"Building Sustainable Workplaces for Women: Linking Training, Safety and Welfare Practices to Work–Life Balance in Apparel Manufacturing"

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***Abstract*—HRM strategies that increase material efficiency and also promote human workplace conservation are fundamental for a restorative work-life balance. Framed within the COR theory and Sustainable Human Resource Management streams, this study develops a Develop–Protect–Support Resource Architecture to examine how training and development (TD), safety practices (SP) and welfare practices (WP) associated with work life balance (WLB) among female workers in the apparel manufacturing sector is impacted. The survey was conducted for 1000 female employees of two major textile production companies in India (Brandix, 450; Shahi, 550). Analyses exploratory and confirmatory factor a covariance structure equation modelling (CSEM); measurement invariance; multi-group analysis. The measurement model supported the differentiated empirical representation of the four domains and revealed substantial positive associations between TD, SP, and WP such that they explained 37.7% of WLB variation (β =. 215, p <. 001, β =. 280, p <. 001). Configural, metric, and scalar invariance were established for both entities. Further multi-group analysis demonstrated a lack of statistically significant differences between organisations across the three structural linkages, suggesting that they exhibited structural stability with little numerical variation and no organisation-level effects. Research suggests three interrelated resource functions are associated with holistic organisations1: training builds human capital, protection preserves the sustainability of resources, and wellbeing generates contextual resources that can benefit employee support in adverse times. Research suggests that work-life balance is a socially sustainable outcome from an employee perspective, and efficient synergies of resources are needed for authentic workplace sustainability.**

***Index Terms*—Sustainable HRM; work–life balance; training and development; workplace safety; employee welfare; Conservation of Resources theory; women employees; apparel manufacturing**

I. INTRODUCTION

Internal sustainability discussions have moved from concerns around environmental stewardship and economic viability (the business case) to an understanding of the social systems through which work is organised and reproduced. At larger scales (organizational level), organizational sustainability is defined more broadly as the health, growth, career stability, fair employment practices, and welfare of its workforce (Ehnert et al., 2016; Aust et al., 2020). This change is reflected in Sustainable Human Resource Management (Sustainable HRM), which focuses on HR practices that simultaneously improve company sustainability while maintaining the human resources required for that sustainability (Kramar, 2014; Stahl et al., 2020). Such a view is particularly relevant for work–life balance (WLB), the extent to which workers experience the compatible and sustainable tension between work and non-work responsibilities over time, according to Greenhaus & Allen (2011) and Haar et al. (2014). Thus, WLB is not simply a personal benefit but an important pillar of socially sustainable work.

These are higher due to the multi-faceted features of labour-intensiveness with deep links to time-sensitive globalised production systems and a predominantly female workforce prevalence in the garment sector. Marketplace resources are especially important because of the workloads already established at many firms, production goals, safety and health concerns with repetitive movements in manufacturing jobs (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2019;

International Labour Organization & International Finance Corporation [ILO & IFC], 2022) which limits recovery time. Since paid work can overlap with important home and caregiving tasks, the relationship between work and life perhaps promises to be especially salient for female employees. But women should not be viewed only as beneficiaries of workplace protections. A lot of their training, practice and experience leads to deep human capital in manufacturing operations that are labour-intensive. To ensure the sustainability of social life in the garment industry, it is necessary to shape the environment where women can maintain health, productivity and work-life balance.

Training and development, workplace safety, and employee welfare are all facets of an organisation's operations that are relevant to this issue. It improves job-specific knowledge and skills while simultaneously enhancing competence, adaptability and confidence in performing work duties (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009). Safety policy effectiveness differs because safety culture provides a mechanism for protecting workers against occupational hazards, health risks, injuries, and uncertainties (Clarke, 2010; Beus et al., 2016). These welfare social programs also offer ancillary benefit for health, and well-being, safety, or general working conditions. From the Sustainable HRM perspective, these types of activities shall not be regarded as administrative ones. They create a more complex develop–protect–support model: training develops skills, safety ensures that unnecessary people do not leave an organisation and welfare represents the capacity of an organisation to look after their wellbeing too. Such circumstances may allow employees to overcome the conflict of multiple work–family roles on their part due to the availability and sustainability of resources.

The conservation of resources theory (COR) provides a good explanation for this relationship. COR theory asserts that people strive to gain, maintain and protect their resources (Hobfoll 1989; Hobfoll et al. 2018). Currently, training relates only to assets and their refinement, safe work environments mean protecting resources, employee well-being means working on organisational assets. Therefore, work-life balance can be interpreted as an outcome reflecting the extent to which employees effectively allocate and maintain resources across their work and personal domains in light of continual resource depletion. Sustainable HRM provides a broad organisational perspective, while COR theory explains how specific workplace practices can help mitigate work-life experiences and make them more sustainable over time.

ESG concerns are not new in sustainable HRM and employee well-being research, however these challenges have been poorly theorised. First, a fragmentation gap is being experienced since issues related to training, occupational safety, welfare and employee outcomes are very rarely explored as an interconnected area of research thereby making the understanding of their synergic role in a sustainable workplace model more difficult (De Prins et al., 2014; Macke & Genari, 2019). Second, a performance–commitment–satisfaction–turnover-related outcome gap remains in that very few HRM studies pay attention to work-life balance as an independent social-sustainability objective (Aust et al., 2020). Third, compared to studies on resource-oriented workplace practices in professional or service industries, there is less empirical information available regarding how these practices affect the work-life balance of women in labour-intensive clothing manufacturing. Finally, it is ultimately better connected to whether firms operating in the same industry sector (and therefore using similar HR practices) do so or not to achieve similar WLB outcomes. This is key as the HR processes may rely not just on their design but also the organisational context and how employees engage with them.

