

Social Sciences in Management Research: Interdisciplinary Approaches for Sustainable Business Practices

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ABSTRACT

With a focus on developing sustainable company strategies, this research explores how social sciences might be integrated into management processes. In order to clarify the importance and possible influence of multidisciplinary approaches for environmentally conscious company operations, it looks at important theoretical frameworks, data from empirical studies, and real-world examples. The research highlights the significance of incorporating behavioural sciences into management by showcasing how concepts from fields such as economics, sociology, and psychology may guide decision-making for more sustainable plans. Successful integration is demonstrated by case studies of businesses like Patagonia and Unilever, which highlight the applicability of institutional and shareholder theories in real-world settings. Investigating consumer behaviour and behavioural economics, the study offers significant insights for companies looking to encourage sustainable buying habits.

Keywords: Social, Sustainable, Business, Sciences, Management, Practices, Challenges.

INTRODUCTION:

In a landscape which is continuously evolving businesses today are facing some unprecedented challenges and opportunities. As the world is grappling with issues like climate change, social inequality and the relentless advance of technology the role of management to shape the future of sustainable business practices is becoming increasingly significant. To meet the challenges face to face and drive innovation and management research has progressively accepted a more interdisciplinary approach which incorporates the social sciences into its repertoire. This significant shift in the field of management research shows that business cannot exist in isolation from the complex web of societal, environmental and ethical factors which are continuously shaping our world. This theme not only underscores the urgency of incorporating insights from the social sciences but also highlights the need to promote sustainable practices in the corporate realm. The social science consists of a wide range of disciplines, which includes sociology, psychology, economics, anthropology, political science and geography (Herrera, & de las Heras-Rosas, 2020).

By integrating the wisdom which is garnered from these diverse fields, the management researchers are able to explore some issues from multiple vantage points and are also able to develop more holistic and effective strategies for the sustainable business practices. The consequences of this interdisciplinary approach extend far beyond academia and reverberates into the corporate board rooms and also to policy making chambers of our world. As the businesses are grappling with some imperative of sustainable practices the knowledge which is generated by this combination of management and social science has the potential to inform decisions that will impact economies, environments, and also

the societies on our global scale (Alkire et al., 2020). This kind of new wave of interdisciplinary management research will not only inform us about the why and how of sustainable business practices but also the critical who and what by shedding light on the rolls of individuals, organizations, governments and also of the broader global community. It also will illuminate the complicated relationship between the businesses and the social and economic and ecological system in which they operate. In this era which is of heightened awareness about the social and environmental consequences of business activities, social science in the field of management research promises to offer some free insights and novel solutions which will help us to navigate the intricate maze of sustainability challenges.

It will also act as beacon which will guide us towards a more balanced and responsible approach towards management, one that respects the delegate equilibrium between profit making and planet saving. This multidimensional journey will tell into the intricate aspects of management research and also, we will try to reflect towards the shifting length skip of modern businesses where the pursuit of profit alliance itself with the preservation of our planet and the betterment of humanity. In the following exploration of this theme, it will delve deeper into the significance and applications and also the future prospects of incorporating social sciences into the field of management research to drive sustainable business practices.

Problem Statement:

The need for environmentally friendly methods is critical in today's business settings. Nonetheless, the incorporation of the social sciences into managerial studies to promote sustainable business practices is still a field that needs more research (Reinhardt *et al.* 2019). By examining the interdisciplinary junctions of management and social sciences, with an emphasis on sustainable business solutions, this research seeks to close this gap.

- In order to improve sustainable business practices, this project intends to investigate how social sciences might be integrated into management research. By doing so, it will offer useful insights for companies that are working to achieve social, economic, and environmental sustainability.
- This study outlines a number of connected goals. First and foremost, it seeks to carry out a thorough analysis of the body of research on the convergence of management and social sciences, highlighting important conceptual frameworks and empirical conclusions. It then looks at case studies of companies that have successfully incorporated social science concepts into their operations to produce long-term results.
- Additionally, research aims to create a framework for the efficient integration of managerial decision-making processes with social science findings. Finally, it seeks to provide useful advice and suggestions for companies looking to adopt sustainable practices based on multidisciplinary, social science-based approaches.

