

Cross-functional HRM and Marketing Collaboration in Driving Consumer Needs-based Eco-Friendly Product Innovation

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ABSTRACT – The development of environmentally friendly products has increasingly become a strategic priority in modern business, driven by the growing consumer awareness of sustainability issues. This study examines the role of cross-functional collaboration between Human Resource Management (HRM) and marketing in supporting the creation of green products that are relevant to consumer needs. The discussion begins by tracing general and specific phenomena, followed by an identification of principal issues such as divergent objectives, communication barriers, resource allocation constraints, cultural resistance, and external pressures that undermine the effectiveness of collaboration. Through a literature review approach, the study reveals that the synergy between HRM and marketing holds significant potential to generate competitive added value. HRM supports this process by developing green competencies, promoting a sustainable work culture, and providing incentives that drive innovation, while marketing contributes through mapping consumer needs and designing market strategies aligned with sustainability trends. However, the success of this synergy depends highly on organization's preparedness to overcome structural, cultural, and regulatory obstacles. In conclusion, strong cross-functional collaboration is underlined by robust performance indicators, enhanced green workforce competencies, and the strategic alignment of HRM marketing. In turn, such collaboration not only enhances organizational competitiveness but also supports the broader agenda of global sustainability.

Keywords: Green HRM, green marketing, cross-functional collaboration, environmentally friendly products, sustainability, green innovation, consumers.

A. INTRODUCTION

The transformation of global consumption patterns, which increasingly emphasizes sustainability, has compelled companies to adapt their business strategies toward more environmentally responsible approaches. Consumers are now placing greater emphasis on the ethical and ecological dimensions of the products they purchase, making business success no longer dependent solely on functional quality but also on the embedded value of sustainability. This trend demands cross-disciplinary integration within companies, particularly between Human Resource Management (HRM) and marketing, to ensure that green product innovations are implemented through strategies congruent with consumer requirements.

HRM plays an essential role in building organizations' capabilities by developing employees' knowledge, skills, and attitudes, whereas marketing's responsibility lies in understanding consumer preferences and effectively communicating the value of the product. The interplay between these two domains creates a collaborative potential that can reinforce the competitive advantage of environmentally friendly products. In the absence of cross-functional cooperation, attempts to introduce green products are often hindered by strategic fragmentation, thereby limiting opportunities to meet the demands of a sustainable market.

International regulations and governmental policies further encourage organizations to adopt more concrete sustainability strategies. Global institutions such as the United Nations and the European Union have promulgated policies directing companies to integrate environmental considerations into product design and distribution. Collaboration between HRM and marketing is thus a vital element in

anticipating these regulatory changes, as firms require competent human resources alongside effective communication strategies to convey sustainability values to consumers (Gardi et al., 2021).

Beyond regulatory requirements, competition among companies necessitates differentiation based on sustainability. Environmentally friendly products are no longer perceived as a niche market segment but have become a widespread necessity across the various industries (Nuraini et al., 2022). Cross-functional collaboration enables companies to develop products that not only comply with sustainability standards but also possess emotional and functional appeal that aligns with the aspirations of modern consumers. Consequently, sustainability strategies require robust synergy between HRM and marketing.

In practice, many companies still encounter considerable difficulties in integrating cross-functional teamwork for the development of environmentally friendly products. Frequently, HRM teams focus on enhancing internal competencies without adequately considering marketing implications, whereas marketing teams tend to prioritize consumer trends without duly accounting for internal preparedness. This coordination gap generates obstacles to producing genuinely market-relevant green products.

A real-world case can be found in multinational companies that launch green products yet fail to achieve broad market acceptance due to insufficient internal collaboration. Employees are inadequately prepared in terms of sustainable production practices, while marketing strategies lack of the capacity to effectively educate consumers regarding product advantages. This situation underscores the critical point of structured cooperation between HRM and marketing in achieving the successful environmentally friendly products commercialization.

The primary issue that emerges is a coordination gap between HRM and marketing functions in designing sustainability strategies. Referring to the study by Chuang et al. (2016), cross-functional collaboration often faces challenges such as divergent priorities, distinct work cultures, and unsynchronized communication. This condition hampers the development process of green products, which ought to provide the company with a competitive advantage.

Another challenge lies in the limited cross-disciplinary competencies possessed by employees. As stated by Renwick et al. (2013), green management initiatives often face obstacles because employees lack sufficient understanding of integrating environmental strategies with marketing efforts. Consequently, organizations struggle to communicate the full value of sustainability to their consumers.