Research using this framework are continuing to examine the impact of workplace support (i.e. Drawing on survey responses from 1,000 women employees at the two largest garment manufacturing firms in India, this research combines structural and between-firm analyses. The novelty resides in that it integrates Sustainable HRM with COR theory via a develop–protect–support resource structure across women instead of examining individual HR practices. The case provides three significant contributions. In theory, it contributes to the discourse on sustainable HRM by conceptualising training, safety and welfare as instruments that are linked and interactively used for resource development, maintenance and organizational sustaining. This is a large survey data from an industrial context that has not been particularly researched with regard to labour utilization, whilst investigating the between-organization variation in these associations. From a

management lens, it sets the stage for designing workplaces around women–advancing them and protecting and supporting employees as deliberate positive feedback loops. Sustainable workplaces must therefore be built upon governing systems empowering actors to act in their professional capacity whilst ensuring they ultimately lead fulfilling lives beyond work more than simply providing employment opportunities.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Sustainable HRM and Employee-Centred Social Sustainability

Strategic human resource management literature has investigated how human resource systems affect productivity, competitive advantage, and business financial performance (Kramar, 2014; Ehnert et al., 2016). Sustainable people Resource Management (Sustainable HRM) asks whether organisational performance can be sustained if its people resources are invigorated. Thus, it adopts a long-term multi-stakeholder perspective that emphasises employees' growth, health, dignity, and well-being as essential to organisational sustainability rather than treating them as actors or "side effects" of HR strategy (Stahl et al., 2020; Aust et al., 2020). Green HRM emphasises employer conduct and organisational sustainability, whereas socially sustainable HRM emphasises workers.

Grounded in this perspective, social sustainability requires work arrangements that enhance human resources through skill development, conserve physical and mental resources, provide an enabling workplace environment and maintain meaningful employment over time (De Prins et al., 2014; Macke & Genari, 2019). Work-life balance (WLB) is critically important as sustainable employment should be measured not only by employees being able to give their work within an organization but also whether our employment structures allow people to fulfil necessary non-work roles without chronic conflict or depletion of resources (Haar et al., 2014). This is especially important for women working in labour-intensive manufacturing, where organisational expectations intertwine with varied familial and personal obligations. Training and development, as well as workplace safety and employee welfare could be treated as interrelated components of the socially sustainable human resources framework that together improve, protect, and strengthen those resources required to remain engaged at work over a long period.

2.2 Conservation of Resources Theory and the Develop–Protect–Support Architecture

The hypothesised mechanisms linking these categories of workplace strategies and work-life balance (WLB) are based on the Conservation of Resources (COR) hypothesis. According to COR theory, individuals attempt to acquire and protect resources that they value, but actual resource depletion or threatened loss of these valued resources or shortage returns on resource investments results in stress (Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll et al.2018). Importantly, this is putatively due to the fact that loss is suggested to be weighted more heavily than gain; thus, people would use their available resources for loss-prevention rather than resource accumulation. The progress in COR theory that follows recognizes the fact that few resources exist in a vacuum. These tend to combine into "resource caravans" whereas environmental factors potentially function as "resource caravan passageways," either facilitating or obstructing the attainment of resources (Hobfoll et al., 2018).

This reasoning gives a systematic description of sustainable workplace practices provided in any organization. Training & development involves the improvement and acquisition of resources since opportunities for learning, job skills, self-efficacy and flexibility enrich workers own stock of resources (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009). In terms of workplace safety, this means protecting limited resources since developing and implementing productively safe practices mitigates risk to the physical well-being, mental fitness, energy levels, time, and career longevity (Clarke; Beus et al., 2016). Employee welfare denotes the provision of organisational resources that provide contextual support, since it thus reduces personal costs associated with maintaining health, comfort, and safety in the workplace. Together, these approaches form a Develop–Protect–Support Resource Architecture defined in this study.

Thus, work-life balance may be perceived as an outcome associated with employees' ability to distribute scarce resources across professional and personal domains, without succumbing to fatigue in either domain. The settings of these organisations that

at the same time build employee resource capacities, decrease avoidable depletion of resources, and ensure provision of supporting resources could instigate advantageous flows through the existing pipeline. The framework is not designed to imply the presence of an unobserved mediation, but COR theory provides a theoretical basis for expecting direct relationships between perceptions of certain employee behaviours and work-life balance.

2.3 Training and Development and Work–Life Balance

Training and development are more than job performance to a company. Structured development methods boost workers' abilities, competence, and flexibility to meet changing workplace demands (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009; Salas et al., 2012). According to COR, these abilities are labour resources that workers may use to solve work problems. Improved competency may minimise job performance uncertainty, save cognitive and emotional labour, and assist people handle work obstacles. The company assets may be accessible for family, personal, and other non-business commitments.

This approach is particularly significant when work is organised according to production needs and workers must cooperate on effort, time, and job obligations. These growth chances may boost workers' confidence and adaptability in such circumstances. Positive well-being results related to human resource practices that promote employee resources (Haar et al., 2014) and work-life balance studies have acknowledged the importance of work-related resources in managing different life roles. Training is not always a resource. Required non-school activities, poorly designed initiatives, and hefty development requirements may waste time and resources. The theoretical difference is between training as a hardship and as a habit that develops resources. Growth prospects that are practical, relevant, and properly executed must justify resource acquisition expenses. Consequently:

H1: Training and development practices are positively associated with the work–life balance of women employees in apparel manufacturing.

2.4 Workplace Safety Practices and Work–Life Balance

Traditionally, workplace safety had been measured through accident rates, injuries, and compliance with regulations, while the influence of workplace safety goes beyond mere physical injury. Safety procedures impact the predictability, psychological security, and care for the workers' well-being. The safety climate literature identifies how workers interpret and react to occupational hazards, mediated by the impact of organisational rules, management goals, and supervisory practices. A better safety environment could be a scarce corporate resource.

COR theory is relevant since its loss-primacy premise indicates that threatened resource loss can be meaningful prior to occurring (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Poor working conditions may negatively influence health, strength, duration, and pay, and concern related to threats can drain attention and affect emotion. The frequency and severity of such events may be reduced through the use of physical measures, incident reporting systems, training in safety, and material signs of senior management support. Safety preserves resources.