By achieving these goals, the research hopes to make a significant contribution to the conversation about sustainable business practices and provide a guide for companies looking to balance their environmental and social obligations with profitability.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

In the last few years, the fields of management and business have gone through a significant amount of transformation due to the growing emphasis on sustainable business practices. This kind of evolution has resulted in a greater amount of reliance on the interdisciplinary approaches specifically those which involves social science to understand the complicated challenges and opportunities which are associated with sustainability. This literature review will explode the role of social science in the field of management research and how the interdisciplinary approaches are contributing towards sustainable business practices.

Theoretical framework: The Intersection of Social Science and Management Research:

The integration of social sciences with management research provides a multifaceted framework to address the contemporary business challenges specifically sustainability. Social science consists a wide array of disciplines for example sociology, psychology, anthropology anti economics. This combination of disciplines with management research has created a more comprehensive understanding of the organizational behaviour, ethics and societal impact. Management research on the other hand focuses on understanding, improving and optimizing several aspects of organizational behaviour strategy and performance. The traditional management research focus on the topics such as leadership, decision making, marketing, operations and financial management (Mustaqim, 2023). However as the

businesses environment is evolving, sustainability ethics and corporate social responsibility and also the stakeholder engagement are becoming increasingly important day by day.



Figure 1: Sustainability

(Source: mdpi.com, 2023)

The intersection of social sciences and management research seeks to bring together the tools, theories and methodologies of the both fields to create a more holistic understanding of the business practices. This kind of integration recognizes that the organizations are not at all isolated entities but they are the part of a broader social, cultural and economic system. That is how the understanding how human behaviour and societal norms and the cultural influences are interacting with each other in the field of management decisions is very much crucial. Contemporary business challenges for example the environmental sustainability or the ethical dilemmas and social responsibility requires a nuanced and multidisciplinary approach. Traditional management research sometimes is not enough to provide a complete understanding of these issues (Cravens et al., 2022). Social sciences contribute by providing the analytical tools and perspectives which are necessary to address these challenges in an effective manner.

Sociology plays a crucial role in the field of management research by delving into the organizational culture and its impact on sustainability. Scholars have recognized that some organizational culture heavily impacts employee behaviour and decision making also. A positive organizational culture which values the factor of sustainability can lead to more responsible business practices. Several studies also have emphasized the importance of sociological analysis to uncover the root causes of unethical practices within the organizations and helped to develop strategies for their mitigation.

Psychological insights are also vital for the sake of understanding the drivers of sustainable behaviour in the field of business. Somebody researchers have employed psychological theories to study the consumer behaviour and motivation of the employees in the context of sustainability. For example, the application of theories like the Theory of Planned Behaviour and Self-determination Theory have shed light on how to incentivised the sustainable practices among the employees and customers. Anthropology also contributed to management research through its offering of a cross cultural perspective on the factor of sustainability (Chan et al., 2020). Different societies and communities do have unique approaches to sustainability which can be valuable in a globalized business landscape. Through incorporating these anthropological insights, the management researchers will be able to develop strategies which will be culturally sensitive and sustainable in diverse context. Economics also plays a significant role in the interdisciplinary approach to sustainable business practices. The researchers have explored the economic benefits of sustainability which uncovers the positive impacts on a company's financial performance, risk management and reputation (Williams et al., 2019). Concepts for example the triple bottom line which are economic, social and environmental have gained popularity as they highlight the importance of a sustainable economic model.

Interdisciplinary Approaches: The Convergence of Social Sciences and Management:

This concept emphasizes how the multiple social science discipline and management research intersect to provide a comprehensive solution to the contemporary challenges. Interdisciplinary approaches aim to tackle the complicated issues from several angles. In the context of sustainable business practices, it means to address not only the economic aspects but also the social and environmental dimensions. By bringing together the experts from sociology, psychology, anthropology and economics and management the organizations are able to develop a more holistic solution. Sustainable business practices involve navigating multidimensional challenges for examples the ethical dilemmas, environmental responsibility, and social impact. These challenges need a broad understanding of how various factors interact with each other. As an example, managing a sustainable supply chain demands insights from economics for cost considerations, sociology for stakeholder engagement and psychology for employee motivation and anthropology also to understand cross cultural considerations. Interdisciplinary collaboration encourages researchers and professionals from several backgrounds to work together (Tauginienė et al., 2020). Through facilitating communication and cooperation between social scientists and business experts the organization are able to leverage the strengths of each discipline. This kind of collaboration results in more comprehensive research and provides innovative solutions and practical strategies for the organizations.