This topic warrants critical examination because the success of environmentally friendly product strategies relies heavily on the organization's capacity to integrate human resources with marketing strategies. In the era of global competition, sustainability is no longer a mere moral choice but a prerequisite for survival and growth. Without a profound understanding of cross-functional synergy, companies risk losing strategic opportunities to create long-term value.

The urgency of this analysis also arises from the academic need to enrich discourse on the role of cross-functional collaboration in advancing sustainability. Studies that link HRM and marketing within the framework of environmentally friendly products remain relatively limited, thereby highlighting the potential for this discussion to significantly contribute to both academic literature and business practice.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze how collaboration between HRM and marketing can contribute to environmentally friendly products development that meet consumer needs. Furthermore, this discussion seeks to identify principal barriers that hinder the effectiveness of cross-functional collaboration, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of strategic synergies for fostering business sustainability.

B. METHOD

A literature review approach was selected as it offers a comprehensive understanding of how collaboration between HRM and marketing shapes strategies for developing environmentally friendly products. Literature analysis serves to identify relevant theoretical frameworks, useful conceptual models, and empirical findings that have been discussed in international publications concerning cross-functional synergy. According to Webster and Watson (2002), a structured literature review facilitates the development of an understanding of specific issues by linking existing findings and

evaluating their limitations. Therefore, the literature mapping in this study is directed at publications that discuss the interconnections between human resource management, marketing, and sustainable product strategies.

The literature collection process was conducted by exploring reputable international journals indexed in academic databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and ScienceDirect. The search focused on publications from 2000 to 2024 to ensure the recency of the discussion as well as incorporation of the latest developments in sustainability practices. As stated by Snyder (2019), a systematically conducted literature review enables researchers to evaluate trends, patterns, and gaps in relevant literature. At this stage, inclusion criteria were established to cover articles addressing cross-functional collaboration, green HRM practices, green marketing, and sustainable product development.

Literature analysis was carried out using a thematic approach to identify core issues related to the research questions. This process involved critical reading, comparing arguments, and grouping findings based on relevant themes. Tranfield et al. (2003) emphasize that systematic literature review methods provide an essential foundation for formulating a robust conceptual basis for academic inquiry. Accordingly, this method is deemed appropriate for discussing the role of cross-functional teamwork in supporting the development of environmentally friendly products and identifying challenges encountered in practice.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Human Resource Management (HRM) and Marketing Collaboration in Eco-Friendly Product Development

Increased global awareness regarding climate change and environmental degradation has motivated companies to integrate sustainability principles into all facets of their business strategies. In the context of market competition, which is increasingly shaped by consumer demand for environmentally responsible products, green innovation has become a strategic necessity that cannot be overlooked (Essa & Mardikaningsih, 2021). Companies capable of proactively developing eco-friendly products will attain a stronger bargaining position both nationally and globally. The integration of sustainability values into business processes not only functions as an

ethical response to environmental challenges, but also serves as a source of competitive advantage that ensures long-term business continuity (Alamin et al., 2021).

The implementation of sustainability practices within corporations necessitates a systemic transformation involving all organizational functions, including HRM and marketing. With stakeholders' expectations increasingly oriented toward transparency and social as well as environmental accountability, both of these strategic functions are required to synergize in creating new value that transcends mere profit-oriented objectives by integrating sustainability as a core dimension (Arifin & Darmawan, 2021). A cross-functional collaborative approach is therefore becoming increasingly relevant in the development of innovative products that not only comply with sustainability standards but also correspond to the evolving preferences of consumers.

Cross-functional collaboration between HRM and marketing constitutes a critical foundation for creating eco-friendly products that align with consumer aspirations. The HRM function cultivates adaptive human capital through green training systems, sustainability-based recruitment, and the creation of reward mechanisms emphasizing continuous innovation. Simultaneously, marketing serves as a strategic channel for translating market sensitivities into receptiveness toward greener products. Harmonization between these functions enables the development of products that satisfy not only technical environmental standards but also address the emotional and functional needs of consumers. Jabbour and Santos (2008) argue that green HRM, when integrated with green marketing strategies, strengthens organizational competitiveness. Within this framework, the success of green innovation emerges not solely from technical capacity but from the alignment between human resource capabilities and sustainability-oriented market insights.

Such cross-functional synergy fosters richer knowledge transfer within the organization. HRM teams facilitate continuous learning processes with an emphasis on environmental issues, while marketing provides inputs concerning the dynamics of shifting consumer preferences. The combination of these knowledge streams enables the product innovation process to be more responsive and adaptive.

According to Daily et al. (2011), green HRM practices integrated into organizational processes strengthen firms' innovation orientation. Similarly, Peattie and Crane (2005) assert that green marketing strategies are effective only if supported by human resources possessing the capacity and commitment to implement them. Hence, the development of green products is not merely technical in character, but is rooted in social interactions across functions that generate new strategic value.