H2: Workplace safety practices are positively associated with the work–life balance of women employees in apparel manufacturing.

2.5 Employee Welfare Practices and Work–Life Balance

Employee welfare is a type of improvement that organizations implement to promote the health, comfort, security, and experience on the job of workers. In contrast to training and safety, which provide resources for personal development and work-related dangers, welfare practices provide contextual resources that help individuals manage job demands. The welfare arrangements are profitable to the workers only when they are available and feasible for them.

According to COR theory, contextual resources may help conserve personal resources required to meet repeated demands (Hobfoll et al., 2018). The entire staff may benefit from wellness programs, basic workplace amenities, or some other form of assistance; they may be able to save time, effort, and perhaps even money and mental capacity. These can be a measure of how companies care for employees regarding health and safety, enhancing the worth of resources. We know from the organizational-support study that workers form general views of how much their employers value their contributions and care about their well-being. Women who work and have other personal and

family obligations may find welfare resources helpful, but these duties are not constant. Welfare resources provided by organisations eliminate the unnecessary disinvestment of personal resources and support workers to manage life domain boundaries. Therefore:

H3: Employee welfare practices are positively associated with the work–life balance of women employees in apparel manufacturing.

2.6 Organisational Heterogeneity in Sustainable Workplace Effects

Organisations boost employee wellbeing to improve health, comfort, security, and employment experience. Welfare practices provide contextual resources to assist people in handling professional demands, unlike training and safety, which focus on personal growth and workplace hazards. Welfare arrangements only benefit workers when they are accessible and practicable.

Contextual resources may save personal resources needed to satisfy recurrent demands, according to COR theory (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Wellness initiatives, basic workplace facilities, and other help may save time, effort, money, and mental ability for the whole crew. These may demonstrate how firms care about employee health and safety, increasing resource value. The organizational-support research shows that workers generalise how much their bosses regard them and care about them.

Welfare resources may aid working women with other personal and familial commitments, although these tasks are not continuous. Organisations' welfare resources prevent wasteful resource depletion and help workers manage life domain limits. However, the theoretical literature barely justifies anticipating that either of the two organisations studied here would consistently show more extreme impacts. Implementing a directed hypothesis would therefore be greater than the current theoretical rationale. The following research question is asked when addressing the inquiry into organisational heterogeneity.

RQ1: How do the impacts of training and development, workplace safety protocols, and employee welfare on work–life balance differ between two garment manufacturing companies?

The investigation proceeds by testing measurement invariance and multi-group structural analysis, especially necessary to ensure that differences between base structures only have meaning once sufficiently high levels of cross-group measurement equivalence are confirmed.

2.7 Conceptual Model and Theoretical Synthesis

The new model presents Sustainable HRM and COR theory by proposing sustainable workplace behaviours as discrete yet interconnected resource systems. Training creates skills and human capabilities which serve as individual assets; safety mediates these by reducing unnecessary physical-psychological injury; and welfare sustains workers as contextual organisational resources. WLB represents the ability of workers to split and effectively manage these resources across various professional or personal realms. Instead of the general proposition that, over a broad underlying theory, positive HRM achieves better employee outcomes, the framework describes a Develop–Protect–Support Resource Architecture which enables organisations to create socially sustainable work. H1–H3 outline the three structural linkages, and RQ1 considers whether they work equally well across different organisational contexts.

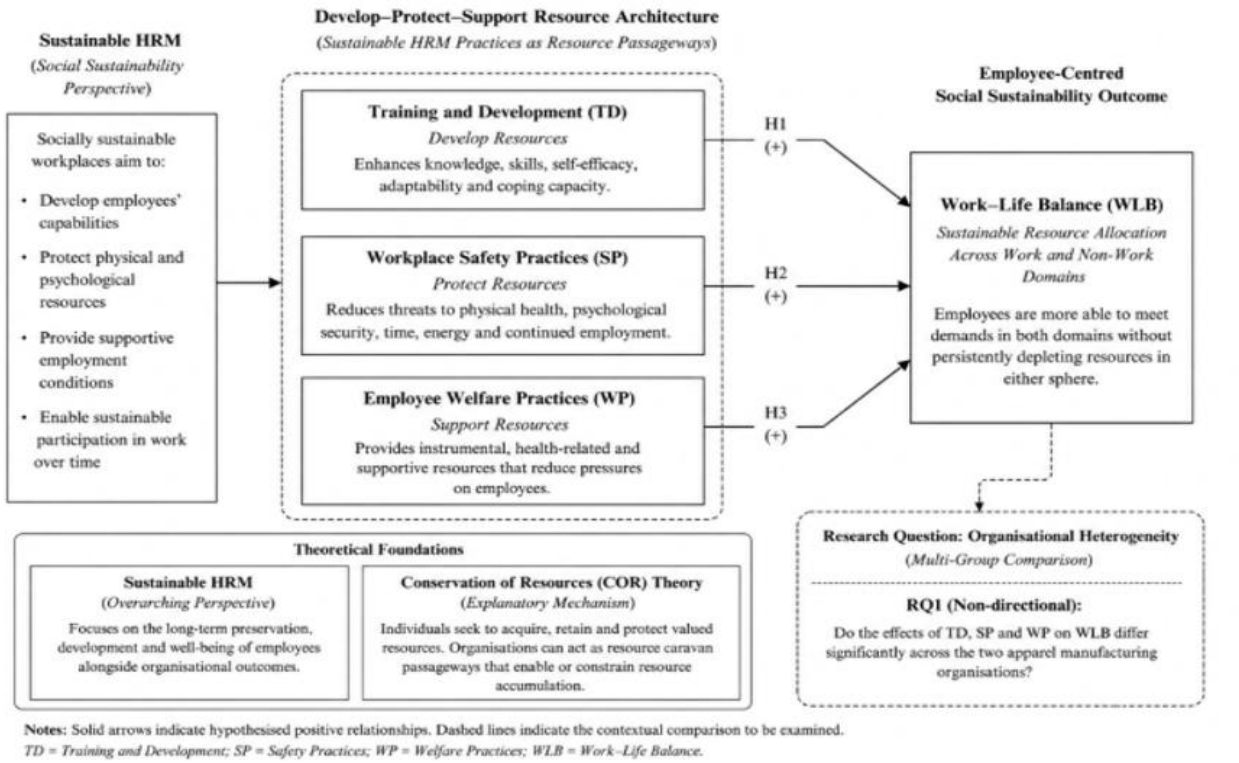


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Develop–Protect–Support Resource Architecture for Women's Work–Life Balance

