	Familiarising yourself with your data	Transcribing data, reading and re-reading the data, and noting down initial ideas.
2	Generating initial codes	Codes are interesting features of the data, and collating data are relevant to each other.
3	Searching for themes	Collecting codes into potential themes, gathering all data due to its relevance to each potential theme.
4	Reviewing themes	Checking the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (level 1) and the entire data set (level 2). Generating a thematic map of the analysis.
5	Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme and the overall story the analysis tells. Generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6	Producing the report	The final opportunity for the analysis. selection of vivid, compelling extracts, relating back to the analysis, to the research questions and literature.

Table 5.6 - Phases of thematic analysis -
Source: (Braun and Clarke, 2006)

Following the basic steps of Braun and Clarke (2006), I have also used the checklist table (Table 5.7) and followed them, in order to achieve a good thematic analysis process, that helped me stay on track.

Process	No.	Criteria
Interview transcription	1	The data has been collected. Then the collected data has been transcribed to an appropriate level of detail. I have checked the transcribed data against the audio recorded interviews in order to achieve accuracy.
Coding	2	I gave equal attention to each data item in the coding process.

	3	I have avoided employing an anecdotal approach while generating themes, instead the coding process has been thoroughly inclusive and comprehensive.
	4	Relevance between the data and the theme have been addressed and aligned with collation.
	5	I have checked the themes against each other and with the original data set.
	6	I tried to make sure that the developed themes were established with internal coherence, consistency and distinctiveness.
Analysis	7	I have strictly analysed the collected data through the interpretation and making sense of the material. , as I have avoided paraphrasing and description.
	8	I tried to make sure that the extracts of the analysed data illustrated the analytic claims.
	9	My way of analysis showed convincing and well-organised information regarding the data topic.
	10	I have employed fairness analysing the style by creating good balance between the demonstrated extracts and the analytic narratives.
Overall	11	I have allocated enough time throughout the process of the analysis adequately without rushing a specific phase.
Writing the report	12	I have maintained compatibility between the claims and what was achieved.
	13	I have positioned myself as active during the research process.
	14	I attempted to make sure that the language and concepts used were consistent and in line with the epistemological position of the analysis.

Table 5.7 - Data analysis process checklist
Adopted by the researcher from the source (Braun and Clarke, 2006)

I have spent my third year of my PhD 2020/2021 conducting interviews, transcribing data and eventually by the end of the year, I came up with the report and managed to finish the data analysis/Findings chapter (chapter 6). The data analysis phase has been an enjoyable experience to me, as a researcher. I have made sure, to keep my research aims and question as a guidance, while I was progressing with that phase of my research. In the table below, I have summarised the findings of my research project which structured my findings as my findings/analysis chapter (chapter 6) (see table 5.8).

<p>Superior & Dominant Themes as merging throughout all the themes and sub-themes: Leadership & the leadership within, employees team-work spirit, communication and programme language translation & transparency</p>	
Name of the theme	Codes
Theme 1.1 – Understanding & misunderstanding of the concept of sustainability and its three pillars Triple Bottom Line “TBL”	Business sustainability, saves a corporation money, maintains profitability, cost reduction, steadiness of corporations’ operational business-activities, functioning and surviving, stability, environmental standards, ISO environmental standards, technology, economy, social, environmental, in compliance with.
Theme 1.2 – Employee engagement as the soul in any corporation and its organisational activities	Physical engagement, emotional engagement, workflow, challengeable, enabler, barrier, job tasks and sub-tasks, productivity, cognitive engagement, meaningful work, chattered efforts, clear direction, unified, employees’ energy, motivation, be understanding, main axis, fundamental role, fairness, integrity, confidentiality, trust, autonomy, purpose, mastery, community
Theme 1.3 – Project management as a backbone and scaffold for corporations’ operations	Planning, organise work, set goals, assign roles and duties, clarity, purpose, full map, comprehensive instructions, budget, sales and revenue expectations, clear directions, core competencies
Theme 2.1 – Components of deep established sustainability programmes in corporations with a specific focus on the individual employee level	Raising awareness, empowering, employee/individual-level, meaningfulness, productivity, attendance, employee physical engagement
Theme 3.1 – Bureaucracy, transparency & authority	Organisational structure, lengthy procedures, process approval, government, rules, regulations, inflexibility, constraints, restrictions, impotence
Theme: 3.2 The alignment of corporations’ efforts with employees’ efforts towards creating a unity	Organisational goals, mission & vision, employees efforts and performances,
Theme 3.3 – Visibility, attractiveness and inclusiveness of sustainability programme	Language, interpretations, operational flows and procedures

Theme 4.1 – Organisational change stroke resistance to embrace sustainability	Resistance, employee confidence, influential behaviour, adapt, project management as a change-agent role
Theme 4.2 – Project management works hand-in-hand with organisational change	Readiness, employee confidence, influential behaviour, adapt, project management as a change-agent role
Theme 4.3– Project management keeps up with the speed and dynamic nature of any operation and sustainability related operations in organisations	Employee confidence, influential behaviour, adapt, project management as a change-agent role
Theme 4.4– Benchmarking & competitiveness support or exhaust sustainability in corporation and employees’ efforts	Codes: Readiness, project management as a change-agent role, market competitiveness, employees competing, departmental competitions
<p>Subordinate Themes: (1) Islamic faith principles, religious obligations and the cultural context in Saudi Arabia. (2) Covid-19: Crises as survival mode or blessings.</p>	

Table 5.8 - Summarized table of the main findings for the research study
Designed by the author of this thesis

As can be noticed from the findings’ summarised themes and their associated codes in table 5.8, that I was lucky enough to gain a richness and depth in synthesising my research findings. The findings, I came up with, by contrast, are only drawn from my primary research as interview transcripts and the themes I have constructed. And therefore, my findings chapter (chapter6) has been introduced in a much richer way, in terms of giving evidence of the themes derived from the transcripts, illustrated by quotes.

There were three major aspects that structured my findings chapter, according to my synthesis efforts. The first aspect came as the superior and dominant themes which are: (1) leadership & the leadership within, (2) employee team-work spirit and (3) communication, program language translation & transparency, as they emerged throughout the main findings and sub-findings. The second aspect structured the emerged themes into the main themes as the main body of the chapter. And eventually, the third

aspect of the findings chapter emerged as subordinate themes: (1) Islamic faith principles, religious obligations and the cultural context in Saudi Arabia and (2) Covid-19: Crises as survival mode or blessings, as they permeated through the majority of the main themes.

5.8 Research ethical considerations: Steps to ensure that the empirical study is ethical

Before embarking into my empirical study, I went through my university's EThOS to submit all the related research for ethical clearance, in order to get the approval for conducting my empirical study according to MMU research ethical guidelines.

Formal research ethics documents were prepared in advance before conducting the empirical study. Documents such as participant information sheets and consent forms have been provided to the participants before commencing any interviews. King (2004) suggests repeating providing ethical relate documents at the start of the interview with permissions to record the interview.

Elements that assured me to meet the research ethics guideline (Punch, 1986; Silverman, 2010) were as follows:

1. I have considered confidentiality and reassured my participants about this important aspect of research ethics, by considering my participants raised concerns and expressed emotions during the interviews.
2. I have dealt with anonymity and considered employing it through hiding the interviewees identity as I created a unique ID number for

each one of my participants, that would be impossible for the corporation they work with to be identified.

3. I have maintained a balanced relationship with my participants as the interviewer. In addition to creating a friendly atmosphere during each interview.
4. I have provided the participants with consent forms before commencing any interview. And I worked on my readiness to accept any participant rejecting the participation in my interviews, before or even during the interview, without providing me with any reasons.

Eventually, during the data transcription process, all sources of data whereby an individual can be identified (e.g. emails) have been separated from all sources of data that will be used in the storage of research data and publication of results. Also, in this thesis as the final version, participants' names or surnames will strictly not be revealed. Additionally, anonymous quotations have been used throughout my findings chapter (chapter 6).

5.9 Pilot study – testing

Yin (1994) emphasised the notion that a pilot study is beneficial prior to the research project, which can allow the researcher to test the plans for data collection and analysis, and to be able to amend the interview topic guide if necessary. Following this line of thought, I have conducted three interviews with three participants.

Conducting the pilot interviews was like a warm-up exercise for me as an interviewer for my empirical study.

The interview topic guide has been designed in an intensive style, as I have noticed minor frustrations from some participants, however, they were happy to offer me help through their positive engagement in my research, which have been noticed in their expressed enjoyment. They expressed their

admiration about how the interview topic guide has been designed, structured and conducted, as they said, that it was 'very methodical'.

In essence, conducting the pilot study reassured me in meeting good standards of efficiency, accuracy and appropriateness of the adopted approach of my empirical study (Silverman, 2010). I have not implemented any changes to the interview topic guide. And the actual empirical study was begun accordingly.

All things considered, with the guidance of the employed research design (approaches, strategies, procedures and the research instrument), which have been considered according to their suitability to the empirical study that has been conducted. While being in line with this study's research question/s, aims, and my thesis as whole, have been empowering enough for me as a researcher to commence moving to the next phase of my thesis as my data analysis, which will be addressed in the following chapter.

– Part D –

Chapter 6: Data analysis and findings

This chapter provides the analysis of the collected and transcribed data which has been gathered from 44 intensive semi-structured interviews (that included several interviews with the same interviewee), though a qualitative study, while being guided by constructivist- pragmatist philosophical modes, from two corporations, as my chosen intensive case studied. Initially, the findings of this chapter have been drawn from the primary research as interview scripts as raw data, which later on have been analysed and categorised according to their commonalities, differences, uniqueness, etc. Therefore, the richness this findings chapter can be noted by the themes, which have been derived from the interview transcripts, illustrated by participants' direct quotes, through the adoption and guidance of thematic analysis approach.

The process of analysing the transcribed data supported me in accomplishing a major step in gaining an in-depth understanding of evaluating and assessing the effective ways to engage employees with sustainability, and how project management, along with organisational change, can advance the mission of engaging employees with sustainability programmes. Furthermore, the transcribed and interpreted data have been analysed and presented thematically as findings in this chapter, by reflecting mainly on 'what is happening in the real world of practice'.

The following diagram 6.1, provides a summary of the findings from the extracted theme and sub-themes, along with their relevant codes:

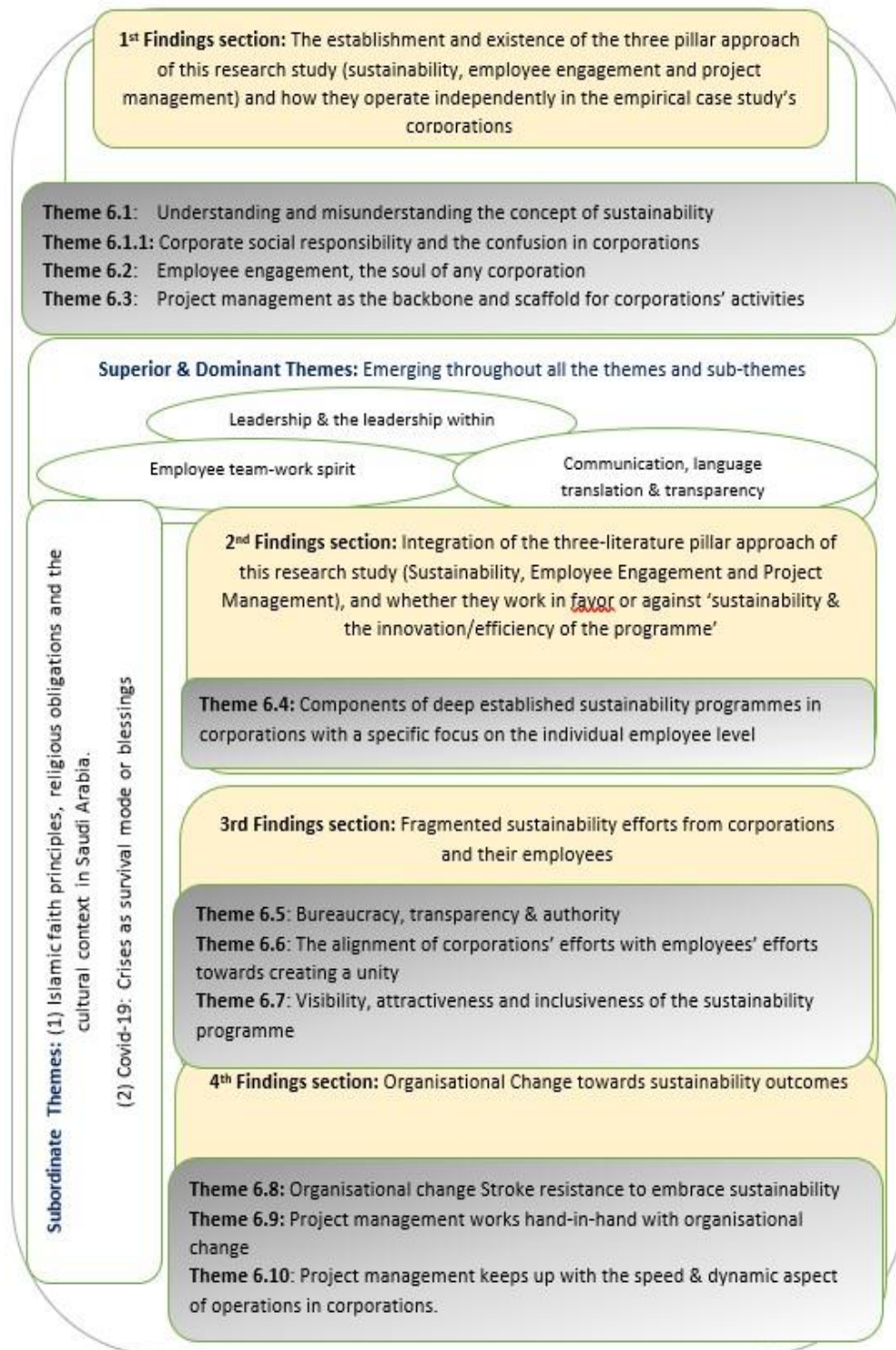


Diagram 6.1 – Findings extracted themes and sub-themes

Designed by thesis Author

1st Findings: The establishment and existence of this study's three-pillar approach of this research study (sustainability, employee engagement and project management) and how they work and operate

The 'three pillar approach' of this research study sustainability, employee engagement and project management are well established and seem to work well independently in each corporation for my case study. A description of how sustainability, employee engagement and project management exist and operate independently, and the elements of the success through the employees' perceptions and views will be elaborated further upon through the following themes.

Theme 6.1 – Understanding & misunderstanding the concept of sustainability and its three pillars Triple Bottom Line 'TBL'

The findings under this theme indicates that there is a form of both understanding and misunderstanding of the concept sustainability and its three pillars from the respondents' viewpoints.

Sustainability as a concept has been well comprehended by the participants within the energy corporation. Such as this example of a well-defined sustainability concept by this participant:

Sustainability means maintaining and taking care of the resources, the current ones, and for the future for the next generations. [...] And of course, I mean by resources her, whether the human resources as employees, or the natural resources and we save it for the future generation. That's what I know about sustainability in its broad meaning. I mean this my understanding towards sustainability (Respondent 5-Z.4.Z.6).

The participants expressed their views and perceptions showing various practices related to sustainability and its three pillars, social, environment and economic. The participant elaborated further:

You know sustainability has many types, environmental sustainability, or sustainability on our economy here in Saudi Arabia, [...] We rationalize the consumption of resources. Also there's sustainability from the societal side, which is about raising awareness to the whole society about how to save and not to over-consume the natural resources inside or outside organisations, to maintain the resources for the future generation through educating them via workshops or training course, just like the way we have it here at our company (Respondent 9-Z.4.X.4).

However, a small segment of participants within the aviation sector mentioned that they are not that aware of sustainability as a programme in their organisation. However, they did recall that their corporation operates in compliance with national and international sustainability standards, and they addressed it more from the environmental pillar:

One of the major sustainability projects that is considered a top priority in the airlines is the fuel emission and its affect to the environment, the airline along with all related governments, authorities and industry organisations are working closely with aircraft manufactures and fuel suppliers to find proper solutions to reduce the fuel emission to preserve the environment. Nevertheless, sustainability's development are part of the society culture and airline strategic practices to preserve the environment around us (Respondent 4-Y.4.X.10).

In general, throughout the two case studies, the concept of sustainability has been misunderstood in its comprehensive way and its relationship to the TBL. The majority of the participants emphasised the economic pillar of sustainability presented in business-related activities and employee performances that contributed to reducing cost, which works in favour of supporting their corporations to gain profit as part of their job roles, and at

the same time supports the corporation's steadiness, stability and survival in the market.

Also in parallel, most participants (from both the aviation and energy corporations) explained sustainability as the continuity and steadiness in how corporations operate as businesses.

Yeah. So, I guess I have my own definition of sustainability, it's probably not very scientific but I think it's about building like sort of business continuity where you're creating a company that is solid and sort of in the foundation, [...] Also, all of your assets and your capital, all that is strong. So, you may have slow growth. But let's say fifty years or eighty years or one hundred years from now, you're still strong as a company, so I guess that would be my understanding of sustainability (participant 11-Z.4.X.9).

Examples were provided by participants from the energy corporation showing how a functional, technical, vocationally-applied process and type of energy service the corporation is providing meets the sustainability standards from their points of view. One participant gave an example by referring to a good technology example in applying sustainability in the energy corporation:

We're sustainable in that we have some really good technology, we have some of our ... [participant mentioned an example of a function or process which has been removed by the researcher for the corporation's anonymity] are like the number one in the world in terms of efficiency. And we're sustainable because we have a market that's not going anywhere (Participant 10-Z.4X.4).

However, most respondents started recalling the information about the concept sustainability by the identification of its three pillars 'TBL' after the researcher introduced the academic definition of sustainability in relation to these three pillars. The participants started to recognise sustainability as about creating a balance between the social, environmental and economic factors. An example is given below:

Looks like the definition you're giving is more about balance. So if you focus too much on the people it might not get the economic benefit. To focus too much on the economic you might not support the environment, so in a way you have to be looking at all these different impacts, the kind of, the impact of your company and make sure that you're balanced between all of these different area (Participant 11-Z.4.X.9).

More interestingly, the participants expressed their interest towards the concept of sustainability, and one of the main motives behind that interest was the participants' own interest and personal knowledge, mainly because of the common faith in Saudi Arabia, which is the Islamic faith. They expressed and showed a passion towards sustainability, by explaining how they apply it in their own personal lives as well as at their workplaces. One participant exemplified this by saying:

We know a lot about sustainability very well through our Islamic principles. Our prophet emphasised in the Hadith about how Muslims' behaviours should be, such as planting a tree or a plant, and how we take care of our environment and the agriculture. And this act of being responsible about our environment and humankind, is considered as a type worshipping 'the Creator' and we're rewarded for this type of behaviours. And we bring this type of responsibilities towards the environment and the mankind to work. Like the trees and paper waste, it is harmful to the environment (Participant 9-Z.4.X.4).

And in line with that, another participant explained further how sustainability is practised in regard with reducing resource waste through reminding each other at work about sustainability behaviours as Muslims:

When you're noticed at work that you're wasting water, food and paper for example, colleagues at work instantly come and advise, and remind you in an Islamic manner. [...] Colleagues remind and advise us by saying few well-known verses from the Quran and from the Hadith from our prophet Muhammed [...] not to practice this unacceptable

behaviour, and to avoid doing so, as you commit a sin as a Muslim
(Participant 10-Z.4.K.4).

Yet, despite all the examples about how sustainability is practised, there were very few adequate signs of the focus of the sustainability programme on the engagement of employees by the participants' corporations.

Theme 6.1.1: Corporate social responsibility and the confusion in corporations

Sub-themes:

Sub-theme 6.1.1.1: Corporate social responsibility decent role and the employees' altruistic activities in corporations

Sub-theme 6.1.1.2: The concept corporate social responsibility is well-understood and considered or seen as a fad

Sub-theme 6.1.1.3: Corporate Social Responsibility and the confusion towards sustainability.

- Distinguishing between CSR and sustainability as independent concepts in organisations looking at it from an employee's perspective (clear and decent concept)

Codes: CSR, Volunteerism, decentness, serving the community, corporation image, altruism, business core, honesty, integrity, charity,

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is well established, operates independently and was announced explicitly as a programme in both case studies. Employees recognise and appreciate the role of CSR in their corporations, the associated activities and the decent role towards the community.

Some relate CSR to seasons and occasions. Others mentioned that CSR was practised under crises and operated well to serve the community.

However, CSR is practised so companies can gain a good image in the market. Also, it is practised on a surface level, as some employees just participate to impress the others and their managers. Therefore, from the participants' points of view, CSR does not have to be about going above and beyond to do extra things for society, but rather it has to be embraced and practised through being ethical, honest and by having integrity on the individual level as employees and on the organisational level in the way corporations operate, which can be integrated fundamentally, through the business core, in the first place.

Employee from both corporations engage in CSR activities. It is well understood that CSR is helpful and decent (as generally accepted standards of moral societal behaviour) to do so, specifically towards the community. All the respondents expressed that CSR exists in their corporations and practised in several ways, which supports the business's reputation in the market, their employees and the consequently the community. A respondent said, "In this corporation the business model is supported by the government" (Participant 1-Y.4.X.20-R).

However, some CSR activities are practiced seasonally:

For example, during religious seasons, like Umrah, Hajj and the holy month of fasting Ramadan, we have its related CSR activities. During summer vacations as well. And also during international events, like world cup for example. The initiative has a name, it's called umm... [the participants is trying to recall some info]. For example, during Ramadan they distribute dates and water bottles to the community in roads, closer to sunset time, when people who are fasting are about to break their fast (Participant 2-Y.4.Z.6).

Other CSR activities appeared and were implemented swiftly due to national and global crises, such as Covid-19:

The corporation with covid-19. The reason why those flights are operating, is to help our Saudi citizens who are stranded abroad, who are outside the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and bring them back to their homes. Which was funded and commanded by our government. And at the same time we're sending aids to other countries, so we don't send our flights empty, but we use this opportunity to collaborate with

other countries and we send aids of, and also exchange of aids as well. Such as masks, etc. [...] However, the cost under the Covid-19 of operating those flights is high [...] and you may notice that it's in favour of CSR because it's not commercial (Participant 4-Y.4.X.10).

Some respondents associated CSR with happiness towards ourselves and the others, as a mutual feeling, represented in a give and take way. Such as the response below:

Corporate social responsibility is about being happy and keeping the others happy and put it under happy all the beautiful words (Participant 14-Y.4.V.3).

Participants' views towards CSR indicate that there was a very limited perception about CSR before the definition and dimensions section was presented to them by the researcher. However, CSR was acknowledged and appreciated in its comprehensive manner, as almost all respondents expressed their concerns that CSR still do not think that, CSR is as decent as it is supposed to be according to the definition and dimensions that have been introduced and explained to them by the researcher interviewer during the interview.

Corporate social responsibility and the intention behind it can be very decent, but we as employees see it more as a show off that help the companies gain a good image and reputation in the market and society (Participant 22-Y.2.Z.28).

Theme 6.2 – Employee engagement as the soul in any corporation and its organisational activities

Sub-themes: Differences and variations in the level of engagement

Codes: Physical engagement, emotional engagement, workflow, challengeable, enabler, barrier, job tasks and sub-tasks, productivity, cognitive engagement, meaningful work, chattered efforts, clear direction, unified, employees' energy, motivation, be understanding, main axis, fundamental role, fairness, integrity, confidentiality, trust, autonomy, purpose, mastery, community

The concept employee engagement has been presented as ‘the bright and the dark sides of the moon’ kind of analogy, within the two case studies. Two opposed views and perceptions on the existence of employee engagement programme were addressed from different perspectives according to the participants. In one corporation, the concept of employee engagement is well-established explicitly and on a highly efficacious stage, which presents the bright side of the moon. In the other corporation, employee engagement was not well known, but they believed that it exists and practised in various ways but did not reach the level to be established as a programme on its own.

The majority of the participants’ views agree upon the importance of employee engagement in both the aviation and energy corporations. However, the concept has been criticised. If a corporation’s only aim is about achieving the highest level of employee engagement, as it has been described by few interviewees, it is an unrealistic dream to be achieved. As this point has been stressed by a few participants, demonstrating the extent of how achieving the engagement of employees can be challenging for corporations.

Different interesting views were revealed by the interviewees about whether the engagement of employees, its dimensions and key features are important or if it is unobtainable by corporations.

In conclusion, most of the views from respondents affirm that the concept ‘employee engagement’ is the corporation’s soul and most precious asset.

Interestingly, within the energy corporation, the concept of employee engagement has been very well established and designed. A common view between the interviewees affirms their full awareness of the programme. According to the interviewees, the concept is formally established, as it is called the ‘Employee Engagement Programme’ explicitly. As an example:

Employee engagement is one of the fundamental goals here in our organisation. We have a huge program called 'Employee Engagement'. We have motivating and interactive programmes for the higher, middle and also the 'Dunya' (earthly world/life) management levels. [the operational or the lower-level of management in Arabic is called 'Dunya' the earthly world or life-management]. Each level of management has its own engagement implemented for the employees within each level. [...] In this company employee engagement is very important for the employee and for the company (Participant 5-Z.4.Z.6).

In line with that, another participant from the same corporation emphasised the same point. He mentioned in a more detailed way by saying that it is taking a shape of a project, and the programme is well designed and monitored, and also his company is keen on working on improving it continuously though analysing the outcomes of the programme in stages. The respondent elaborated further:

I'm also responsible for the employee engagement survey that we're running, where we have a live system that we're measuring employee engagement. And we have initiatives to improve employee engagement throughout the company based on those results. So, I'm leading that project (Participant 11-Z.4.X.9).

In addition – within the same corporation – most of the participants praised the employee engagement programme by explaining how it also meets the dimensions of engagement such as speaking openly and feeling safe, encouraged and supported to express themselves to their managers throughout all the management levels in the corporation, even towards the highest level of management, the corporation director:

And as I mentioned earlier, in terms of integrity we have the hotline within this company. If you want to put any complain or report any issues (behavioural or non-behavioural). We have a direct line, and deals with employees' requests with high confidentiality, as employees receive codes sent to their personal mobile numbers. To access the programme, and you write anything you're experiencing and you would like the management to solve it, without knowing who sent the

complaint or who reported the issues. Then the process goes through different phases, until it gets solved. So here fairness and integrity are achieved (Participant 9-Z.4.X.4)

However, in the aviation corporation, most of the respondents believe that the concept employee engagement exists under other names and applied in indirect ways such as working hard, enjoying doing the work, relationship with managers and co-workers, achieving appreciation and appraisal, being loyal, feeling attached to work, working in the quality of work, etc., as they know those elements represent the purpose of the engagement of employees, stressing the importance of it in their corporation.

The engagement of the employees is one of the main axes that has a fundamental role in helping organisations to execute projects and achieve the targeted goals. In any aspects in the business (Participant 4-Y.4.X.10).

In parallel, another respondent emphasised the same point, as she added how employee engagement is practised through the created atmosphere of peer-relations and leaders' support. She added:

The manager here listens to us, we have good relationship with him. He's very friendly. And he provides me and the rest of the employees with support beyond the boundaries when we do tasks. If there's anything wrong, I did, like a swift decision when it's needed to be taken, he accepts it and then he gives me advice on how to deal with it next time to avoid doing the same mistake. Also he welcomes suggestions and considers doing them (Participant 22-Y.2.Z.28).

Most of the participants from the aviation company expressed that employee engagement as being applied for the corporation as a whole to include all the employees from various levels and divisions, when specific project is implemented, by giving an example below as developmental programme, service performance enhancement and cost reduction projects. Participants

added that usually messages are announced for the whole corporation to embrace and apply to stay in line by forming a collegial environment. This emphasises the notion that employee engagement should include all employees, so they can stay in line with their corporation's goals such as the example below:

How would you think, that we as a service corporation can reach high and good quality of performance? [...] it's very important to engage all employees, and I mean here all the [corporation's] staff. It's impossible to achieve any of these goals without the engagement of the employees. To make sure we engaged the employees, the employees must be aligned with us in the company. And they must become aware that the company is adapting a project. And there must be assigned as teams and sub-teams. And we have to join those groups together in later stage, so they can accomplish the last phase of the project (Participant 4-Y.4.X.10).

In line with how employee engagement is applied, a respondent from the energy company also explained how employee engagement exists under a formal, explicit and well-designed employee engagement programme, established through sophisticated designated tools. The respondent asserted:

So, for the company, traditionally the company measured employee engagement, like once every five years. And if they got a kind of average result and they said good, let's forget about it, we never have to do it again. So in the past, it was more like a checkbox activity, as it was somebody's job but nobody really cared about it. Now recently there's a lot more focus on this and especially the board is saying, what's the situation? What's the health of the organisation? So that's where we started using a new tool. It's called [...] which is... it's a software. It's a live software. Everyone has a dashboard, they can see the dashboard and they can see how... and they can interact with their employees on that dashboard (Participant 11-Z.4.X.9).