Interdisciplinary approaches are not purely theoretical. They find some practical application in the field of business seeking to adopt sustainable practices. This includes the development of corporate sustainability strategies, responsible supply chain management systems, employee training programs and also the ethical marketing campaigns. The insides and methodologies derived from social sciences inform these real-world applications. Interdisciplinary research also promotes evidence-based decision making. The data and research findings from several dimensions and disciplines provide a solid foundation to make informed choices. For example, the collaboration of sociologists and economists can help the organizations understand the societal implications of their business decisions while also assessing the feasibility of the economy. Through the examination of case studies of the organizations which have successfully accepted the interdisciplinary approaches, the researchers and practitioners are able to identify the best practices and also learn lessons. These case studies are able to serve as the models for other businesses which are you looking towards embarking on a similar journey towards sustainable practices (Jain et al., 2019). They provide valuable insights on how to overcome the challenges and make the progress meaningful. It is also important to understand that interdisciplinary research is not without any kind of challenges. Overcoming the communication barrier, aligning the goals of various disciplines and also addressing resistance to change within the organizations can sometimes be very difficult. However recognizing these challenges is the very first step to mitigate them and make interdisciplinary collaboration way more effective.



Figure 2: Interdisciplinary Approach

(Source: sage-bcgc.berkeley.edu, 2023)

Trans-disciplinarity Takes interdisciplinary approaches a step further by seeking to integrate the knowledge from several fields into a unified framework. In this context of sustainable business practices, the trans-disciplinary research aims to mitigate the lines between social sciences, natural sciences and management to create a more comprehensive understanding of the sustainability challenges. Interdisciplinary approaches also encourage systems thinking which considers the inter-dependencies among several components of a system (Derwich et al., 2020). When it is applied to sustainable business practices, systems thinking helps the organizations to identify the inter-connectedness of the environmental and social and economic factors which allows for more effective decision making (Jain, & Pandey, 2019). The convergence of social sciences and management is very much crucial for the future of sustainable business. As the organizations are facing increasing amount of pressure to operate responsibly and ethically, the interdisciplinary approaches offer a path towards finding innovative solutions which will balance profit with environmental and social effect. Interdisciplinary approaches in the convergence of social sciences and management are instrumental to address the multidimensional challenges which are associated with sustainable business practices. By encouraging the collaboration, examining real world applications and by promoting an evidence-based decision making these approaches are helping the businesses to make informed choices which will prioritize sustainability while also achieving their common economic goals. As the sustainability remains the central point in the world of business the role of interdisciplinary collaboration will grow in an expected manner in importance. In an era characterized by heightened awareness of environmental and social issues, the integration of social sciences into management research has become imperative for businesses striving towards sustainable practices (Jain, & Pandey, 2019). This literature review delves into the multifaceted relationships between social sciences and management, with a particular emphasis on sustainable business strategies. By examining key theoretical frameworks, empirical findings, and real-world examples, this section seeks to elucidate the significance and potential impact of interdisciplinary approaches for sustainable business practices.

- **Institutional Theory:**

Organizations encounter expectations and demands related to sustainability, which can be better understood by using institutional theory as a lens. Renowned outdoor gear company Patagonia is one example of a company that successfully integrates a strong institutional dedication to sustainability into its core operations. Patagonia's commitment to social and environmental problems is demonstrated by their charitable endeavors, transparent supply chains, and sustainable sourcing (Herrera, J., & de las Heras-Rosas, 2020). This illustrates how institutional norms have an impact on the development of sustainable business practices.