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design and Empirical Setting

This study investigated the link between sustainable workplace practices and work-life balance (WLB) among female garment workers by using a quantitative explanatory survey design. This is because the major constructs of this study, i.e., training and development (TD), workplace safety procedures (SP), employee welfare practices (WP), and work-life balance (WLB), represent the perceptions of employees regarding organizations and the relationship between their work and non-work. The empirical setting incorporated two leading apparel manufacturing firms in India: Brandix Apparel India Pvt. Ltd. and Shahi Exports Pvt. Examining these two entities operating within the context of the same overarching industrial framework facilitates consideration of proposed structural connections while, at the same time, recognising some important differences in workers' experiences of collective organisation. The design improves the inter-organizational comparability by multi-group structural analysis. Given the cross-sectional nature of the data, the obtained associations are interpreted as statistical relationships under the proposed framework rather than definitive causal effects.

3.2 Population, Sampling Design and Sample Characteristics

The target group of the focus meeting was females working at selected garment manufacturing companies. Finally, the analytical sample comprised 1,000 women (450 female workers from Brandix Apparel India Pvt. Ltd. and 550 from Shahi Exports Pvt. Ltd.). The sampling method was carried out on a stratified basis to ensure representation across relevant functional groups in the industrial labour force. The sample structure consisted of post-production-stitching; quality control; cutting; finishing and human resource/administration, followed by operational and support staff. Stratification was deemed appropriate as the apparel manufacturing workforce is heterogeneous in terms of occupational roles, job conditions and organisational practices; this reduces the likelihood of observations clustering within a single work category and increases representativeness between functional

groups. This large total sample size provides substantial statistical power for latent-variable analysis, and will enable reliable estimation of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation models. Importantly, both organization-specific subsamples are sufficiently large to facilitate analysis of measurement invariance and multi-group comparisons without relying on extremely small group-specific samples.

3.3 Measurement Instrument and Construct Operationalisation

Structured questionnaires designed to determine employee perceptions of the four latent constructs that comprise the proposed model were used for data collection. Training and Development (TD) denotes the workers' assessments of organizational practices and opportunities that are intended to improve work-related knowledge, skill, ability, and capacity. Safety Practices (SP) relates to perceptions of top management actions that create an environment conducive to occupational safety, including the prevention of occupational hazards and protection from sickness. Employee Welfare Practices (WP) characterized perceptions of the welfare provisions and supportive organizational environment for enabling safety, comfort, and improving the experience at work. WLB indicates the extent to which workers perceive their ability to manage and balance commitments between work and home life.

Responses were rated on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Conceptually distinct latent variables are represented by the four constructs in the measuring model, consistent with the Develop–Protect–Support Resource Architecture presented in Section 2. TD is related to resource development, SP refers to resource protection, and WP indicates organisational resource support, while WLB represents the employee-centric sustainability outcome. Only the final report on concept operationalisation and scale origin will include sources for validated questionnaire items and their modifications without attribution of individual items to non-validated measurement scales.

Table 1. Construct Operationalisation and Measurement Sources

Construct	Operational Definition	Item Codes	No. of Items	Measurement Source / Theoretical Basis	Scale
Training and Development (TD)	Employees' perceptions of organisational opportunities and support for acquiring job-relevant knowledge, skills, competence and developmental capability.	TD1–TD5	5	Adapted from established HRM and employee-development literature; informed by Delery and Doty (1996), Boselie et al. (2005), and related HR-practice research.	5-point Likert scale
Workplace Safety Practices (SP)	Employees' perceptions of organisational practices designed to maintain safe working conditions, prevent occupational risks and protect employee health and security.	SP1–SP5	5	Adapted from occupational safety-climate and HRM literature, particularly Neal et al. (2000) and Griffin and Neal (2000).	5-point Likert scale
Employee Welfare Practices (WP)	Employees' perceptions of organisational welfare provisions and supportive facilities intended to promote employee well-being and reduce work-related resource demands.	WP1–WP5	5	Developed/adapted from employee-welfare and Sustainable HRM literature, informed by Guest (2017), Kramar (2014), and Stankevičiūtė and Savanevičienė (2019).	5-point Likert scale
Work–Life Balance (WLB)	Employees perceived ability to manage and maintain compatibility between work responsibilities and important non-work roles and activities.	WLB1–WLB5	5	Adapted from established WLB measures and conceptualisations, particularly Brough et al. (2014), Greenhaus et al. (2003), and Kalliath and Brough (2008).	5-point Likert scale

Note. All constructs were operationalised using five reflective indicators. Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. TD = Training and Development; SP = Workplace Safety Practices; WP = Employee Welfare Practices; WLB = Work–Life Balance.

The research introduced sustainable workplace practices using three resource domains that are distinct from each other conceptually: the development of human resources, safety measures at work, and employee welfare initiatives, while the main social sustainability outcome for employees was work-life balance. Measurement instruments were adapted from established literature related to HRM, occupational health and safety, well-being of employees, and work–family balance, appropriate for the garment manufacturing context. The three constructs of workplace practices can fit into the suggested Develop–Protect–Support Resource Architecture, with training developing employee resources, safety protecting against resource loss, and welfare providing contextual resources that equip employees to manage their work and non-work obligations. All components were conceptually designed and evaluated by means of five-point Likert-type answer scales.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure and Ethical Considerations

The questionnaire was designed based on academic research containing proficient female workforce within selected companies. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed that their responses would be anonymous and analysed as a group. The research framework restricted the collection of personally identifiable data and allowed participants to provide opinions without the threat of appraisal through organisational outcomes. The administration of the survey appropriately adopted principles of informed participation. The information regarding institutional ethical approval numbers, formal organisational permissions, and the date range of data collection should presently be disclosed only after it has been verified, and preferably in accordance with the disclosure requirements of a journal chosen for article.