And he elaborated further on what the employee engagement program includes and designed the program based on which components:

So there's basically these four things that people are looking for. They're looking for autonomy, mastery, purpose and community. And then when you put those altogether you get the engagement of the people. So, you start out, the first one is that the basic needs are met, like kind of Maslow's hierarchy. So you have to give them their salary and decent safe environment, right? But then after that they want autonomy, they want to be able to do things themselves and not be micromanaged. They want to become really good at what they're doing. So that's the mastery part. They want to have a purpose. Such as, why am I doing this? Am I benefitting anyone? And then they want the community. They want the interaction with people. So, under those five main areas, then there are these fourteen drivers. So are you happy with your salary? Do you get along with your peers? Are you friends with your peers? Is your work environment nice? Is it safe? All these different drivers under underneath. So I don't want to go on too long about this because it's probably too much detail but those are the fourteen things that under those four main areas, we're measuring fourteen drivers (Participant 11-Z.4.X.9).

Furthermore, most participants within the energy corporation stated their awareness, not only about the establishment of the programme on a sophisticated level, but also, they know that the programme is getting reviewed and developed within reasonable expectations to prosper and develop well for the sake of the employees. One participant stated that:

Yeah, so this engagement project that we're working on, that I mentioned to you, and this is touching all parts of the company [...] it's a huge project that we're working on to increase and we have targets, by the way, for the next four years. We have to increase our engagement score by, like, 5% every year for the next four years, so we have to increase our overall engagement score by 20% in the next few years, which is a huge increase that we're aiming for (Participant 5-Z.4.Z.6).

With the same attention towards the importance of employee engagement, participants from the aviation corporation expressed opinions which were in line with the energy corporation, in spite of them being unannounced and the informally presented and practised. Participants provided elements and signs of being engaged such as unified efforts, employees working together to avoid shattered efforts.

Views from both businesses affirmed that employee engagement and the workflow can have a twofold aspect: whether as an enabler or a barrier for tasks and sub-tasks to be accomplished. Most of the views from both case studies were supporting the notion that employee engagement helps in achieving both individual and company goals. Numerous views were raised about how being disengaged can have an impact on the workflow:

One employee's task can be dependent on another employee to accomplish another task. Any delay in doing the task on time by an employee, can affect another sub-task which can have an impact on the whole process to be finished by all the employees who are involved in it (Participant 22-Y.2.Z.28).

However, very little interviewees expressed an interesting point by stating that gaining the engagement of the employees is like a dream hard to be pursued by corporations. Stressing the notion that achieving the full and highest level of employee engagement is very challenging for organisations:

Employee engagement is hard to be gained by organisations. It is very challenging. And because the engagement if employees differ from one person to another, it very challenging and for organisations to win their employees' engagement at their highest levels most of the time. From my own point of view, and as the Arabic well-known idiom says "Not all one hand's fingers' length are equal" and employees engagement and the level of their engagement differs (Participant 2-Y.4.Z.6).

Making sure that employees are always motivated as a fundamental element of being engaged is a point often overlooked by corporations, according to most participant responses from the aviation corporation. Such as this example about how employee's motivation should be the primary responsibility of corporations and leaders. Again, leadership appears and is emphasised as a central emerging theme and appeared to have a vital role in the engagement of employees:

Because an employee is the basic element, and organisations must invest in them through engaging them with work. So if I didn't motivate the employees, then he/she won't be productive and the employee performance will be stay in a dull state (Participant 5-Z.4.Z.6).

A noteworthy feature of a leader's role is to provide encouragement and praise in showing support to the employees through using emotional intelligence wisely, as few respondents within various levels of management and from both companies talked about leaders' emotional intelligence skills towards employees motivation, and how it support the engagement of employees. For example:

I can't guarantee that one of my employees in my department can work and perform the same every day or for a long period of time. My duty here as their manager is to keep on motivating them. Praise them when they do well. And on other occasions, I have to be more understanding when they're not that productive (Participant 1-Y.4.X.20.R).

With a specific focus on employee engagement, the physical engagement is inevitably achieved through daily compulsory attendance of employees. However, it is more challenging for companies to achieve emotional and cognitive engagement. With the cognitive dimension of engagement, the employees demonstrated this in the training they receive as an element of being empowered by their organisations, and work experience they gain during and after leaving work. However, there was a scarcity within the corporations towards focusing on emotional engagement, as according to the employees, the company's main focus is on the 'robotic-type' of employees. The employees' productivity in 'quality and quantity' is a must, yet very little attention and care is given to the emotional engagement of employees to be developed and encouraged:

We come to work daily, or work online, in the case of Covid-19. So, this about the physical engagement. We also receive training and learn

while doing our job. But the problem here is, we're supposed to work hard as employees, whether we get tired or not, it's not the corporation's main concern (Participant 23-Y.2.X.27).

Very few respondents from the aviation company claimed that the greater amount of employees works in a corporation, the harder it will be for the employees to be emotionally engaged. But in contrast, a respondent from the energy corporation mentioned that their company is focusing on the emotional dimension of engagement:

[...] However, in this corporation, they do not focus 100% emotional engagement. This corporation, has a big nation of employees. It will be very hard for the corporation to support and achieve the 100% achievement of emotionally engaged employees successfully (Participant 2-Y.4.Z.6).

Theme 6.3 – Project management as a backbone and scaffold for corporations' operations

Codes: planning, organise work, set goals, assign roles and duties, clarity, purpose, full map, comprehensive instructions, budget, sales and revenue expectations, clear directions, core competencies

The concept of project management specifically was emphasised throughout the process of the data analysis. According to the findings (check the below quotation), project management provides an easy step-by-step detailed plan via providing a clear follow-up manual with status tracks and updates throughout the developmental stages. Important aspects like initiatives, programmes, and organisational goals, etc. can be achieved through project management. Also, intentions, plans and initiatives can be developed into actions and become reality. In addition, project management helps in creating and connecting collaborations between organisational and employee efforts. Unfortunately, in spite of all these vital points about project management, the employees' knowledge and skills in project management is not very well recognised and appreciated in both minor and major processes.

Project management training courses are provided in corporations (specifically in the two case studies), however it is still not compulsory for employees. In essence, project management works as the main backbone (inwards) and scaffold (outwards) of organisational operations.

All participants' responses, regardless of their management levels, were in favour of the concept of project management. The role of project management has been addressed by respondents from both corporations. A representation from one of the respondents commented:

My views and perspective about project management, and we as employees in the management world, on daily basis, we have a project that includes all the project plans. And that project plan has a content scenario, and with steps on how to achieve that goal through the project plan. So project management is a tool for the director or responsible employee [employee in charge] to achieve the goals that are assigned under his job role. Goals are met through project management and considered as integral part in any organisation (Participant 4-Y.4.X.10).

The majority of respondents from both corporations provided remarkable examples at a professional level of the application of project management in terms of organisational aspects and activities. First example was provided by participant from the energy company:

Let me talk as an employee, not as a manager. Here we have initiatives, under those initiatives there are projects and sub-projects. In each project there are employees who are in charge to get those projects accomplished that pour [as an Arabic expression] and contribute in supporting the achievement of a specific initiative. It's about a whole perfectly organised system to reach a designed goal you planned for (Participant 5-Z.4.Z.6).

And in line with that, another example was given from the aviation corporation's sales and revenues perspective, demonstrating how project management helps to achieve such goals, with a specific focus on how

employees consider applying project management through their engagement:

We set annually, sales and revenues expectations. All departments design their own plans, as operating plans, to know what's required in order to meet the corporation main goal. Employees' roles are delegated, and duties are assigned accordingly (Participant: 4-Y.4.X.10).

And the third example is the role of project management within the human resource department, such as employee learning and development:

I'm responsible for all the learning and development initiatives throughout the company. And specifically, each year I have about ten or twelve projects that I work on. So I'm doing a lot of projects that are focused on learning and development, but they're also focused on HR improvement. So that's a huge project that I'm working on (Participant 11-Z.4.X.9).

Nearly all responses were in a harmonious way, confirming that project management helps in organising the work and giving clarity to what needs to get done and how, as project management helps with the 'why' behind an assigned task and the purpose of accomplishing it. Also, project management methods and tools, empower the employees and provide them with directions, plans, outcomes, goals, milestones, timeframes, and the reasons behind the project implementation. This fosters the notion of having a purpose and, more importantly, giving it a feature of meaningfulness.

However, with the energy corporation, all respondents showed adequate knowledge and expressed their awareness of project management concepts in their professions. They addressed that project management is considered as one of the corporation's core competencies. Showing their abilities to apply project management on a professional level, as well their awareness

level was high in terms of how project management tools and methods are applied. Their responses emphasised that without project management, nothing will get managed and accomplished. One respondent noted:

We have project management is one of our core competencies. So we have our behavioural competencies, which are like, kind of management training competencies, and we have the technical ones, like electrical competencies and so on, then we have something we called core competencies, which includes English, safety, finance, IT and project management. So, project management is one of the five core competencies that we have. [...] We put that as a basic curriculum, but we didn't really enforce it yet, where we didn't force everybody to take, kind of, project management training (Participant 11-Z.4.X.9)

Although most responses substantiate that: 'Project Management is like a step-by-step easy to follow manual' (Participant 1-Y.4.X.20-R).

Project management is still considered as optional and a not a compulsory skill to be developed and nurtured in employees in some corporations, which crucially depends on the nature of the job an employee occupies. But surprisingly, although employees are not forced to take project management training courses by their employers, many of them are selecting these courses and they are willing to gain the knowledge and are keen to develop the skills related to its methods, tools and techniques. The quote below confirms this point by stating that:

In this corporation, we have a lot of online courses, especially now during Covid-19. They're usually in a class [live classes as on-job-training to be attended physically and personally], but now everything is online. And one of those courses was Project Management Professional PMP. And I want to register for it as I want to participate. But unfortunately, it was always fully booked (Participant 22-Y.2.Z.28).

And eventually, the on the micro and meso levels, organisational and the employee efforts get connected where collaborative efforts are formed

through project management tools, techniques and methods, towards achieving organisational goals. In addition, project management helps in making strategies clearer for all managerial levels and employees, in order for strategies to be embraced and considered:

I've noticed in this corporation, they put a big focus on it as well. We usually apply project management methods and tools when we're working on big projects. These types of projects are usually for the Head quarter's strategies. [...] And by applying project management methods and tools the work between branches, the Headquarter and the departments and its divisions get connected together. And then we follow up, we finish this, we're done with this [task/phase], this is here, this is the status of this (Participant 19-Y.1.Y.29).

And to re-emphasise and clarify further, most of the responses affirm that project management provides employees with status updates, task follow-up processes and jobs to be accomplished towards the targeted goals in a clear an organised manner.

2nd Findings: Integration of the three-pillar approach of this research study (sustainability, employee engagement and project management), and whether they work in favour or against 'sustainability & the innovation/efficiency of the programme'

Components of how sustainability is implemented and practised at a deeper level, is through the employees work performance in their workplaces. To put it more concisely, the components of how deep sustainability is practised and embraced – and all the associated key features to engage the employees with sustainability programmes – reflects the levels and elements of integration of the three pillar approach of this research study, and whether they work in favour or against 'sustainability & the innovation/efficiency of the programme'.

Theme 6.4 – Components of deep established sustainability programmes in corporations with a specific focus on the employee level

Subthemes:

Sub-theme 6.4.1: Empowerment:

raising awareness, training, workshop, campaigns, events

Sub-theme 6.4.2: Monitoring system

Sub-theme 6.4.3: Encouragement, incentives & rewards: (the how)

how to encourage and motivate

Sub-theme 6.4.4: Feedback to feed forward

Codes: Codes: raising awareness, empower, employee/individual-level, meaningfulness, productivity, attendance, employee physical engagement

Sub-theme 6.4.1: Empowerment:

In regard to sustainability programmes and the engagement of employees, empowerment appeared to be the most central key feature in achieving the engagement of employees. As stated earlier and to reiterate the point, a sustainability programme exists formally and explicitly within the energy corporation. The majority of the participants expressed their awareness of the programme, but some employees did not understand how sustainability practices can be applied in their daily tasks. Whereas, within the aviation corporation, the programme has not been established and announced formally but the employees do practice sustainability. However, participants within the aviation company asserted their awareness towards the concept of sustainability, showing a positive perception towards it, and they are aware that it is practised somehow within their corporation.

In addition, under the sub-theme of empowerment, raising the employees' awareness towards sustainability programme came up as the most intensified key feature. Specifically, this was in the design and implementation stages of the programme, as the first important step towards the successful engagement of the employees. And more specifically, on how sustainability awareness can be raised, communicated, and simplified to the employees, so they can understand their duties towards it. One participant with the energy corporation stated that:

Our organisation supports the success of achieving sustainability programmes goals by all means. [...] For sure, I did mention previously that we are aware in regard with most matters related to sustainability [...] examples [of practicing sustainability] like the resource's usage and manufacturing according to our county's sustainability-related rules and regulations, waste and etc. I strongly believe that the more you spread and raise the awareness about sustainability, its goals and how it can be achieved, that will be the most success factor (Participant 7-Z.4.X.X).

As an illustration of the most opinions from participants within the aviation corporation regarding raising awareness, one of the participants stated:

Raising awareness and creating a platform for sustainability and make the main focus the employees and how to make them join and make the employees role as important part of the success of the sustainability programme (Participant 19-Y.1.Y.29).

Almost all the participant from both corporations, following the definition of the concept of sustainability being introduced, emphasised the importance of developing a comprehensive understanding towards sustainability through disseminating the simplified message behind the sustainability programme so they can get engaged effectively:

I would say, understanding. They need to understand, and they need to have the interest to become involved. A lot of people always think in most organisations that sustainability is about being profitable. first of all, they don't generally understand what it means, because it's never been explained. [...] It's all about simplifying it so people can understand it, and in doing so, don't expect people to be involved in something if they don't understand it. So it's awareness and understanding (Participant 8-Z.4.X.X).

The most compelling evidence affirms that communicating the message of sustainability is in place within the energy corporation, as the programme has been designed to reach all the employees from the headquarter to the branches. This is demonstrated in this response: *“Externally and externally, and all the employees in this company are aware of this program”* (Participant 5-Z.4.Z.6).

However, corporations can confuse employees about sustainability, which results in the employees disengagement due to misunderstanding the concept. So, the representation and how sustainability is communicated and

how the message of sustainability gets disseminated is crucial. As this respondent asserted:

It's the same with resilience, sustainability and continuity. It all, think the same thing, different flavour, different meaning, but it's the same thing (Participant 10-Z.4.X.4).

In regard to empowerment, corporations must dedicate their attention to how to encourage the employees to engage with sustainability programmes, specifically as regards to what exactly is to be communicated in terms of their responsibilities towards the programme. According to most responses from participants from both case studies, the communicated messages to the employees have to be motivational and include encouragements, in order for the employees' spirit of motivation to be activated successfully, and follow up arrangements can be applied accordingly, which has been noted here:

We form a committee for the follow up and to communicate and encourage the employees and communicate sustainability responsibilities of the employees and their departments. We have external and internal 'Muraqbeen' in Arabic terms which means assessors, controllers, and spectators (Participant 5-Z.4.Z.6).

Although many participants' views were backing employee awareness as a way to support the engagement of employees towards sustainability, hardly any mentioned the relationship between the employees' disengagement and minor carelessness that can lead to catastrophic consequences on the macro-level. One participant gave an example:

For example, I don't sign a contract if the word 'Riba' is mentioned [the word Riba in Arabic means financial interest, which is forbidden in the Muslim religion and also is considered a major part of the Saudi government's rules and regulations]. For example, if we didn't pay the agreed instalment on time, you have to pay 15% extra on top of the instalment amount. This is not acceptable, and consequently the contract will be invalid and will not be signed. Contracts and the included articles have to be in line with our country principles which most of it is based on our religion. And putting my company in debt

because of my mistake is considered as unsustainable behaviour that happened because I wasn't focusing well, during my job role (Participant 4-Y.4.X.10).

From the participant's point of view, avoiding conflict between corporations when signing contracts and agreements is considered part of sustainability, which consequently can escalate political problems between two countries that can lead to disastrous consequences. Corporations' relationships need to be considered when signing contracts.

Participants within the aviation industry expressed their interests in getting empowered through learning and attending training courses to develop a comprehensive understanding towards the concept of sustainability:

I wish that there are training courses provided by our company for employees, so we can learn and understand what is sustainability (Participant 22-Y.2.Z.28).

With a hint of confusion about the three pillars of employee engagement towards sustainability, the most distributed message behind sustainability that was reaching the employees was about the focus on the employee's productivity. And in terms of the engagement of employees, the main emphasis was on the physical dimension of engagement, as employees' physical daily attendance matters as well as their productivity at work. One respondent added:

We are aware of sustainability in our corporation, but all we know how to show it in our job-work without the real meaning of sustainability. So according to the dimensions you've introduced to me, the physical dimension appears. We just have to show it in our jobs and productivity to prove to the company that we're obeying the rules and our department can win being one the good department [as a reward] in producing less paper, saving energy and water sources, and showing this in our procurement processes (Participant 2-Y.4.Z.6).

Ultimately, sustainability is practised by the employees to follow their corporations' rules and support their departments to win 'the best department' type of reward, so only for the purpose of joining competitions internally within their company. Moreover, in both corporations, it was the most commonly raised point, according to the employees, confirming that employee attendance at sustainability events was mainly performed to please the higher authorities such as managers, supervisors, etc.:

Sustainability is practised in events that are under sustainability initiatives. But unfortunately, employees attend because their managers ask them to join and show interest and when it's practised within the department and business lines, it's just practised blindly (Participant 9-Z.4.X.4).

Other employees have associated in participating in sustainability training courses, receiving certificates from the courses, as well as limiting and associating the gained knowledge, only for the sake of gaining promotions and appraisal purposes in their careers. They claim that they achieved the skills and expertise in sustainability without understanding the purpose of sustainability. Whether the employees are convinced about embracing sustainability is an issue on its own. One respondent said:

I like to support our company's sustainability initiatives. I register for workshops to gain knowledge and job credits for attending sustainability training courses. I want this to be added to my CV (Participant 14.Y.4.V.3).

The majority of employees, from both corporations, showed their willingness and eagerness to embrace sustainability in their daily work. Those who responded felt the need for a sustainability programme and its initiatives to be embedded through the introductory stage of raising the employee's awareness first, then to be designed in their career evaluations process. However, they emphasised the notion that corporations and the leaders

should avoid coercion when it comes to performing in a sustainable manner.

A respondent asserted:

The more you spread and raise the awareness about sustainability, its goals and how it can be achieved, that will be the most success factor. Also, the organisation must try to make sustainability more internal to employees, for example, make it part of their career evaluation, design workshops, and embed sustainability in each employee's behaviour at work, until sustainability comes within the employees to the extent that he/she strives to make it successful by his own will and not to force sustainability and make the employee do it, just for the sake of achieving well in his job evaluation (Participant 21.Z.4.X.12).

Meanwhile, few respondents highlighted that sacrificing some of their time and personal gains is required when it comes to practising sustainability at the workplace, which is a trait of being a leader, as having the will to support sustainability is important. And that the response affirms what exactly leaders need to focus on:

Being a hero is something that lasts forever [...] people have to be willing to sacrifice their own personal gain to do something that's good for the long term. And I think that's really missing and I'm not saying it, like, in Saudi it's missing, I think globally, being a sacrificing leader is really, it's not very popular (Participant 20-Z.4.Z.11).

Additionally, interviewees highlight the point that frequent and daily sustainability practices by the employees become a gained skill, and will eventually develop to happen by default, during their job-tasks. This has to be considered by managers as part of their leadership skills and their duties and responsibilities towards sustainability.

As managers we gain skills that help us recognise the implicit content about environmental harm avoidance within any agreement we sign. There are some key points that indicate that this agreement about the project is environmental-friendly. Such skills of making sure we don't cause any harm to the environment are adopted in this corporation as ethics whether we receive it via instructions, rules, and regulations, we adopt it as ethics in our daily work life. But it's not usually written how and where you can find it written explicitly. For example, paper waste

that we mentioned before in this interview. We will not find in any project contract that we shouldn't waste paper. Because this became a principle for each employee, e.g., paperless and emails. Going paperless initiative exists and practised but I don't think it's mentioned explicitly as a directive circulated in the company (Participant 4-Y.4.X.10).

The most alluring pillar out of the three pillars of the 'Triple Bottom Line' of sustainability, that the participants related towards the most was the social pillar of sustainability. Participants instinctively were touched, as they related sustainability behaviour at their workplaces to the faith that all Saudis embrace which is the Islamic faith, which has a fundamental influence on Saudi culture and citizens' behaviour, beliefs, and principles. Participants from both corporations shared the same views, expressed in the example below:

The best leader who can demonstrate that they've been trying hard to create a balance between showing emotional support first and, at the same time, they're good at accomplishing their job tasks. But the main point here as a leader, is to always prioritise emotions and show it in the way you deal with your employees. Meanwhile, you should strive to create work accomplishments and support and compassion balance. It's part of our religion, prophet Muhammad [...] said "The merciful will be shown mercy by the Most Merciful. Be merciful to those on the earth and the One in the heavens will have mercy upon you." So, leaders should practise mercy upon their employees. And employees must practise mercy upon each other. And that is sustainability in the human resources of the corporation. We have a well-known say, which say "an employee is like a tree", they need good care, they need water, soil, etc. Just like the employees needs that has to be considered by the leaders in their corporations (Participant 23.Y.2.X.27).

Sub-theme 6.4.2: Monitoring system

Employees self-regulated monitoring system towards sustainability's individuals' responsibilities and duties is in place, rooted mainly from the individuals' embraced Islamic faith which, then got fostered and encouraged to be applied at their workplaces. Peer support and peer monitoring by the employees are practised towards each other at work without an organisational monitoring system but through the individuals' faith, the social and cultural self-regulated monitoring system in the Kingdom Saudi Arabia which is a common practice by Saudi citizens. Specifically, any behaviour that causes harm towards the environment such as resource exploitation behaviours are forbidden under Islamic principles. This was a shared common view by respondents from both corporations. An example has been provided below:

When you're noticed at work that you're wasting water, food and paper for example, colleagues at work instantly come and advise, and remind you in an Islamic manner. Even the reminder itself should be produced to you in a soft and gentle way, otherwise it's not considered as an Islamic way of encouraging and advising the others. Colleagues remind and advise us by saying few well-known verses from the Quran and from the Hadith from our prophet Muhammed [...] not to practise this unacceptable behaviour, and to avoid doing so, as you commit a sin as a Muslim (Participant 10-Z.4.K.4).

Similarly, another participant added, when he was asked by the interviewee about giving examples, demonstrates the engagement of individuals with sustainability:

Trust, and 'Amanah' [an Arabic word which means integrity and self-monitoring] is practised at work and God is watching us. Every resource under your department as a manager you're held accounted for about. Also, you have to be trustworthy and responsible during contract signing, by taking care of the company's money and be responsible in approving the exact and suitable budget which should be calculated and considered strictly (Participant 1-Y.4.x.20-R).

In spite of the employees declaring their self-regulated monitoring system towards sustainability at their workplaces. Employees still expressed their demand for a well-designed monitoring system at work to feel well looked after and to stay on track with the sustainability programme, specifically respondents from the aviation corporation. However, the role of establishing a monitoring system to track an employee's sustainability activities with providing a follow up to the employees was addressed by almost all the participants with the energy corporation because the sustainability programme is reaching a good level of functionality. Such as the example related to the massive project of sustainability being monitored with designed KPIs for the employees.

Okay, well, by nature the sustainability programme had KPIs, the roles and responsibilities assigned. [...] They each had a set of key initiatives. There was 00-00 [numbers were removed for the purpose of maintaining the corporation's anonymity] key initiatives, it was a massive project. It lasted three years, and it was very closely monitored, and they were very stringent measures and KPIs associated, not just for department level, but also for the individuals (Participant 20.Z.4.Z.11).

However, in terms of monitoring and the designed tools to engage the employees, what was challenging was getting the employees to do the corporation's online survey related to the sustainability programme. This seemed to form an issue from the other end of the programme, from the employees and their duties to complete the surveys, so that their corporations can measure and track their engagement with the programme. In other words, the leadership role here appears to be essential to support the employees to do the sustainability survey. Which was the view from the executive level participants at the energy corporation. As an example:

Getting people to actually complete the survey related to sustainability programme in the first place is a good measure of engagement (Participant 8.Z.4.X.X).

There was an initiative last year from our sales team to start doing all these reports related to meeting environmentally friendly standards in our branch. I remember they started suggesting it, but then, all this happened [Covid-19 pandemic] and then, we didn't go ahead with it, and the head office just forgot about it. They were just suggesting that it would be good for the customers, it would be good for us. It was just a mention! (Participant 22-Y.2.Z.28).

However, such a poor follow-up and monitoring system would affect the encouragement for employees to engage with sustainability. This, consequently, impacts the notion of employees getting rewarded or incentivised to practise such sustainability-related behaviours and activities.

Sub-theme 4.1.3: Encouragement, incentives & rewards

Incentivising the employees' efforts when it comes to practising sustainability at work was one of the elements that was missing adequate attention for most of the participants. In order for employees to adopt sustainability in their daily behaviour and activities at the workplace, sustainability has to come from the employees' will. Most participants from both corporations emphasised an important missing element in regard to encouraging and motivating employees, which is incentives and rewards to foster the engagement of employees towards sustainability programmes.

Furthermore, almost all the participants from the energy corporation stated that making sustainability comes from within the employees which is important to create the sense of meaningfulness and belonging for the purpose of sustainability to be well understood by the employees. The participant added:

It's [sustainability programme] well designed and it gets monitored and there are associated incentives. And according to how much you adhere to sustainability rules and regulations you gain star [as a

reward], if you're on a job duty on/in a sight or in the corporation, and everyone strives to achieve those stars. [...] When you notice their behaviour if in favour of sustainability you assign rewards [incentives and rewards schemes] (Participants 5-Z.4.Z.6).

Yet, in the other corporation, some employees mentioned that they do come up with initiatives on how to apply sustainability with the consideration of practising it at their workplaces. But unfortunately, due to the discouraging atmosphere, employees' ideas go further than a 'mentioned initiative'.

Almost every participant from both companies recommended that when leaders communicate sustainability messages, they should be aware of the way they talk, persuade, and encourage employees to embrace and apply sustainability. However, they warned that leaders should avoid discouraging their co-workers towards sustainability and should not impose and act like a sinless leader, but to consider themselves part of the problem first, and to avoid making employees feel like it is their problem solely, as the example below states:

Show and make yourself as part of the problem and the 'TBL' environment society and economy is everyone's responsibility. And dedicate the advice, regulations and say sustainability employee-engagement matters to yourself first and then, try to persuade the others to do sustainability (Participant 9-Z.4.X.4).

Likewise, another participant emphasised the notion that the language and the words you use can be demotivating and could lead to sustainability outcomes through the employees behaviour. Attract, praise and encourage as a leader, as well as forbid yourself from talking in an irritable language by choosing your words wisely. Develop your communication skills. Demonstrated in this example:

I think that, for me, it's about this [...] the motivation for doing it, so I think they came across a little bit, like, we need to do this, it's a good

thing to do, and people were like, don't tell me what to do, like, it felt, like preachy, you know (Participant 10-Z.4.X.4).

Nevertheless, employees throughout the corporation can disseminate the message of sustainability by emphasising the reward they will achieve, but with an intense focus on the long-term benefits and as a common shared beneficial outcome for all, from making sustainability part of the employees professional and personal lifestyle. But at the same time, individuals have to be careful when they motivate, and not encourage selfishness by mistake, by emphasising the point that engagement with sustainability can benefit the employee only, and that the achieved success is not connected and can lead to a bigger and more decent and important rewarding outcomes, such as towards the society, the whole country and the planet:

I think the key is really that motivation of how can you get people to really care [...] So what I think in terms of motivating people here, you want to motivate them about 'what's in it for me?', let's take care of the planet because this is going to be better for me, so almost as selfish thing. Is there a way that you can get people to selfishly think, I'm not saving the planet for future generations? Is saving the planet for myself only? Somehow, is there a way to motivate people with a bit more of a selfless motivation (Participant 1-Y.4.X.20-R).

Another interesting way to motivate employees to engage with sustainability programmes is to dedicate direct messages via email or other communication channels to each employee in person, talking to them to awaken their human side, in order to engage them with cultural and religious seasons, as an example from the respondent from the aviation corporation below demonstrates:

Any directives from the top management should be presented as direct letter to the employees with all levels of the corporation, and not to be exclusive to the executives only, but it should include all the employees, so sustainability goals can be achieved and everyone feels that the letter is sent to them personally/specifically. [...] And that's how to foster trust and sense of belongings towards such occasion.

Sustainability as a decent duty from each employee. Don't underestimate such direct letters from the higher authorities that takes to each employee. [...] Sustainability [is about] reflecting good image to other societies by showing the best behaviour you can. It reflects and has a societal meaning (Participant 4-Y.4.X.10).

Sub-theme 6.4.4: Feedback to feed forward:

Participant confirmed the functionality of the feedback scheme, as it operates sufficiently in the aviation corporation. Which, according to his suggestion, such feedback systems can also be suitable to be applied in terms of employees and their engagement towards sustainability programmes, emphasising how important it is for corporations to launch and designate them to serve sustainability programmes, which can benefit both the employees and their corporations.

Unfortunately, feedback systems have not been designed to engage employees in the delivery towards sustainability programme within the aviation corporation:

To answer your question, I believe what is related to it and what's happening at our company is about "feedback to feed forward". We learnt this when we got the training for PYP [a course at the aviation company]. The corporation receive the feedback, and then they start analysing and developing, studying the current status, finding solutions. So they can reach the feed forward step (Participant 2-Y.4.Z.6).