- **Stakeholder Theory:**

According to the stakeholder approach, businesses should take into account the needs of all parties involved in decision-making, not only shareholders. Global consumer goods giant Unilever is frequently praised for its dedication to sustainability. Unilever focuses on fostering beneficial social and environmental consequences while promoting company growth through programs like its Sustainable Living Plan (Panwar et al., 2021). This strategy serves as an example of how sustainable business practices can be fuelled by a stakeholder-centric viewpoint.

Empirical Findings:

Behavioural Economics and Consumer Behaviour:

This field of study emphasizes how psychological aspects play a part in influencing consumers' decisions to purchase sustainable goods. For example, a prospect theory study by shows that people frequently value losses more than comparable benefits (Nikolaou, Jones & Stefanakis, 2021). This knowledge can help marketers explain sustainable decisions in terms of minimizing loss rather than giving up rewards, which will encourage environmentally friendly consumption habits.

Organizational Psychology and Human Resources:

Research has indicated that an atmosphere in the workplace that is emotionally healthy can encourage sustainable practices in businesses. Renowned for its innovative work policies, Google undertakes various projects aimed at promoting sustainability. This covers things like well-run recycling centers, energy-efficient office buildings, and initiatives to raise staff understanding of sustainability. These procedures highlight how a psychologically sound workplace can encourage actions that are environmentally friendly.

Case Studies:

Interface Inc:	Often praised as a trailblazer in sustainable business methods, Interface is an international innovator in prefabricated flooring. Interface, led by the late Ray Anderson, pledged to transform into a "restorative enterprise" by the year 2020. The goal of their Mission Zero program was to completely eradicate harmful environmental effects (Buyalskaya, Gallo & Camerer, 2021). Interface has made significant progress toward accomplishing its sustainability objectives through advancements in materials, manufacturing techniques, and recycling initiatives.
Tesla Inc.	Social sciences can be incorporated into management methods, as Tesla's innovative strategy in the auto sector shows. Tesla positioned electric automobiles as high-performance, appealing products that are also ecologically friendly by utilizing behavioural economics concepts. The company's ability to upend the auto industry is evidence of how well interdisciplinary techniques can be used to support sustainable business practices.

METHODOLOGY

In order to comprehend and explain the intricate relationships between the social sciences and corporate leadership in the context of ethical company conduct, this research uses an interpretivist research philosophy. Interpretivism highlights how subjective reality is and accepts that everyone creates their own concepts and understandings of it. Examining the viewpoints and interpretations of those involved in organizations as well as the larger business environment is critical in this setting.

The research method will be guided by a deductive approach. This entails developing particular hypotheses based on accepted knowledge and earlier studies (Wickert *et al.* 2021). The deductive method will begin this study by utilizing well-established frameworks from shareholder and structural theories, which offer a theoretical framework for examining how social sciences might be integrated into sustainable management practices.

Descriptive research will be used, with the goal of giving a thorough and in-depth explanation of the topic being studied. To create a comprehensive picture of how firms are implementing social science concepts for sustainable results, data from multiple sources will need to be gathered. The analysis of the data's connections, trends, and commonalities is made possible by the descriptive design. The main technique for gathering data will be secondary data collecting. This entails compiling data from already published academic papers, reports, research papers, and other pertinent sources. Utilizing secondary data offers a large and varied dataset that makes it possible to analyse the multidisciplinary strategies used by companies to implement sustainable practices in-depth.

ANALYSIS

In the quest for environmental, social, and financial viability, research on cross-disciplinary strategies for sustainable corporate behaviour critically examines the intersections between management techniques and social sciences. This analysis explores the study's main conclusions, ramifications, and contributions in detail, providing a comprehensive assessment of the research's importance in the context of modern corporate situations.

Key Findings

- **Integration of Social Sciences and Management:**

In order to promote sustainable company strategies, the research emphasizes how important it is to incorporate social sciences into organizational procedures. It clarifies how knowledge from fields such as economics, sociology, and psychology can influence decision-making, resulting in more comprehensive and successful approaches to sustainability. Successful integration is demonstrated by the case studies of businesses such as Unilever and Patagonia, which highlight the practical application of institutional and customer theories to promote sustainable practices. The famous outdoor clothing company Patagonia is a prime example. The business's dedication to sustainability is evident in every aspect of its activities, from the open supply chain to the sustainable procurement of resources.