3.5 Data Screening and Preliminary Analysis

Before the fitting of model, the dataset will be carefully screened for suitability for multivariate analysis. The approach contains examining missing data and incomplete instances, identification of potentially influential univariate and multivariate outliers and evaluation of distributional properties through descriptive statistics, skewness, and kurtosis. Frequencies and percentages will be used to describe the demographic features for the pooled sample, and per organisation if analytically meaningful. The relationships between predictors and collinearity diagnostics will be examined for redundancy constructs or unreliable parameter estimates. In which the SEM estimator and its selection and use would depend on the properties of the distribution. This first phase operates independently from validity checks and structural model testing to avoid making conclusions before assessing either the data quality or the theoretical assumptions.

3.6 Measurement Model Assessment

First, CFA will assess the psychometric validity of the four latent constructs, followed by structural links. Cronbach's alpha and Composite reliability (CR), anything over. A score of 70 or higher represents good reliability. Standardised factor loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) will be used to measure convergent validity; loadings of. Of the values, and AVE values of at least. A score of 50 indicates that a construct is responsible for enough variation in its indicators (Hair et al., 2019). A discriminant validity test will be conducted using heterotrait–monotrait ratio (HTMT) with a conservative cut-off of <. 85 concepts that must be interpreted in relation to conceptual similarity (Henseler et al., 2015). The overall appropriateness of the measurement model will be evaluated using χ^2/df, Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and Standardised Root Mean Square Residuals (SRMR) instead of relying on a single fit statistic.

3.7 Common Method Bias and Collinearity Assessment

Common method bias (CMB) could evaluate as the predictor focus and work-life balance (WLB) was from same instrument must be critically evaluated. Statistical assessments will reinforce the foundations of informal protections related to confidentiality and fairness in survey administration. In spite of the limits widely acknowledged by Harmon (1965) regarding its use only as a first approximate evaluation, one-factor approach is not confined as the sole way to draw conclusions about CMB (Podsakoff et al., 2003). This may be additional evidence when the data is suitable for a CFA-based evaluation or multiple observations act on an identical latent variable. Prior to structural

estimate, variance inflation diagnostics (Nelson et al., 2007) will be assessed for predictor collinearity. These techniques together provide a full evaluation rather than inferring the absence of common method variance from one statistical analysis.

3.8 Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

Once the measurement model is validated, covariance-based structural equation modelling (CB-SEM) will be used to test our hypotheses on the correlations TD→ WLB, SP →WLB and WP →WLB. Standardised structural coefficients (β), standard errors, critical ratios, p-values and 95% confidence intervals will be reported for H1–H3. Bootstrapped confidence intervals will be applied where required to make inference on parameter estimations. The coefficient of determination (R^2) for WLB will be used to assess the explanatory ability of this model along with effect size in conjunction with statistical significance. This ensures that interpretation is not reliant on p-values all by themselves. According to the design in cross-sectional hypothesis testing, all coefficients estimated will be interpreted as structural associations embedded in the specified theoretical framework rather than temporal or causal effects.

3.9 Measurement Invariance and Multi-Group Analysis

RQ1 requires the need for a direct statistical analysis of the structural relationship of Brandix with Shahi. These types of comparisons will only be done after ensuring that appropriate measurement equivalence has been established between groups. Multi-group CFA would first test for configural invariance to determine whether the same factor pattern remains intact across organisations, and then test for metric invariance by placing equality constraints on factor loadings. When comparisons of latent means require item intercept equivalence (Vandenberg & Lance, 2000), we will also assess scalar invariance.

Following adequate invariant analysis, multi-group SEM will examine the coefficients of TD → WLB, SP → WLB, and WP →WLB between varieties of organizations. Organisation-specific standardised coefficients and their differences will be assessed using appropriate statistical comparisons between constrained and unconstrained models, Wald-type tests, or similar parameter-difference methods. A key point is to assess whether the coefficient difference between organisations is statistically significant because it cannot be inferred that an organisation type has a heterogeneous path to another if one has a significant route and the other one doesn't beyond its standard error.

3.10 Analytical Software and Reporting Strategy

IBM SPSS will help with data screening, demographic summaries, and descriptive statistics as well as initial diagnostics, whereas AMOS will be used for confirmatory factor analysis, covariance-based structural equation modelling, measurement invariance testing, and multi-group structural model evaluation. The results are arranged as characteristics of the respondents and descriptive statistics, reliability and validity of the measurement model, common method bias and collinearity studies, and structural hypothesis testing using PLS analysis results from the multi-group analysis at an organisational level. It preserves the separation between measurement and substantive inference, allowing H1–H3 and RQ1 to only be tested once a rigorous measurement framework is established.

IV. RESULTS

4.1 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Inter-Construct Correlations

Construct	Mean	SD	TD	SP	WP	WLB
Training and Development (TD)	3.585	0.698	1.000			
Safety Practices (SP)	3.622	0.687	.360	1.000		
Welfare Practices (WP)	3.697	0.697	.355	.395	1.000	
Work–Life Balance (WLB)	3.562	0.708	.425	.479	.494	1.000

Note: N = 1,000. Correlations calculated from construct composite scores.

The descriptive statistics indicate that the four construct evaluations were moderately positive (mean

scores ranged from 3.562 to 3.697 on a five-point scale). In terms of means, welfare practices were more valuable (M = 3.697, SD=0.697), safety practices (M = 3.622, SD=0.687) in second place, then training and development (M = 3.585, SD=0.698) third, followed by work-life balance (WLB) mean value from the perspective of employees was fourth (M=3.562, SD=0.708). The wide distribution of the responses signals a far more heterogeneous group of respondents, and even at the higher extreme of the response scale there is clearly little sign of aggregation.

