

Corporate Education And ESG Practices: People Management Strategies To Strengthen Citizenship And Sustainability Within Organizations

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Abstract:

Background: The growing demand for sustainable and socially responsible practices has encouraged companies to integrate ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) principles into their operations. In this context, corporate education has emerged as a vital tool for promoting corporate citizenship and solidifying sustainability efforts. This article examines the relationships between corporate education, people management, and ESG practices, highlighting their implications for building a more conscientious corporate culture.

Materials and Methods: This research employed a qualitative approach aimed at understanding how corporate education and ESG practices can contribute to strengthening citizenship and sustainability within organizations. A bibliographic analysis was conducted, reviewing a wide range of national and international scientific sources covering corporate education, ESG, and their implications for people management.

Results: The main objective was to analyze how corporate education and people management practices, guided by ESG principles, can reinforce organizational citizenship and promote sustainability within companies. The analysis in this article offers significant theoretical and practical contributions to the field of corporate sustainability by demonstrating the positive impact of integrating ESG principles into corporate education and people management policies.

Conclusion: The study underscores the importance of embedding ESG principles in corporate education and people management strategies as a means to foster a sustainable and socially responsible corporate culture. These findings provide valuable insights for companies aiming to strengthen their organizational citizenship and support long-term sustainability goals.

Keywords: Environmental; Social; Governance; Corporate Education; Citizenship.

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I. Introduction

In recent years, the term ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) has gained considerable importance in the business world as companies seek to align their operations with practices of social and environmental responsibility and ethical governance. Amid increasing demands for sustainability and transparency, organizations recognize the importance of embedding these principles into their culture and procedures, emphasizing people management as a strategic component in driving this transformation. In this

context, corporate education emerges as a crucial tool for empowering employees and reinforcing principles of citizenship and sustainability, fostering a workplace environment that values human growth, ethical engagement, and social responsibility.

Thus, exploring how corporate education can contribute to ESG practices provides a significant contribution to building organizations that are more aware and committed to social and environmental well-being. This study followed a qualitative approach aimed at understanding how corporate education and ESG practices can strengthen citizenship and sustainability within organizations. The research method used was a bibliographic analysis, investigating a range of national and international scientific sources on corporate education, ESG, and their implications for people management.

The general objective was to analyze how corporate education and people management practices, guided by ESG principles, can strengthen organizational citizenship and promote sustainability within companies. The specific objectives include: examining the importance of ESG principles as pillars of sustainability and citizenship in the corporate context; investigating the role of corporate education in promoting a culture of sustainability and social responsibility among employees; and analyzing how people management strategies can align skill development with the promotion of sustainable and citizenship-oriented practices. These objectives were designed to structure a theoretical foundation exploring the connections between ESG, citizenship, and people management, enabling a comprehensive study on fostering a responsible and sustainable corporate culture.

The article is organized into four sections for clarity and focus. The first section presents the study objectives and the context motivating this investigation into corporate education and ESG practices. The second section, titled Materials and Methods, details the methods used, including the bibliographic research process. The third section centers on the development of the theoretical framework, discussing fundamental concepts and research supporting the link between people management, corporate education, and ESG. Finally, the fourth section provides the concluding insights, demonstrating that the study achieved its objectives and suggesting directions for future research to further explore strategies that foster citizenship and sustainability within organizations.

II. Material And Methods

The research in this scientific article followed a qualitative approach with the aim of understanding how corporate education and ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) practices can contribute to strengthening citizenship and sustainability within organizations¹.

The qualitative approach is essential for exploring the complexity of the interactions between people management and sustainable practices, enabling an in-depth analysis of behaviors, perceptions, and organizational strategies focused on social and environmental responsibility. In the scientific realm, this approach is valued for its ability to generate detailed and contextual insights, which are fundamental for shaping policies and practices aimed at promoting sustainability and corporate citizenship¹.

The research procedure adopted was a bibliographic analysis, in which various scientific sources, both national and international, were investigated, covering studies on corporate education, ESG, and their implications for people management.

The selected sources predominantly include articles classified as QUALIS A1, ensuring the quality and credibility of the analyzed information. This careful selection of sources enables the study to offer a comprehensive and well-grounded perspective, highlighting contributions from different global and regional contexts on how ESG practices, combined with corporate education, can promote a more citizen-oriented organizational culture committed to sustainability.