Whereas, on the other hand, employees from the energy corporation confirmed that the feedback system exists, is functioning well and is designed for employees and their engagement with the sustainability programme, but it seems faulty and inadequately launched somehow, and not beneficial to the employees.

In the same way, another participant within the aviation company, emphasised his leadership skills in creating a friendly open atmosphere for direct feedback channels. And the example here is about exchanging conversations with the employees as a leader/manager during and after the implementations of projects:

We exchange feedback and views with the employees in regard with projects. Their feedback about the project outcomes, was the projected implements in the right way, did we have re-apply it following another mechanism to change or update here and there. And consider the employees views as approval that yes, it was the right way to implement the project (Participant 4-Y.4.X.10).

In contrast, elements of the way the feedback system is applied with the energy corporation indicate that the feedback system exists, is functioning well and is designed for employees and their engagement with the sustainability programme. Most participants were aware of this system, such as this response below:

We have this new learning management system. You have your own learning page. And all of your learning is on that page and you can do everything from one location, which helps you to own your learning and get excited about learning. [...] For my employees, I can access their learning development records, through performance management system. I talk to them about what they have done and achieved and what's their next training plan, and what is needed for our department (Participant 11-Z.4.X.9).

The latter quote from the respondent also missed addressing an important element that on-job-training courses provided by their corporations are primarily advantageous towards sustainability, as these consequently lead to less travel, which means reducing emissions. And at the same time, by doing so, valuable element appears in regard with corporations maybe unintentional, unaware that the social sustainability pillar is also encountered such as: employees' rights to learn and develop their job-related

skills, knowledge gaining which also contribute the employees being empowered and eventually their wellbeing/s are met.

There was the same emphasis on the functionality of the feedback system within the energy corporation, since the majority of participants within this corporation were in favour of the same point – employee engagement, feedback system and the sustainability programme. Another participant added:

There's a team that are assigned the task of visiting and checking on us, without giving us a specific time (unscheduled time) so we won't be prepared and then they give us feedback, as your scope. My role as a manager I check the requirement in that, was to me in a list, and I communicate with the facilities, and I do the do the follow up with my employees to make sure they adhere to it (Participant 5-Z.4.Z.6).

3rd Findings: Fragmented sustainability practices from corporations and their employees

The discussion under this section addresses aspects of (1) bureaucracy, transparency & authority, (2) the alignment of the efforts of corporations and employees towards creating a unity and (3) the visibility, attractiveness and inclusiveness in relation to sustainability programmes within the energy and aviation case studies.

Theme 6.5 – Bureaucracy, transparency & authority

Codes: organisational structure, lengthy procedures, process approval, government, rules, regulations, inflexibility, constrains, restrictions, impotence

Almost all the respondents from both corporations expressed their willingness and enthusiasm to be actively accountable employees towards sustainability programmes. This shows their intentions and attempts to become part of the programme's development and enhancement in various ways. However, the employees' enthusiasm and attempts to contribute and become helpful, faced discouraging reactions from their managers, supervisors or authorities, due to the fear of the managers using sustainability initiatives within their departments without receiving the approval from the higher authorities. It is important to recognise that such reactions in rejecting any simple sustainability initiative from the employees can develop into and form an obstacle to communicate in a shape of a bottom-up employee innovative approach in regard with any related matters towards sustainability programmes.

Furthermore, participants within the aviation sector, although almost all participant expressed their intentions and willingness to show efforts toward sustainability, as they mentioned ambitious ideas and intentions demonstrated in their responses, only a few raised their worries and concerns that it is unsafe to express it, with very little flexibility (from their managements) due to the lengthy approval procedures towards showing and applying sustainability without the internal higher authority's approval:

But sadly, we don't bring up subjects like this related to environmental-friendly practices by the employees in meetings. [...] Even if there's a suggestion for something, for example, to do something via email instead of paper letter [as printed out hard copies] or something similar. It can't really be done from our sides, because it has to be approved. Anything we suggest here has to be approved from the headquarters and they have to be aware of it. So that takes quite a long time. To get to them, to go through all the levels, to get approved, then to get back to us. So all the ideas similar to that, usually stops in the beginning (Participant 22-Y.2.Z.28).

This view represents participants' frustration on how the lengthy process for authorising practising sustainability kills their motivation to promote sustainability. Although sustainability as a bottom-up approach is not well encouraged or welcomed or is still developing at both corporations, some remarkable incubators within both corporations exist that can augment the development of the traditional top-down approach for employees' creative sustainability suggestions, attempts and ideas, such as employees' loyalty, and persistence to contribute to the programme:

There are very ambitious employees and they have a lot of amazing ideas but they can't express them. [...] The atmosphere here is not created for them to, you know, excel and develop and raise those ideas and they may, you know. [...] which is disappointing (Participant 11-Z.4.X.9).

And he added:

It is bureaucratic for sure. It's definitely bureaucratic. Things move very slowly, which gets frustrating for people. But on the positive side, I think the environment is a bit loyal environment which is something you like to appreciate over time (Participant 11-Z.4.X.9).

On the other hand, external authority factors on the macro-level such as the country's government, can be advantageous towards the social sustainability pillar of the TBL. Respondents from both corporations were against the government's restrictions, and expressed their irritation and disapproval towards how their corporation's rules and regulations are controlled by the government, in prioritising the employees welfare which, at the same time, can affect the corporations financially such as restricting profits at the expenses of the Saudi citizens' rights. Such as one respondent claim that they cannot fire people nor raise the cost of the services because the corporation belongs to the government sector and controlled by the government. But meanwhile, this is sustainable because maintaining people as employees and giving a fair price for the service is under the concept of sustainability. The respondent says:

But we're not sustainable because we can't fire people. So we have too many employees. We can't fire them, that's not allowed. We can't raise the cost of our services, that's not allowed. So, in a way, the business model itself is not sustainable. Actually, the business model is broken. It can't work like this! (Participant 10.Z.4.X.4).

Theme: 6.6 The alignment of corporations' efforts with employees' efforts towards creating a unity

Codes: Organisational goals, mission & vision, employees' efforts and performances

The dissemination of the sustainability message is not designed to reach all employees, which leads to disunified non-collaborative efforts between the employees themselves, their departments and towards their corporations. And this whole – possibly unintended and unplanned – process can form an obstacle for corporations to reach the achieved overall collaborative-based organisational goals.

Most of the participants' views within the aviation corporation imply that the sustainability message is not for all the employees. The sustainability programme and the message behind it reaches specific segment of employees, as it is not dedicated to reach all. The sustainability programme is only for the highest levels of management, according to their organisational hierarchy. This inevitably forms a 'collaborative efforts disconnecter' specifically between the employees themselves and towards their corporation's efforts as a unified whole outcome. And consequently, the disunified, non-collaborative efforts would hinder corporations towards the achievement of the targeted overall organisational goals, demonstrated in this participant's example:

We have many initiatives that have various dimensions, but sometimes the dimensions are well-known to all the employees. And

other times, some of the dimensions are not well-known to all employees, [as] the target audience of the initiative reaches specific employees (Participant 4-Y.4.X.10).

And the interviewee added one example of the going paperless initiatives, claiming that:

Such directives, of e-ticketing and going paperless only well-known within us the executives. It's not announced to the public, because you can't announce and say I saved money. It won't attract the customers' attention (Participant 4-Y.4.X.10).

On the contrary, most participants within the energy corporation stated their awareness in regard to the sustainability messages in their corporation. However, they believe that the message is for specific divisions and departments that are in charge of the technical aspects of sustainability and more related to operations and projects meeting sustainability standards such as Environmental Management Systems and ISO environmental standards. Or the other type of message which is more for altruistic behaviours such as events which are optional to attend. And they expressed their disengagement in general, as they are not sure how highly important it is to engage in their workplaces with sustainability programmes. This affirms that the message behind the sustainability programme was inadequate or rather miscomprehended.

Since the motivation to engage employees with sustainability programmes is embedded deeply within the employees themselves and practiced by their Islamic faith, corporations can benefit from this as a naturally created credit to foster and encourage such rituals and make it aligned with sustainability to serve the establishment of the programme.

However, almost all participants from both corporations emphasised a solid fundamental common base which is their Islamic faith, the common faith in Saudi Arabia. This was one of the most remarkable factors affirming that the employees' efforts are already instinctively in favour of the sustainability programme. Employees' shared and practiced beliefs can be powerful and highly beneficial for corporations in regard to promoting sustainability on a deeper level. In addition, corporations can foster and encourage such rituals and make them aligned and become utilised with sustainability to serve the establishment of the programme, since the motive to engage with sustainability is embedded deeply within the employees themselves. This is demonstrated in this response:

We know a lot about sustainability very well through our Islamic principles. Our prophet emphasised in the Hadith about how Muslims' behaviours should be, such as planting a tree or a plant, and how we take care of our environment and the agriculture. And this act of being responsible about our environment and humankind, is considered as a type worshipping 'the Creator' and we're rewarded for this type of behaviours. And we bring this type of responsibilities towards the environment and the mankind to work. Like the trees and paper waste, it is harmful to the environment. You got the relationship, the environment, the Muslim behaviour following the Islamic principles/regulations? (Participant 9-Z.4.X.4).

And to back this up another participant's commented:

"We're raised and encouraged at home to practice sustainability" (Participant 20-Z.4.Z.11).

According to the participants' views from both corporations, their responses in general affirm that in order for corporations to find the missing link between sustainability planning, implementation and the unfocused sustainability-related organisational outcomes, they can relay and employ project management tools and methods with the provision of leaders to

support the alignment of the efforts from both sides the organizations' efforts, its designated non-human resources and the employees performances and efforts. The respondents mentioned various project management aspects, presented in terms like clearer plans, long-term and short-term plans (as project management can cover both), being tracked and followed up (monitoring), phases of sustainability programme, providing an update to the employees, the assigned duties are clear and actionable. This not only has been emphasised under this theme, but throughout the majority of themes in the data analysis according to the participants' expressed views and experiences. But the emphasis in this section is more about project management's role towards supporting the alignment of the employees' efforts with their corporations' sustainability programmes.

Such as this response that affirms that project management connects and aligns the efforts and work between the corporation's departments, divisions and branches for the sub-goals to become one goal based in the employees collective efforts. As the project management's role is to help a strategy becomes clear so that everyone can reach and achieve what needs to be done:

Project management tools and methods make the actions clear, provide a status update and helps in the following up phase/process (Participant 22-Y.2.Z.28).

This was supported by another interviewee who said: *"Project management is rewarding to the employees and their companies"* (Participant 5-Z.4.Z.6). Which can be influences, managed through the leaders' focus on the long-term goals, instead of minor short-term ones. A respondent stated:

I never talked about sustainability in the sense that in my business I don't talk about, let's be good for the environment, let's be good for society. Those kinds of terms don't really come up in the work that we do. But we do think a lot about what does it mean to be a good leader

and does that leader involve serving the environment or serving the long-term benefit as well as the short-term benefit there. So it's a fascinating subject for me from that perspective (Participant 8-Z.4.X.9).

In addition, project management methods and tools support a basic important part for any corporation which has organisational values, mission and vision.

The role of project management in a sustainability programme through the engagement of employees is vital as it connects and support corporations to meet organisational main goals. This is done through the process of achieving the values, mission and vision, as they lead and serve each other, specifically when they are in line with the employees' efforts and performances. Some of the respondents' views are represented in this quote:

Definitely it is very important. Because project management help you achieve corporation goals. And goals lead to achieving the added value of the corporation which are mentioned in the corporation vision and mission. How do you reach all of this, unless you applied it into initiatives (Participant 5-Z.4.Z.6).

Furthermore, by creating a unity between the organisation's efforts and employee performances, you create and develop, encourage and gain employees' ownership, which in this case, ownership towards sustainability. This was one of the points most of the respondents stated in an indirect way such as mentioning employee loyalty, etc., or in a direct way such as the term ownership. And employee ownership here can be a major advantage that corporations can achieve if it was specifically in regard with sustainability programmes. A respondent asserted:

Okay, well, to me, if you look at engagement in general, I mean, to me, engagement is [...] there's lots of textbooks. I'm not going to reel off textbook stuff. You've got plenty of those available. To me, employee

engagement is all about ownership. It's about ownership and commitments and involvements. So, how involved are you in, as an employee in the company and its outcomes. So, there are people that stay beneath the radar, there are other people that are active participators and active resistors in any organisation (Participant 19-Y.1.Y.29).

Theme 6.7 – Visibility, attractiveness and inclusiveness of the sustainability programme

Sub-themes:

- (Sub-theme 6.7.1) Translation of sustainability programme and employees' interpretation of the language of sustainability
- (Sub-theme 6.7.2) The dissemination of sustainability message to all employees throughout the corporation

Codes: Language, interpretations, operational flows and procedures

6.7.1 Sub-theme: Translation of the sustainability programme and employees' interpretation of the language of sustainability

The issue in miscomprehending the message behind sustainability can be a twofold problem. On the one hand, there is the corporation's managerial side in communicating the message of sustainability to the employees. On the other hand, there is the employees' misunderstanding or misinterpreting the received message, the purpose behind it and the required actions and responsibilities behind engaging the employees due to the language used and the way sustainability was communicated. However, the majority of participants from both corporations expressed their awareness and willingness to respond and interact with sustainability related matters at work, as in this example:

“Externally and internally, and all the employees in this company are aware of this programme” (Participant 9-Z.4.X.4).

However, the employees experienced confusing reactions in regard with their roles towards sustainability. They blamed it on the way the message of sustainability reached them, as the message was not attractive enough for them to embrace, in addition to the misinterpretation towards the message and purpose of the programme. In line with that, there was also a need for leadership support which is provided through encouragement and persuasion when disseminating the sustainability message. The message behind the programme lacks the characteristics of how it can be actionable and at the same time simplified, meaningful and attractive enough to engage employees. One respondent noted:

If the sustainability message doesn't reach the employees in the optimum way, it becomes a barrier. It means you don't make sustainability reach the employees as an ideal and real image. You attract their attention by persuading them in a positive way about sustainability goals, and not through coercion (Participant 5-Z.4.Z.6).

One of the points that has been generally emphasised by the majority of participants from both corporations, is that they are willing to engage and perform their duties and responsibilities towards sustainability programme and that they want to see, hear and feel more about sustainability. According to the majority of the views, this affirms that sustainability practices and activities are not noticed as something frequent or consistent at work. Sustainability for most of the employees takes the shape of events and campaigns. And even when the events and campaigns take place, all they know is that they must attend to support their company in various ways, for example, to please their managers, support their departments and their company image in regard to sustainability credentials on a national level. As has been stated earlier, even if the sustainability programme and the

message behind it is visible somehow to the employees, sustainability related matters, practices and responsibilities are unattractive or meaningless for the employees. Just to clarify further, this point was synthesised based on the hand-written notes that were taken during the interviews by the researcher, in addition to the employees' transcribed interviews about their perceptions and views.

The participants in general, within the energy corporation, said that there are signs, brochures, flyers and announcements about sustainability events and sustainability achievements were circulated via emails, with the availability of sustainable facilities for recycling. This indicates that sustainability is visible and there have been great efforts to promote the concept. For example, from the energy corporation, one person remarked:

[...] similar to the ISO [environmental] standards, but it's more created/designed on the company's level. They also come and do check-ups on paper usage. We have paper shredder machines for paper waste, as a provided facility for paper waste management (Participant 5-Z.4.Z.6).

Although all the views about the efforts to promote sustainability at the energy corporation might be true, participants raised their concerns that, in regard to sustainability, they still did not feel connected enough to take part and become engaged with the programme somehow, in spite of the efforts from their corporation to make sustainability visible. This indicates that the message of sustainability is still developing, yet it is not very engaging for the employees, due to its unattractive characteristics and the way the concept of sustainability has been visualised in a way that did not win the employees' full attention and engagement.

6.7.2 Sub-theme: The dissemination of the sustainability message to all employees throughout the corporation – inclusiveness

According to participants' views, the dissemination process of sustainability in both corporations seems not inclusive to all employees. Firstly, the message behind sustainability only reaches specific employees as it is exclusive and compulsory for some employees because of the technical nature of their jobs that requires them to work in specific ways to meet environmental standards such as careers that require knowledge and experiences in reducing the harm to the environment. This is supported by this participant's view from the aviation corporation:

Not only going paperless, we have many [sustainability] initiatives that have various dimensions, but sometimes the dimensions are well-known to all employees. And sometimes some of the dimensions are not well-known to all employees, the target audience of the initiative reaches specific segment of employees (Participant 4-Y.4.X.10).

According to most employees from both corporations, employee engagement with sustainability is occasional for all the employees in general, in regard to campaigns and events, as employees are more likely show their physical engagement for the purpose of gaining their manager's satisfaction and approval, based on this participant's example:

Sustainability is practised in events that are under sustainability initiatives. But unfortunately, employees attend because their managers ask them to join and show interest (Participant 9-Z.4.X.4).

Furthermore, not only inclusiveness to all employees should be considered when sustainability programmes are designed and disseminated, but also inclusiveness with respect to diversity, in regard to the actual spoken language, as the most two most spoken languages in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are Arabic, as the national language, and English, as the universal well-

known language. The sustainability message has to be distributed via all communication methods in both Arabic and English because there are employees from different countries working in both companies. This is so that sustainability can be understood by all employees from different backgrounds. For example:

The tea boys don't speak well Arabic nor English. Which means that they can be excluded from being part of the programme. And their job mainly is about being in charge about catering, serving tea, food and plastic cutlery, cups, plates waste etc. (Participant 8-Z.4.X.X).

This is supported by this participant's suggestion:

I would communicate sustainability message and consider it in all languages, since we have employees from different countries (Participant 10-Z.4.X.4).

In addition to this example, in regard with the corporations' training courses they provided in one language, which makes it unfair to employees who do not speak the that language:

I mentioned the training courses. And the management want to train everyone about sustainability. Choosing which training course are optional. [...] I think we should have more training for the staff, we should know more about it. Because, at the moment all these training we have, specifically related to sustainability are voluntary. And they're sometimes in Arabic. So, not all the courses are available for everyone (Participant 22-Y.2.Z.28).

Gaining the employees highest level of engagement is challenging for organisations, as it has been described by some participants as being like a dream that is unrealistic and cannot come true. As employees' responses, interactions, becoming motivated, etc., all the related features of being engaged emotionally, cognitively and physically differs from one employee to

another in their abilities to learn, develop and adapt. Therefore, the variation of the employees' engagements lacks being considered by organisations.

Furthermore, according to the respondents' views within the aviation corporation, in order to attract employees and support their engagement with sustainability programmes, they must take into consideration that the engagement of employees is challenging and that not all employees are attracted towards sustainability in the same way. So various means and diverse ways and methods have to be included and considered to meet various tastes, abilities and ways that can attract the employees' attention and beliefs. One respondent affirmed: "*all the hands fingers are not equal in length*" (Participant 2-Y.4.Z.6).

Another interesting view that very little participants expressed their knowledge about in regard to the inclusiveness of sustainability programmes is KPIs and how sustainability can reflect on company brand health. Although it was suggested by one of the participants within the executive management level (as a consultancy specialist) that giving attention to sustainability as a positive for brand health and designing KPIs accordingly might support the engagement of employees. However, this might tackle sustainability at higher levels of management, leaving middle and operational/frontline management puzzled and not solving the problem, since the suggested solution came from the higher level of management. Such as the example below:

So sustainability, I think you could look at sustainability in terms of engagement would be a good one because you can look at sustainability in terms of positive brand health, how are we sustaining that, so there are things which are measurable under their KPIs, which are all performance related. Brand health is about how people perceive you as [...] brand health is about the value of your brand (Participant 8-Z.4.X.X).

Furthermore, some of the employees developed the perception that sustainable work-related or non-work-related activities are 'not for me', due to the notion that: (1) the sustainability programme and the concept behind it is not attractive enough, (2) they acknowledge that sustainability exists but they lack the knowledge of how to take part and be effective employees towards the triple bottom line. This is demonstrated in the following:

Yeah, yeah, so there might be some components of sustainability that we're doing here, but nobody would link it to sustainability. They would say we have an obligation to society or we have an obligation to our shareholders or whatever but they wouldn't use that phrase to describe it (Participant 11-Z.4.x.9).

4th findings: Organisational change towards sustainability outcomes

“Change is sustainability and vice versa, sustainability is change”

Considering sustainability as a change was an intense topic that has been mentioned by the majority of participants from both corporations. And in parallel, participants mentioned that creating change in corporations creates and fosters sustainability, since the awareness in corporation about sustainability has drastically risen, and the concept of sustainability has become a heated topic, specifically in Saudi Arabian corporations. One participant stated that:

Departments that transformed where technology became the core for such departments. In such situations, we bring and reform a new management in order for the employees to accept the change. Usually in any change, it must include sustainability, whether it is written or a verbal format. Sustainability that reflects on the dimensions you've provided as a guidance for this interview (Participant 4-Y.4.X.10).

Theme 6.8 – Organisational change stroke resistance to embrace sustainability

Codes: resistance, employee confidence, influential behaviour, adapt, project management as a change-agent role

Many participants asserted that the readiness of employees to embrace sustainability is very important, which has been revealed by participants from both corporations. When corporations consider making their employees ready to accept, adapt and embrace sustainability as a change, it helps in boosting the employees' confidence, and hence they become empowered when they engage themselves with sustainability.

According to the participants from the aviation corporation, choosing the right place to implement the change is critical in terms of the success of the programme. To welcome the change and embrace it confidently will help in avoiding or decreasing resistance. In case of resistance, it can be tackled easier when the readiness level is better:

Making sure which department you start the change with. It is very important so they can inspire the others and they become more influential to attract the others to follow their lead (Participant 4-Y.4.X.10).

Others emphasised generating the right energy between employees to welcome the new change and help the process happen smoothly:

Employees will have the right energy to welcome change, adapt quicker and be able to inspire the others to adopt the change (Participant 2-Y.4.Z.6).

However, with change at a deeper level, when resistance develops, the role of project management is crucial to study the anticipated risks and take them into consideration when implementing sustainability as a change:

As an anticipated risk for any project-based sustainability programmes that is aiming to engage employees, if resistance is not considered as a risk, this will lead to serious deterioration towards achieving the objectives of the programme (Participant 4-Y.4.X.10).

Yet, when creating sustainability as a change, employees' age can support or be against change. As some younger (millennials) might be more ambitious to support the change, while the older generation can be rigid and form a barrier to the new change, which was one of the views raised by participants from each corporation. The participant's example states:

And then people here like, let's say the older generation here where they say I've got one year left until retirement, right? Why would I worry about solar power when tomorrow I'm retiring, right? So they

don't really care about that, so in terms of making it succeed, I think younger people than like even the younger Saudis, I mean, they have this kind of, they're curious and they think how can we help (Participant 10-Z.4.X.4).

A reasonable number of views brought about several times through the conducted interviews from interviewees from both corporations explained how unforeseen circumstances can be a crisis or a blessing for sustainability, such the recent Covid-19 pandemic. One participant mentioned that:

Everyone right now is focused on how can we survive this year, how can I get my bonus this year. How can I not get fired this year, [...] So leadership, globally, is all about short term. And that's in contrast to the whole word sustainability. It's all about long-term thing, and if you look at leaders fifty years ago were saying what can we do that will be good for a hundred years from now (Participant 11-Z.4.X.9)

Theme 6.9 – Project management works hand-in-hand with organisational change

Codes: Readiness, employee confidence, influential behaviour, adapt, project management as a change-agent role,

The stated views provided by participants from both companies, according to participants' experiences and perceptions, confirm that project management works hand-in-hand with organisational change, more specifically when sustainability is considered as a change. In total, the views affirm that project management helps in presenting a full map, and showing the directions, by providing comprehensive instructions and supporting the employees to understand the purpose:

I think project management would be about making a strategy of how to reach your aim, how to reach your goal, having all the steps in details, the reach of resources you need, helps you realise what's missing, what needs to be done, and the people who will be working on it (Respondent 22-Y.2.Z.28).

In addition, participants advised that, in order for a corporation to achieve a successful sustainability change implementation, they have to consider it more as a continuous change journey, as demonstrated here:

I believe putting milestones is important, for sustainability sub-goals to be met and achieved during the implementation of the programme. We should treat and consider it like a journey. And consider all its stages until the destination is reached! But we don't stop, as we need to keep on evaluating and assessing what's going on (Participant 5-Z.4.Z.6).

Theme 6.10– Project management keeps up with the speed and dynamic nature of any operation and sustainability related operations in organisations

Codes: employee confidence, influential behaviour, adapt, project management as a change-agent role

Since participants considered sustainability as continuous change for corporations, they emphasised that corporations can use the aid of project management tools and methods to keep up with the dynamic nature of sustainability, as project management supports the operational processes in corporations in keeping up with the speed and dynamic nature of sustainability-related operations.

One participant stated:

Every day there's something new happening and every day there's something new happening. New problems, new issues. If we don't chase it, then everyone will forget about it. Just because you need to deal with this new thing. So if from the beginning we had a strategy how to do something, it will be much easier (Participant 22-Y.2.Z.28).

Also, another example was provided by a participant from the aviation corporation, demonstrating how organisational operational processes function with the aid of project management tools and methods to keep up with the day-to-day operations:

First of all, we have amazing and perfect examples of projects. But also, we have day-to-day operations and we don't call them projects, although they might take a shape of a project. Just to clarify, they happen to correct mistakes, or to avoid issues, and they're not considered as projects. For example, in the airlines, can cancelled airlines, replacing and creating an alternative flight, closing airports due to unforeseen circumstances, such as extreme weather conditions. These are not projects, they're considered as day-to-day operations' cases and shows swift engagement for employees in taking quick and urgent actions via plans that takes the shape of projects. But all projects that any business put it in place, they must be based on sustainability. [...] But the success of any service company, is dependent on continuity of providing the service, despite any loss the company is gaining [for example loss in the profit]. It means, once I put my effort to establish this services, then I should be committed to carry in the implementation in offering the service, no matter what the company go through (Participant 4-Y.4.X.10).

The engagement of employees is never in a state of stability. Achieving the engagement of employees does not necessarily mean that the targeted goals have been achieved, However, keeping the employee engaged and maintaining that is the success. Another key point that was raised by some of the participants was about keeping and maintaining the employees engaged with sustainability programmes, which also can be achieved through project management tools and methods. One of the participants asserted that the engagement of employees with sustainability has to be continuous with a need to be monitored towards improved signs of engagement:

But, in terms of, did it actually achieve that. You see, in any organisation, that question of engagement, it's live, it's continuous, that, by nature is the word itself. So, people take at any given moment, other than measuring the improvements in sustainability. In engagement, if that's one key element, the only way you can measure sustainability is, whether it's improved, or at the very least, a percentage of engagement is continuous (Participant 11.Z.4.X.9).

This findings chapter has been produced based on what the findings of the empirical study has informed. The collected and transcribed data has been analysed through the aid of a thematic analysis technique. In summary, these results unlocked aspects that can support the engagement of employees with more focus on the emotional and cognitive engagement with sustainability programmes, from both project management and organisational change perspectives, while looking at it from the practitioners' lens. Interestingly, the findings indicate that the Islamic faith played a vital role in guiding the employees towards sustainability at work. And eventually, Covid-19 seems to be a blessing rather than an obstacle, specifically in favour of sustainability. The next chapter, therefore, moves on to discuss the findings against what exist in the academic research, as by doing so, it will create a bridge between the literature and practice.

- Part E -

Chapter 7: Discussion & Reflection

This research project studies and investigates how can corporations engage their employees with sustainability programmes, via the aid of systematic project management tools and techniques framed by organizational change and centralising an Islamic faith lens. The thesis considers three relevant pillars to be: sustainability, employee engagement and project management, along with the additional fourth pillar being organizational change.

This chapter combines findings and insights from the literature review (part B- Chapters 2,3 and 4) undertaken for this study and the findings (part D – Chapter 6) drawn from the empirical case study research and interviews. By bringing these chapters together Chapter 7 addresses and evaluates the relevant aspects and components that support corporations to successfully achieve the engagement of employees with sustainability, through the process of evaluating the findings of this research project’s empirical research, which brings additional insights on the application of these considerations in the Saudi Arabian context, compared to how the topic has been addressed in the academic literature.

The literature on employee engagement related to sustainability programs in corporations, has been emergent and nascent. Therefore, this research study addresses sustainability challenges through the vital role of employee engagement via the support of project management tools and techniques.

In contemporary business, attaining an engaged workforce within the corporation sphere, has gained a momentum, with the emphasis on the importance of employee engagement programmes, as a vital managerial

aspect (Goodman et al., 2009). Recent studies have reported that only 20% of the employees are actively involved and committed at the workplace (GALLUP, 2021).

However, studying and understanding sustainability from an individual level, does not address the question of 'how' corporations can engage their employees. This question can however be addressed by drawing on insights from a project management perspective, as systematic project management tools and techniques support the successful engagement of employees in a continuous manner in various ways, which is taken up in this chapter.

When studying the engagement of employees with sustainability within the Saudi Arabian context (including the Arabian Gulf region), it appeared that the engagement of employees with sustainability has been infused by Islamic faith principles and values, which granted the Islamic faith aspect to become a fundamental theme throughout this thesis, as shown in particular in this discussion chapter, under the relevant points and sections, which will be addressed in the first section of the discussion (Section 7.1).