The development of eco-friendly products also requires a nuanced understanding of increasingly fragmented consumer behavior. Marketing is responsible for capturing signals of preference shifts through market research, trend analysis, and mapping consumer values (Gautama & Mardikaningsih, 2022). Nevertheless, the realization of these analyses is contingent upon HRM's efforts in building a workforce sensitive to sustainability issues. Such collaboration empowers organizations to create products that are not only environmentally friendly, but also imbued with emotional and functional appeal. Ottman et al. (2006) note that consumers are inclined to accord higher preference to products combining green value with practical benefits. This underscores that the success of green products is born from a combination of internal human resource strengths and external market acuity. In this context, the proactive role of HRM in developing relevant training materials and nurturing an organizational culture conducive to sustainable innovation is crucial to ensure company-wide preparedness in facing continually changing market demands (Putra & Arifin, 2022). Moreover, a strong partnership between HRM and marketing generates opportunities to develop products that are not only market-responsive but also foster competitive advantage grounded in sustainability values. Integrating innovation processes into the corporate value chain may enhance responsiveness to green consumer segmentation and personalization, thereby broadening market reach. The implementation of cross-functional strategies also minimizes potential internal resistance to change, as every organizational division is actively involved from planning through execution of green products. Consequently, a holistic and collaborative approach between HRM and marketing forms a crucial basis for crafting environmentally friendly products that fulfill not only technical

standards, but also foster robust emotional connections with consumers.

In the process of green product innovation, inter-functional communication barriers often arise as significant challenges. HRM and marketing frequently maintain different focal points, necessitating intensive coordination to prevent strategic fragmentation. (Y.-S. Chen et al., 2006) contend that the success of green strategies requires cross-functional engagement to avoid perceptual gaps between internally and externally oriented teams. Such collaboration ensures a harmonized vision regarding sustainability values, as translated into product attributes (Ahmed & Ahmed, 2022). When this vision is collectively understood, the risk of product failure in the market can be mitigated. Thus, the synergy between HRM and marketing reduces the potential for strategic disharmony and fosters stronger cohesion in the introduction of eco-friendly products that achieve consumer acceptance.

The involvement of HRM in supporting green marketing strategies is also evident in the management of organizational culture (Kotkar & Bhadani, 2016). Green culture can only flourish when HRM instills collective values relating to the importance of sustainability among employees, which marketing then articulates through narratives that resonate with consumer aspirations. López-Gamero et al. (2010) found that pro-environmental organizational culture is positively correlated with the success of green strategies. The interplay between internal cultural reinforcement and the crafting of external narratives becomes a fundamental basis for the creation of eco-friendly products that hold social legitimacy in the eyes of consumers.

The linkage between HRM and marketing further manifests in consumer feedback-driven innovation. Marketing identifies emerging demands, while HRM directs internal teams to realign skills and processes accordingly. This dynamic accelerates the green innovation cycle and enhances the precision of innovation targeting. According to González-Benito and González-Benito (2006), organizations that integrate human resource management systems with market feedback demonstrate greater capacity in generating sustainable green innovation. This underlines the vital role of HRM in aligning employee competencies with the dynamics of green markets.

From a strategic perspective, cross-functional collaboration between HRM and marketing fosters sustainable competitive advantage. HRM lays the groundwork with human capital oriented toward green innovation, while marketing acts as a bridge connecting products with consumers. As Aragón-Correa and Sharma (2003) note, the efficacy of corporate sustainability strategies is profoundly shaped by the interaction between internal capabilities and external market pressures. Thus, cross-functional collaboration serves as a conduit for uniting internal strengths and external opportunities, facilitating the market acceptance of environmentally friendly products. Synergistic integration of employee competency development and market information management enables firms to construct adaptive responses to dynamic trends and consumer preferences. Incorporating market insights into HRM training and development processes strengthens organizational preparedness for increasingly complex sustainability demands. Structured collaboration further accelerates the internalization of green innovation values into corporate culture, encouraging all levels of the organization to proactively create sustainable business solutions. Additionally, a cross-functional approach enlarges the potential for the emergence of innovative ideas drawn from diverse perspectives, ultimately bolstering the firm's competitive position in the market. Within the context of global competition, such collaborative work patterns also provide a strategic foundation for building credible brand reputation and enhancing consumer loyalty toward eco-friendly products.