In a similar vein, the multinational conglomerate Unilever has made sustainability a central tenet. Unilever tackles a variety of societal and environmental challenges, such as lowering greenhouse gas emissions and enhancing sanitation

and hygiene, through its Responsible Living Plan (Haseeb *et al.* 2019). This all-encompassing strategy is in line with stakeholder theory and shows how companies may effectively coordinate the interests of different stakeholders while promoting sustainable practices.

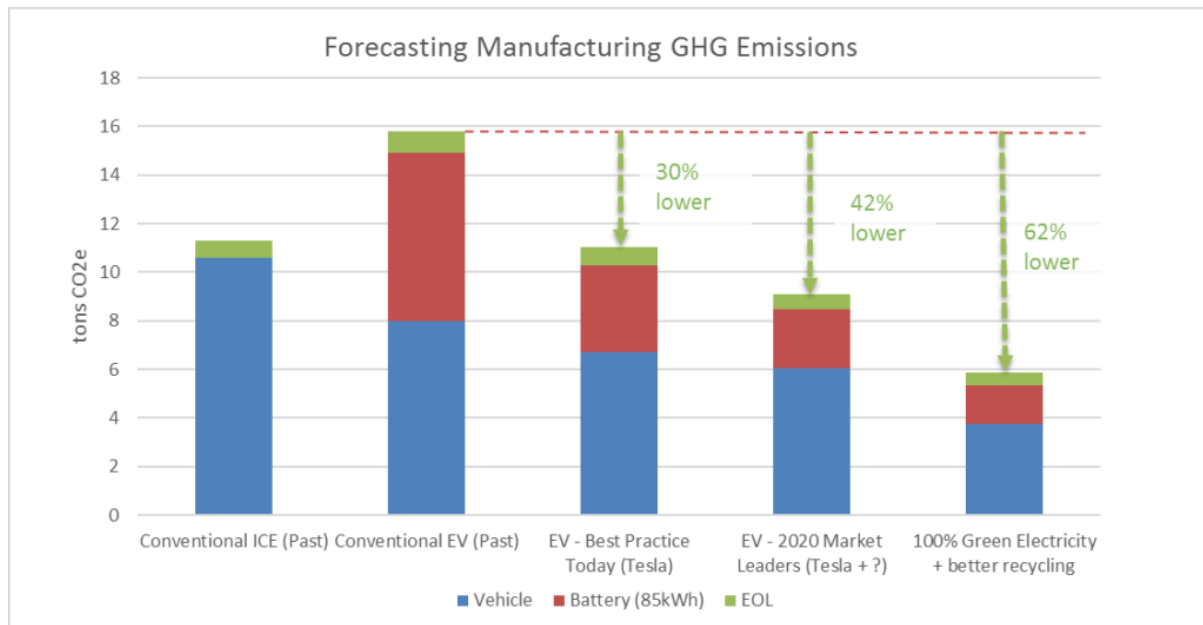


Figure 3: Sustainability of Tesla

(Source: tesla.com, 2023)

- **Behavioural Economics and Consumer Behaviour:**

The investigation of consumer behaviour and behavioural economics in the study provides important information for companies trying to encourage sustainable consumption habits. Prospect theory, as used, provides a sophisticated explanation of how framing decisions in terms of preventing losses might promote environmentally beneficial behaviour. This discovery has important ramifications for sustainability-focused marketing tactics.

One study, for example, shows that it can be more successful to promote pro-environmental behaviour when communications are framed in terms of avoiding costs, such as environmental destruction, rather than stressing prospective rewards (Alkire *et al.* 2020). This realization directly affects companies looking to promote eco-friendly goods and services. Through emphasizing the adverse effects of unsustainable decisions, companies can use consumers' inclination to steer clear of losses and subsequently encourage environmentally conscientious conduct.

- **Organizational Psychology and Human Resources:**

The study emphasizes how important it is for human resources and organizational psychology to support sustainable practices in businesses. One striking example is Google's efforts to establish mentally healthy work environments. Google exemplifies how a positive work atmosphere can foster a sustainable culture by emphasizing sustainability in corporate design, recycling initiatives, and employee involvement campaigns.