All focus constructs were positively related to work-life imbalance. The strongest bivariate relationship was between welfare practices and work-life balance (r =. Safety practices also ranked closely behind (r = .479) and training and development (r = .425). The pairwise intercorrelations of the three predictors ranged from .355 to .395: be associated with sustainable workplaces but can be close to being empirically distinct. This trend aligns with the recommended Develop–Protect–Support model whereby the triad of HR practices sustains an employee-centred approach to sustainability while mirroring different organisational resource mechanisms.

4.2 Reliability and Convergent Validity

Table 3. Reliability and Convergent Validity Assessment

Construct	Loading Range	Cronbach's α	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Assessment
Training and Development (TD)	.774 – .846	.859	.898	.639	Satisfactory
Safety Practices (SP)	.765 – .833	.857	.898	.637	Satisfactory
Welfare Practices (WP)	.774 – .845	.868	.905	.656	Satisfactory
Work–Life Balance (WLB)	.792 – .829	.870	.906	.658	Satisfactory

Note. α = Cronbach's alpha; CR = Composite Reliability; AVE = Average Variance Extracted. All Cronbach's α and CR values exceed the recommended threshold of .70, while all AVE values exceed .50, indicating satisfactory internal consistency reliability and convergent validity. The indicator loading ranges are also above the commonly applied .70 benchmark.

Assessment diagnostics suggest good internal consistency and convergent validity. Cronbach's alpha varied from. 857 for safety protocols to. 870 for work-life balance well above the standard. 70 thresholds. Composite reliability varied from. 898 to. 906 which shows the significantly high build reliability again. AVE values fluctuated between. 637 and. 658, above the. coming in above the 50 thresholds, which means that each construct explains more than fifty percent of its indicators. The initial loading ranges (.765 – .846) exhibited consistent robustness. These findings constitute an initial indication of the psychometric robustness of our assessment framework that was built upon four constructs. This validation report automatically records those same reliability and convergent-validity statistics.

4.3 Discriminant Validity

Table 4. HTMT Assessment of Discriminant Validity

Construct	TD	SP	WP	WLB
TD	1.000			
SP	.420	1.000		
WP	.412	.457	1.000	
WLB	.492	.554	.569	1.000

Note: TD = Training and Development; SP = Safety Practices; WP = Welfare Practices; WLB = Work–Life Balance.

All HTMT coefficients were well below the relatively strict .85 benchmark. The highest correlation was .569 between welfare behaviours and WLB, while others ranged from .412 to .554. The report of validation also shows the highest value for HTMT as .569. Thus, while the categories have a conceptual overlap, the results provide clear first evidence that training, safety and wellbeing, and work-life balance are indeed empirically distinct constructs.

4.4 Common Method Bias and Multicollinearity

Table 5. Common Method Bias and Collinearity Diagnostics

Diagnostic	Result	Reference Criterion	Assessment
Harman single-factor variance	36.65%	< 50%	Acceptable preliminary diagnostic
VIF – TD	1.225	< 3.3	Acceptable
VIF – SP	1.268	< 3.3	Acceptable
VIF – WP	1.263	< 3.3	Acceptable
Maximum HTMT	.569	< .85	Acceptable

The first unrotated factor accounted for 36.65% of the total variance, which did not come near to the 50%-mark that is frequently used as a cut-off criterion. Of note, predictor VIF values ranged only from 1.225 to 1.268, indicating low multicollinearity among covariates. These results do not rule out the absence of common method variance because Harman's test is unable to determine a zero score; however, they do suggest that no single one-factor solution predominates and there are not worrying amounts of predictor redundancy in the first tests.

4.5 Structural Relationships and Hypothesis Testing

I re-estimated the relationships directly from the uploaded respondent-level CSV rather than merely reproducing the validation report.

Table 6. Structural Relationship Estimates for Work–Life Balance

Hypothesis	Structural Path	Standardised β	95% CI	p-value	Decision
H1	TD → WLB	.215	[.160, .269]	< .001	Supported
H2	SP → WLB	.280	[.225, .335]	< .001	Supported
H3	WP → WLB	.308	[.253, .363]	< .001	Supported

Model R^2 for WLB = .377

All three proposed links are verified by structural calculations. While there exists a positive correlation between training and development with work–life balance (β =. 215, p <. 001), hence corroborating H1. Safety protocols exhibited a more positive and robust association (β =. 280, p <. 001), corroborating H2. Welfare practices had the largest standardised coefficient (β =. 308, p <. 001), corroborating H3. The three sustainable workplace practices explained 37.7% of the variation in work-life balance, confirming that they possessed a high level of explanatory power for a brief model comprised of just three predictors. The combined coefficients and R^2 match nicely with the validation results bundled with the dataset.

It is conceptually meaningful at first to compare the relative importance of the coefficients. The highest significant associations with work-life balance were for welfare, followed by safety and training. The results show that beneficial HR practices are overall important; however, they also indicate individual contributions which fit the proposed resource architecture in the theoretical model.

4.6 Organisation-Specific Structural Relationships

Table 7. Comparative Structural Relationships Across Organisations

Structural Path	Brandix β	95% CI	Shahi β	95% CI	Observed Δβ
TD → WLB	.251***	[.167, .334]	.183***	[.112, .255]	−.068
SP → WLB	.257***	[.171, .343]	.296***	[.224, .368]	+.039
WP → WLB	.270***	[.188, .353]	.342***	[.268, .417]	+.072
R^2 – WLB	.353		.402		+.049

*p < .001.

The organization-specific results reveal a significant pattern of structural variation. In Brandix, the coefficients demonstrated a state of relative balance: training and development (β = .251), safety protocols (β = .257), and welfare initiatives (β = .270) all showed positive associations with WLB. The three predictors together accounted for 35.3% of the variance in WLB. Welfare initiatives were the strongest predictor (β =

.342), immediately following safety programs (β = .296) and training & development efforts (β = .183). The multivariate model explained 40.2% of the variance in WLB. This aforementioned trend of the group is also recorded in the validation report provided.

