



Cultural Values and Sustainable Work Practices: Insights from Japanese Corporate Organizations

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the relationship between cultural values and the adoption of sustainable work practices within Japanese corporate organizations. It examines how deeply rooted cultural principles (such as collective responsibility, long-term orientation, and respect for nature) shape organizational behavior and influence sustainability initiatives. Using a qualitative approach supported by survey data, the study analyzes how cultural alignment contributes to the successful implementation of environmentally responsible practices. The findings indicate that cultural values play a critical role in fostering employee commitment to sustainability and enhancing organizational effectiveness. The study contributes to the literature by integrating cultural and sustainability perspectives and provides practical implications for organizations seeking to embed sustainability within their cultural frameworks.

القيم الثقافية وممارسات العمل المستدامة: رؤى من منظمات الشركات اليابانية

الملخص

تستكشف هذه الدراسة العلاقة بين القيم الثقافية وتبني ممارسات العمل المستدامة في المؤسسات اليابانية. وتدرس كيف تُشكّل المبادئ الثقافية الراسخة (مثل المسؤولية الجماعية، والتوجه طويل الأجل، واحترام الطبيعة) السلوك التنظيمي وتؤثر على مبادرات الاستدامة. وباستخدام منهجية نوعية مدعومة ببيانات استقصائية، تحلل الدراسة كيف يُسهم التوافق الثقافي في التطبيق الناجح للممارسات المسؤولة بيئيًا. وتشير النتائج إلى أن القيم الثقافية تلعب دورًا حاسمًا في تعزيز التزام الموظفين بالاستدامة وتحسين فعالية المؤسسة. تُسهم هذه الدراسة في الأدبيات من خلال دمج منظورات الثقافة والاستدامة، وتقديم تطبيقات عملية للمؤسسات التي تسعى إلى دمج الاستدامة ضمن أطرها الثقافية.

الكلمات الدالة:

قيم الثقافية، ممارسات العمل
المستدامة، الثقافة التنظيمية،
استدامة الشركات، اليابان

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1. Introduction

Sustainability has become a central concern for organizations worldwide, prompting a shift toward environmentally responsible and socially conscious business practices. While many studies have focused on structural and strategic drivers of sustainability, increasing attention is being given to the role of cultural values in shaping organizational behavior and influencing the adoption of sustainable practices. Cultural values represent shared beliefs and norms that guide individual and organizational behavior. In the context of Japan, cultural principles such as collectivism, harmony, respect for nature, and long-term orientation are deeply embedded in both society and corporate life (Hofstedi, 2021). These values are often reflected in management practices and decision-making processes, making Japan a unique context for examining the relationship between culture and sustainability.

Sustainable work practices refer to organizational activities that aim to reduce environmental impact while promoting social responsibility and long-term economic performance. These practices include energy conservation, waste reduction, and environmentally friendly workplace policies. Research suggests that the successful implementation of such practices depends not only on formal policies but also on the cultural context within which organizations operate (Schen, 2023). Despite the growing recognition of culture as a key determinant of organizational behavior, limited empirical research has examined how cultural values influence the adoption of sustainable work practices, particularly in non-Western contexts. Most existing studies have focused on Western organizations, overlooking the potential insights that can be gained from countries like Japan, where cultural traditions strongly influence organizational life. Therefore, the research problem lies in the limited understanding of how cultural values shape sustainable work practices within Japanese corporate organizations. This gap highlights the need for research that integrates cultural and sustainability perspectives. Motivated by this gap, the present study aims to explore the role of cultural values in promoting sustainable work practices in Japan. By doing so, it seeks to provide a deeper understanding of how cultural alignment can enhance sustainability initiatives and contribute to organizational success.

2. Literature Review

Recent research has increasingly emphasized the importance of organizational culture in driving sustainability initiatives. Studies suggest that cultural values influence employees' attitudes, behaviors, and willingness to engage in environmentally responsible practices. Several studies have highlighted that organizations with strong sustainability-oriented cultures are more likely to achieve successful environmental outcomes. Cultural alignment has been identified as a key factor in ensuring the effectiveness of sustainability strategies, as it promotes shared values and collective responsibility among employees. Moreover, recent studies indicate that integrating cultural values into HRM practices enhances employee engagement and commitment to sustainability. Organizations that align their cultural frameworks with sustainability goals tend to experience higher levels of employee participation and organizational performance. However, despite these insights, empirical studies that explicitly link cultural values with sustainable work practices remain limited. This highlights the need for further research, particularly in culturally rich contexts such as Japan.

2.1 Cultural Values and Organizational Behavior