

Invitation

You are cordially invited to the public defense to obtain the academic degree of

DOCTOR OF BUSINESS ECONOMICS

by Tom Kluijtmans

The Impact of Organizational Sustainability on Employee Outcomes

Supervisors:

Prof. dr. Saskia Crucke

dr. Kenn Meyfroodt

Wednesday, 22 November 2023 at 17h00

In auditorium 'Vandenhove', Rozier 1, 9000 Ghent

Please confirm your attendance no later than 12 November 2023 by registering via:

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Abstract

Organizations, be they for-profit, nonprofit, or public, have a pivotal role to play in contributing to sustainable development and the achievement of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. This contribution is realized through the practice of organizational sustainability, which can be defined as the capability of an organization to contribute to sustainable development by delivering simultaneously economic, social, and environmental benefits—the so-called triple bottom line. Whilst this definition emphasizes the capabilities of an organization to contribute to the broader society and therefore stimulated scholars to study antecedents and outcomes at the organizational-level, more recent research acknowledged that such policies and initiatives are created and enacted by individuals within the organization. Consequently, there is increased attention for individual-level research on organizational sustainability that seeks to understand how employees perceive and react to organizational sustainability. Although there is a growing body of research that delves into employee perceptions of organizational sustainability and the impact employee perceptions of organizational sustainability exerts on resulting outcomes, insufficient is known regarding the underlying mechanisms and boundary conditions that help explain these relationships. Additionally, a more robust theoretical foundation is needed to clarify these associations. Drawing from the fields of Human Resource Management (HRM), Organizational Behavior, and Industrial and Organizational Psychology, this dissertation adopts a multi-theory framework to shed light on how, when, and why employees respond to organizational sustainability across diverse organizational contexts through four empirical studies.

The first study contributes empirical evidence demonstrating a positive relation between organizational sustainability and organizational citizenship behavior, highlighting the significant role of leadership integrity. The study emphasizes that consistency between the organization's sustainability efforts and the integrity of its leadership is pivotal for fostering positive employee outcomes. The second study delves into the multifaceted nature of organizational sustainability and studies how its underlying dimensions impact employee outcomes through both internally oriented and externally oriented mechanisms. Findings indicate that while organizational sustainability oriented towards external stakeholders contributes to achieving desirable employee outcomes, the impact of organizational sustainability oriented towards internal stakeholders is predominant. The third study adopts a novel team-level approach, underscoring the importance of shared perceptions of organizational sustainability in cultivating favorable team-level outcomes. Additionally, it accentuates the significance of consensus within teams regarding the organization's motivation for implementing organizational sustainability initiatives (i.e., authentic organizational sustainability). The belief that these initiatives are implemented for authentic reasons, namely to benefit the broader society, relates stronger to desirable team outcomes than just the perception of their presence within the organization. Lastly, while organizational sustainability is generally perceived positively, the fourth study offers a more critical perspective. It reveals evidence of a potential darker side of organizational sustainability, particularly concerning its impact on employee well-being. This study offers a more nuanced understanding of the complexities associated with organizational sustainability and its effects on employees.

Curriculum vitae

Tom Kluijtmans, born in 1992 in Helmond, holds a Bachelor's degree in applied psychology (2016, Fontys Hogeschool HRM & Psychologie) and an Extended Master's degree in human resource studies (2019, Tilburg University). In 2019, he joined the HRM and OB research cluster at Ghent University (Faculty of Economics and Business Administration). During his time as a PhD student, Tom actively contributed to the safety and sustainability committee and the education quality assurance committee of the Faculty. Tom published study two of his doctoral dissertation in *Public Management Review*. Study one is in the third round of the publication process in *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, and study three is in the second round of the publication process in the *Journal of Business Ethics*. In addition to the studies included in the doctoral dissertation, Tom also co-authored multiple papers, three of which have been published in the academic journals *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*, *Management Decision* and *Vlaams Tijdschrift voor Overheidsmanagement*. A fourth paper has received a conditional accept in *PLOS ONE*. Tom presented his research at the 80th Academy of Management Annual Meeting in Vancouver (2020), the Corporate Responsibility Research conference in Belfast (2022), the 19th Workshop on Research Advances in Organizational Behaviour and Human Resource Management in Paris (2023), and the Business & Society Research Seminar in Rotterdam (2023). His work was also awarded with the Best Doctoral Student Paper Award of the Public and Nonprofit (PNP) division at the Academy of Management Annual Meeting (2020) and the Best Paper Award at the Corporate Responsibility Research conference (2022).