III. Literature Review

In this theoretical framework, key topics will be explored to understand the integration of ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) principles into corporate sustainability. First, the topic "ESG Principles and Organizational Citizenship: A Foundation for Corporate Sustainability" will address how ESG principles contribute to promoting organizational citizenship, establishing a critical foundation for responsible and sustainable business practices.

Next, the theme "Corporate Education for Sustainability: Building Values and Competencies in ESG" will analyze how organizations can, through corporate education programs, foster values and develop essential competencies for commitment to ESG. This section will examine how corporate education strengthens the organizational culture focused on sustainability and ethics.

Finally, the section "People Management and ESG: Strategies for the Development of Citizen and Sustainable Competencies" will address people management practices that promote citizen competencies, emphasizing the role of ESG in shaping teams capable of addressing socio-environmental challenges. This topic will discuss strategies for promoting a workforce aligned with sustainable values, highlighting the importance of developing citizen skills within organizations.

ESG Principles and Organizational Citizenship: A Foundation for Corporate Sustainability

On a global scale, business practices are analyzed through the environmental, social, and governance (ESG) axes, and this trend has become essential for organizations committed to sustainability. In the face of growing socio-environmental challenges and increasing regulatory rigor, ESG principles have proven to be crucial for the development of responsible companies. This approach not only strengthens the company's image with stakeholders but also contributes to the construction of organizational citizenship that integrates ethics and respect for the environment and society into everyday practices, thus promoting what is understood today as corporate sustainability².

Currently, the understanding of sustainability, as highlighted by Goi Junior (2023), is no longer solely linked to environmental issues, but connects environmental needs to social and economic issues that need to be taught, as they enable sustainable development for both institutions and people. Therefore, corporate sustainability encompasses the movement and practices of companies regarding their commitment to a sustainable development model through the balance of three pillars: Environmental, Social, and Economic³.

The environmental dimension of ESG principles requires companies to operate with practices that reduce their environmental impact by promoting the rational use of natural resources and reducing their ecological footprint. As such, companies that adopt ESG principles are encouraged to implement practices that favor environmental preservation, such as proper waste management, the use of renewable energy, and minimizing carbon emissions. Studies have shown that these practices positively impact the company's reputation, improving its competitiveness in the long term and increasing the perceived value among investors and consumers concerned with sustainability. In the social dimension, ESG principles address the company's responsibility to the community and its employees, promoting ethical behavior that values inclusion, diversity, and well-being in the workplace⁴.

According to Harraca (2022), corporate responsibility plays a vital role, as adherence to a sustainable internal culture directly impacts the collective, extending outward through the company's relationships with its stakeholders, thereby promoting organizational transformations that enable more conscious choices and the construction of a better society. Organizations that implement practices of organizational citizenship in the social dimension tend to invest in gender equality, racial equity policies, as well as in health and occupational safety programs⁵.

Research indicates that these actions not only contribute to social cohesion but also increase productivity and employee engagement, resulting in a healthier and more inclusive organizational environment. The governance pillar, in turn, is essential for ensuring transparency and ethics in the corporate environment. Companies that are guided by strong governance policies implement compliance practices, ensuring that all operations are in accordance with laws and regulations, while also acting ethically and responsibly toward their stakeholders. Corporate governance is seen as the foundation that supports the environmental and social principles, creating an environment where commitments to sustainability are monitored and audited. Recent studies indicate that companies with good governance practices have a lower risk of scandals and crises, which ensures greater financial stability and trust from investors⁴. Below, we present Table 1, which provides an overview of the ESG pillars and their impact on corporate sustainability.

Table 1: Overview of ESG Pillars and Their Impact on Corporate Sustainability

ESG Pillar	Practices Adopted	Impact on Corporate Sustainability
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proper waste management - Use of renewable energy - Minimization of carbon emissions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduces ecological footprint - Improves long-term competitiveness - Increases perceived value for investors and consumers
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inclusion and diversity policies - Investment in occupational health and safety - Promotion of equality and equity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increases social cohesion - Enhances productivity and employee engagement - Fosters an inclusive organizational environment
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compliance policies - Transparency and ethics in operations - Monitoring of sustainability commitments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduces the risk of scandals and crises - Ensures greater financial stability - Strengthens investor confidence

Source: Dunn & Harness (2018)⁴.