The second section of the discussion chapter (Section 7.2) addresses a major aspect in engaging employees with sustainability in corporations revealed through the empirical case studies, which is the theme of organizational connectivity. This section discusses 'how' employees can be effectively and more continuously engaged with sustainability programs in corporations, considering the identified core and sub-components of engaging employees with sustainability identified in my research study. Therefore, the synthesized components for the purpose of this thesis, will be addressed within the following sections under organizational connectivity, while showing how each core component (leadership, communication and strategic commitment) sits

in relation to each of the sub-components as: organizational connectivity, alignment, empowerment, monitor & control, review & feedback, reinforcement, continuity and circularity.

This section (Chapter7) considers the following:

- a) Initially employee engagement states, conditions, dimensions and related aspects with sustainability in corporations are identified.
- b) People, Planet, Profit, Product and Processes, as a scope and areas of engaging employees with sustainability in corporations is identified.
- c) The ART (Accountability, Responsibility and Transparency) as criteria for corporations to achieve efficient engagement are considered.
- d) The synthesized requisite core (components) and sub-components to engage employees with sustainability programs in corporations are determined.
- e) Collaboration. This section will address each point regarding its role and contribution to the successful achievement of organizational connectivity, as this has been initially informed aspect by the findings, in addition of being in line with the literature of engaging employees with sustainability through the aid of project management tools and techniques.

The fourth and final section (Section7.5) addresses reinforcement, continuity and circularity and the guidance of organizational change towards sustainability engaged employees' outcomes, namely processes of reinforcement. Reinforcement has been focused upon as it was found to be critical aspect of organizational change, frequently overlooked in previous research on the implementation of sustainability programmes and organisational change.

7.1 Faith, Islam and sustainability

Although the researcher did not plan for considering faith aspects (in relation to this research project) prior to the literature review and research design for the interview topic guide for the empirical study, the empirical research revealed that faith presents a focal aspect of engaging employees with sustainability along with the aid of project management tools and techniques framed by organizational change, that became unexpectedly well informed by the findings.

According to theologians, three main theology-related terms have been defined. Firstly, religiosity has been referred to as beliefs and rituals in an organized system in a designed institutional structure. Secondly, spirituality is a quest or connection to the divine at a personal level, that can be either within or outside formal religion. Thirdly, faith is a broader term, which is about the combined elements of religion and spirituality than entails searching for, while being in relationship with sacred or divine, on both within and outside institutional context (Miller-Perrin and Krumrei Mancuso, 2016).

Whilst this study did not intentionally impose faith aspects (specifically Islamic faith), prior to the execution of the empirical study, however, the findings affirm that Islamic faith formulates the focal point/theme of 'the engagement of employees with sustainability programs, specifically in Saudi Arabian corporations' (and the Arabian Gulf region). As the empirical study has been applied within the Saudi Arabian corporations through the program of two case studies (the energy and aviation corporations), therefore, it is important to state that the foregoing discussion implies that faith aspect presents a fundamental theme that has been mainly led and emphasized upon by the empirical findings.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is located at the heart of the Arab and Islamic world (Vision, 2030). One of the foremost Saudi Visions statement states “*In the context of implementing its development strategy, Saudi Arabia draws upon Islamic principles and values as well as on economic freedom, so as to integrate the three basic dimensions of development: economic, social and environmental*” (Saudi Vision 2030, 2018: P.18), The announced governmental official statement emphasize that, the Saudi Vision 2030 has been established with the consideration of the Saudi Arabia core cultural context which is the Islamic faith. In addition, according to the studies that have been conducted within Saudi Arabia context, as research affirm that the culture in Saudi Arabia is based on Islamic values that have been in confirmatory with *Sharia* (a well-known Islamic term that present Islamic/divine rules and regulations) (AlArjani *et al.*, 2021; Islam *et al.*, 2017).

Since this thesis studies sustainability as its main core-pillar in relation to the engagement of employees as the second pillar, it is essential to clarify that the results of this study revolve around the notion that the engagement of employees with sustainability in Saudi Arabian context has been faith-driven, while confirming that sustainability is fundamental to the Islamic faith.

The empirical findings in this study, which can be referred to within the findings chapter (6) theme (6.6), provide a new understanding of engaging employees with sustainability from an Islamic lens. Consequently, faith has been considered as a fundamental theme in this discussion chapter for the following reasons.

Firstly, the conducted empirical study of my thesis is within Saudi Arabian corporations by studying sustainability on a deeper level which is the employees, and more than the majority of participants embrace the Islamic faith, that requires the practice of Islamic values, whereby sustainability and ethics are fundamental to sustainability.

Secondly, the findings affirm that (Islamic) faith is the main guidance in engaging employees with sustainability programs in Saudi Arabian corporations, which will be addressed in more details under the relevant aspects, in the following sections in this chapter. One of the noteworthy results state that (the majority of) employees were guided by the '*Quran* and *Hadith*' in regard with their engagement with sustainability programs in the context of Saudi Arabia, evident in the participants exhibiting and providing verses from the *Quran* and quotations from the *Hadith* that demonstrate sustainability as a fundamental part of embraced Islamic faith within this research context, which was the main driver of their engagement of their duties as Muslims (for both *Muslimmeen* for plural masculine and *Muslimaat* for plural feminine) towards the three dimensions of sustainability, social, environmental and economic (or the three Ps: people, planet and profit).

Thirdly, since this research project studies the deeper level of sustainability (the employees) and how can the employees embrace and apply sustainability, it has been stated that both employee engagement and faith lands on a main aspect which is wellbeing, which is a main aspect in the social dimension of sustainability (see figure 7.1) below.



Figure 7.1 - Employee Engagement and Faith and their confirmation point as wellbeing

Source: Author's conceptualization

According to the literature, contemporary corporations began the consideration of faith and spirituality in their work settings through their human resource departments, by studying how vital it is to address them (faith and spirituality) via both theory and practice. It appears that faith and spirituality are important concepts specifically in workplace settings, because of the role of work in providing a sense of meaning and purpose to people's lives, which in this case the employees (Miller-Perrin and Krumrei, 2016; Carroll 2013; Peterson, 2006). Notwithstanding, employee engagement literature also agrees with this meeting point of faith and spirituality at the workplace, as it considers creating a sense of meaning and purpose as a vital aspect of empowering employees when corporations aim at engaging them.

It is important to state that the empirical findings of this study provide a new understanding of sustainability when it comes to engaging employees with it, in Saudi Arabian corporations. Therefore, sustainability in this case has been infused by faith throughout its aspects and components, particularly in this discussion chapter. Although faith, has not been imposed and planned, prior to the empirical study, neither considered in the preparations of the interview guide, nor included in the contents of the interview guide, which granted it to be a fundamental aspect in this research study, which has been revealed through the empirical findings.

In essence, for the purpose of my research study, it emerges that faith permeates throughout the mechanism of engaging employees with sustainability, as faith shapes the way sustainability is embraced, along with the aid of project management tools and techniques. Moreover, faith granted sustainability to be fundamentally faith-driven in Saudi Arabian context and the neighbouring countries (middle east/ Arabian Gulf region), specifically on the employee's level. Therefore, it is impossible to dedicate one part/section in the discussion chapter as it will present it in a fragmented manner. As it

would be presented in isolation, if faith is introduced on its own as a section. As faith will be addressed comprehensively in the rest of the parts of this discussion chapter within each relevant point.

7.2 Organizational connectivity through practical and systematic project specifications and management

Through the guidance of project management along with organizational change, this part of discussion addresses 'how' can organisational leaders and managers engage employees with sustainability programs, along with the identified core components and sub-components of engaging employees with sustainability for this/my research study. The synthesized components will be addressed under the following sections, showing how each core component (leadership, communication and strategic commitment) sits in relation to each sub-component (organizational connectivity and collaboration, alignment, empowerment, monitor & control, review & feedback, reinforcement, continuity and circularity).

To reflect on the outline, this section builds on elements already present in the academic literature, namely: (1) the identified (5Ps) as a scope and areas of engaging employees with sustainability in corporations (2) the ART Criteria for corporations for an efficient engagement Accountability, Responsibility and Transparency (3) the synthesized requisite core (components) and sub-components to engage employees with sustainability programs in corporations (4) Collaboration. As this section will address each point in regard with their roles and how they lead into a successful achievement of organizational connectivity, as this is a critical theme of my findings, in addition to being in line with the literature of engaging employees with sustainability through the aid of systematic project management tools and techniques.

7.2.1 Identifying Scope and Areas of engaging employees with sustainability in corporations (5Ps) - People, Planet, Profit, Products and Processes

In reviewing the three combined literatures of sustainability, employee engagement and project management, five 'Ps' has been identified as People, Planet, Profit, Products and Processes. Yet, the 5Ps have not been addressed within the findings of my study directly. However, it has been addressed adequately within the literature, and reflected upon from the practice point of view (i.e. Carboni and Gonzalez, 2014). Therefore, this study acknowledges the consideration of the 5Ps (people, planet, profit, products and processes) as beneficial tool for corporations to support them identify the scope and areas for engaging employees with sustainability programs, as an emphasized guiding aspect offered by project management concept (See Chapter 8 – final chapter on contribution – practitioner guidelines).

It has been argued that, when it comes to sustainability integration in regard with which aspects to engage employees with sustainability in corporations, the three pillars of sustainability "TBL" (Social, environmental, economic) should permeate throughout the corporation, via sustainability's 5Ps as People, Planet, Profit, Product and Processes, as employees 'areas of sustainability related engagement practices that can contribute to the enhancement of employees productivity and wellbeing (Lee 2008).

Innovatively, project management, as a discipline is uniquely suited to address challenges related to sustainability pillars (Carboni and Gonzalez, 2014), through the designed Green Project Management 5Ps Standard as a tool that supports the alignment of Portfolios, Programs and Projects with organizational strategy for Sustainability and focuses on the Impacts of Project Processes and Deliverables on the Environment, Society, the corporate bottom line and the local economy as GPM P5 provides guidance on what to measure and how to integrate P5 into business activities (Carboni and Gonzalez, 2014).

7.2.2 The ART Criteria for corporations for an efficient engagement Accountability, Responsibility and Transparency

The combined concepts of sustainability and project management, advocates the consideration of the three dimensions as accountability, responsibility and transparency, as criteria for supporting the employees. Such criteria can help in ensuring and maintaining the employees' emotional, cognitive and physical states, when their engagement is pursued with sustainability programs (by their corporations). More specifically, such engagement can be achieved in a meaningful manner, along with employee's availability, while feeling safe to embrace and practice sustainability at their workplaces. Whereby this thesis, likewise, goes further within this advocacy, which has been in line with the findings, as well.

According to the literature, it is believed that transparency, accountability and responsibility have been emphasized upon as dimensions of both sustainability and project management when addressed together (Pojasek, 2012; Silvius and Schipper 2014). However, they have been considered and synthesized by me (the researcher) into the acronym ART, at the early stages of developing this thesis, specifically at the stage of writing the literature review chapter (Literature review - part B), prior to conducting the empirical study of this research project.

Surprisingly, the empirical findings further support the vital role ART (Accountability, Responsibility and Transparency), associating it the corporations missions, vision and values, recommending it to be embedded in the mindset of corporations and the workforce, in regard the sustainability (see chapter 6 – theme 6.6 and sub-themes 6.4.1 and 6.4.2).

Accountability: The literature states that accountability is about the willingness to be held accountable for decisions, actions, while adhering to laws and regulations and other requirements to meet sustainability targeted outcomes (Silvius and Schipper, 2014; Pojasek, 2012). A Corporation is ultimately accountable for the impacts it's decisions and activities towards social, environmental and the economy pillars of sustainability. Nowadays, there is a call for more demand towards accountability by stakeholders, the emphasis would be on the employees as an aspect of stakeholders. Corporations strive to achieve accountability by monitoring a lengthy list of metrics of sustainability related activities and practices (Pojasek, 2012).

Responsibility: Acting responsibly comes at the core of sustainability. As corporations' show their commitments and responsibilities towards sustainability's three pillar, social, environmental and the economy.

According to the literature, corporations must consider applying responsibility dimension through the following. Firstly, responsibilities towards environmental stewardship (e.g. reduce the use of all resources, eliminate waste, pay attention to the prevention of pollution, etc.). Secondly, responsibilities towards social well-being (e.g. protect human rights, ensure fair operating practices, assess labour practices, including health and safety, optimize community involvement and awareness, etc.). Thirdly, responsibilities towards economic prosperity (e.g. create top-line growth (brand), ensure bottom-line growth (profits), improve governance and maintain the organization's "license to operate.", contribute to community development, etc.). However, the responsibilities from the employees, suppliers and other stakeholders have been identified as: doing what you have committed to do, always giving your best effort, being held accountable for your choices, helping others when they need help, being fair and helping to make a better world Pojasek (2012). However, the findings presented the

same dimension of responsibility from the CSR perspective, but rather explained in a broad and unfocused way.

Transparency: Transparency is about proactively providing information and reflecting it openly without restrictions (Silvius and Schipper, 2014). For Pojasek (2012), transparency serves as a “self-regulating mechanism” for corporations. It also is important to maintaining ethical behaviour, and often is mentioned in a corporation’s code of conduct.

In addition, Information relevant to demonstrating corporation transparency addressed aspects such as: (1) purpose, nature, and locations of organizational activities, (2) identity of any controlling interest in the activities of the organization, (3) manners in which organizational decisions are made, implemented and reviewed, (4) definitions applicable to roles, responsibilities, accountabilities, and authorities across the different functions of the organization, (5) standards and criteria used to evaluate sustainability performance; performance with regard to relevant and significant interests of stakeholders, (6) sources, amounts, and application of funds expended on sustainability efforts, known and likely impacts and risks (to society, the environment, and the economy) from organizational decisions, activities and specifics to the stakeholder engagement process (Pojasek, 2012).

This thesis studied the engagement of employees with sustainability within faith-driven context. Whereby the concepts, sustainability, employees’ engagement, project management and Islamic faith intersect, a comprehensive Arabic term, instilled by Islamic faith emerge as *Amanah*, which includes the three dimensions (Accountability, Responsibility and Transparency) as criteria for engaging employees with sustainability in corporations that have to be considered when embracing sustainability by corporations, throughout the corporation’s hierarchy (see figure 7.2 below).



Figure 7.2 - Amanah as Islamic term for ART
(Accountability, Responsibility and Transparency)
Source: Author's conceptualization

More interestingly, the findings presented the word '*Amanah*' has been addressed under different settings. For example, *Amanah* is embraced and applied in the internal and external levels, in the way corporations operate in the context of Saudi Arabia, representing how (ART) Accountability, Responsibility and Transparency are applied in the way corporations operate as well as the employees work and non-work-related behaviours.

However, how vigorously *Amanah* is employed requires another level of investigation which is beyond this thesis scope, as the focus of this thesis is on identifying *Amanah* along with its comprehensive meaning as ART (Accountability, Responsibility and Transparency) as crucial dimensions and criteria for engaging employees with sustainability in corporations. In fact the word *Amanah* is also applied in the Western management styles. For example, the HSBC bank (hsbcamanah.com) under its finance and banking

activities, which makes it a familiar term within the Western context as well, to provide accounts for clients who are interested in opening bank accounts.

In the Islamic management literature *Amanah* lies in the heart of the Islamic faith. Amanah is obligatory for every Muslim, as an act of fearing Allah (the God) in seeking his reward and avoiding his punishment for any act of misconduct at a personal, societal, organizational, environmental, in business and trade, and at any sphere. According to Islamic scholars (e.g. Muis, Alias, Kamaruding, & Mokthar, 2018) every Muslim must apply Amanah in their behaviours and duties explicitly and implicitly. Whether at a personal level or with the surroundings such as: nature, animals, consumptions, belongings, relationships, work and non-work related duties, trade, etc.

In essence, according to Shuhari (2019) the act of Amanah is considered as a noble quality that includes, trustworthiness, responsibility, accountability, credibility and transparency. However, there is lack of evidence in the literature, in regard with Amanah specifically within sustainability on the employees level within the Arabian Gulf (Saudi Arabian) context (Razimi, Noor and Daud, 2014).

7.2.3 Identifying the guiding elements and parameters for engaging employees with sustainability

it is essential to offer a map of contents in regard with the identified conditions, states and drivers of employee engagement with sustainability as a guidance, according to the agreed and confirmed points by the findings and the literature of this/my research study. Whereby the rest of the discussion results have been built upon such guiding employee engagement points. They have been summerized in the below table (Table 7.3 below and Chapter 8– the final chapter on Contributions). The following section will explain them in detail.

Employee Engagement	The identified conditions, states, parameters and elements	Theorists
States of engagement	emotionally, cognitively and physically	(Kahn, 1990)
Conditions of engagement	meaningfulness, availability and safety.	(Kahn, 1990; May, Gilson and Harter, 2004)
Drivers of engaging employees	CAMP: Autonomy, Mastery and Purpose (Pink, 2014) + Community	Autonomy, Mastery and Purpose (Pink, 2014) CAMP (Community) element by Amina AbuShal (Author of this thesis)
Core elements of employee engagement	involvement, commitment, passion, enthusiasm, focused efforts, energy	(Macey and Schneider, 2008)
Core aspect of measuring the engagement	vigor, dedication and absorption	(Schaufeli et al., 2002,2006; UWES-9)

Table 7.3 - The guiding elements and parameters for engaging employees with sustainability (states, conditions, core elements and aspect for measuring the engagement)

Source: Compiled by this thesis's author's

Firstly, the construct 'employee engagement' has been defined as The process of harnessing an employee involves their active engagement and commitment to their organizational function, both physically and mentally (Kahn, 1990).

Therefore, according to Kahn (1990), the identified states of engagement are emotionally, cognitively and physically. In parallel the findings have been in line with the literature in regard with the three states of engagement that have been introduced by Kahn (1990), specifically when they're applied in regard with emotional, cognitive and physical engagement with sustainability programs in corporations (within the Saudi Arabia context). The states of

engagement introduced by the literature, have been clearly supported by the current findings of this study.

According to the empirical findings (Findings chapter (6) – themes (6.2) and (6.4)) , although they initially confirmed the physical engagement of the employees, due to the work physical attendance, however, the findings emphasized on the cognitive and emotional engagement, affirming that three states of engagement as emotionally, cognitively and physically are primarily important, when it comes to employees engaging themselves with sustainability programs in corporations. Surprisingly, according to the findings, the safety dimension was found to be as equally important as the other two (meaningfulness and availability) for employees to engage themselves with sustainability in corporations (within the Saudi Arabian context).

Secondly, it is believed that, in order for an individual to be engaged, three psychological dimensions/conditions must be met: meaningfulness (job enrichment and role fit) safety (rewarding co-workers and caring/helpful supervisors and exchangeable positive and supportive relations with colleagues) and availability (belief of having physical and mental resources) (Kahn, 1990; May, Gilson and Harter, 2004). Although the last dimensions as safety has been given less attention in employee engagement studies. As safety dimension is about feeling comfortable of express yourself without the fear of being judged or criticized at the workplace by work colleagues, supervisors and/or managers (Kahn, 1990).

Thirdly, the most commonly reported drivers were summarised in the work of 'The Conference Board' (2006), proposing 26 different drivers of engagement to 12 largely consultancy-based studies of engagement as: Trust and integrity, the nature of the job, the line-of-sight between individual,

performance and company performance, career growth opportunities, pride in the company, relationships with co-workers/team members, employee development and the personal relationship with one’s manager. In addition to the two-way commitments from the organization and the employees towards each other, that were recognized as drivers as well in a lengthy and detailed list (Albrecht, 2012; Wollard and Shuck, 2011; Christina *et al.*, 2011; The Conference Board, 2006; Robinson *et al.*, 2004).

It is somewhat surprising that the empirical findings chapter 6 (i.e theme 6.2), confirmed the foundational engagement’s drivers in a simplified and inclusive way, which can be noted through the example that was literality emphasized upon by Pink’s of autonomy, mastery and purpose (as only three drivers). However, another unexpected fourth element has been introduced as ‘community’, which seems important in practice, and has not been emphasized upon within the literature.

The table below (table7.4) provides the recognized differences between what was explored in the literature and the emerged drivers of engagement in the findings.

Drivers of engagement discussed in the academic literature	Drivers of engagement which emerged from within the empirical findings
Trust and integrity; The nature of the job The line-of-sight between individual performance and company performance Career growth opportunities Pride in the company Relationships with co-workers/team members	Autonomy Mastery Purpose Community

Employee development and the personal relationship with one's manager (The Conference Board, 2006)	
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Table 7.4 - Drivers of employee engagement
Adopted from sources: (The Conference Board, 2006; Pink, 2011)

The three drivers of engagement (as autonomy, mastery and purpose) that have been recognized by Pink (2011), in addition to the last unexpected element/driver that has been introduced, emphasized and reflected upon from practice (according to the findings) which is 'community' – although this element driver has not been yet approved via previous research, in relation with the engagement of employees. As has been noted, when employee engagement drivers are combined altogether, from both the literature as autonomy, mastery and purpose, plus the added one that emerged from empirical findings as the community driver, have inspired the researcher to synthesize those engagement drivers into the acronyms, by re-organizing the orders of them, while adding the addition element into (CAMP) Community, Autonomy, Mastery, and Purpose, as engagement drivers that have to be considered when engaging employees with sustainability in corporations synthesised to serve the purpose of this study in regard with employee engagement thesis pillar.

According to the literature of employee engagement, it has been stated that: (1) the core elements of employee engagement are (involvement, commitment, passion, enthusiasm, focused efforts, energy) (Macey and Schneider, 2008). (2) In addition to the core the core aspect of measuring the engagement as, vigor, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002,2006; UWES-9). However, those core elements and aspects of engaging employees specifically with sustainability have been underexamined.

In essence, employee engagement as a construct has been shown to be vital as the soul of the corporation, according to both the findings (chapter 6 – theme 1.2) and the literature. However, these elements, (states, conditions, dimensions, drivers, etc.) that have been addressed, forming a solid base for my results to meet the purpose/objective of this research project, in regard with employee engagement as the second pillar for this thesis.

Furthermore, whether employee engagement states, conditions, dimensions, etc., with sustainability, harmonize specifically within the required relevant core and sub-components, as major results of this thesis as well, which will be addressed critically along with the evidence from the findings against the literature, in addition to whether project management tools and techniques would help towards such change. Which will be addressed in the following sections of this discussion chapter.

7.3 The requisite core components (and sub -components) to support the engagement of employees with sustainability programs in corporations

This section emphasizes and elucidates further on the identified core and subordinate components for engaging employees with sustainability programs. Firstly, the core components have been identified for the purpose of this thesis as leadership, communication and the management strategic commitment and direction. The core components permeate through the subordinate components, which can be noted as one of the key results for this current study. As the core components have a vital role altogether in forming the bridge that support the function of the components (core and sub) together. Secondly, the subordinate components that support the engagement of employees with sustainability in corporations as organizational connectivity, alignment, empowerment, monitor & control, review & feedback, reinforcement, continuity and circularity, are all elements

that can be supported and amplified in practice, through the practical deployment of systematic project management tools and techniques.

In the following two sections, the core components and subordinate components will be addressed in detail in relation to how they can support the employees to embrace and apply sustainability at their workplaces, which has been informed by the findings, while being in line with the literature.

7.3.1 leadership

Leadership was one of the most emphasized upon requirement for engaging employees with sustainability with qualified leaders who are aware and knowledgeable of the employment and unitization of project management tools and techniques, to support the employees in embracing and applying sustainability in corporations, from both the literature and the findings of this thesis, which has been identified as the first and main core component, by me as the researcher.

Different characteristics of leadership have been identified, and have been classified as transactional or transformational, as the most well-known leadership styles in regard (in general) and specifically within the concept of sustainability, according to leadership theorists (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978). Leadership is associated with goal orientation. Transformational leadership is associated with learning goal orientation. Whereas transactional leadership is associated with a performance-goal orientation.

In addition, Johannsdottir, Olafsson and Davidsdottir (2015) highlighted leadership roles as, establishing a sense of urgency, acting as role models, sharing a vision, providing necessary resources, empowering employees to act, and showing commitments by themselves wholeheartedly towards the

implementation of successful sustainability strategies. Likewise, leadership from employee engagement perspectives, has been addressed as a key antecedent and driver to employee engagement (Wollard and Shuck, 2011). In addition to the key role leadership plays for an efficient project management in relation to sustainability in corporations (Silvius *et al.*, 2017; Carvalho and Rabechini, 2017). In addition to the vital role of leadership in leading a successful change and goal achieving (Carnall, 2003, 2007; Kotter, 1996, 2006; Hiatt and Creasey, 2012). Therefore, the three pillars of this thesis (as sustainability, employee engagement and project management) in addition to the fourth ones as organizational change, considered leadership at their core aspects, which has been considered by (me) the researcher as ‘a core building block’ at the literature review stage of this thesis.

Although leadership role was emphasized upon as vital in engaging employees with sustainability, however, the findings did not indicate explicitly about the suitable and sufficient style of leadership. The findings, seem to recommend a combination of both transactional (performance goal oriented) and transformational (learning goal oriented). Yet, the findings (chapter 6, i.e. sub-theme 6.4.2) indicate that more of a transactional leadership style was required for engaging employees with sustainability, via the aid of project management.

However, this research study argues that a combination of both styles of leadership, in addition to adapting more than one or two leadership styles. Due to how complex engaging employees with sustainability can be to leaders, when leaders face obstacles, as different situations and challenges require different styles of leadership. Although this research study does not aim at studying leadership in details since the related literature can be broad and rich. However, it does emphasize on leadership as core components according to both the literature and the findings of this thesis.

Most and foremost, the empirical findings (chapter 6, i.e. sub-theme 6.4.2) indicate that, the most suitable leadership style would be a 'leading by example' one. As in corporations, leaders need to demonstrate their commitments towards sustainability as a way of showing their engagement through their actions and not only by talking about sustainability to the employees. The example below states:

7.3.2 Communication

Communication came as the second necessary core component for engaging employees with sustainability in corporations, according to the literature, which has been confirmed and supported by the empirical findings.

According to the literature, communication plays a vital role as a blood flow and circulation in any corporation, specifically when the goal is to engage employees with sustainability. Scholars emphasized the consideration of different types of audience when corporations plan to engage their employees with sustainability programs. Also, they recommended the application of employing various communication methods (Greene *et al.*, 2014; Potoski and Callery, 2017).

According to Gupta and Sharma (1996) sustainability goals should be communicated to the employees. Standards of performance, especially with respect to sustainability concerns, need to be subject to continuous improvement. Corporations must consider applying frequent communication of its sustainability programs, initiatives, and goals, so that employees can know what is expected. Statistics indicate that employees do not feel that they have been informed properly in regard with sustainability related matters in their corporations (Madsen and Ulhoi, 2001). Eventually, it has been recommended that leaders in corporations must embrace a democratic and open style of communication in regard to sustainability ideas (Ramus,

2001; Ramus and Steger, 2000), as well leaders who lead by example (Markos and Sridevi, 2010). However, communication requires individuals to disseminate, liaise and convey sustainability throughout the corporation's hierarchy, highlighting the role of teamwork.

Likewise, the evidence from the empirical findings of this study (findings chapter 6 – communication as a dominant theme throughout this study's empirical findings). supports the literature (i.e. Carlson, 2009; Govindarajulu and Daily, 2004; May, Gilson and Harter, 2004), by elucidating how communication is important in conveying and consolidating the message of sustainability throughout the corporation, specifically on the employees level, in addition to the role communication plays in raising employees awareness towards sustainability.

This research study supports applying various communication methods, that need to be tailored to meet different employees' abilities and needs, in order to support employee engagement in a frequent and continuous manner, with sustainability at their workplace. Principally, communication has the role of visualizing, attracting and making sustainability-related aspects visible for the employees in order for them to engage themselves with sustainability programmes.

Finally, both the literature and the empirical findings of this study stress on the importance of making the language to communicate sustainability appropriate to the employee audience, in order to attract employees and motivating them engage with sustainability programs. The sustainability messages must be appropriate to audience, circulated throughout the corporation, and engage employees through language that is less complicated, less technical, more humanistic, and simplified to touch the employees and awaken their sense of responsibility, belonging and meaningfulness.

7.3.3 Management strategic commitments and direction

Management strategic commitment and direction appeared to be vital by both the literature and this research empirical study's findings, which grant it to be considered as a third core component for this thesis.

Management commitment has been defined in the literature as “generating human energy and activating the human mind. Without it, the implementation of any new initiative or idea would be seriously compromised” (Argyris, 1998: p. 99). Management commitment must create an atmosphere of encouragement, innovation and risk taking, values, norms, attitudes, and behaviour that promote sustainability improvement efforts and have to be nurtured and maintained (Ramus, 2001). Likewise, Wilms *et al.* (1994) stated that people will follow management direction, pushing towards a specific direction where the corporation goes. However, management commitment requires efficient leadership to steer, keep up, support and foster sustainability commitments throughout the corporation (Ramus and Steger 2000; Egri & Herman, 2000; Kane, 2011; Haddock-Fraser *et al.*, 2018; Muller & Kolk, 2010).

In parallel, the empirical findings (chapter 6 – theme 6.6) stressed upon the management commitment throughout every aspect related to supporting the employees to embrace and apply sustainability in corporations with the aid of project management tools and techniques. In fact, the management commitment has been associated with a successful engagement of the

Eventually, to re-emphasize once again, in this discussion chapter a major result emphasized on the importance of the three core components as (1) leadership, (2) communication and (3) the management strategic

commitments and direction, when corporations aim at engaging employees with sustainability. Therefore, the three core-components permeate throughout the sub-components, which will be addressed below.