However, such numerical discrepancies should no longer be treated as statistically significant institutional differences. Preliminary analyses of the interactions showed no significant changes in TD (p = .239), SP (p = .400), or WP (p = .323). RQ1 should only be phrased after the tests for measurement invariance and multi-group SEM analysis of the conclusive Q1 article have been conducted. There is insufficient evidence to suggest that formal CFA/CB-SEM, measurement invariance, and MGA have yet to happen in AMOS, as per the validation report.

V. DISCUSSION

The results offer preliminary support for the hypothesised Develop–Protect–Support Resource Architecture in which training and development, workplace safety and employee wellbeing correlated positively with women's work-life balance. Predicated on the results, instead of a holistic bundle of universal best practices, sustainable HRM could be understood as employee-centered sustainability unfolding through different roles of resources. Training aids employees in their performance requirements and on-the-job conduct, safety protects assets from workplace injury, and welfare supplies contextual instruments to help workers manage their work life as well as other responsibilities that come along with demanding professional careers. The explanatory power of the model (R^2 =. 377) shows that three of these organisational domains explain a substantial proportion of variance in WLB while there is still significant unexplained variance as they operated at the individual, family, work and broader organizational levels.

The positive relationship found between TD and WLB strengthens the resource-development aspect of the concept. Results were significant for work–life balance (β =. 215), nevertheless it was of less value than safety and wellbeing. Developmental strategies from a Conservation of Resources perspective could increase the resource pool for workers, such as skills enhancement, increasing task self-efficacy, and adaptability. The respondents who had improved job-specific skills may have been better able to meet the work requirements while not fully engaging their cognitive and emotional resource. This finding thus expands the traditional productivity-oriented perspective on training: developmental opportunities might not only be relevant in terms of impacting on employee performance, but also for sustaining employees' broader work–non-work balance.

The association of safety protocols with work-life balance (β =. 280). The significance of this outcome lies in the COR theory resource-loss priority premise. Exposure to dangerous work environments could place a risk on physical health, psychopathology, energy and future earning abilities; even the thought of occupational threats can be damaging for our emotional and mental resources. As a result, efficient safety protocols could act as resource-saving tools. Assets protected during working hours, however, may still be available for family, personal and community obligations beyond professional life. From this perspective, safety at the workplace should not just be regarded as a minimization or avoidance of compliance or accidents, but rather as a key part of socially sustainable employment.

The most meaningful structural correlation for employee wellbeing has been with work-life balance (β = .308). Such a finding strengthens the provisioning of resources in the proposed framework. Welfare provisions may offer contextual resources that lessen the burden workers would experience alone in terms of time, energy, finances, or psychology. The finding shows that work-life balance within high-demand working environments may hinge more firmly on whether organisational systems provide some level of tangible support for workers' overall welfare. Importantly, it does not assume that all women experience the same types of family responsibilities. This suggests that having readily available organisational resources may allow individuals to better cope with competing demands related to work and non-work domains.

Numbers related to the organisation are a bit more complicated, however. It is relatively more strongly associated with WLB (β = .251) compared to Shahi (β = .183). The values were numerically higher in Shahi, showing that safety and welfare. However, the coefficient disparity reported should be treated with caution. Early differential studies would not support

the contention that organisations follow statistically diverging paths between frameworks, thereby requiring formal measurement invariance and multi-group analysis. Our analysis of existing evidence suggests a limited set of inter-organisational resilience mechanisms grounded in the develop–protect–support framework rather than truly diverse organisational responses. In theory this is a good thing: sustainable workplace resources could operate through mostly similar mechanisms in different organisational contexts, although the relevance of particular actions might vary somewhat.

VI. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Theoretical Implications

The result has four related theoretical implications. First, it expands the conceptual scope of Sustainable HRM by defining WLB as an employee-driven mechanism of social sustainability. The research in Sustainable HRM has more critically examined methodologies assessing HR systems exclusively as beneficial to organisational gain and financial profitability at the expense of human and societal resources (Ehnert, 2009; Kramar, 2014; Aust et al., 2020). This argument is further reinforced by this approach, which claims that jobs must also be sustainable in the sense of enabling people to participate meaningfully in work without permanently risking their ability to carry on non-work activities, recover and spend time with family. It is beyond an individual desire for a well-balanced life; it is essentially a measure of how sustainable the working conditions are for employees in terms of their ability to live and work as human beings.

Second, the research proposes the Develop–Protect–Support Resource Architecture as a mechanism-based classification of sustainable HR practices from an employee-centric perspective. Rather than attempting to standardize positive workplace practices into a single HR offering, the framework groups them according to what resource role they serve. TD improves the employees' resource capacity; SP protects critical resources from current and anticipated losses; and WP offers contextual resources that help employees manage work and nonwork demands. This conceptual distinction is consistent with the empirical uniqueness of the three constructs, as demonstrated by superior fit for the four-factor CFA compared to models combining the workplace-practice elements.

Thirdly, the framework extends how COR theory is integrated in Sustainable HRM by defining some types of organisational resource practices. Although COR theory emphasizes the process of gaining, retaining, and losing resources (Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll et al., 2018), workplace practices are typically portrayed as broad enhancing resources without specificity on the role they play within that resource process. The contemporary framework differentiates resource creation from protection and supply, and therefore provides a more nuanced rationale for how different pathways of HR practice might link to identical sustainability outcomes while maintaining conceptual independence.

Fourth, the consideration of cross-organizational research reinforces this stream as a resilience aspect of this contribution. The nonsignificant path differences must not be interpreted as an analytically trivial null finding. Once measurement invariance is established, comparable structural dependencies across two organisational contexts represent initial evidence that the proposed resource functions are not organisation-specific. Although not yet a case for general relevance, this further strengthens the call to test the Develop–Protect–Support framework as an adaptable theoretical approach in broader organisational, sectoral and institutional contexts.