Digital transformation has increasingly reinforced the synergy between human resource management (HRM) and marketing. Digital technologies enable HRM to expand the reach of green training programs, while marketing leverages data analytics to identify consumption patterns of eco-friendly products. According to George et al. (2021), the utilization of digital technology accelerates organizational adaptation to sustainability trends. This demonstrates that the success of green product development is not solely the result of individual functions, but rather stems from cross-functional collaboration amplified by technological support.

The involvement of HRM in developing cross-functional skills also contributes to the creation of innovative teams capable of addressing

environmental challenges (Mardikaningsih & Wardoyo, 2024). Marketing, in turn, utilizes these skills to communicate sustainability values in forms that are relevant to consumers. As noted by Renwick et al. (2013), green HRM contributes to shaping a workforce that is more proactive in supporting sustainability strategies. Through cross-functional synergy, organizations are able to minimize internal resistance and enhance external legitimacy by offering more innovative green products.

Cross-functional collaboration further assists organizations in navigating reputational risks associated with green product marketing. When marketing strives to communicate sustainability values, HRM ensures that internal practices substantiate such messages. Delmas and Burbano (2011) assert that a failure to align external communications with internal practices may give rise to accusations of greenwashing. Therefore, cross-functional collaboration between HRM and marketing ensures that green product claims are validated by authentic practices within the organization.

Overall, cross-functional teamwork between HRM and marketing serves as a crucial catalyst for creating environmentally responsible products that align with consumer needs. This strength stems from combining the organization's internal capabilities in human resource management with an acute external market sensitivity. In the absence of such synergy, green strategies are deprived of both effective implementation and legitimacy in the eyes of consumers. Conversely, sound cross-functional coordination enables the organization to create products that possess environmental, functional, and symbolic value recognized by consumers. Thus, cross-functional collaboration not only produces greener products but also solidifies the company's strategic position in an increasingly competitive global market.

Barriers to Cross-Functional Collaboration in Realizing Eco-Friendly Products

The principal barrier to cross-functional collaboration between HRM and marketing in eco-friendly product development lies in the divergence of the departments' respective strategic objectives. HRM typically focuses on competence development, organizational culture, and talent management, whereas marketing emphasizes external orientations such as customer satisfaction and market competitiveness. These divergent priorities

often result in coordination gaps, leading collaborative efforts to become fragmented. Lawrence and Lorsch (2000) highlight that the misalignment of objectives between organizational functions constitutes a primary source of coordination conflict in innovation processes. In the context of environmentally friendly products, this gap may manifest as a disconnect between the sustainability values embedded in human resources and the commercial strategies offered to the market, thereby rendering collaboration suboptimal. This misalignment often leads to inconsistent messaging and lost opportunities, undermining consumer trust and reducing the effectiveness of otherwise well-designed green initiatives.

Another significant barrier is the limitation of effective inter-functional communication. HRM and marketing frequently operate with distinct terminologies, work styles, and performance indicators. Such organizational language differences often hinder the flow of information essential for green product development. According to Moenaert and Souder (2004), failure in cross-functional communication has a direct impact on the sluggishness of product innovation processes. If messages regarding market needs are not understood by HRM, or if green cultural values are not accurately translated into marketing strategies, the risk of product misalignment with consumer preferences escalates (Mardikaningsih, 2024). Hence, communication breakdowns constitute a critical issue in building effective synergy. This miscommunication may lead to resource wastage, weakened brand credibility, and ultimately reduced sales as consumers fail to see the real value of sustainability efforts.

Resource allocation constraints also persistently challenge collaboration efforts. The pursuit of environmentally friendly product development necessitates investment in training, market research, and product design innovation. However, HRM and marketing departments often vie for budgetary support from upper management. Dangelico and Pujari (2010) observe that inadequate resource allocation is a major impediment to sustainable product strategy development. Internal competition for resources weakens synergy and gives rise to conflicting priorities, making it difficult to execute green programs comprehensively. Furthermore, budget limitations may compromise the effectiveness of green training and workforce capacity development, which subsequently diminishes

the quality of eco-friendly innovation implementation. Frequently, constrained resource allocation leads to the neglect of essential market research required for understanding green consumer needs, even though such insights are pivotal to the effectiveness of sustainable marketing strategies (Chen, 2021).

Funding priority ambiguity creates an organizational climate that is less conducive to innovative breakthroughs, as every initiative must compete for managerial attention. Additionally, imbalanced resource allocation increases the risk of departmental fragmentation, cumulatively hampering the cross-functional integration necessary for sustainable product creation (Darmawan et al., 2020). Therefore, strategic commitment from top management is essential to formulate equitable and proportional resource allocation policies, ensuring that all departments receive optimal support to enable effective collaboration in developing eco-friendly products.