7.4. The requisite sub-components to support the engagement of employees with sustainability programs in corporations

7.4.1 Alignment (value-purpose -goal)

Alignment has been emphasized in the employee engagement literature, specifically in relation to with the meaningfulness. According to the literature, on employee engagement 'meaningfulness' can be achieved when corporations support employees to feel that the job they are performing is emotionally meaningful, cognitively meaningful and physically meaningful. This can be achieved when corporation's value, goal and purpose are aligned (Kahn, 1990; May, Gilson and Harter, 2004), see figure 8.5 below.



Figure 7.5 - The alignment of corporation's value-goal- purpose for meaningful engagement

Author's conceptualization adopted from source: (Kahn, 1990; May, Gilson and Harter, 2004)

Identically, within the combined literature of sustainability and project management, an alignment has been identified as highly important through the designed Green Project Management (GPM) 5 'P's Standard which stands for People, Planet, Profit, Products and Processes. This tool supports the alignment of Portfolios, Programs and Projects with organizational strategy

for sustainability and focuses on the impacts of Project Processes and Deliverables on the Environment, Society, the corporate bottom line and the local economy as Green Project Management (GPM) 5 'P's provides guidance on what to measure and how to integrate P5 into business activities (Carboni and Gonzalez, 2014).

However, the literature indicates that the alignment of sustainability's value, purpose and goals on the employees level has been underexamined, as it has been studied more on the strategic macro-level of the corporation. Daily and Hung, (2001) study addressed this gap, by confirming that corporations should include the alignment of their Human Resource functions by considering the ways in which subsidiaries are able to engage their workforce in the sustainability practices, and yet this is an area that is still underexamined. It has been argued that the alignment of corporation's value-purpose-goal appeared to be more significant factor that contribute to the engagement of employees. Sahoo and Sahu (2009) affirmed that the employee looks for an alignment of value-meaning, which presents a true sense of connection, a common purpose and a shared sense of meaning at work.

Conversely, the empirical findings (chapter 6 – 3rd findings) indicate that there has been a lost sense of meaningfulness for the employees in regard with sustainability, which hindered them from being engaged, due to the lack of considering alignment of sustainability related policies and initiatives on the employees' level. Furthermore, the findings confirm that employees lost physical engagement with the emotional and cognitive states of engagement when they did not feel connected with sustainability programs in their corporations.

When investigating further, project management provides the tools and techniques to enable the connecting of corporation's value, mission and vision and support the alignment of them, by breaking them down into separate initiatives (Govindarajulu and Daily, 2004), which can be tailored

according to the employees' abilities and needs, in order for them to more effectively engage with sustainability.

In essence, sustainability tends to engender apprehensive feelings emotionally, cognitively and physically in employees unless very broad and abstract concepts are translated into practical actions that are achievable and applicable, in other words sustainability becomes meaningful findings.

Therefore, both the literature and empirical findings support the significance of alignment of value, purpose and goal as the first crucial sub- component in engaging employee emotionally, cognitively and physically with sustainability through practical achievable programmes and projects.

7.4.2 Empowerment

The empowerment aspect appears to be fundamental to both employee engagement and sustainability literature. From a sustainability perspective, empowerment has been categorized under the social pillar/dimension of sustainability. Empowerment has been emphasized as one of the aspects of the social pillar, along with other aspects, such as, human rights, fair labour practices, living conditions, health and safety, wellness, diversity, equity, work-life-balance, community engagement, volunteerism (Diesendorf, 2000; Huq, Stevenson, and Zorzini, 2014). All of which as important aspects of the social pillar of sustainability. However, this research emphasizes upon empowerment mainly, as it is beyond the scope of this research to address the other aspects of sustainability's social pillar.

Although empowerment has been addressed on the macro-levels (external to corporations) associated with Sustainable development Goals (DGs), however, many corporations embrace it in their internal macro-levels (internal to corporations) as guidance to be adopted to meet the

corporation's outcomes and goals (Sarkis, J., Helms and Hervani, 2010; Frandsen, Morsing and Vallentin, 2013; Epstein and Buhovac, 2014).

In parallel, the employee engagement literature considers empowerment at its heart. Employee empowerment is about "the importance of giving employees both the ability and responsibility to take active steps to identify problems in their workplaces, while dealing effectively with such problems (Leitch *et al.*, 1995). It is impossible for corporation's vision and strategy to be achieved without empowering employees (Argyris, 1998). As has been noted, both sustainability and employee engagement literature, share empowerment as a common essential aspect (see table 7.6 below).

Sustainability – under the social pillar	Employee Engagement
empowerment	Empowerment: encouragement- Feedback- Leadership - Opportunities for learning - Career growth opportunities- Positive work climate- Rewards - Emotional fit - Employee motivation- Supportive Two-way relationship - organizational culture

Table 7.6 – Shared common empowerment aspect by both literature, employee engagement and sustainability created, combined and synthesised by the researcher of this thesis
Sources for Employee engagement (Albrecht, 2012; Wollard and Shuck, 2011; Christina *et al.*, 2011; The Conference Board, 2006; Robinson *et al.*, 2004)
Sources for Social sustainability: (Diesendorf, 2000; Huq, Stevenson, and Zorzini, 2014; United Nations, 2015)

Sustainability can be pursued through empowered employees who have autonomy and decision-making power by being part of sustainability programs in their corporations. According to the literature, employees are better engaged when they feel a sense of having a bond with the organisation

they work for. To point out, empowered employees feel in control of their opportunities at work to prove themselves; they become aware of the assigned task to them to be accomplished; as they are willing to commit the necessary emotional and personal energies to excel in their jobs; by showing that they are emotionally, cognitively and physically involved while performing their tasks (Buhler, 2006; Govindarajulu and Daily, 2004).

Similarly, the findings of this study offered several explanations on what empowerment means in practice (Findings chapter 6, Sub-theme 6.4.1), specifically sustainability-related empowered employees. Empowerment according to the findings means to motivate, praise, delegate tasks and authorities, and eventually, grant employees a sense of mastery and autonomy.

However, the employees felt the absence of mastery and autonomy to practicing sustainability., within the two case studies' organisations of my empirical study. The empirical findings (chapter 6 – theme 6.4) of my research show that, although the employees expressed high levels of willingness to engage themselves with sustainability, since it became a heated topic within Saudi Arabian context and globally. As the employees developed frustrations, and they wanted to develop the sense of being self-empowered and wanted to engage, without the restrictions of having to go through the lengthy processes (according to their complains) of approval for sustainability related behaviour at their workplaces. Which mainly require the support of leadership. In addition, the findings (chapter 6, sub-theme 6.4) also stressed on the need of managers to have leadership skills related to motivating, encouraging and praising the employees when they embrace and practice sustainability at their corporations. Furthermore, practicing mercy and compassion upon each other at work is very empowering, as a main

requirement in Islam. Therefore, leadership has to be through practicing sustainability first as a leader.

This research study put forward the claim that visualization has been one of the most neglected powerful tools to empower the employees and engage them with sustainability in practice. It is a potent tool for communicating sustainability and attracting the employees, as it draws their attention to positive dimensions of engagement. This semiotic approach develops meaning making, which is a necessity in engaging employees, which is as equally important as written and verbal languages and scripts. Visualizations help employees to understand what sustainability is about in various ways: (1) helping the employees to see a holistic image of sustainability in their corporations, (2) helping the employees to see the direction of sustainability (3) helping them to realize the achieved efforts so far (4) realizing the alignment of sustainability internally (in their corporations) and externally (national and international levels) (5) helping them to feel connected and consolidate the employees sense of belonging with sustainability. Both the literature and the findings concurred in regard to how powerful visualization is to empower and consequently engage the employees emotionally and cognitively with sustainability programs.

The empirical findings endorsed visualizing sustainability to the employees in their corporations, which lead to attracting and simplifying sustainability messages and making it look more meaningful to the employees (findings chapter 6, sub-theme 6.7.1). Furthermore, the literature that address the powerful tool of visualization along with “walk the talk” method is still developing. As such action-oriented visualisation methods can contribute and support the engagement of employees with sustainability (Stocker, 2005).

Kanashiro, Rands and Starik (2020) provided an explanation which states that, due to the fact that sustainability challenges have almost exclusively

increased in terms of quantity, intensity, and complexity during our careers, we all need not just to talk the sustainability talk, but also walk the sustainability talk in corporations to encourage employees turn those talks in actions. As it encourages leaders to embrace and apply it first, then have the influence on their employees to follow their lead, since this type of tool and method is mainly related to decision-making and action-taking, while considering both short- and long-term horizons. As it can be noted here both core components as communicating sustainability, as well as, leadership here play a vital role in empowering employees through the tool of visualizing sustainability and walking the talk methods.

However, empowered employees can be achieved when their sustainability awareness is raised and when they are, trained according to their needs and receive support by their corporations by getting incentivized and rewarded.

7.4.2.1 Incentives and rewards

One of the most effective ways to empower employees can be through incentives and rewards. Corporations can design an incentive and reward system, for their engaged employees, departments, branches etc. whether through verbal incentives and rewards, by encouraging the employees verbally, in addition to the tangible and/or monetary incentives and rewards.

The findings affirm that the missing element of rewards and incentives is about 'how' to corporations can tailor rewards, incentives and appreciation when the employees engage themselves emotionally, cognitively and physically with sustainability. Incentivizing employees can contribute to motivating and encouraging them, which according to the findings has been missing adequate attention to -date in the academic literature (See Chapter 6, sub-theme 6.4.3).

Drawing on similar lines, the literature states that, rewards system must be well designed to support promoting employees to perform their sustainability

practices, which can be implemented in various forms as financial and recognition awards. Such as award and recognition programs, profit-sharing programs, increase in pay, benefits and incentives, and suggestion programs are some of the systems that can be used to reward employees for demonstrating a good quality of sustainability practices (Laabs, 1992; Marks, 2001). However, it has been argued that it is unlikely that employees get motivated by money most of the time. Ramus (2001) has shown that supervisory behaviours that encourage daily praise coupled with sustainability awards were ranked as being among the most important factors for sustainability innovativeness and encouraged creativity and problem solving by employees.

One of the most effective ways for corporations within Saudi Arabian (Arabian Gulf region) to empower the employees is through embedding the principles and values of Islamic faith (that the employees embrace) and utilizing them to serve sustainability programs. Since Islamic faith has been identified in this research study as a fundamental aspect, which has been addressed throughout this discussion chapter under the relevant elements and themes. By doing so, corporations can touch the employees emotionally and cognitively at a deeper level. Specially that such incentives are accompanied by reward for Muslims (masculine) and Muslimas (Feminine), since practicing sustainability is considered fundamental, as each Muslim and Muslima are required to behave in a sustainable and ethical manner throughout the societal, environmental and economic spheres. In essence, it is obligatory for people who embrace the Islamic faith to practice sustainability in every aspect of their lifestyles, as a considered act of worship. Verses from the Quran and Hadith as examples for seeking Allah to be pleased with Muslims and Muslimas and the granted rewards (see table 7.7 below):

The reward for following Allah's commands by showing gratitude towards what humankind has bee been granted from the blessings of common good

Source as a verse from the Quran: "*Do no mischief on the earth, after it hath been set in order...*" (Quran, al-A'raf: 56).

Source as a verse from the Quran: "*Eat and drink from the provision of Allah, and do not commit abuse on the earth, spreading corruption.*" (Quran, al Baqara, 60)

... كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا مِنْ رِزْقِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَعْتُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾

Source from the Hadith: "Whoever is kind to the creatures of God is kind to himself." (Hadith: Bukhari)

Gaining good deeds as a reward from Allah when behaviours are in favour of Earth's ecosystem and natural resources

Source from the Hadith: Anas bin Malik reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "No Muslim plants a tree or sows a seed and then a bird, or a human, or an animal eats from it but that it is charity for him." Source: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 2320, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 1553

Another example from a verse from the Quran: "*It is He Who has brought into being gardens, the cultivated and the wild, and date palms, and fields with produce of all kinds, and olives and pomegranates, similar (in kind) and variegated. Eat of their fruit in season, but give (the poor) their due on harvest day. And do not waste, for God does not love the wasteful.*" (Qur'an 6:141)

Disciplines against unethical and unsustainable behaviors - prohibitions to practice extravagance (at any level, not even emotions, resources, environment,.....)

Source as a verse from the Quran: "*Verily spendthrifts are brothers of the Evil Ones.* (or) another translation: *Behold, the squanderers are, indeed, of the ilk of the satans*"

إِنَّ الْمُبَذِّرِينَ كَفَرُوا إِخْوَانَ الشَّيْطَانِ هُوَ لَبِيسٌ لَّوَّافٍ خُورًا

Source as a verse from the Quran: "*And follow not the bidding of those who are extravagant, 'who make mischief in the land, and mend not (their ways)'*" (Quran, al-Shu'ara': 151-152).

Practicing mindfulness upon the blessings we have been granted

Source as a verse from the Quran: "*And the earth have We spread out, and placed therein firm hills, and caused each seemly thing to grow therein all kinds of things in due balance. And We have provided therein means of subsistence for you and for those for whose sustenance ye are not responsible. And there is not a thing but its (sources and) treasures (inexhaustible) are with Us; but We only send down thereof in due and ascertainable measures. And We send the fecundating winds, then cause the rain to descend from the sky, therewith*

providing you with water (in abundance), though ye are not the guardians of its stores” (Quran, al-Hijr 19).

Table 7.7 - Verses from the Quran and Hadith as examples for seeking Allah to be pleased with Muslims and Muslimas and the granted rewards

Source: (Quran (not date); Abu Da’ood, (unknown date) ; AlBukhari, (unknown date); AlAhdal, 2009; Şaḥīḥ Bukhāri, 1987)

Likewise, Islamic faith appeared as the key motive that empowered the employees sustainability related attitudes and behaviours within Saudi Arabian corporations, evident in the findings of this study (chapter 6 – themes 6.1 and 6.6). People who embrace the Islamic faith instinctively practice sustainability, as it forms a solid base for them.

7.4.2.2 Training and gaining knowledge

This research study argues that training and gaining knowledge can be considered as a branch of empowerment that mainly supports the cognitive engagement of the employees which consequently feed into and enhance their emotional engagement with sustainability.

In regard with training and gaining knowledge, the findings indicate that the cognitive engagement of employees with sustainability, has been granted to the employees with limited opportunities. As the employees showed interests in learning more about sustainability programs in their corporations (See Chapter 6, sub-them 6.4.1).

In reviewing the literature, scholars (e.g. Fernandez, Junquera, and Ordiz, 2003; Govindarajulu and Daily, 2004; Greene *et al.*, 2014) stated that training in the context of sustainability is about learning opportunities for employees that support them in gaining knowledge about sustainability related policies, environmental, economic and societal aspects, procedures, instructions and non-conformity reporting. Based on that, employees can receive different types of training according to their roles. Moreover, sustainability training

and learning processes should suite the nature of the employees' jobs without adding pressure to their daily work activities. Ramus (2002: p. 154) asserted that training helps to "improve employee's abilities to give high quality contributions to sustainability activities".

On the positive side, sustainability-focused training and knowledge gaining boosts the employees' engagements specifically in regard with the safety condition. As under various aspects in the findings, indicate that the safety condition in regard with employee engagement with sustainability has not been considered sufficiently. In practice, corporations seem unaware of the importance of the safety dimension for the engagement of employees in general and specifically in regard with sustainability (Findings chapter 6 - theme 6.2).

Drawing on similar lines, the issue in practice in regard with safety condition of employee engagement has been also underexamined within the literature.

The employee engagement dimension of safety has been given less attention in employee engagement studies. Kahn (1990) believes that, in order for an individual to be engaged, three psychological dimensions must be met: meaningfulness (job enrichment and role fit) safety (rewarding co-workers and caring/helpful supervisors and exchangeable positive and supportive relations with colleagues) and availability (belief of having physical and mental resources) (May, Gilson and Harter, 2004). However, the last dimension safety is referred to as, the extent of freedom and respect an employee can gain, while expressing themselves at the workplace, without holding the fear of negative ramifications, that they might receive from their boss and co-workers at the workplace (Kahn, 1990).

Despite the lack of attention to the safety dimension, other research studies confirmed its importance in engaging employees. The safety dimension of engaging employees has been emphasized upon as an important dimension in the following studies as examples: (1) Pink (2011) stated that feeling safe

to express one's self at work, as it boost confidence, which lead to autonomy, one of the vital drivers of employee engagement in his research study. (2) another research study identified safety as the relationship between co-workers and team members, in addition to the relationship with one's manger infused by trust and integrity (The Conference Board, 2006). (3) Also, Wollard and Shuck (2011) stated that safety on the organizational level as employers must work on enhancing perceptions of work safety and positive work climate. And on the individual level, they emphasized on employee's motivation, optimism, self-esteem and self-efficacy, which cannot happen without feeling encouraged and supported to express yourself at work. (4) and lastly, May, Gilson and Harter, (2004) stated that individuals feel safe at work, when they perceive that they will not suffer for expressing their true selves at work. As they identified related conditions to the safety dimension of engagement as, co-workers' relations, supervisor relations, co-workers' norms and self-consciousness. Therefore, the researcher in this research study has given full and fair attention while equally considering the three conditions as dimensions of employee engagement, of meaningfulness, availability and safety along with its associated engagement states of being emotionally, cognitively and physically engaged, of both Kahn's model (1990), and May, Gilson and Harter, (2004).

7.4.3 Monitoring & control

Tools for effective monitoring and control support employees to stay on track in regard with their efforts and achievements, which can strengthen their engagement to be in line with the goals and purposes of sustainability program. Also, corporations can have up-to-date information in regard to the progress of engaging employees with sustainability program, through project management tools such as reporting (graphical and non-graphical), and the consideration of high and low risks (Wysocki, 2007) which can support

individual and departmental achievements to become unified, towards serving holistic sustainability goals in their corporations.

Mainly the attention has been given to monitoring sustainability in corporations at the macro levels, which entails mainly the way corporations operate. However, very little attention has been paid towards designing a monitoring and control system that focuses on the employees and their engagement with sustainability. One of the well-recognized tools for monitoring sustainability at the macro level is the implementation of ISO family (Which have been explained in more details in the literature review chapter, Chapter 4). ISO stands for International Organization for standardization, whereby thousands of various standards cover almost every aspect of modernized daily life. To articulate further, some Iso standards deal with the assurance, when a company meet specific environmental goals (Sayre, 1996; Castka and Balzarova, 2008). In quality management, ISO management standards represent a familiar cycle known as Plan-Do-Check-Act. Demonstrating steps of establishing objectives and processes, implementing, measurement and evaluation, and adaptation and improvement (Robertson, 2017). Another ISO tool is called ISO 26000 which is considered as a guidance for Social Responsibility activities and performances. Such tools require specialized individuals to be responsible for and be part of it, and is not designed for all the employees to even recognize the purpose of such tools in their corporations.

The empirical findings of this study affirmed however that in practice there has been weak/poor implementation of monitoring systems. Or even in the case when monitoring system worked with a quality at the beginning of the implementation of sustainability programs, unfortunately such monitoring systems were deployed and maintained infrequently (See Chapter 6, sub-theme 6.4.2).

This study therefore stresses the importance of monitoring and control systems that are designed for the employee levels, in a simplified manner, with less technical language, that can be applied frequently, to support the employees feeling of connectedness and being part of the program.

Surprisingly, within the empirical study of this thesis, although the employees did not feel well supported or monitored by their corporations in regard with their sustainability efforts towards sustainability, yet, their Islamic faith principles played a major role on having the sense of being self-monitored, based on the Islamic principles and values they believe in and embrace. (See findings Chapter 6, sub-theme 6.4.2).

In addition, the findings clearly state that the employees demonstrated self-regulated monitoring towards sustainability's individuals' responsibilities and duties is in their workplaces, rooted mainly from the individuals' embrace of Islamic faith, which then became fostered and encouraged to be applied at their workplace. Peer support and peer monitoring by the employees is/are practiced towards each other at work without their corporation's monitoring system, due to the Islamic faith they hold, through the individuals embraced faith principles, social and cultural self-regulated monitoring system in the Kingdom Saudi Arabia which is a common practice by the Saudi citizens. Specifically, any behaviour that cause harm towards the environment such as resources exploitation and waste production behaviours are prohibited under the Islamic principles. Which has been a shared common view demonstrated in the findings of this study.

7.4.4 Review and feedback

Review and feedback schemes usually are implemented through technical tools in corporations. They have not been designed to understand and comprehend the ideas of the employees, which can result in the employees

refraining and disengaging from sustainability, which consequently disconnects them from being part of the programme and eventually the corporations contribute to employee disengagement.

For the sake of the discussion, I would like to put forward the claim that receiving feedback can be very rewarding for the employees in various ways, if it has been tailored to meet the employees' abilities to engage with it, and if it has been designed to be aligned with the employees' sustainability efforts in a meaningful manner that include the alignment equation of value-purpose-goal, which has been emphasised earlier in this chapter under heading 7.4.1. Moreover, the review and feedback scheme can help the employees understand how well they have performed in regard to sustainability and encourage the employees to keep the effort up, in addition to recognising room for improvement. This can be achieved through the aid of project management tools and techniques.

Prior studies have noted that the role of project management tools and techniques exclusively can support with providing updates to employees regarding their engagement efforts towards sustainability and whether they achieve minor or major goals. Such tools and techniques can also support the changes towards sustainability by applying corrective actions when things do not go according to plan, in order to achieve a successful implementation of change (Donaldson, 1999; Cameron and Green, 2015; Padar and Robertson, 2017; Pataki, and Sebestyen, 2017; Mirza, 2018). However, corporations need to be careful with the way they introduce and provide such updates, as the technical language related to sustainability can be confusing, which might cause employee's disappointment and potential disengagement. Therefore, corporations when they aim at engaging employees with sustainability must have a tailored approach to the people of the corporation (Carlson, 2009).

The empirical study's findings agree with the literature in regard with how important feedback and review systems are for employee engagement with sustainability. In practice, review and feedback systems seem not to give fair attention to the employee level in regard with sustainability programmes. As the findings of this study indicate, there has been an absence of reviewing and feedback on the employee level, as such, the system has been described as insufficient, specifically within Saudi Arabian corporations (Data analysis and findings – chapter 6, sub-theme 6.4.4).

Furthermore, the findings associated with the success of a well-designed feedback and review system, can directly impact positively the motivation of the employees and support them to engage with sustainability (findings chapter 6, sub-theme 6.4.4). Feedback systems (as a project management technique) keep the employees updated in regard with their duties and roles towards sustainability.

Constructive feedback for example, as a form of verbal feedback, when provided by the employees' leaders, and when communicated in a simple and humble language, helps the employees to recognise what went well so they can do it again, maybe with a better quality. And at the same time employees can know what went wrong and avoid or change their behaviour. This eventually supports the employees and gives them the motivation to carry on with their efforts and attempts to engage themselves with sustainability programmes.

7.4.5 Collaboration

Collaboration has been mainly augmented and considered as a sub-component for this study, through the studied and assessed findings through a critical lens, by the researcher of this study. Such theme has emerged from the findings, calling for a need for collaboration on the top of any individual or departmental achievements in regard to sustainability in corporations.

The evidence from the findings asserts that employee, departmental and branch efforts in regard with sustainability have been fragmented in nature. Sustainability's efforts and achievements from different levels of the corporation's hierarchy were going in different directions without a focused approach towards the main sustainability goal and purpose (Data analysis and findings – chapter 6, 3rd findings).

According to the literature on sustainability, embrace collaboration at its core, specifically within the governance and stakeholder participation domains (Vos, 2007; Shah and Arjoon, 2015; Romero-Lankao et al., 2016), which grant collaboration to be fundamental to sustainability.

However, according to research, collaboration has been emphasised under governance of sustainability exclusively. Governance has been referred to as collective action by diverse communities of stakeholders, collaborating and working together towards the achievements of common goals (Evans, 2012). It has been claimed that governance is considered as a key factor in successful sustainability programmes (Robertson, 2017). This develops further the claim that little attention has been given to collaboration between employees and how it can contribute to their successful engagement with sustainability, which cannot be achieved with the aid of project management tools and

techniques. Since, according to the literature, collaboration on the employee level has been underexamined (Lozano, 2008), as the literature addresses, for example, cross-sectors and partnership type of collaborations which are usually practiced at the macro level (Freudenreich, 2020).

The literature talks more about external collaboration (such as training employees with external training bodies), but does not address internal collaboration, specifically on the employee level with sustainability (e.g. Stachova, 2019).

Likewise, within the context of Saudi Arabia, collaboration has been emphasised on the macro level in regard with sustainable development goals, as Saudi Arabia will progress its development journey with the realisation of Vision 2030 which is already well underway. The country will carry on embedding sustainable development goals into public plans via close collaboration between all relevant stakeholders (Saudi Vision 2030, 2018).

Overall, there has been a desperate need for a unity of effort of engaged employees with sustainability, without the urge to compete and show off against each other (individuals, departments, branches, etc. or even externally with other entities), which in essence, requires collaboration throughout the corporation's hierarchy.

In addition, as has been stated earlier in regard with the CAMP model for employee engagement that has been synthesised by me (the researcher) which entails Autonomy, Mastery, Purpose which has been adopted from the main model (Pink 2011). Which has been additionally augmented by the fourth element as 'Community', inspired by this study's empirical findings

(chapter 6 – theme 6.2), while reflecting on its importance from the lens of practice. And under this part of the discussion, specifically under collaboration, the I would like to emphasise on that fourth element, which has not been addressed previously in this discussion chapter.

This thesis is in favour of addressing the importance of encouraging the development of a community of engaged employees with sustainability programmes. Community is an outcome of collaborative efforts, whereby individuals share common values and purpose. However, when a community is encouraged to develop at corporations for sustainability related engaged employees, can strengthen the employees' beliefs in sustainability, maintain their sense of safety (as a condition of employee engagement) and unifies their efforts towards a higher level in achieving their corporations' sustainability goals. However, such achievements can be challenging for corporations to reach this level, and requires various leadership styles that combine discipline with compassion. At the same time, it requires adequacy and consistency in the corporation's communication channels to convey, disseminate and consolidate sustainability at the employee level.

People who embrace the Islamic faith already exist as community, since individuals that embrace Islam seek identity to become a member of a community of faith (Grieve, 2006). Yet, individuals do not have to be Muslims or Muslimas to hold and show collaborative efforts, but Islam creates a base for a collaborative atmosphere. Moreover, a collaborative community always align their efforts with a common value and purpose, and the role of faith supports in creating a system of meaning, from a psychological perspective (Miller-Perrin and Mancuso, 2016). Likewise, the findings of this thesis recalled such claims (findings chapter 6 – Islamic faith as a subordinate theme).

The Islamic faith can play a vital role in unifying the sustainability efforts of both employees and their corporations, as the concept of sustainability is fundamental to the Islamic faith. In addition, most of Islam’s ethics and morals call individuals to practise mercy and compassion, and to encourage collaboration, working hand-in-hand and lending a helping hand when needed, as Muslims and Muslimas are obliged to do things selflessly and for the sake of humanity, which has been emphasized upon from the Quranic guidelines (Quran, al Ma’idah, 5:3). Practitioners are in favour of a flourishing ecosystem with a fair and just economy; however, this depends on the quality of the embraced Islamic faith. Examples can be noted from the table below (table 7.8) which includes evidence from the Quran and Hadith as the main sources for Islamic principles, values and morals.

Examples about collaboration from the Quran and Hadith
<p><i>“And cooperate with one another in virtuous conduct and reverence, and do not cooperate with one another in sin and hostility. And revere Allah. Allah is severe in retribution”</i> (Quran, al Ma’idah, 5:3).</p>
<p><i>“O mankind, indeed We have created you [...] and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted”</i> (Quran, al Hujuraat, 13).</p>
<p>Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also urged Muslims to practise collaboration in the shape of teamwork. In one of the Hadiths, he said, “Faith Believers are to each other as a brick of a wall, supporting and reinforcing each other” (Hadith).</p>

Table 7.8 - Collaboration and evidence from the Quran and Hadith
Source: (Quran; (no date) Abu Da’ood, unknown date); AlBukhari, unknown date); AlAhdal, 2009; Şaḥīḥ Bukhāri, 1987)

7.5 Reinforcement, continuity and circularity and the guidance of organisational change towards sustainability engaged employee outcomes

Everything that has been addressed previously in this discussion chapter demonstrates a change towards sustainability in corporations through engaged employees via the aid of project management tools and techniques. Since organisational change is a broad and rich concept, the researcher, focused their investigating research efforts on a specific aspect of change, which is reinforcement. Reinforcement has been considered in this thesis to support the engagement of employees to meet the dynamic nature of sustainability. In addition, organisational change supports corporations and their employees to engage with sustainability programmes when applied through project management tools and techniques, by offering guidance and direction, specifically when they focus on the reinforcement aspect of change, to achieve continuous and successful change, to allow further suitable amendments and enhancements of sustainability programmes that is in favour of the employees and their engagement.