Google's strategy is in line with studies showing that a psychologically sound workplace encourages a feeling of purpose and community among staff members, which can stimulate participation in environmental projects (Tauginienė *et al.* 2020). This implies that companies can use psychological tools to foster an atmosphere that is more likely to support and adopt sustainable practices in addition to improving employee well-being.

- **Institutional and Stakeholder Influences:**

The case studies of Tesla, Inc. and Interface Inc. highlight how stakeholder and institutional pressures impact companies' sustainability initiatives. Ray Anderson's vision for Interface's Mission Zero project serves as an example of the organization's strong organizational dedication to environmental responsibility (tesla.com, 2023). Similar to this, Tesla's

novel approach to the motoring industry demonstrates how stakeholder-centric methods can result in ground-breaking sustainability advances.

In his book "The Confessions of a Radical Industrialist," Anderson describes Interface's journey toward sustainability, showing the transformative effects of creative management in conjunction with institutional requirements (Klerkx, Jakku & Labarthe, 2019). Interface not only lessened its environmental effect but also altered industry norms by establishing bold sustainability targets and questioning traditional business practices.

In contrast, Tesla is a symbol of a revolution in the auto business. Tesla addressed environmental issues and altered customer standards for both reliability and creativity through its unwavering focus on electric vehicles. This innovative strategy, which is based on a thorough comprehension of consumer needs and concerns, is an excellent example of how companies may use stakeholder theory to gain a competitive edge and promote sustainability.

Implications

- **Practical Guidelines for Businesses:**

The study offers useful suggestions for companies looking to adopt interdisciplinary approaches-based sustainable practices. It underlines the need of coordinating organizational plans with social science concepts and the demand for an all-encompassing, stakeholder-centered strategy (Prestes *et al.* 2019). Businesses can use the knowledge gained from this study to create customized sustainability programs that appeal to their particular stakeholders and surroundings. One practical suggestion is that companies carry out thorough stakeholder evaluations in order to pinpoint important players and their objectives. Businesses can create focused strategies that meet stakeholders' unique concerns and advance sustainability goals by taking into account their varied points of view. Businesses can also include psychological findings into their marketing and communication plans, using the ideas of behavioural economy to motivate customers to adopt eco-friendly practices.