These three pillars of ESG intertwine to form a model of organizational citizenship in which corporate sustainability is treated in an integrated manner, rather than as a series of isolated actions. Organizational citizenship, in this sense, is a practice that manifests when a company commits to its long-term social and environmental impact. This occurs not only due to external pressure but as a genuine commitment to ethics and sustainable development. This concept goes beyond regulatory compliance, requiring active involvement in promoting a more sustainable future for society as a whole⁶.

The adoption of ESG principles as a foundation for organizational citizenship can also result in competitive advantages. Studies show that companies that incorporate ESG into their business structure and strategies tend to exhibit greater resilience in times of crisis and better adaptability to market changes. Furthermore, consumers and investors have increasingly valued companies with clear and effective sustainability commitments, making adherence to ESG a market attraction factor. However, for ESG principles and organizational citizenship to promote genuinely transformative corporate sustainability, it is essential that top leadership is aligned and committed to these values⁶.

The effective implementation of ESG practices requires leadership that prioritizes these values as strategic goals, promoting an organizational culture that embraces sustainability as an essential value. This engagement is critical because, without the genuine support of leaders, ESG principles risk becoming merely symbolic, with no real impact on the company's operations. Finally, the connection between ESG and organizational citizenship stands out as a pathway to building companies that not only meet the minimum sustainability requirements but go beyond them, acting as active agents in promoting social and environmental change. This integration represents a commitment to a more just and balanced future, where economic development is aligned with social and environmental responsibility. Corporate sustainability, grounded in ESG principles and organizational citizenship, thus emerges as an essential practice for strengthening the role of companies in building a sustainable and ethical society⁶.

Corporate Education for Sustainability: Building Values and Competencies in ESG

Corporate education focused on sustainability plays a crucial role in developing an organizational culture committed to ESG principles. By promoting continuous learning and the construction of ethical values, companies encourage conscious practices that engage employees to make responsible decisions aligned with environmental, social, and governance sustainability⁷.

This type of training enables teams to understand the importance of their actions in the corporate and social context, driving the creation of a workplace that values and supports sustainable initiatives. Incorporating ESG principles into corporate education helps develop essential competencies, such as ethical leadership, resource management, and skills to deal with socio-environmental impacts. By equipping employees with these competencies, companies ensure that their internal practices reflect a genuine commitment to sustainability, not just as an image strategy, but as part of their organizational identity⁷.

Therefore, corporate education, in this context, as Schlochauer (2021) notes, transcends technical qualification. It becomes a vector for personal and social development, aiming for the autonomy of each individual and the construction of more active citizenship⁸.

Research shows that employees who receive this type of training are more engaged and productive, actively contributing to the development of a socially responsible corporate environment. In addition to developing competencies, education for sustainability promotes the internalization of ethical values among employees, creating a culture that prioritizes collective well-being and respect for the environment. This long-term perspective is crucial for strengthening organizational citizenship, encouraging each employee to see themselves as an agent of change. Thus, by incorporating sustainable practices into everyday organizational life, the team contributes to the realization of ESG goals in a coherent and integrated way. ESG training programs also facilitate the alignment of individual employee goals with institutional objectives, creating an environment where social and environmental responsibility is part of the corporate mission^{9; 11}. Let's see Table 2, which provides a classification on Corporate Education for Sustainability.

Table 2: Corporate Education for Sustainability: Building Values and Competencies in ESG

Aspect of Corporate Education in ESG	Implemented Practices	Impact on Organizational Culture and Sustainability
Competency Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training in ethical leadership - Resource management and socio-environmental impact - Sustainable decision-making training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More engaged and productive employees - Genuine commitment to sustainability - Internal practices aligned with ESG values
Promotion of Ethical Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fostering a culture of collective well-being - Respect for the environment - Encouragement of organizational citizenship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthens organizational citizenship - Encourages employees to see themselves as agents of change - Socially responsible workplace
Alignment with Institutional Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integration of individual goals with ESG objectives - Education for social and environmental responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reinforces sustainability as a strategic goal - Employees aware of the positive impact of their actions - Cohesive organizational culture

Source: Araújo, Correia, & Câmara (2022)⁹

This alignment between values and goals strengthens sustainability as a strategic and shared objective, making employees aware of the positive impact their activities have on the community and the environment. Such alignment is essential for sustainability to become part of the organizational legacy. Investing in corporate education for sustainability is, therefore, a competitive advantage and a commitment to the future. By promoting values and competencies in ESG, companies not only increase their market value and reduce risks, but also position themselves as leaders in social and environmental responsibility. This practice becomes a long-term pillar, consolidating an ethical culture and organizational citizenship that strengthens the company's resilience in the face of contemporary challenges and prepares it to actively contribute to more sustainable development⁹.