According to the reviewed literature, the majority of change models have been portrayed in a linear way, lacking the cyclic aspect that returns back to the change phases to re-address, re-assess, enhance and apply the required amendments to the implemented change phases. Organisational change scholars stressed the notion that change should not be perceived as a series of linear events within a specific period of time but should be considered as a continuous, open-ended process of adaptation to changing circumstances and conditions, so it can accommodate the nature of change (Burnes, 2004; Dawson, 1994; Todnem, 2005). Due to these shortcomings in change theories, the phase of reinforcement evolved, presenting a vital role to address and tackle this aspect of change, demonstrating a loop shape. As

according to Totterdill and Exton (2014), innovation cannot be pursued via traditional linear change models by organisations. They added that, since innovation is an inherently social process, organisations need to create innovative and self-sustaining processes of reflection, learning and change, which require a commitment to learning from diverse sources, to enable employees to challenge established practices, and to experiment.

Within organisational change literature, and in relation to the cyclic model, it has been argued that reinforcement has been one of the most neglected aspect in most of the implemented changes, since reinforcement demonstrates the role of reinforcing and its ability to support in reviewing all the previous implemented change processes. It grants a ramification effect for re-implementation in an enhanced version of change (Cameron and Green, 2015), where the cycle of change can continue and keep on going. Therefore, I embraced this point as one of her main arguments, considering the engagement of employees with sustainability programmes as a changing phenomenon that requires continuity and adaptation, which has been applied in her developed conceptual model for this thesis, presented in the reinforcement phase.

The evidence from the empirical study of this thesis, acknowledged reinforcement as challenging for corporations who want to engage their employees with sustainability. Furthermore, within practice, there has been a lack of reinforcement in engaging employees with sustainability (chapter 6 – theme 6.3).

Therefore, the reason this study considered organisational change and the additional aspect of it as reinforcement is because the literature and the findings affirm that organisational change offers guidance and direction in

order for employees to engage themselves with sustainability, while reinforcement offers continuity and circularity after the change of engaged employees has been achieved successfully, as it offers opportunities of maintaining and enhancing it.

This chapter has focused on the key outcomes of my research project, through an in-depth understanding of how project management and organisational change can aid and assist corporations to achieve effective engagement of employees with sustainability programmes, specifically from a faith-based perspective.

The key aspects of this discussion chapter demonstrate the formation of the bridge between literature and practice, relevant to this research project. This has been achieved by critically reviewing the literature (part B – Chapters 2, 3 and 4), whereby sustainability, employee engagement, project management and organisational change intersect, against what I have been informed by the findings (part D – Chapter 6) of my empirical study.

The engagement of employees with sustainability can flourish when it is infused by faith, which requires both deep and comprehensive considerations to the implementation of sustainability programmes, with a special attention to the context, which has been a demographic focus in this thesis, since the empirical study has been conducted in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Finally, all that has been mentioned above has set the scene for me to address and present in the following chapter, which will be the conclusion of the whole thesis. In addition to identifying my research contributions to both theory and practice, future research recommendations and limitations of my research project.

Chapter 8: Conclusion & Contribution

This research study investigated sustainability at a deeper level, focused on the employees, working towards an effective emotionally, cognitively, physically and spiritually engaged workforce with sustainability programmes in corporations, through a further investigation into the role of project management along with organisational change towards a successful engagement of the employees. In addition, the principal question guiding this thesis was about corporations (specifically within Saudi Arabia) seeking to achieve sustainability through sustained engaged employees, with the aid of systemic project management framed by organisational change through the lens of faith.

Such an enquiry entailed an in-depth understanding of the employees' perceptions, views and lived experiences, which the I have attempted to illuminate empirically through an intensive qualitative study, undertaken in two case study corporations, through a constructivist-pragmatism lens, via the utilization of action research. Therefore, the following section will address how the objectives of this research study have been met, which served in achieving the research aim and answering sufficiently the research questions which were:

- i. How can employee engagement advance the organisational mission of a major Saudi multi-national corporation towards improved sustainability performance?*

And

- ii. *How can the systematic development of project management tools advance this mission in order to advance organisational change oriented to improving sustainability performance through the process of sustained employee engagement?*

In Addition to sub-question one:

- iii. *Would employees' faith influence their engagement with sustainability related activities at their workplaces?*

This chapter is structured in sections. The first section (8.1) presents the chosen thesis pillars as: sustainability (the core pillar), employee engagement, project management and organisational change. This section identifies the pillars of my thesis, while determining the connection between the chosen pillars and how they serve each other, as one of my research outcomes.

The second section (8.2) documents this research study's contributions to knowledge, which has been divided into three sub-sections. The first sub-section (8.2.1) highlights the key results as the outcomes of this thesis, presented as theoretical contributions. The following sub-section (8.2.2) presents the revised conceptual framework, which has been developed into a conceptual model. Thus, the conceptual framework derived from the literature (Part B- Chapters 2, 3 and 4) is amended to take account of the empirical findings (Part B- Chapter 6). After studying both the literature and findings of my study, I was inspired to develop the conceptual model, as a pragmatic device for leaders and managers of large corporations in Saudi Arabia to understand better how organisations can engage their employees systematically with sustainability programmes to achieve the dual objectives of more motivated and committed employees; and organisational change towards practical sustainability outcomes. The last sub-section (8.2.3)

provides contributions to policy and practice, and offers practitioners' pragmatic guidance device for managers, decision and policy makers, and leaders according to Quranic and hadith guidelines. Eventually, the last section (8.4) of this chapter acknowledges the current study research limitations ad recommendations.

8.1 The connection of the thesis pillars and how they serve each other

This research study determined how corporations can engage their employees with sustainability programmes effectively though incorporating the aid of project management tools and techniques along with organisational change, from a faith-based perspective.

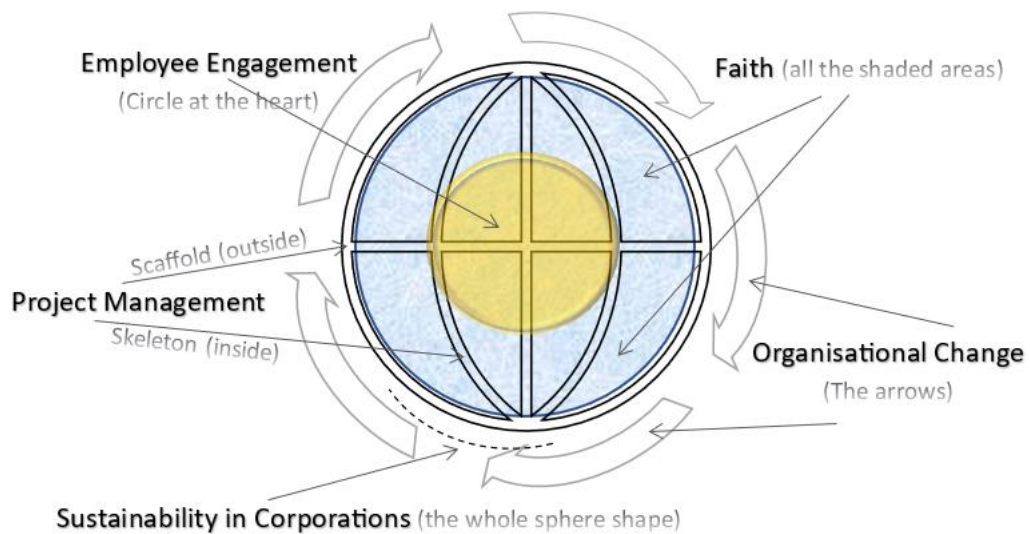


Diagram 8.1 - The formation, connection and collaboration between the thesis pillars according to the research study's outcomes (Sustainability in corporations, employee engagement, project management tools and techniques and Organisational change)

Designed by the author

Firstly, sustainability has been considered as the core pillar of my thesis and has been studied within the corporation sphere, with an intensive investigation on the individual level as employees, and their engagement with sustainability programmes. Sustainability is demonstrated as the sphere shape in diagram 8.1, which shows sustainability as the core of the whole system.

Secondly, employee engagement as the second pillar, presents the heart of my thesis. In association with sustainability in corporations, evidence from this study suggests that the employees and their engagement are at the soul of sustainability and employees are as equally vital to the other pillars of this thesis: project management and organisational change. This is demonstrated in the 'middle' yellow (shaded) circle, located at the heart of sustainability, the large main sphere shape.

Thirdly, project management tools and techniques as the third pillar to this thesis strike as being important in aiding the engagement of employees with sustainability programmes. As demonstrated in figure 8.1, project management plays two important roles as it establishes the scaffold (outer side) and the skeleton (inner side) towards an effective engagement of employees with sustainability programmes. In essence, project management tools and techniques offer the following: (1) connecting and unifying the employees' sustainability efforts, (2) assisting and helping in sustainability programme language translation from technical and strategic languages into an actionable language, (3) disseminating the sustainability message throughout the corporation with a unique speciality in solving organisational gap-related challenges, (4) helping in breaking down and simplifying sustainability-related strategies and policies into initiatives, including the employees' needs and abilities so they can be operationalised efficiently and (5) organising the sustainability-related work and (6) invites collaborative

engagement of the employees. At heart, the outcomes of this research study confirms that project management tools and techniques provide the operating system to corporations' policy and decision-makers, and leaders in showing how corporations can advance the engagement of their employees with sustainability programmes, and consequently, the corporations' sustainability performance as a whole. However, project management on its own cannot ensure such achievements to be maintained, which are subject to change and amendments when needed for the enhancement of sustainability programmes. This justifies why the fourth pillar has been incorporated as organisational change with a specific focus on the vital role of reinforcement.

Fourthly, organisational change as the fourth pillar of this thesis is represented in the arrows surrounding the sphere in figure 8.1. Organisational change and project management work hand-in-hand in the following ways: (1) offering guidance on how employees can engage themselves with sustainability, (2) reinforcement as an aspect of organisational change which has been the main focus in this thesis and offers an essential support to the employees in keeping their sustainability efforts on track with regard to the progress or changes occurring within sustainability programmes. (3) Reinforcement by creating a loop for maintaining circularity and continuity of the achievements of engaged employees. (4) Reinforcement as an aspect of organisational change along with the aid of project management tools and techniques to help employee engagement with sustainability programmes, with the flexibility and agility to comprehend the direction of change and welcoming any enhancement (through the feedback feature), that is in favour of the effectiveness of the programme. All things mentioned are considered as vital outcomes of this thesis, that aided in the design of the conceptual model in a circular way (see section 8.2.2 in this chapter).

Finally, faith emerged as beacons or *Minrit* منارات that emerged as one of the fundamental outcomes of this thesis, when corporations aim at engaging their workforce with sustainability programmes, specifically within the Saudi Arabian context (including the Gulf region). Faith has been demonstrated as the shaded areas in the sphere in figure 8.1.

8.2 Research contributions to knowledge:

This section documents the study's contributions to knowledge, which has been divided into three sub-sections. The first sub-section (8.2.1) highlights the key results as the outcomes of this thesis, presented as theoretical contributions. The second (8.2.2) presents the revised conceptual framework, which has been developed into a conceptual model. Thus, the conceptual framework derived from the literature (Part B- Chapters 2, 3 and 4) has been amended to take account of the empirical findings (Part B- Chapter 6). After studying both the literature and the findings of the research study, I have been inspired to develop the conceptual model, as a pragmatic device for leaders and managers of large corporations in Saudi Arabia to understand better how organisations can engage their employees systematically with sustainability programmes to achieve the dual objectives of more motivated and committed employees; and organisational change towards practical sustainability outcomes. The third and final sub-section (8.2.3) provides contributions to policy and practice offers primarily decision-based framework as a device for managers, decision and policy makers, leaders according to Quranic and hadith guidelines.

8.2.1 Theoretical contributions as the synthesised key outcomes of this thesis

(i) This thesis three pillars and the fourth sub-pillar that has not brought together before as: Sustainability in corporations, employee engagement, project management and organizational change

Given the multiple-layered complexity of the subject matter, this thesis brought together distinct streams of literature that have not been brought together before in the extant literature to focus on sustainability and employee engagement in the workplace. The intersection of the four fields of literature: sustainability, employee engagement, project management and organisational change, will support in reinforcing the effective engagement of employees with sustainability programmes. In addition, the phenomenon under study have been investigated further, through the lens of faith.

However, in this research, the contribution to knowledge will be mainly devoted to sustainability literature. Meanwhile, reflections of this contribution have benefited the employee engagement, project management and organisational change concepts as well. While the faith-driven aspect granted this study its uniqueness.

(ii) Sustainability in corporations whereby the employee lies at the heart of sustainability

The investigation of engaging employees with sustainability programmes, through the aid of project management framed by organisational change has shown that the social dimension of sustainability is located at the heart of sustainability's triple bottom line model. This makes the three rings model the most suitable one (out of the three addressed in section 2.4), for the

phenomenon under study of this thesis (see figure 8.2 below). The whole discussion chapter (chapter 7) embraced the social pillar, presented as employee engagement at its core throughout the chapter, while addressing its vital role towards sustainability programmes in corporation as the main focus of this study. While acknowledging the interconnectedness of the three dimensions of sustainability: Social, economy and environmental.

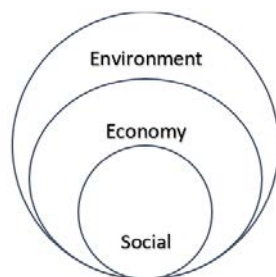


Figure - 8.2 Venn diagram as overlapping three rings
Source: Adopted from
Vos (2007); Elkington (2012); Hitchcock and Willard (2015)

(iii) Accountability, Responsibility and Transparency: as the ART of Amanah in Islamic faith

This thesis studied the engagement of employees with sustainability through the lens of faith. When the concepts of sustainability, employees engagement, project management and Islamic faith intersect, a comprehensive Arabic term that is instilled by Islamic faith emerges as *Amanah*. Which is a comprehensive term that includes the three dimensions (Accountability, Responsibility and Transparency) as criteria that received a double confirmation by both the relevant literature and the findings of my study, which have to be considered when corporations aim at engaging employees with sustainability, throughout the corporation's hierarchy (see chapter 7 – section 7.2.2). Such important criteria for engaging employees with sustainability programs through the aid of project management tools techniques and organizational change from a faith perspective has been

critically addressed with the discussion chapter (chapter 7). Accountability is about the willingness to be held accountable for decisions, actions, while adhering to laws and regulations and other requirements to meet sustainability targeted outcomes (Silvius and Schipper, 2014; Pojasek, 2012). Responsibilities from the employees, suppliers and other stakeholders have been identified as: doing what you have committed to do, always giving your best effort, being held accountable for your choices, helping others when they need help, being fair and helping to make a better world Pojasek (2012). In addition, transparency is about proactively providing information and reflecting it openly without restrictions (Silvius and Schipper, 2014). For Pojasek (2012), transparency serves as a “self-regulating mechanism” for corporations. It also is important to maintaining ethical behaviour, and often is mentioned in a corporation’s code of conduct. In the Islamic management literature *Amanah* lies in the heart of the Islamic faith. Amanah is obligatory for every Muslim, as an act of fearing Allah (the God) in seeking his reward and avoiding his punishment for any act of misconduct at a personal, societal, organizational, environmental, in business and trade, and at any sphere. According to Islamic scholars (e.g. Muis, Alias, Kamaruding, & Mokthar, 2018) every Muslim must apply Amanah in their behaviors and duties explicitly and implicitly. Whether at a personal level or with the surroundings such as: nature, animals, consumptions, belongings, relationships, work and non-work-related duties, trade, etc. In essence, according to Shuhari (2019) the act of Amanah is considered as a noble quality that includes, trustworthiness, responsibility, accountability, credibility and transparency. However, there is lack of evidence in the literature, in regard with Amanah specifically within sustainability on the employees level within the Arabian Gulf (Saudi Arabian) context (Razimi, Noor and Daud, 2014).

(iv) The requisite core components and sub-components to support the engagement of employees with sustainability programmes in corporations

At the primary stages of this thesis, and through the critical review and analysis of the relevant literature, I have therefore, identified the key features that can aid the employees to engage themselves emotionally, cognitively, and physically with sustainability programmes. In addition, I have explored how both project management and organisational change can assist the engagement of the employees with sustainability programmes. At that stage, the key features for such engagement as 'elements' have been identified, which have been adopted in my developed conceptual framework, toward the end of my literature review chapter/s (chapters 2,3 and 4). Accomplishing this major step, guided me in conducting my empirical study, and in choosing the most suitable research design as pragmatist-constructivist and intensive qualitative case studies, assisted by action research.

In the discussion chapter phase, as a result of connecting theories (literature review) with practice (findings from the empirical study) as a main result for this thesis, I have gained the ability to synthesise key elements and develop them into essential components for the engagement of employees with sustainability, via the aid of project engagement, framed by organizational change, through the lens of faith. The components have been synthesised according to where the four pillars intersect. Each essential component has specified roles and responsibilities on their own, as well as in relation to each other. When adopted by corporations, this can aid them to engage their workforce with sustainability programmes successfully. The components were divided into two categories, as they have been classified according to the key results of this thesis.

Firstly, the core components identified for the purpose of this thesis are: (1) leadership, (2) communication and (3) the management strategic commitment and direction. In addition, the core components permeate through the subordinate components, which can be noted as one of the key

results of this current study, as the core components have a vital role in forming the bridge that supports the function of the components together. Secondly, the subordinate components that support the engagement of employees with sustainability in corporations are: (1) organisational connectivity, (2) alignment, (3) empowerment, (4) monitor and control, (5) review and feedback, (6) reinforcement, and (7) continuity and circularity. All these can be supported and amplified in practice, through the practical deployment of systematic project management tools and techniques, all of which have been addressed adequately in the discussion chapter of my thesis (chapter 7).

(v) In this research study, one of the most significant outcomes that emerged is the aspect of 'faith'

This thesis affirms that sustainability programmes in corporations need to be infused with faith-based initiatives, specifically within the Saudi Arabian context (and the Arabian Gulf region), when corporations aim at engaging their employees with sustainability. Although this study addressed sustainability from an inter-faith perspective (in chapter 3), there has not been enough scope to address sustainability from the broader lens of inter-faith sufficiently. Within the literature, it has been increasingly recognised that Islamic faith helps individuals in enhancing their quality as human beings (Mohiuddin, 2012), as Islam guides their emotions, the way they think, attitudes, behaviours and actions, by striving towards a better quality of themselves and, consequently, reflecting such quality of morals on the way they interact with their surroundings (humans, animals, plants, private and public properties, workplaces, etc.). Muslims follow the guidance of Quran (the words of Allah) and Hadith (Their beloved prophet Muhammad). In fact, 3% of the Quran are commands and prohibitions, whereas 97% of the Quran teaches ethics, morals and the relationship between God (Allah) and man, the purpose of life, the history of nations, the relationship between mankind and

the universe, how to be self-critical, and how to use reason and faith (Lang, 2003). Fundamentally, Muslims follow the model established by God himself, through his prophet Muhammad (PBUH) (Lang, 2003). In essence, Islam is a way of living, as Muslims considers it as the manual for guidance. As humans, faith is what keeps us alive; therefore, faith need to be practised and sustainability is a fundamental pillar to human faith, which is also nurtured at their workplaces as ways of engaging with sustainability. According to sustainability advocates, even planting a tree requires faith (Pierson, 2011).

Although within the literature, a number of concepts have been established based on Islamic faith, such as Shariah law, Islamic finance, Islamic banking, Amanah bank accounts, etc. However, this would not apply to the concept of sustainability, as this thesis rejects the notion of calling it Islamic sustainability, as this could be claimed. Due to the reason that sustainability is an integral part of the Islamic faith. Therefore, this thesis argues that sustainability can be guided by Islamic faith values and principles, and not vice versa.

(vi) One of the central outcomes to emerge from this study is the spiritual state of engagement as a fourth state reflecting on the faith aspect

The literature states, the engagement of employees is vital via meeting the engagement dimension as: meaningfulness, availability and safety (trust) (Kahn, 1990; May, Gilson and Harter, 2004). According to the literature, employee engagement is about the engagement of self at work when organisations create a suitable environment for three fundamental key features of engagement to develop and flourish. According to employee engagement scholars, each employee engagement dimension requires three states which are emotional, physical and cognitive states of engagement that can support the employee to be present when occupying a job role (Kahn,

1990; May, Gilson and Harter, 2004). This thesis, however, confirms a fourth state of engagement that emerged as an important state to be considered which is the 'spiritual' state when it comes to engaging employees with sustainability programmes.

For example, when performing a job role for employees to meet the meaningfulness dimensions, it has to be emotionally meaningful, cognitively meaningful and physically meaningful and spiritually meaningful. And the same applies to the rest of the three dimensions (availability and safety). Check this study's evolved employee engagement dimensions model, (figure 8.3) below.

4. Meaningfulness (emotionally – cognitively – physically – spiritually): job enrichment and role fit.
5. Safety (emotionally – cognitively – physically – spiritually): rewarding co-workers and helpful supervisors and building positive and supportive relations with colleagues.
6. Availability (emotionally – cognitively – physically – spiritually): belief of having physical and mental resources.

(Kahn, 1990; May, Gilson and Harter, 2004)

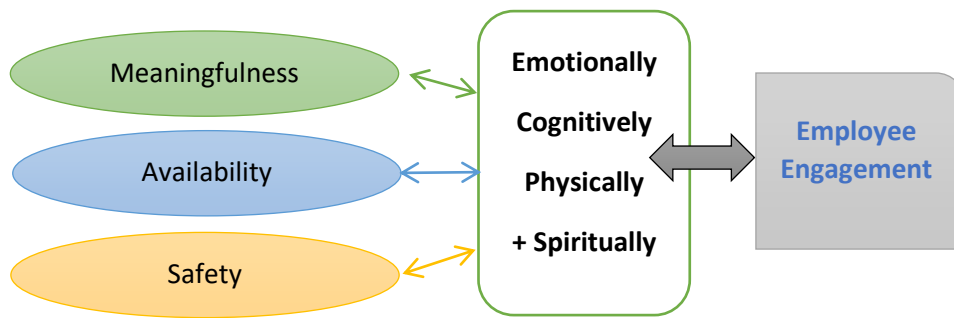


Figure 8.3 - States and dimensions of employee engagement with sustainability programme in corporations from a faith perspective for this study
 Source: Author's conceptualisation

It has been argued that it is beneficial for corporations when they consider faith, spirituality and religion on the individual level, specifically towards achievable sustainability outcomes. The notion of considering employees cultural backgrounds (values, beliefs, religion, faith, etc.) advances the self and societal aspects, as a way of employee empowerment via nurturing a particular set of spiritual qualities (More and Todarello, 2013). In reality, people are hungry for meaning in their lives, and it is crucial for corporations, whereby this type of support is needed at their workplaces (Klenke, 2003), specifically when it is designed for sustainability purposes. In parallel, this also resonates with the concept of employee engagement which is the main focus for this thesis. In order for employees to engage themselves at work, they seek meaningful work (Wollard and Shuck, 2011), as meaningful emotionally, meaningful cognitively and meaningful physically to meet the conditions and statuses of engagement (Kahn, 1999). This requires a spiritually-informed management that integrates traditional and spiritual approaches (Delbecq, 2005), that can be enhanced and developed into the shape of faith-based initiatives. Therefore, I have considered embracing the faith aspect in my conceptual model which will be addressed in (section 8.2.2) under conceptual contribution.

(vii) CAMP: Community, Autonomy, Mastery, and Purpose, as employee engagement drivers

As it has been noted, when employee engagement drivers are combined altogether, from both the literature as autonomy, mastery and purpose Pink (2011), in addition to the fourth one that complemented them, which has emerged from the empirical findings as the 'community' driver. Such outcome has inspired me to synthesize those engagement drivers into the acronyms, by re-organizing the orders of them, while adding the addition element into (CAMP) Community, Autonomy, Mastery, and Purpose, as engagement drivers that have to be considered when engaging employees with sustainability in corporations synthesised to serve the purpose of this study in regard with employee engagement thesis second pillar.

(viii) The examination of the engagement of employees with sustainability programmes in corporations, via the aid of project management, framed by organisational change, through the lens of faith, has shown that the alignment of value, purpose and goals is essential to be embedded within sustainability programmes throughout the organisational hierarchy, vertically and horizontally, with a special focus on the individual employee level, that aims at engaging the employees with such programmes.

According to the literature on employee engagement, 'meaningfulness' can be achieved when corporations support employees to feel that the job they are performing is meaningful emotionally, physically, and cognitively (Kahn, 1990; May, Gilson and Harter, 2004). It has been argued that the alignment of corporation's value-purpose-goal appeared to be a more significant factor that contributes to the engagement of employees. Sahoo and Sahu (2009) affirmed that the employee looks for an alignment of value-meaning, which presents a true sense of connection, a common purpose and a shared sense

of meaning at work. When investigating further, project management provides the tools and techniques to enable the connecting of a corporation's value, mission and vision and support the alignment of them, by breaking them down into separate initiatives, which meet the employees' abilities and needs, in order for them to more effectively engage with sustainability. In essence, sustainability tends to engender apprehensive feelings emotionally, cognitively, physically and spiritually in employees unless very broad and abstract concepts are translated into practical actions that are achievable and applicable, in other words sustainability becomes a meaningful goal to strive for (See Chapter 6).

(ix) This thesis is in favour of addressing the importance of encouraging the development of collaboration and creating a community and unity of engaged employees with sustainability programmes. Community is an outcome of collaborative efforts, whereby individuals share common values and purpose. However, when community is encouraged to develop at corporations for sustainability-related engaged employees, it can strengthen the employees' beliefs in sustainability and maintain their sense of safety (as a condition of employee engagement), in addition to unifying their efforts towards a higher level in achieving the sustainability goals of the corporation. However, such achievements can be challenging for corporations to reach this level and requires various leadership styles that combine discipline with compassion. At the same time, it requires adequacy and consistency in the corporation's communication channels to convey, disseminate and consolidate sustainability at the employee level.

Authentically, people who embrace the Islamic faith already exist as a community in nature, since individuals that embrace Islam seek identity to become a member of a community of faith (Grieve, 2006). Yet, individuals do not have to be Muslims or Muslimas to hold and show collaborative efforts,

but certainly Islam creates a base for a collaborative atmosphere. Moreover, a collaborative community always aligns their efforts with a common value and purpose, and the role of faith supports creating a system of meaning from a psychological perspective (Miller-Perrin and Mancuso, 2016). Likewise, the findings of this thesis recalled such claims.

(x) Systematic project management: A noteworthy outcome of this thesis affirms that project management can assist corporations in engaging their employees with sustainability programmes by drawing on insights from a project management perspective, as systematic project management tools and techniques support the successful engagement of employees in various ways, which have been taken up in chapter (7). Systematic project management is the operating system to corporations' policy and decision makers, and leaders in showing how corporations can advance the engagement of their employees with sustainability programmes, and consequently the corporations' sustainability performance as a whole. As has been noted, project management tools and techniques connect and unify the employees' sustainability efforts and assist in sustainability programme language translation from technical and strategic languages into actionable language. Additionally, project management tools and techniques plays a vital role in the dissemination of sustainability message throughout the corporation, with a unique speciality in solving organisational gaps related challenges, that helps in breaking down and simplifying sustainability-related strategies and policies into initiatives. Tailored to the employees needs and abilities so it can be operationalised efficiently, and eventually organise the sustainability-related work and invites collaborative engagement of the employees.

(xi) Organisational change and reinforcement

Significantly, this study confirms that organisational change offers a mechanism for engaging the employees with sustainability programmes, when working hand-in-hand with systematic project management (see chapter 7), with a specific focus on the reinforcement aspect of organisational change. Markedly, organisational change offers guidance and direction for corporations to engage their employees with sustainability, while the aspect of reinforcement specifically, offers continuity and circularity. After the successful achievement of engaged employees, reinforcement offers opportunities for maintaining and enhancing it, which supported me in designing my conceptual model through a circular shape (see section 8.2.2 in the conclusion chapter).

(xii) Organizational connectivity through practical and systematic project specifications and management

When the aim of corporations is to engage the employees with sustainability, specifically in the case of my research study, whereby the four literature (sustainability, employee engagement, project management and organizational change) intersect. While considering it from a faith-driven perspective, lead this research study such phenomena at a holistic level, presenting 'organizational connectivity' as a major outcome of this study, as a key solution to the dilemma of engaging employees with sustainability programs, via systematic project management along with organizational change (for further details see chapter 7).

Organizational connectivity emerged one of a critical aspect stemmed from systematic project management and reinforcement aspect of organizational change, that assist in the engagement of employees with sustainability the workplace. Practice suffers mainly from employees' sustainability related fragmented efforts whether on the individual level or departmental, which has been addressed within the findings chapter (chapter 6). Organizational connectivity has a major role in engaging employees with sustainability. The

critical aspect of organizational connectivity can be achieved when corporations embed the core and subordinate components that have been addressed in details in section (iv) in this chapter, and in further details in the discussion chapter of my thesis (chapter 7).

The addressed key outcomes of the research study that have been addressed in this section above, paved the way for the design of the conceptual model, which will be introduced in the following section.

8.2.2 The conceptual model as the theoretical/conceptual contribution

This section addresses the conceptual model that I have designed, as a major contribution to knowledge of this thesis, along with its ensured research-related trustworthiness, in a rigor manner. The conceptual model (figure 8.4) is a distillation of the synthesized aspects that have been addressed in my discussion (part E - chapter 7). Each aspect has been thoroughly examined in additional depth in (part E) discussion chapter (7).