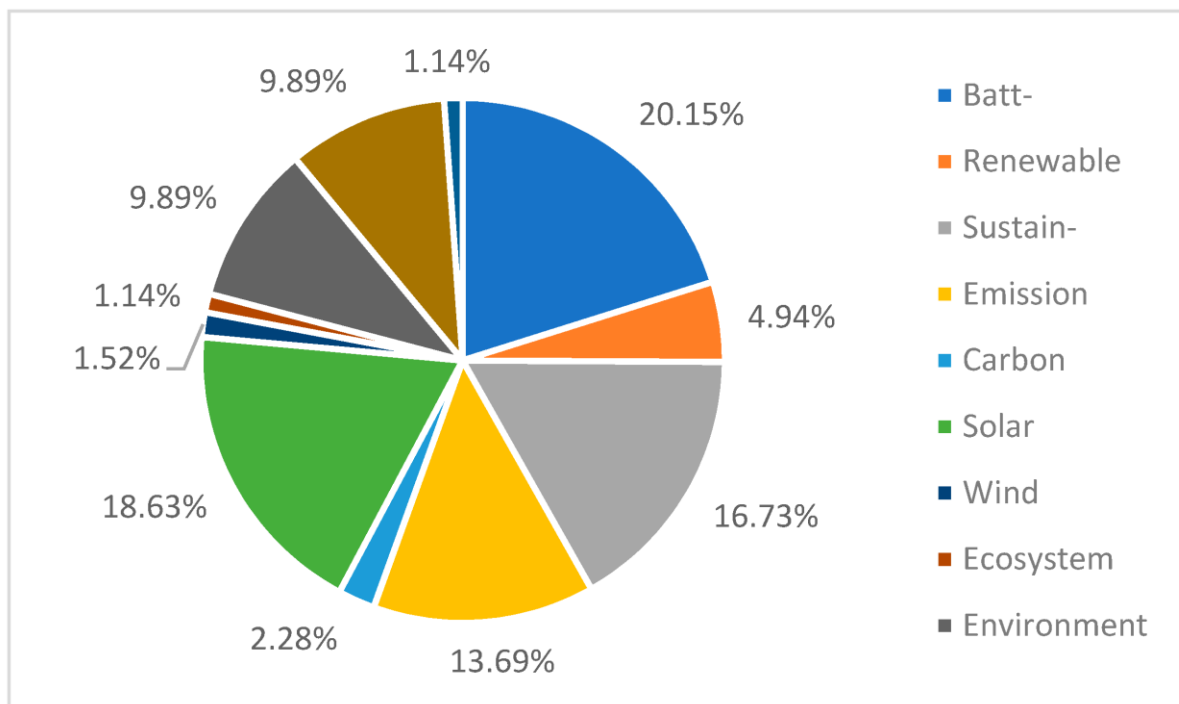


Figure 4: Sustainability

(Source: tesla.com,2023)

- **Fostering a Culture of Sustainability:**

An examination of organizational psychologists and human resources reveals how important it is to have a psychologically sound workplace in order to promote a sustainable culture. According to this research, companies may actively foster an organizational culture that values and gives sustainability top priority. Businesses may cultivate an employee base that is more likely to support and advocate sustainable practices by making investments in the well-being and engagement of their employees.

Businesses can adopt programs like sustainability training, incentives for sustainable choices, and chances for staff members to get involved in sustainability efforts to help cultivate a culture of sustainability. Additionally, companies can establish open lines of communication so that staff members can offer suggestions and commentary on sustainable initiatives.

Innovation and Disruption in Sustainability:

The case studies of Tesla and Interface show how companies may use sustainable practices to spur innovation and disruption. In addition to having a positive impact on the environment, Interface's bold Mission Zero program has established the business as a pioneer in sustainable hardwood solutions. Similar to this, disruptive innovation can be used to achieve sustainability, as seen by Tesla's achievement in the electric car industry.

For companies, this means that sustainability is not just a matter of ethics but also a source of competitive advantage and innovation (Pizzi *et al.* 2020). Companies can lead the way in innovative approaches to conservation that benefit the environment and establish them as pioneers in their respective fields by questioning preconceived notions and rethinking business strategies.

Contributions

Advancing Interdisciplinary Research:

This study makes a substantial contribution to the conversation about multidisciplinary strategies for environmentally friendly company behaviour. Through the integration of knowledge from management and social sciences, the research offers a thorough framework that helps companies deal with the challenges posed by sustainability. It fills the void between academic concepts and real-world implementations by providing firms with doable tactics. This study makes a greater contribution than just its initial conclusions. It acts as a spark for more multidisciplinary studies at the nexus of management and social sciences. This study encourages academics and practitioners to look deeper into particular domains, such as customer spending, company culture, and involvement of stakeholders, in order to improve our comprehension of this crucial intersection by highlighting the tangible effects of integrating scientific principles. It provides a strong basis for a more comprehensive discussion of sustainable business practices by encouraging future research projects to investigate novel aspects and settings.

CONCLUSION:

The integration of social sciences in the field of management research which is driven by the interdisciplinary approaches plays a crucial role in advancing the sustainable business practices. This kind of synergy capitalizes on the diverse insights and methodologies which are offered by sociology, psychology, anthropology and economics and other social sciences to comprehensively address the complicated challenges of sustainability in the field of corporate world. Through the adoption of interdisciplinary strategies, the businesses can foster a holistic problem-solving leverage diverse expertise and also become able to develop evidence based sustainable solutions. The collaborative efforts between the social scientists and the management professionals have resulted in innovative strategies, informed kind of decision making and some practical implementation of the responsible practices. As the world is continuing to grapple with the pressure of global challenges such as the climate change and the ethical business conduct and also the societal well-being, the intersection of social sciences and management research will offer a path towards a more sustainable, ethical and environmentally responsible future. It is not merely an academic attempt but a call to action for the businesses so that they become able to navigate the complexities of the modern world and make sure that they remain not only economically prosperous but also becomes socially and ecologically responsible.

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