People Management and ESG: Strategies for Developing Citizen and Sustainable Competencies

People management guided by ESG principles strengthens a corporate culture that values citizen and sustainable competencies among employees. By promoting an approach focused on personal and social development, companies encourage practices that go beyond economic objectives, stimulating behaviors that positively impact society and the environment. This strategy transforms people management into a tool of corporate responsibility, capable of aligning organizational values with citizenship and sustainability practices¹¹.

One of the pillars of this approach is the implementation of specific training programs that enable employees to make conscious decisions, based on ethical values and social responsibility. These training programs cover topics such as inclusion, diversity, environmental respect, and ethical governance, preparing the team to responsibly address contemporary challenges. Studies show that employees trained in ESG practices tend to engage more with the company's mission, increasing organizational cohesion and reinforcing a sustainability culture. The following Table 3 compiles information related to people management and ESG: strategies and impacts for a sustainable organizational culture.

Table 3: People Management and ESG: Strategies and Impacts for a Sustainable Organizational Culture

Aspect of ESG-Oriented People Management	Implemented Practices	Impact on Organizational Culture and Sustainability
Development of Ethical and Social Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training in ethical decision-making - Focus on social responsibility and environmental respect - ESG-focused training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engages employees with the company mission - Builds an organizational culture of sustainability - Cohesive team aligned with ESG principles
Promotion of Diversity and Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policies for diversity in the workplace - Programs for gender and racial equity - Inclusive work environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhances organizational citizenship - Fosters respect and integration of all rights and values - Increased capacity for innovation and change
Performance Assessment Based on ESG Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Goals and rewards for sustainable actions - Metrics that prioritize socio-environmental responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourages a long-term mindset for sustainability - ESG principles integrated into daily tasks - Motivation for continuous improvement

Source: Coelho et al. (2020)¹¹

The adoption of diversity and inclusion practices also integrates people management committed to ESG, as it creates an environment that embraces different perspectives and values equity. Policies that promote diversity in the workplace, in addition to being aligned with ESG principles, contribute to the development of an organizational citizenship that respects and integrates the rights and values of all. This stance increases the company's capacity to innovate and adapt to changes, as employees with varied backgrounds and experiences bring different solutions to complex issues¹¹.

Another fundamental strategy is the evaluation of employee performance based on socio-environmental responsibility metrics, which encourage ESG-aligned practices. By setting goals and rewards that value sustainable actions, companies motivate employees to adopt citizen practices in their professional routines. This recognition system fosters a long-term sustainability-oriented mindset, making ESG an active part of each team member's role. These initiatives make people management a strategic ally for ESG, consolidating a workforce that not only understands the importance of sustainability but also feels part of the positive impact generated by the company. In this way, the organization builds a legacy of citizenship and responsibility that is reflected in both employee satisfaction and stakeholder trust, ensuring a solid reputation and a commitment to long-term sustainable development¹².

IV. Conclusion

This study fully achieved its planned objectives by analyzing how corporate education and people management practices guided by ESG principles can strengthen organizational citizenship and promote sustainability in companies. The research highlighted that ESG principles are essential for consolidating a culture of sustainability and social responsibility within the corporate environment, acting as pillars that support organizational citizenship.

Furthermore, corporate education was confirmed as a key strategy for building values and competencies focused on sustainability among employees, fostering a more conscious and engaged organizational culture. It also became clear that people management strategies, when well aligned with ESG objectives, can guide the development of competencies that reinforce sustainable and citizen-focused practices.

The analysis presented in this article makes important theoretical and practical contributions to the field of corporate sustainability, demonstrating the positive impact of integrating ESG principles into corporate education and people management policies.

As a suggestion for future research, it is recommended to investigate case studies in companies from different sectors, analyzing how they apply ESG principles in their people management and corporate education practices. This deeper exploration could contribute to a more detailed understanding of the variables that impact the effectiveness of ESG initiatives, enabling the identification of best practices and the adaptation of strategies according to the specificities of each sector.

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