Delving deeper into the engagement of employees with sustainability programs, via the aid of systematic project management along with organizational change from a faith lens, has inspired me in designing my conceptual model. This model offers a fundamental conceptual/theoretical contribution principally to the sustainability literature, in addition to employee engagement, project management as well as organizational change. The designed conceptual model can address the challenges that are associated with engagement of employees with sustainability programs in corporations, and can help towards an effective achievement, in regard with the dynamic nature of engaging employees with sustainability programs in corporations.

The designed conceptual model has been built based on the identified core and subordinate components of this study, as the outcomes of my discussion chapter (chapter7). To reiterate, the core components are: (1) leadership, (2) communication and (3) the management strategic commitment and direction, which permeates through the sub-components, which are: (1) organizational connectivity, (2) alignment, (3) empowerment, (4) monitor & control, (5) review & feedback, (6) reinforcement, and (7) continuity and circularity. The identified core and sub-components have been addressed thoroughly in the discussion chapter (chapter 7).

The model has been designed through a constructivist-pragmatist action-based lens. As this study has been specially influenced by the employed intensive qualitative case studies modes of enquiry. The designed conceptual model comprises of two levels: (1) the holistic level (the outer side of the circle), and (2) the practical one, demonstrated in the middle circle of the model, while the model as a whole has been infused and framed by the faith aspect (see diagram 8.4).

This chapter encompassed the entire thesis by integrating the theoretical and empirical aspects of how organizations can get an efficient and engaged workforce through sustainability programmes. Which can be achieved via systematic project management, leading to organizational change, and infused by faith. In addition, the chapter provided a concise summary and evaluation of my main research study's outcomes and contributions, as well as proposing potential areas for future research.

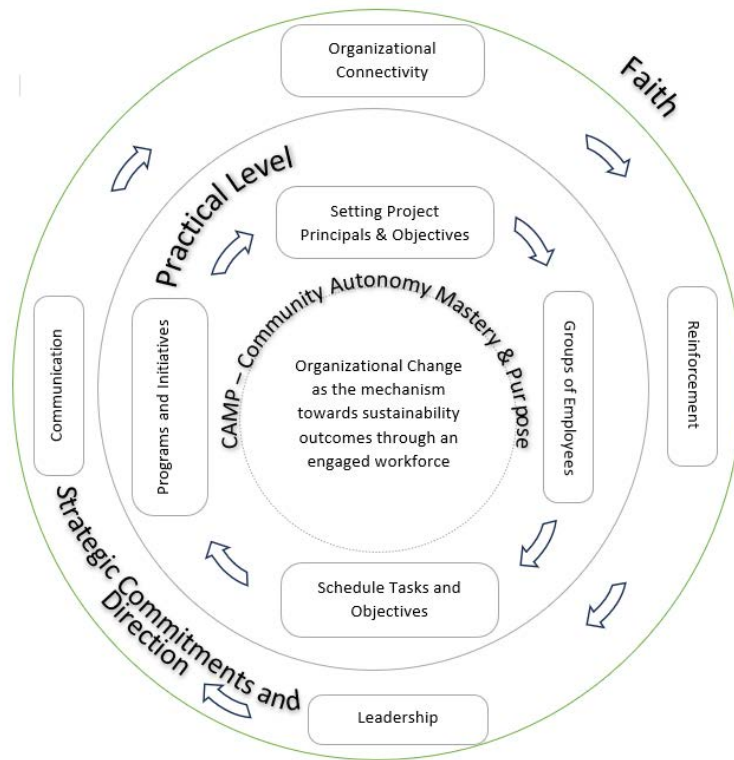


Diagram 8.4 – My thesis conceptual model
Source: Author's conceptualization and design

8.2.2.1 The big outer ring/circle in the conceptual model:

I have designed the conceptual model in a holistic recursive style. For further elaboration, the big outer ring/circle includes organizational connectivity, reinforcement, leadership, strategic management commitment and direction and communication, which will be explained as follows (see diagram 8.4):

- **Organizational connectivity:**

Organizational connectivity aspect (in diagram 8.4) emerged as one of the critical aspects stemmed from systematic project management and

reinforcement aspect of organizational change, that assist in the engagement of employees with sustainability the workplace.

The empirical findings of this study, states that practice suffers mainly from employees' sustainability related fragmented efforts whether on the individual, inter-department, branches levels, which has been addressed within the findings (chapter 6 – see the 3rd findings), which also has been addressed in the discussion chapter (chapter7). In addition, lack of collaboration, bureaucracy and authorization, lengthy procedures, formed some sort of hindrance to the employees' willingness to embrace sustainability at the workplace (see 3rd findings, themes 6.6 and 6.5).

Organizational connectivity has a major role in engaging the employees with sustainability. The critical aspect of organizational connectivity can be achieved when corporations embed the core and subordinate components that have been addressed in detail in section (iv) in this chapter, and in further details in the discussion chapter of my thesis (chapter 7). In essence, both this study's empirical findings (chapter 6 - 3rd finding, themes 6.6 and 6.5) and the body of literature (i.e. Brown, 2020; Hirschheim and Adams, 1991; Zepeda, Derrington and Lanoue, 2020), along with the key outcomes of this dissertation (chapter 7), affirm and recommend that 'organizational connectivity' is a crucial aspect for corporations to be taken into account, when engaging their employees in sustainability programmes. According to my research study, there has been a need for comprehensive holistic approach demonstrated in the concept of 'organizational connectivity', to form and strengthen the alignment between employees' sustainability-related efforts and job tasks/assignments, and the corporation's performance and directions towards efficient sustainability outcomes. In addition to the need for creating an atmosphere of collaboration between corporations' inter-departmental, branches, etc. that can unify the employees' sustainability efforts towards the corporation's sustainability outcomes.

- **Reinforcement:**

Reinforcement is demonstrated in the recursive arrows in the conceptual model (see diagram 8.4), which enabled the components/aspects to receive further enhancements, during the implementation and process of engaging employees with sustainability programmes in corporations. Reinforcement aspect has been taken into account at the initial phases of this research study, specifically at the phase of developing the literature review (mainly in chapter 4). Which later on, has been confirmed by the findings of this study, as the empirical findings accentuated the need for support and enhancement, follow up and review & feedback (the findings chapter – chapter 6). Ultimately, the main outcomes of this thesis (see discussion Chapter 7), supported the adoption of the aspect ‘reinforcement’ in my conceptual model.

The adoption of organizational change using project management tools and techniques can facilitate the engagement of employees with sustainability programmes in corporations. This can be achieved by providing clear guidance and direction, particularly when emphasizing on the reinforcement aspect of change. The ultimate goal is to ensure a continuous and successful transformation, while enabling the implementation of appropriate adjustments and improvements of any established or existing sustainability programmes which can benefit employees and enhance their engagement. Theorists within the literature of organisational change (i.e. Glickman and Schiff, 1967; Monk and Wagner, 2008) asserted that reinforcement has been underexamined. In addition, reinforcement from an organizational change perspective, grant the model its cyclic shape.

- **Leadership:**

Leadership appeared to be as a strong requirement along with the strategic management commitment and direction in engaging the employees with sustainability programs in corporations.

Furthermore, leadership was one of the most emphasized upon aspect as a requirement for engaging employees with sustainability through qualified leaders who are aware and knowledgeable of the employment and utilization of project management tools and techniques that can aid the employees in embracing and applying sustainability in corporations, from both the literature and the findings of this thesis, which has been identified as the first and main core component (discussion and reflection chapter 7).

The majority of the literature (i.e. Ramus and Steger 2000; Egri and Herman, 2000; Kane, 2011; Haddock-Fraser *et al.*, 2018; Muller and Kolk, 2010) (upon the three pillars of this thesis, in addition to the fourth one) stressed on the vital role of leadership in supporting and guiding the employees towards a successful engagement with sustainability initiatives in corporations, via the aid of project management tools and techniques (see chapter 3 and 4). In parallel, leadership theme emerged as a core theme within the empirical study's findings (chapter 6). And eventually, within the discussion and reflection chapter (7). Which further on, has been considered as a core component, and eventually has been adopted in my designed conceptual model. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to specify which type of leadership to be adopted, however, this thesis is in favor of the 'lead by example' style of leadership, as the most suitable to the field of this thesis.

- **Communication:**

Effective style of communication emerged as the predominant essential aspect in this research investigation's outcome. Communicating sustainability

to the employees and throughout the cooperation, via various formal or informal communication methods and channels, to disseminate, convey, liaise and foster sustainability practices, processes, goals and outcomes, specifically on the individual level (employees).

Communication has been mainly derived from the literature, specifically in regard with the engagement of the employees with sustainability programmes (i.e. Greene *et al.*, 2014; Potoski and Callery, 2017). Sustainability goals have to be effectively communicated, as it also must be subject to ongoing enhancements, tailored to the employees' needs (Gupta and Sharma, 1996). Effectively, project management plays a vital role in communicating sustainability (on the individual, groups, departmental, branches, organisational etc.), as it can assist in making clear and effective communication, as well as, its support in simplifying the messages of sustainability and helps in transferring it into an actionable language (which has been explained in further details in chapter 4, 6 and 7).

Likewise, communication has been developed into a key core-component (in the discussion and findings stage - chapter 6) to be considered, and consequently has been adopted into my conceptual model (see diagram 8.4).

8.2.2.2 The middle ring/circle in the conceptual model (diagram 8.4):

The middle ring-circle in the conceptual model (see diagram 8.4) demonstrates the practical level, in regard with engaging the employees with sustainability programs, along with what that practical level entails. Which includes: (a) Setting project principles and objectives, (b) programmes and initiatives, (c) scheduled tasks and objectives and (d) group of employees. Such elements in the conceptual model, has been mainly obtained from the literature (chapter 4), and augmented further by the empirical study of this research project (chapter 6). Each point has been stated clearly and articulated upon with further details within the discussion chapter (7).

My research study's results validate that project management tools and techniques can assist in employee engagement sustainability outcomes, determined by projects and programmes objectives that are systematically implemented, monitored and maintained.

This can be at the stage of establishing or re-establishing sustainability programmes that entail an engaged workforce with such programmes in corporations. Sustainability programmes, strategies, and policies cannot be designed neither operationalized without the aid of project management tools and techniques. Such assertions have been investigated and studied throughout the phases of this research study, and eventually substantiated further into valid outcomes (see chapter 7).

Furthermore, the significance of aligning sustainability related corporation's value-purpose-goal has been a subject of debate. According to Sahoo and Sahu (2009), employees seek an alignment of value-meaning that fosters a genuine connection, a collective purpose, and a shared understanding of meaning within their workplaces.

Such related validation has been gradually achieved via the initial stage of this research study through a critical review of the relevant aspects within the literature (see chapter 4), which later on have been investigated further through the empirical study and proven within the (empirical) findings (see chapter 6 - i.e. themes 6.3, 6.4, 6.6, 6.9, 6.10). And eventually synthesized into major discussion points and outcomes in chapter (7).

In addition, both the literature and the evidence within the empirical findings confirm that project management tools and techniques when implemented and applied systematically, it can assist in translating, simplifying and transferring sustainability programme related policies and strategies into an actionable language (i.e. initiatives), which can aid the employees to engage with such programmes.

Lastly, groups of employees' aspect (see diagram 8.4), requires a program that aims at engaging the employees with sustainability, while being designed with inclusiveness of all the employees, along with being tailored to meet their competencies and abilities, throughout the organizational hierarchy (whether vertically or horizontally). Such assertion has been proven jointly by the body of the literature (chapter 4) and the empirical findings (chapter 6 - themes 6.3, 6.6, 6.7).

8.2.2.3 The smallest ring/circle (located in the middle) in the conceptual model (diagram 8.4):

- **CAMP: A, M, P**

Remarkably, the acronym 'CAMP' stands for Community, Autonomy, Mastery and Purpose. As mainly the three drivers as 'AMP' have been derived from the literature which are recognized by Pink (2011) which has been acknowledged by further research (addressed in detail in chapter 4). In addition, unexpected driver emerged from the empirical findings of this study (chapter 6), namely as 'Community', which augmented the rest of the existed drivers, as consequently, I have altogether turned them into the acronym 'CAMP' – although this specific driver has not been yet examined and approved via previous research, in relation with the engagement of employees, specifically in regard with the context of sustainability. Eventually Community, Autonomy, Master and Purpose have been re-organized and synthesized into the acronym 'CAMP' by me (the researcher of this thesis). Therefore, community as the acronym 'C' has been adopted in the thesis outcomes (discussion chapter 7), as well as in my conceptual model (see diagram 8.4), to reflect upon the vital dimension of employee engagement to be considered in engaging the employees with sustainability programmes in corporations.

- **Framed by Faith:**

Notably, according to my research study's outcomes, as well as the literature, faith aspect appeared to be imperative in engaging employees with sustainability programmes, through the aid of project management tools and techniques, within the Saudi Arabian's (Arabian Gulf) context. The empirical findings of this thesis, affirmed that signs and ways of employees' engagement (i.e. beliefs, attitudes, actions, job tasks, outcomes, decisions, etc.) with sustainability were (predominantly) guided by their embraced faith. Which, necessitate the need for corporations to embed and infuse their established sustainability programmes with Islamic faith (Quran and Hadith guidelines), according to this thesis's outcomes, specifically within the Saudi Arabian context. Faith related aspects have been addressed in the literature review (chapter 3), the empirical findings (chapter 6), as well as the discussion (chapter 7) of this research study. Furthermore, faith aspect emerged intensely as a focal aspect in this study, as it has been mainly derived from the empirical findings, which has been revisited and re-addressed in the literature review (chapter 3), via the employed iterative process. Therefore, the conducted investigation of this thesis demanded me to address faith as the focal aspect throughout this research study, which consequently compelled the adoption of 'faith' aspect as a central point.

According to the literature, sustainability is correspondingly multicultural (Rizk, 2014). In corporations, diversity is inevitable, since the employees come from different backgrounds (culture, faith, spirituality etc.). Yet, what unify them in principle, is being human beings. Therefore, investigating how to engage employees with sustainability in corporations, entails such examination at a deeper level. Which in the case of my study, has been through the engagement of the employees, as the key aspect, in regard with sustainability programmes in corporations. Interestingly, within the literature of sustainability, there has been growing research in regard with faith and

spirituality to be adopted at the workplace (i.e. Giacalone and Jurkiewicz, 2003).

8.2.3 Contribution to policy and practice

This study extends our knowledge associated to the effective ways' assistance in creating meaningfulness of sustainability program, that invites the employee's safety (trust to express themselves) and meets the employees' availability to engage themselves with such programs (adopted from: Kahn, 1990). Therefore, this study contributes to practice, by offering a primarily decision-based framework, that offers a valuable start for practitioners (Table 8.5). The framework has been infused by faith, to awaken and touch the employees' souls (the human/side of them) and attract their emotions and attentions, in order to make it meaningful, by creating a sense of purpose and belonging behind the message of sustainability to the employees in their workplaces.

The framework below (table 8.5) has been designed based on my research study's investigation through the conducted systematic literature review (Denyer, D. and Tranfield, 2009) (in chapters 2,3 and 4), whereby the four literatures intersect (sustainability, employee engagement, project management and organizational change). In addition, the investigation this research phenomenon under study has been considered through a constructivist-pragmatist lens, in an action-oriented manner.

Both the process of my research empirical findings' analysis (chapter 6), and the outcomes of my discussion chapter (chapter 7) assisted me in developing the framework (below) for practitioners, through an evidence-based approach (Schön, 1999; Lewin, 1946; Cassell and Johnson, 2006; Argyris, 1993; Bargal, 2006 and Greenwood and Levin, 2007). It is imperative to

acknowledge that, the pragmatic devise for practice (table 8.5), has been created in accordance with the conceptual model (figure 8.4) and the outcomes of this research (chapter 7). Nevertheless, it has been transformed into a simplified and practical format to ensure its applicability in real-world scenarios.

I have therefore, developed a set of values and strategies, that offer a comprehensive step-by-step guidance, that translated evidence-based outcomes of this research study to fit into practice (Coghlan, 2011; Hitchcock and Willard, 2015; Carlson, 2009). While acknowledging the vital role of reinforcement, which emerged as a strength key aspect, which invited flexibility for further amendments and enhancement of sustainability programs, that are tailored to meet the employees needs and abilities to engage themselves with such programs. By all means, sustainability programs have to be infused by faith, in order to touch the employees' souls. Which in the case of this study, it can be infused by Quranic and Hadith guidelines. However, at the same time, such design of sustainability programs that target the engaged of employees can adopt inter-faith aspect, through the influence of famous powerful quotation from well-known great thinkers, for example. Since the phenomena itself is context-dependent, which when embraced can allow the employees to innovate and not to suffocate with sustainability related technical and political languages in corporations.

In essence, I have designed the practitioners' practical guidance as a primarily decision-based framework (table 8.5), that can offer a valuable start for practitioners. For managers, decision and policy makers, leaders according to Quranic and hadith guidelines.

-
- ✓ Identify the direction and scope of an engaged workforce with sustainability.
 - ✓ What is needed: (1) Leadership and leading by example figures, (2) strategic management commitment and direction, and (3) communicate sustainability by utilizing all the communication (though formal and informal) channels.
 - ✓ Invite employee-related critical engagement questions such as: (1) Is it meaningful? (2) How available I am? (3) How safe it is to do so? (Kahn, 1990).
 - ✓ Motivate, empower and make sustainability message attractive to the employees.
 - ✓ Touch the employees beliefs and awaken their souls
 - ✓ When you are doing great; make sure the efforts are on the right direction, align and connect them with the bigger image of sustainability on the corporation as a whole, as well as with both national and international image of sustainability.
 - ✓ Augment the program with monitoring and control, review and feedback schemes.
 - ✓ Allow mistakes, study and benefit from the learned lessons, and design the program with flexibility to be amended and enhanced through reinforcement.
 - ✓ 'Walk the talk' and visualize sustainability to the employees;
 - ✓ Design the programme in a semiotic way, infused by inspiring sentences that touch the human-side of the employees. For example, aid it with images that include Quranic verses or Hadith, or famous powerful quotes (from well-known influential characters within that specific culture or community).
 - ✓ Create an atmosphere of collaboration and a community of engaged employees with sustainability!
-

Table 8.5 – Practitioner’s practical guidance as a primarily decision-based framework. Source: The author’s conceptualization

8.2.4 Research study's ensured trustworthiness and rigor (research outcomes, contribution to knowledge (conceptual model) and contribution to policy and practice):

Validation has been seldomly mentioned in qualitative research studies (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019; Denzin and Lincoln, 2011), as the term is more applicable to quantitative research studies. The equivalent term that is compatible with qualitative research studies would be 'trustworthiness' which entails ensuring rigor and meaningfulness of the research results. In fact, some scholars (i.e. Shenton, 2004) affirmed that validity is an incorrect/unsuitable term to be considered in qualitative research.

According to Shenton (2004), trustworthiness plays a crucial role in qualitative studies, as it enables researchers to generate meaningful and trustworthy results that contribute to our understanding of human experiences. Therefore, ensuring trustworthiness and rigor have been imperatively considered and applied in my research study, which have been demonstrated in a well-established implemented research methodology. This will be briefly addressed in my research-study-related employed processes and steps in this section.

The ensured elements of meaningfulness, rigor and trustworthiness, are evident in my research outcomes (results) and contribution to knowledge (in sections 8.2.2 and 8.2.3 in this chapter), which are demonstrated through the three main stages that have been considered and employed throughout the process of my thesis, as follows:

1. The conducted systematic and narrative literature review:

Initially, the relevant literature/s as sustainability, employee engagement, project management, organisational change, through the lens of faith, specifically where they intersect, have been critically reviewed, through a combined approach of a narrative and systematic styles (check chapter 2,3 and 4). This initially has marked the primary step of ensuring 'thoroughness'

and 'rigor', specifically towards my thesis outcomes, as this supported me to come up with a synthesised conceptual framework (which has been presented by the end of the literature review – by the end of chapter 4). Such accomplished research stage/phase mainly helped me to come up with the required key features in engaging employees with sustainability in corporations through the role of project management tools and techniques from a faith perspective. Which consequently created a firm guidance (for me as a researcher), throughout the conducted empirical study. According to scholars, (i.e. Johnson et al., 2020) such stage can guide researchers in formulating research question/s, synthesising a conceptual framework, designing their qualitative research methodology, and consequently can have an influence in coming up with rigorously and trustworthy research findings/outcomes.

2. A well-established methodology has been employed as follows:

Philosophical stance: the research outcomes in my discussion and reflection chapter (7), in addition to my contributions to knowledge (both to academic knowledge and practice) (which have been addressed in this chapter), have been synthesized and formulated from a constructivist-pragmatist lens. The relevant points have been addressed in further details in chapter (5). Furthermore, the embraced philosophical stance guided and aided me in finding out what is needed to as elements (identified at the literature review stage – chapter 2,3 and 4) which have been developed into components (discussion and reflection – chapter 7). The constructivist-pragmatist philosophical stance aided me to understand the phenomena under study, to explore related sustainability employee engagement practical consequences and meanings associated to realities of ideas, presented in a flux of processes, lived experiences and practices (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019; Biesta, 2010) (check the methodology - chapter 5).

Such achievement would not be possible without a well-designed qualitative approach which suited the most, the nature of this research project's aims and research questions.

Qualitative approach: For my empirical study, I have employed a qualitative approach. Which supported me in gaining an in-depth understanding in regard with the employees' perspectives, opinions, and personal encounters.

Furthermore, such employed research approach, helped in facilitating the exploration of efficient ways in engaging the employees with sustainability programmes, as well as examining the role of project management in such investigations, based on practical experiences, with a specific focus on the Saudi Arabian context.

Such points have been addressed in chapter (5), as the methodology chapter. However, it has been argued that researchers can fall into the risk of coming up with debilitated research outcomes, if they do not consider applying rigor and trustworthiness when implementing a qualitative research study (Shenton, 2004). Therefore, the followings have been considered:

Case study and action research: The qualitative study for this research, has been implemented through a programme of intensive case study, in addition to the aid of action research. For the sake of this research, two case studies have been considered. The first case study has been chosen within the aviation sector, and the second one has been within the energy sector (see methodology chapter 5).

The second important aspect of my empirical study is that is has been implemented via the style of Action Research through a reflection-in-action mode (Schön, 1999). Employing Action research supported me in interrogating the current norms in Saudi Arabian multi-national corporations. Such triangulation (presented in the employed qualitative approach, case

study/ies and action research strategies) provided a firm research foundation for meaningfulness and trustworthiness to the way this research study has been implemented, which consequently had an influence on both the investigation and the synthesis of this research project's outcomes (chapter 7 and 8). According to scholars, a variety of research techniques and strategies that accompanies the qualitative study play a vital role in ensuring trustworthiness, while helping in forming a concrete research framework for the phenomena under investigation (Guba, 1981; Shenton, 20224; Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

Intensive semi-structure interviews: I have conducted intensive semi-structured interviews. Participants have been recruited through snowballing and random sampling. In addition, participants had the right to reject or withdraw from participating in my empirical study, before, during and after the interviews. All of these points have been addressed in the methodology - chapter (5). According to Preece (1994), inviting diversity in the empirical study population ensures that any 'unknown influences' can be distributed evenly in the overall collected data. As utilizing such way of inviting participants can optimize the assurance of true reflection of wider population, whereby research biases can be avoided (Bouma, Atkinson and Dixon, 1995). Such considerations can optimize the quality of the research investigation, and consequently, rigor and trustworthiness towards the research outcomes can be achieved.

Moreover, I have designed the interview's topic guide in sections and parts, in a sophisticated way (see appendix C). Every part represents each thesis pillar (as sustainability, employee engagement, project management). And eventually the last part entailed questions, whereby the four research pillars related parts intersect. Such approach has been employed to accommodate the complexity of my research, in addition to ensuring cross examinations of the phenomena under study. I also gradually introduced my research topic to the interviewees (through the designed interview questions parts) to ensure

their effective engagement, and consequently collect a good quality of data (see methodology chapter 5).

Richness of the thematically analysed empirical data: in regard to my conducted empirical data, and specifically during the data collection phase, a prolonged time have been spent with the interviewees, as each interview has been conducted into two or three sessions (see appendix G). This way granted me (the researcher) and the participants to spend sufficient time, which lead to the achievement of an in-depth-oriented data collection, accompanied by intensive data analysis (see chapter 5).

In addition, during the phase of analysing the data, drafts of the findings' chapter have been peer reviewed and debriefing sessions have been conducted with my supervisory team, as feedback has been provided accordingly. I have engaged in numerous conversations with my supervisory team, in regard the submitted drafts of my findings chapter, which enhanced and widened up my vision, as an investigator, by considering their feedback that reflected the supervisory teams' experiences and perspectives. Such collaborative meetings (with the supervisory team), helped me (as a researcher) in exploring different strategies, embracing alternative approaches, being aware of my own biases while analysing the collected data, identifying potential flaws in the proposed course of action (Guba, 1981; Shenton, 20224; Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

Pilot study: Initially, I have conducted a pilot study prior to the undertaken empirical study (chapter 5 – heading 5.9). This step was essential for ensuring feasibility of the whole empirical study. In addition, the pilot study aided me to test and find out the suitability and alignment between the empirical study's data collection instrument (designed as the interviews' topic guide) and my research project's aims and questions. Conducting pilot studies are

critical to research projects, which can pave the way of achieving rigor and trustworthiness in the research project (Silverman, 2010). As for the case of my research project, this has been achieved in my research project's outcomes, conceptual model and pragmatic device for practice.

8.3 Limitations and recommendations

This study's outcomes and results are subject to limitations, in several ways. Mainly, this current study encounters its time and period related limitations, which had a major influence at the assessed and investigated outcomes of engaging employees with sustainability in corporations, which has been investigated through systematic project management, framed by organizational change.

Firstly, the time related limitation is about the research strategy which has been employed as Action Research. I do acknowledge that the lack of time within my PhD timescale, restricted completing the last cycle of the employed Action Research strategy. As such research strategy requires the utilization of multiple essential cycles. Unfortunately, due to the time constraints, I could not complete the implementation of the last cycle of Action Research strategy. Which requires me to return to the interviewees (approximately after completing my discussion chapter – chapter 7), in order to obtain their responses towards the proposed conceptual model, and to further refine the developed primarily decision-based framework for practitioners accordingly.

Secondly, this study has been conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has been a global outbreak of coronavirus, during the period between 2020 until 2022. The empirical study's gathered data has been only collected

virtually, through conducting intensive semi-structured interviews via social media platforms. This restricted the interactions between me (the interviewer) and the interviewees (the participants). As this did not allow me to study the interviewees' body languages, which would have had a good impact on the quality of the interpreted data. In addition, this research would have been complemented by the employment of focus groups data collection instrument. As I unfortunately, could not implement it, due to the time constraints and the restricted rules and regulations that accompanied that period of time (COVID-19 pandemic).

Finally, this current study has been limited by using the aid of project management tools and techniques only, in regard with my third thesis pillar, incorporated as project management. As it excluded project management methodologies and approaches. Further research could be undertaken, applying different project management methodologies, such as Agile, PRINCE2 and hybrid, to different industries. Due to the scope related limitation, I would recommend incorporating Agile project management methodologies (Highsmith, 2004), with researchers who come from both managerial and technical software backgrounds.

In addition, touching upon future research, examining the generalizability of the conceptual model I have developed (see figure 8.4) would be meaningful. As in this study, the employed research design (participants, data collection instrument, and data analysis technique, etc.) are well-recognized processes in research methodology. However, one limitation of my research that I must recognize is the employment of a qualitative method, resulting in findings and outcomes that may not be broadly/generally applicable. In addition, one more fundamental factor that played a major role that led to ungeneralised research outcomes (which had the same effect on the conceptual model I have developed), is due to the fact that the empirical study has been

exclusively conducted within the Saudi Arabian context. As the two case studies have been conducted within the aviation and energy sectors. Prospect research studies can be implemented within diverse industries, such as the education sector/industry – which can be noted in the following paragraphs within this section. Such consideration would provide a better understanding of the ‘engagement of employees’ with sustainability programmes, while investigating the aid of project management tools and techniques, and how they manifest, from a different research context.

My research project employed a qualitative study. Which supported to me (as a researcher) to explore ‘what’ is required for an effective engagement of the employees with sustainability programmes, and ‘how’ such engagement can be achieved. As the outcomes of this research revealed and provided an in-depth understand of such phenomena. Therefore, looking at the same phenomena, from a different research approach such as employing quantitative perspective, would aid the investigation in looking into: (1) factors that affect an engaged or disengaged workforce with sustainability programmes, (2) cause and effect patters and relationships between engaging the employees with sustainability and in addition to finding out, to what extent would project management tools and techniques can aid the employee at their workplaces.

Furthermore, a viable recommendation for future research would be through investigating the engagement/involvement of employees with sustainability initiatives or programmes (if they exist or/and well-established or if such programme is completely absent) on the sphere of Small and Medium Enterprises SMEs, through an exploratory qualitative study.

Ninety percent of businesses globally are classified as Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) (Gay and Szostak, 2019). As they exhibit a range of key characteristics, including being operated by a single individual, having sole

proprietorship, operating within one or more sectors/industries, and maintaining a limited workforce typically ranging from 1 to a maximum of 250 employee (i.e. Kotey and Folker, 2007; Demirkan et al., 2022). Interestingly, sustainability in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is a multifaceted subject, with employees being essential for the implementation and achievement of sustainable initiatives in such companies (Haase and Franco, 2016). According to the literature, SMEs face challenges in adopting sustainable practices, whereby employees and other stakeholders play a vital role in their companies' sustainability related activities and overall performances (Journeault, M., Perron and Vallières, 2021).