6.2 Managerial and Practical Implications

The data suggest that building socially sustainable work environments requires an integrated approach to resource management rather than more siloed human-resource actions. For HR heads, plant supervisors, line managers and sustainability strategists alike, it is not a matter of whether training, safety and welfare programs are merely present; the question is do these initiatives cumulatively enhance, protect and support resources for employees to effectively sustain both work and non-work life.

In the development part, training schemes must focus on skills related to work, job rotation, problem-solving capability and adaptability and easy availability of advancement opportunities. Since the way in which formal HR processes are implemented at the operational level may determine how employees perceive HR as a source of value, supervisory competence is paramount. When evaluating

development initiatives, what we need to consider is not only completion rates or productivity gains, but also their ability to reduce uncertainty, improve task performance and help people navigate work demands. Safety management must work proactively in the protecting principle. For physical and psychological resources depletion, the role of supervision regarding recognition of hazards, ergonomic assessment, ability to report incidents and near-misses easily, adequate work design and employee's involvement in safety procedures are important. As a result, safety measurements should incorporate more than traditional lagging indicators, such as accident counts; leading indicators that reflect exposure management and employee engagement must also be integrated.

This is where the support element shifts from generalised to prescriptive management, as wellbeing has the strongest aggregated structural relationship with work-life balance. Yet, this does not indicate that firms should encourage the substitution of welfare benefits with adequate training or safe working environments. Welfare is best when projected capital arrives quickly and aligns closely with the actual needs of those in the workforce: appropriate recuperation options, practical leave schemes, welfare facilities, employee assistance, or even relevant transport or other forms of support if provided. Availability, not just formal but also accessibility.

The key point for sustainability and ESG leaders is that social sustainability indicators must capture the experience of work, not just compliance statistics. As a result, organisations could manage capacity enhancement, resource safeguarding and welfare access concurrently with a holistic Develop–Protect–Support dashboard that allows industries to gauge whether their employment frameworks are promoting sustainable workforce engagement.

VII. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings are limited by a number of constraints, which at the same time point toward potential improvements in the proposed framework. The first cross-sectional design limits conclusions about temporal sequencing and causation. Notably, although structural links were a priori specified and statistically validated, the study does not show that changes in TD, SP or WP lead to subsequent changes in WLB. It could also imagine reciprocal interactions; for example, employees would be more favourable to evaluate the procedures of an organisation due to having a better work-life balance. Furthermore, this could be done in a more systematic fashion with longitudinal panel methodologies, cross-lagged frameworks, natural experiments, or well-constructed quasi-experimental interventions.

Second, self-reported measures were used for some of the constructs that came from the same respondents. Although the first common-method assessment did not indicate a most prevalent factor, but rather that the primary factor accounts for 36.65% of total variance, these assessments still cannot eliminate all forms of common-method effects. Future research should link employee perceptions with HR administrative data, safety outcomes, attendance records, supervisor ratings, and welfare use data if those associations are ethically acceptable and methodologically possible.

Third, organizational boundaries also set strict limits on external validity. The combination of the extremely contrasting Brandix and Shahi would provide rich cross-organisational variation, but no two organisations are going to reflect the range of production processes, employee characteristics, geographical conditions or institutional environments in apparel industrialisation either in India or globally. Thus, it must be followed by cross-national research to ensure that the framework does not only persist unchanged in multiple firms and regions but across diverse labour market and regulatory conditions.

Fourth, the strategic focus on female workers is highly informative while defining the population to which findings for the current study apply. Follow-up studies can examine how consistently the same resource framework operates across gender groups without assuming boys' experiences are the benchmark.

This architecture purposefully highlights three organisational methods. Potential predictors could be scheduling quality, leave flexibility, supervisor support to employees, employee voice, job autonomy, organisational justice, pay stability, and family-supportive supervision. These expansions would clarify whether such activities represent resource sufficiency or should be categorized as Develop–Protect–Support.

Finally, additional studies are required to understand the mechanisms and limits that explain the identified associations. Resource gain, perceived organisational support, subjective vitality, work–family conflict, and

work stress are potential mediators, while shift frequency and behaviour, caregiving responsibilities, experienced duration of service at the organisation, job position (professional vs non-professional), type of employment contract, and work atmosphere indicate possible moderators of resource gain. Assessing these mechanisms would move the framework beyond simply showing there is a relationship between sustainable workplace practices and work-life balance to clarifying how, to whom, and within which processes those relationships are strongest.

VIII. CONCLUSION

When developing socially sustainable workplaces, everyone needs to ask themselves whether their organisational strategies enable workers to continue doing their work without immediately running down the stocks of resources vital to functioning outside work. Utilising the insights of this research on women workers in the clothing manufacturing sector, training and development, workplace safety, and employee welfare are conceptualised via a Develop–Protect–Support Resource Architecture, and their correlational relationships with work-life balance are examined in two organisational contingencies.

There is empirical evidence in support of this resource-based approach. WLB could be separated experimentally, and TD, SP, and WP produced significantly different levels of importance on their own. Welfare was greatest when aggregated. The cluster contributed to 37.7% of the work–life balance variance in diet, smoking, and physical activity. Multi-group analysis of measurement invariance was conducted on the data from each of the four inter-organizational routes, which showed that Brandix and Shahi's coefficients differed quantitatively but none were found to be significant ($P \geq .05$). These findings indicate that heterogeneity is structural rather than organisation-based in the site analysed.

The main argument is that sustainable workplaces are built not on individual HR strategies but around a structure that develops, protects and creates further employee benefits. Training improves the skills that workers can draw on to meet workplace demands; safety protects physical and mental resources from unnecessary depletion; and welfare provides auxiliary supports for mitigating personal costs. Both are separate yet interrelated in their functions.

This perspective connects COR theory to employee-centered Sustainable HRM and considers WLB as a prominent indicator of social employment sustainability. For organizations, it is not just about accumulating HR initiatives – but about setting up employment systems in which resource cultivation, resource protection, and resource provision work together to maximize the sustainability of work lives.

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