Therefore, employing an investigation within the level of SMEs would be a fascinating endeavour, specifically in regard with (1) what the engagement of employees with sustainability entails and (2) whether there would be a need for systematic project management. Specifically, that SMEs face various challenges (i.e. limited budgets, human resource management are less developed, conditional access for governmental financial support such as loans, employee retention and development, technological and political, their alignment with sustainability on the macro levels, etc.) (Dekel-Dachs, O. et al., 2021). As such challenges differs from the ones Multinationals deal with, which has been the case of my research study.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Participant information sheet



[Funder logo(s) if appropriate]

[Text in a colour other than black is guidance and must be deleted when you create your PIS. Text in black is MANDATORY and must be preserved as written.]

Projects differ in nature and some guidance presented here might not apply to you so feel free to ignore. Sections that you are not allowed to discard are clearly labelled MANDATORY. Avoid the use of acronyms and any specialised language. If you are unsure what is meant by this, please consult <https://www.plainenglish.co.uk/>]

Participant Information Sheet

Title of the research project: The role of employee engagement in environmental sustainability programmes using project management tools: a mechanism for organisational change? Case studies from Saudi Arabia

1. Invitation to research

My name is Amina ~~AbuSha~~. I will be personally conducting the study by collecting data related to my research by undertaking interviews and focus groups.

You are being invited to take part in a research study as part of PhD project. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand what the purpose of my research is, and what it will involve. Please take your time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others of you wish.

Please feel free if you have any questions or would like to ask for further clarifications. Please feel free to decide whether you wish to take part in my research (interviews or focus groups). Thank you for reading this.

2. Why have I been invited?

Your views and perceptions, alongside those of others, will form a critical part of my PhD research. I am very grateful to [redacted] who have given me permission to approach the employees and managers to conduct my research. The research will take the form of interviews and focus groups. The research will provide helpful findings for management decision making, theory and practice, on the important topic of employee engagement in environmental sustainability programs and projects.

3. Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide. We will describe the study and go through the information sheet, which we will give to you. We will then ask you to sign a consent form to show you agreed to take part. You are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason.

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[MANDATORY] Version: Date:

[MANDATORY] Ethical approval number (~~EthOS~~): Date:

4. What will I be asked to do?

- You would be asked to participate in individual, one to one interviews with myself, and/or group discussions where a number of participants will be brought together to discuss the topic.
- The one to one interviews would use a semi-structures methodology, conducted with (employees from upper, middle and operational levels of managements).
- I will be also conducting focus groups. One focus group with the executive management members (3-5 Participants), and another focus group will be with employees from the middle and operational levels in this organization).
- The interviews will be recorded only for my research purposes, no-one else will have access to the audio files.
- The data will be stored in a safe and secure place, separate to the contact information or names of the participating employees.
- Participants have the right to withdraw from the interview at any time without providing the research with any reasons.

I will use the collected data only for my thesis. The recorded interviews will be transcribed, and no identifications or confidential information will be asked from participant while conducting the interviews, nor revealed while transcribing the data. The gathered data will be analysed using a qualitative method.

5. Are there any risks if I participate?

According to the researcher's assessment and consideration of the associated risk related to the research study, there is no risk is associated to this research study. However, for further information and concern, you may refer to article (9.a) in this sheet.

6. Are there any advantages if I participate?

No expenses or payment will be required in taking pace for my (the researcher) interviews. Interviewees are kindly asked to participate in my interviews and focus groups, only or research purposes.

7. What is the duration of the research?

Duration of the interview will take about 30 to 35 minutes depends on the participants if they are interested and enjoying the conversation and would like to take longer in the same interview.

The focus group will take approximately 45 to 60 minutes.

[Funder logo(s) if appropriate]



8. What will happen to the samples that I give?

This research does not require any bio samples or any participant-made artefacts.

9. What will happen with the data I provide?

When you agree to participate in this research, we will collect from you personally-identifiable information.

The Manchester Metropolitan University ('the University') is the Data Controller in respect of this research and any personal data that you provide as a research participant.

The University is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), and manages personal data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the University's Data Protection Policy.

We collect personal data as part of this research (such as name, telephone numbers or age). As a public authority acting in the public interest we rely upon the 'public task' lawful basis. When we collect special category data (such as medical information or ethnicity) we rely upon the research and archiving purposes in the public interest lawful basis.

Your rights to access, change or move your information are limited, as we need to manage your information in specific ways in order for the research to be reliable and accurate. If you withdraw from the study, we will keep the information about you that we have already obtained.

[IF APPLICABLE] We will not share your personal data collected in this form with any third parties.

[IF APPLICABLE] We will share your personal data with [state any recipients, meaning external partners] in order to fulfil the purposes set out above.

If your data is shared this will be under the terms of a Research Collaboration Agreement which defines use, and agrees confidentiality and information security provisions. It is the University's policy to only publish anonymised data unless you have given your explicit written consent to be identified in the research. **The University never sells personal data to third parties.**

We will only retain your personal data for as long as is necessary to achieve the research purpose. [MANDATORY. Include full details of your data handling, retention, disposal, anonymisation, and how you will preserve participant's confidentiality].

For further information about use of your personal data and your data protection rights please see the [University's Data Protection Pages](#).

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[MANDATORY] Version: Date:

[MANDATORY] Ethical approval number (EthOS): Date:

[Funder logo(s) if appropriate]

a. What will happen to the results of the research study?

The findings and conclusions of the research will be published for academic purposes, as input to my doctoral theses and potentially academic articles. If desired, I will produce a separate practitioner report to assist Saudi Arabian Airlines with their learning, management practices and decision making on the topic of engaging employees in environmental sustainability projects and programs. This publications would highlight the organizational benefit and challenges of doing so, and provide management guidelines on how to do so.

b. Who has reviewed this research project?

[MANDATORY detail all who have reviewed the research, e.g. supervisors, funders, ethics committees, academic peers, public (as part of public involvement activity)]

c. Who do I contact if I have concerns about this study or I wish to complain?

[MANDATORY Staff applicants must offer at least three points of contact: the researcher for general questions about the project, the Faculty ethics contact for concerns/complaints about the project, and the DPO & ICO for complaints about data. Student applicants must offer four points of contact: researcher, Supervisor, Faculty ethics, DPO&ICO. All points of contact will be given with full name, email, work telephone and postal address. Please must not use personal phone numbers, non-university email addresses or personal postal addresses for any of the contacts.]

If you have any concerns regarding the personal data collected from you, our Data Protection Officer can be contacted using the legal@mmu.ac.uk e-mail address, by calling 0161 247 3331 or in writing to: Data Protection Officer, Legal Services, All Saints Building, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, M15 6BH. You also have a right to lodge a complaint in respect of the processing of your personal data with the Information Commissioner's Office as the supervisory authority. Please see: <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/>

THANK YOU FOR CONSIDERING PARTICIPATING IN THIS PROJECT

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[MANDATORY] Version: Date:

[MANDATORY] Ethical approval number (EthOS): Date:

Appendix B – Consent form

Faculty of Business and Law
Manchester Metropolitan University
All Saints Campus
Oxford Road
Manchester, M15 6BH
United Kingdom



RESEARCH PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: The role of employee engagement in environmental sustainability programmes using project management tools: a mechanism for organisational change? Case studies from Saudi Arabia

Name of Researcher: Amina ~~AbuShal~~

Please initial all boxes:

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet (date ... and version no.) for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had them answered satisfactorily.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to leave at any time without giving any reason.
3. I understand that data collected during this study will be processed in accordance with data protection law as explained in the participant information sheet.
4. I give consent for direct quotes to be used from the interview in the project
5. I understand that I can view the completed transcript and omit any data that I would not like to be presented within one month of the interview

I agree to take part in the above study.

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Date	Signature
_____	_____	_____
Name of Researcher	Date	Signature

Date created:

Version No.: (to correspond with PIS version no.)

NOTES

Optional check boxes may be added to the above template depending on the nature and requirements of the study, such as those noted below for instance, but they may not be necessary if the details have already been made clear on the accompanying participant information sheet and are, therefore, covered by the initialling of box 1. If, for any clause, consent is optional the single check box can be replaced with two boxes indicating 'yes' or 'no'.

- I consent for my interview to be audio/video recorded. The recording will be transcribed and analysed for the purposes of the research (also provide information on how long the recording will be stored and procedure for destruction).
- I understand that the results of this study may be published and/or presented at meetings or academic conferences, and may be provided to research commissioners or funders. I give my permission for my anonymous data, which does not identify me, to be disseminated in this way.
- I agree to be named as a participant and referred to accordingly.
- I agree to allow the use of anonymised verbatim quotes in the reporting of research findings.
- I would like to receive further information about the results of the study.
- I agree to take part in further rounds of data collection and provide contact details to facilitate such.
- I agree to the data I contribute being retained for any future research that has been given a favourable opinion by a recognised research ethics committee.

The above is an illustrative and not exhaustive list. A researcher must ensure that all relevant matters of research ethics are addressed in either the participant information sheet or participant consent form (or both), which may mean adapting clauses or drafting new clauses.

Date created:

Version No.: (to correspond with PIS version no.)

Appendix C – Intensive interviews’ topic guide

Pilot Interviews Topic Guide

Amina AbuShal

PhD working title: **“Employee engagement in sustainability programmes-**

Case studies from Saudi Arabia”

Pilot interviews with Saudi Arabian Airlines

Feb. 2020.

INTRODUCTION:

1. Has the interviewee received, understood and is happy with the project description and ethics form sent in advance?
2. If no, list any reasons for objecting.

Opening the discussion:

As you see, the topic of our discussion today is how we can work with organisations like yours, hopefully to help them to develop and improve their engagement with their employees, around areas of corporate responsibility and sustainability. I am also investigating how formal project management tools might help to achieve this. At the end of this PhD project, I will be providing a report of my recommendations and guidance to the management team of Saudi Arabian Airlines (SV) - Saudia. During the interview I would like to discuss the three core ideas of my PhD with you. These are ‘sustainability’; ‘employee engagement’ and ‘project management’. Then I would like your views on how we can bring these ideas together and develop recommendations and guidelines tailored to the needs of this company.

Before we begin, could you talk me through your current and past roles here at

(Description of everyday work and responsibilities)

SECTION 1 - CAREER/JOB BACKGROUND OF INTERVIEWEE.

1. Can you please describe to me your current job role and objectives? What are you seeking to achieve in your role?
2. What you do on a day-to-day basis in this role?

3. When did you join Saudi Arabian Airlines? what/why were you attracted to apply to join Saudi Arabian Airlines as an employee and what was your starting position at the company?
4. Can you please describe your progression in the company from this start? What positions did you move to and why?
5. What social values do you think the company holds (if any?) and did these play any part in your decisions to join the company, or in your progress through the company?

Now I would like to move on to discuss the 3 core themes that I am studying for my PhD –They are sustainability, employee engagement, and project management in organisations. I am investigating whether and how these can be brought together to assist the organisation to facilitate change by engaging its employees in corporate responsibility and sustainability programmes.

SECTION 2 - SUSTAINABILITY

1. May I ask you please to tell me what, in your own words ‘Sustainability’ means to you personally; and in terms of the Company.

Personally:

In terms of the Company:

2. How important is working towards (this definition) of greater sustainability for you **PERSONALLY?** (SHOW CARD)

2.1 Can you explain why you say that?

2.2 (If Very or quite important) Can you tell me what dimensions of Sustainability you are thinking of when you say that?

Definition:

3. And now how important is working towards (this definition) of greater sustainability for **YOUR COMPANY?** (SHOW CARD)

.....

3.1 Can you explain why you say that?

3.2 (If Very or quite important) Can you tell me what dimensions of Sustainability you are thinking of when you say that?

4. Are you aware of any current programmes or activities in the company that are undertaken in order to improve sustainability outcomes?

Yes/no

If yes, please explain what you know about these

(For up to 3 initiatives, Discuss For each)

Prompts: –

SECTION 3 – Corporate Social Responsibility

5. May I ask you please to tell me what, in your own words 'Corporate Social Responsibility' CSR means to you personally; and in terms of the Company.

Personally:

In terms of the Company:

Definition:

6. How important is working towards (this definition) of greater CSR for you **PERSONALLY?** (SHOW CARD)

.....

- 6.1 Can you explain why you say that?
- 6.2 (If Very or quite important) Can you tell me what dimensions of CSR you are thinking of when you say that?

- 7. And now how important is working towards (this definition) of greater CSR for **YOUR COMPANY?** (SHOW CARD)

.....

- 7.1 Can you explain why you say that?
- 7.2 (If Very or quite important) Can you tell me what dimensions of CSR you are thinking of when you say that?

- 8. Are you aware of any current programmes or activities in the company that are undertaken in order to improve CSR outcomes?
Yes/no
If yes, please explain what you know about these

(For up to 3 initiatives, Discuss For each)

Prompts:

SECTION 4 – EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT.

- 9. May I ask you please to tell me what, in your own words '**Employee Engagement**' means to you personally; and in terms of the Company.

Personally:

In terms of the Company:

Definition:

- 10. How important is working towards (this definition) of greater 'Employee Engagement' for you **PERSONALLY?** (SHOW CARD)

.....

- 10.1 Can you explain why you say that?
- 10.2 (If Very or quite important) Can you tell me what dimensions of CSR you are thinking of when you say that?

11. And now how important is working towards (this definition) of greater 'Employee Engagement' for **YOUR COMPANY?** (SHOW CARD)

.....

- 11.1 Can you explain why you say that?
- 11.2 (If Very or quite important) Can you tell me what dimensions of Employee Engagement you are thinking of when you say that?

12. Are you aware of any current programmes or activities in the company that are undertaken in order to improve employee engagement outcomes?

Yes/no

If yes, please explain what you know about these

(For up to 3 initiatives, Discuss For each)

Prompts: –

SECTION 5 – PROJECT MANAGEMENT.

13. May I ask you please to tell me what, in your own words 'Project Management' means to you personally; and in terms of the Company.

Personally:

In terms of the Company:

Definition

14. How important is working towards (this definition) improved project management for you **PERSONALLY?** (SHOW CARD)

.....

- 14.1 Can you explain why you say that?
14.2 (If Very or quite important) Can you tell me what dimensions of Project Management you are thinking of when you say that?

15. And now how important is working towards (this definition) of improved 'Project Management' for YOUR COMPANY? (SHOW CARD)

.....

- 15.1 Can you explain why you say that?
15.2 (If Very or quite important) Can you tell me what dimensions of project management you are thinking of when you say that?

16. Are you aware of any current programmes or activities in the company that are undertaken in order to improve projects within the company through the more systematic use of project management methods and tools?

Yes/no

If yes, please explain what you know about these PM initiatives

(For up to 3 initiatives, Discuss For each)

Prompts: –

SECTION 6 – Bringing it all together.

17. Do any of the Project Management processes/examples that you are aware of specifically aim to improve the **engagement of employees** in the company?
18. What were the **employee engagement outcomes** that the project(s) were aiming to improve?
19. Please describe this/these projects in more detail and whether/how you think it/they have been successful or not?

20. Have you been directly involved in these projects? What was your role on them and what was your experience of them?

-
21. Do any of these Project Management processes/examples that you are aware of specifically aim to **improve sustainability** outcomes for the company?
22. What were the **sustainability outcomes** that the project(s) were aiming to improve?
23. Please describe this/these projects in more detail and whether/how you think they have been successful or not?
24. Have you been directly involved in these projects? What was your role on them and what was your experience of them?
-

-
25. Are you aware of any **project management processes/examples that specifically aim to better engage employees in topics and activities related to sustainability or corporate social responsibility CSR?**
26. Please describe this/these projects in more detail and whether/how you think they have been successful or not?
27. Have you been directly involved in these projects? What was your role on them and what was your experience of them?
-

28. From your experience of being involved or participating in initiatives to improve **sustainability or corporate social responsibility within the company**, what would you say are the **critical success factors of such initiatives?** – Open ended

29. And then ask again showing a prompt list: **Develop a prompt list** from the literature, **eg. Regulations** & Standards; Leadership; values and commitment of employees etc.

30. From your experience of being involved or participating in initiatives to improve **sustainability or corporate social responsibility within the**

company, what would you say are the barriers or challenges to their success? – Open ended

31. From your experience of being involved or participating in initiatives to improve sustainability or corporate social responsibility within the company, what would you say are the barriers or challenges to their success? – Show Prompt list **Develop a prompt list** from the literature, eg, Lack of Regulations & Standards; Lack of Leadership; lack of values and commitment of employees; other commercial priorities in practice over-ride sustainability objectives
-

SECTION 7 – LOOKING FORWARD

Looking at these issues at your company, how would you take it forward? **Open-ended question**

EXPLAIN NEXT STEPS IN THE PHD PROJECT (FURTHER INTERVIEWS AND GROUP DISCUSSIONS ETC). THANK AND CLOSE.

Appendix D – E-coding sheet

Employee engagement can affect the **work flow** in the company. Engaged employees can enhance the speed of the work process or can be a burden/obstacle and hinder the task/job to get accomplished, due to how the tasks and sub-tasks are connected and the nature of the **collaboration** of the job between employees. One employee's job is dependants on the other employee's job and daily tasks.

We, in this corporation, actually have appraisals once a year for everyone. I think everyone is very proud working with this company, and the company has pride in itself. We get new materials, history about the company, and achievements reach us through the company newsletter. In appraisal, we evaluate ourselves and then the manager evaluate us. So both sides. [REDACTED]

Employee engagement exists in this corporation. But they don't have a program called "employee engagement".

[REDACTED] like the nature of my job to be honest. Also the relationship between co-workers is very important. I'm working with admin team, which is four of us. But four of us have different obligations. But we're part of sales team. So we're under that concept. For me it's easier because my line manager is actual the general manager. I'm very lucky, and he's a very relaxed person, and very flexible. But for example if I work with [REDACTED]. Sometimes it's very difficult to corporate with managers and CC heads, and if I was in their departments for example, I would loose my motivation. If I had someone who's very strict and who doesn't value at all what you do. They only have one thing in their mind and that's only how it has to be.

Type leadership – and one of the key features I mention in the list if relation towards manager and co-workers.

Next section - Project management: 23:11

Means to you personally and I terms pf the company:

23:30 - I think it would be making a strategy how to reach your aim and goals, **having all the steps in details**, how to reach the resources you need, what's missing, what needs to be done, the people who be working on it, step-by-step.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

I would say very important. For example, We had in this [corporation] few ideas how to improve some systems, but, unfortunately, because we didn't really do a detailed plan, we didn't put a time and scope, no one kept chasing (**PM-monitoring**). It just fell through and stayed forgotten. No one really remembered it. So I would say it's very important, because if we had those procedures in place, a lot of things would be easier. Every day there's something new happening and every day there's something new happening. New problems, new issues. If we don't chase it, then everyone will forget about it. Just because you need to deal with this new thing. So if from the beginning we had a strategy how to do something, it will be much easier. (**PM keeps up with the speed and dynamic nature of operations at organizations**) [REDACTED]

Also for the company it's very important, for example, [in this corporation] **we have a lot of online courses, specially** now during Covid-19. They're usually in a class [live classes as on-job-training to be attended physically and personally], but now everything is online. And one of those courses was

Appendix E – Manual coding handwritten sheet 1

Business sustainability * How sustainability is understood
They believe and very confidently describe sustainability as the **continuity** of a business stability, survive, prosper, carry on operations
3 part 4 (54:55) min

* **Readiness** of the employees to embrace sustainability
1:11 confidence → **resistance** (from the employees)
change management towards sustainability outcomes

* **Make sure** which departments you start with, so they can inspire the other and they become more influential about the change 1:11
choosing the right place to implement the change any project employee very understanding highly educated, welcome change, energy levels are good, adapt ⇒ influential to others in supporting the change ⇒ inspire the others. 1:11

* **Resistance** as an anticipated risk for any project-based sustainability programs that aiming at engaging employees if resistance is not anticipated it can lead to deterioration towards achieving deep the objectives of the program.

Appendix F - Manual coding handwritten sheet 2

Seen to work well independently
no. of couplets not right
Couple the themes

* Homogeneity - Homogeneous

outcomes fragmented
- no harmony

collaboration - C

* CSR is more for the image of the Company

Employee engage in activities, they understand that it's helpful & decent to do that to the community BUT they still don't feel the as decent as it's supposed to be, they think it's more of a show off, that helps their Corporation gain a good image in the Market.

3:36 (part 2)

* Employee engagement
can affect the work flow
to accomplish tasks and sub-tasks
one employees task - dependants on other employee accomplishing a sub-task

20:50 - 21:08

* Employee engagement
Enhance employees emotional, physical, cognitive aspects?
Sides

work flow

* project management
organize work. clarity
full map * plan * instructions - makes things clear
comprehensive * direction - helps in understanding the why - purpose

shared

name of the interaces + integration ← three lite
discussing Chapters
and by not doing so the company gets a bad image
reflect reflected on the bright side
green wash

Appendix G – Summarized report of key participants with unique IDs

number of Interviews	Interviewee Name & ID	Corporation Y, Z or O	Interview Status Complete/Incomplete	Into How many Sessions Interview Duration
1st interview 2nd interview 3rd interview	1 (Session/Interview no.) -Y.4.X.20-R	Y	Complete	1st session: 45(min.):05(sec.) 2nd session: 20(min.):54(sec.) 3rd session 49(min.):31(sec.)
4th interview 5th interview	2(4,5) - Y.4.Z.6)	Y	Complete	1st session: 1(hour):20(min.) 2nd Session 1(hour):07(min.)
6th interview	3(6) -Y.1.Y.29	Y	Incomplete - due to the outbreak of Covid-19	1st session 21 (min.)
7th interview 8th interview 9th interview 10th interview	4 (7,8,9,10) -Y.4.X.10	Y	Complete	1st session: 50(min.):27(sec.) 2nd session: 1(hour):25(min.) 3rd session 1(hour):22(min.) 4th session 2(hours):13(min.)
11th interview	5 (11) -Z.4.Z.6	Z	Complete	1(hour):23(min.)
12th interview 13th interview	6 (12,13) -Z.4.Y.9	Z	Complete	1st session 1(hour):20(min.) 2nd session 1(hour):31(min.)
14th interview 15th interview	7 (14,15) -Z.4.Z.4	Z	Complete	1st session 2(hours):01(min.) 2nd session 11(min.):15(sec.)
16th interview 17th interview	8 (16,17) -Z.4.X.X	Z	Complete	1st session 2(hours):45(min.) 2nd session 28(min.):27(sec.)

18th interview 19th interview 20th interview	9 (18,19,20) -Z.4.X.4	Z	Complete	1st session: 1(hour):59(min.) 2nd session: 54(min.):30(sec.) 3rd session 1(hour):49(min.)
21st interview	10 (21) -Z.4.X.4	Z	Complete	1(hour):47(min.)
22nd interview 23rd interview	11 (22,23) -Z.4.X.9	Z	Complete	1st session: 1(hour):45(min.) 2nd session: 23(min.):01(sec.)
25th interview	12 (25) -Y.4.X.3+6	Y	Incomplete - It was hard to communicate and find an appointment for the interview	27(min.):02(sec.)
26th interview 27th interview	13 (26,27) -Y.3.V.3	Y	Complete	1st session: 52(min.):35(min.) 2nd session: 31(min.):05(sec.)
28th interview 29th interview 30th interview 31st interview	14 (28,29,30,31) - Y.4.V.3	Y	Complete	1st session: 20(min.):00(sec.) 2nd session: 1(hour):10(min.) 3rd session 38(min.):22(sec.) 4th session 21(min.):8(sec.)
28th interview 29th interview 30th interview 31st interview	15 (28,29,30,31) -O.2.Z	O	Complete	1st session: 20(min.):00(sec.) 2nd session: 1(hour):10(min.) 3rd session 38(min.):22(sec.) 4th session 21(min.):8(sec.)

32nd interview	16 (32) -O.1.V	O	Complete	1(hour) 40(min)
33rd interview	17 (33) -O.1.V	O	Complete	1(hour) 45(min)
34th interview	18 (34) -O.1.V	O	Complete	1(hour) 59(min)
35th interview	19 (35) -Y.1.Y.29	Y	Complete	2(hours) 11(min)
36th interview 37th interview	20 (36,37) -Z.4.Z.11	Z	Complete	1(hours) 9(min) 1(hour) 25(min)
38th interview 39th interview 40th interview	21 (38,39,40) -Z.4.X.12	Z	Complete	1st session: 1(hour):12(min.) 2nd session: 1(hour):6(min.) 3rd session 53(min.):00(sec.)
41st interview 42nd interview 43rd interview	22 (41,42,43) -Y.2.Z.28	Y	Complete	1st session: 18(min.):33(sec.) 2nd session: 1(hour):32(min.) 3rd session 48(min.):00(sec.)
44th interview	23 (44) -Y.2.X.27	Y	Complete	1(hour):52(min.)

Appendix H - Invitation letter

**Manchester Metropolitan
University**



PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

Manchester Metropolitan University
Faculty of Business and Law
Business School
All Saints Campus
Oxford Road
Manchester
M15 6BH
UK
5 Feb 2020

To whom it may concern

**Re: Amina Omar AbuShal, PhD Candidate,
is currently undertaking a programme of interviews in your
organisation to support her doctoral research on:
“Employee engagement in sustainability programmes-
Case studies from Saudi Arabia”
We have great pleasure inviting you to participate**

I am writing to confirm that the above named PhD candidate is conducting a research study entitled 'Employee engagement in sustainability programmes: Case studies from Saudi Arabia' at the Business School within the Faculty of Business and Law at Manchester Metropolitan University, United Kingdom.

Amina, the Doctoral researcher is interested in exploring employee perceptions and experiences of sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR) programmes in organizations, to gain a better understanding of the practical views and elements that have an impact on employee engagement. Amina will be conducting a qualitative study, which will support her work to identify the key features of engaging employees by considering project management and its implications in relation to sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR) programmes that may be present within your organization.

Business School | All Saints Campus | Oxford Road | Manchester M15 6BH |
+44 (0)161 247 6750 | GSBL@mmu.ac.uk



To fulfil the objectives of her research study, Amina will be conducting a programme of qualitative interviews in Saudi Arabia, commencing January 2020 and continuing for approximately 6 months.

May we assure you that Amina has undertaken Research Ethics training and we adhere to the regulations on data collection, use and storage, abiding by the EU GDPR legislation. As such, although we will audio-record the interview we conduct with you, all data will be kept safely and anonymity will be maintained in the collection, storage and reporting of the data.

We thank you, in advance, for supporting Amina's studies.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Sally Randles'.

Professor Sally Randles,
Chair in Sustainability and Innovation,
EQUIS Faculty Lead for Sustainability,
Convenor of the Sustainable and Ethical Enterprise Group,
Department of Strategy, Enterprise and Sustainability,
Faculty of Business and Law,
Manchester Metropolitan University,
Manchester.
United Kingdom

Appendix I - Aspects and activities of non-oil revenues towards achieving Saudi Arabia Vision 2030

Industry or sector	Aspects and activities of non-oil revenues towards achieving Saudi Arabia Vision 2030
Mining and metals industrial sector	The industrial cluster and its strategic partners are working hard to expand the main raw material industry and develop sustainable, globally competitive value-added semi-finished and finished metal industries to support the Kingdom's goal of diversification and development of advanced industries.
Tourism and hospitality sector	The second largest non-oil sector; figures presented in the 'Saudi Vision 2030' economic diversification agenda indicated that there is a rapid growth in the hospitality and tourism industry due to huge governmental investments. The country aims to promote government-led tourism projects that the report claims will support the Kingdom's envisioned post-oil economy.
Petrochemicals	One of the primary non-oil sectors in Saudi Arabia, petrochemical industrial activities represent 60% of absolute non-oil trades.
Construction Industry	The industry actually grew by 4.6% in 2019, exceeding the overall non-oil GDP growth rate of 3.3%. Under the guidance of 'Saudi Vision 2030', the construction industry is expected to achieve significant growth in the next ten years. The construction activities accelerated in 2019, with many infrastructure plans announced and launched, such as Riyadh Metro, and Al Haramain train (offering services by connecting the two holy cities of Makkah and Madina). These, in addition to other mega-projects that are emerging in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, are driving optimism in the industry and related industries. Although the long-term outlook remains optimistic, the COVID-19 crisis led to a slowdown in the entire economy in 2020.
Retail and wholesale trade	The retail industry in Saudi Arabia is still flourishing as online retail. It is adapting to modern retail formats and rapid online migration, which can significantly increase productivity and growth and adoption of best retail practices.

	The country and its citizens will benefit from this, as more Saudis will be employed within this industry, encouraging the 'spreading' and feminisation of retail categories targeted at women.
Healthcare industry	Citizens and residents in Saudi Arabia receive public and private healthcare services, and the two sectors are accessible whether offered for free by the government through public healthcare, or through private healthcare services facilitated by affordable prices through insurance companies, granted by the corporations that employees work with, which cover employees and their families, including their parents. This helps the country's non-oil revenues to flourish, and at the same time contributes to citizens' and residents' wellbeing.

Table 3.4 – Aspects and activities of non-oil revenues towards achieving Saudi Arabia Vision 2030

Adopted from source: (Vision 2030 of The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia – Energy & Sustainability, 2018; Al Shehri, Xianhui and Shah, 2021)