In addition, organizational cultural resistance constitutes a significant barrier. Cross-functional collaborative efforts frequently encounter obstacles due to rigid work patterns and short-term orientations. While HRM may endeavor to promote sustainable values, the absence of comprehensive support from organizational culture can lead to employee resistance. According to Harris and Crane (2002), cultural resistance is among the most substantial obstacles in the implementation of sustainability strategies. This resistance weakens cross-functional commitment, resulting in HRM and marketing collaboration failing to reach its full potential. The entrenched nature of existing norms and values often impedes the acceptance of new, sustainability-driven paradigms, thereby inhibiting organizational learning and adaptation. Such resistance is further exacerbated when employees perceive environmental initiatives as merely symbolic, rather than integral to the organization's core mission and practices.

Discrepancies between officially stated sustainability goals and actual everyday practices diminish credibility, fostering skepticism among staff regarding the authenticity of green initiatives. Moreover, the lack of leadership support in bridging cultural divides can reinforce silos, undermining efforts to create a unified approach towards

sustainability. Sustained transformation thus necessitates not only policy reform but also deliberate cultural change, with clear communication strategies, inclusive involvement at all organizational levels, and consistent reinforcement of environmentally responsible behaviors to foster genuine commitment to collaborative innovation.

The imbalance of power among departments also impacts the success of collaboration. Marketing is often perceived as more strategic given its direct connection to revenue generation, whereas HRM is commonly regarded as more administrative in function. This asymmetry fosters inequality in decision-making processes, ultimately weakening HRM's contribution to supporting green strategies. Pfeffer (2005) argues that power distribution within organizations significantly influences the extent of functional involvement in strategic decision-making. Within the context of eco-friendly products, such imbalance leads to an uneven collaborative process.

Another obstacle involves the limited green competence of the workforce. Many organizations still lack employees with a comprehensive understanding of sustainability concepts and their implementation within marketing strategies. Jackson et al. (2011) recognize that green workforce skills remain a critical issue in the execution of sustainable strategies. This limitation hampers HRM's ability to align training with the evolving demands of the green market.

External pressures from the market and stakeholders can also present barriers to collaboration. Marketing often prioritizes promptly responding to consumer trends, whereas HRM requires more time to cultivate internal culture and competencies. Porter and Kramer (2011) note that the imbalance between external demands and internal readiness can weaken sustainability strategies. Thus, external pressures complicate collaboration by producing disparities in the pace of adaptation across functions.

The absence of integrated performance indicators constitutes an additional barrier. HRM and marketing typically employ distinct evaluation systems, hindering the ability to measure collaborative success in the development of green products. According to Epstein and Buhovac (2014), fragmented performance measurement systems result in sustainability initiatives failing to generate

tangible outcomes. Without integrated indicators, cross-functional efforts encounter difficulty in gaining legitimacy from top management.

Barriers also arise from issues of interdepartmental trust. Collaboration necessitates confidence that each function will support shared objectives. However, a history of internal competition often gives rise to skepticism, which impedes synergy. Zaheer et al. (1998) assert that trust among functions is a key determinant of collaborative quality. In the context of eco-friendly products, a lack of trust may provoke minimal coordination, thereby constraining innovation.

Beyond internal factors, regulatory and external standards may also disrupt collaboration. Marketing is required to align products with green regulations, while HRM must ensure that employees possess the technical understanding necessary to comply with these regulations. Moreover, Testa and Iraldo (2010) found that environmental regulations frequently impose significant administrative burdens and necessitate cross-functional engagement. The regulatory barriers can decelerate collaboration and incite friction among departments. The increasing complexity of these regulatory requirements compels organizations to continuously update employee knowledge and skills to keep pace with dynamic policy environments (Mardikaningsih & Darmawan, 2021).

Furthermore, inconsistent interpretations of regulations across departments can lead to strategic misunderstandings, prolonging decision-making and implementation processes (Benevene et al., 2024). The imperative to comply with multiple international standards often necessitates adjustments in standard operating procedures, which may, in turn, constrain innovation flexibility and augment administrative burdens. Moreover, pressure to satisfy external environmental audits can add further strain to the already complex internal coordination (Wong et al., 2021). Consequently, a structured communication mechanism and cross-functional leadership systems are essential to bridge interpretative differences and effectively harmonize interdepartmental objectives. Strategies that align internal policies with external regulations are crucial to establishing productive and sustainable cross-functional collaboration.

Overall, cross-functional collaboration barriers between human resource management (HRM) and marketing in supporting the success of environmentally friendly products encompass issues related to communication, divergent objectives, cultural resistance, resource constraints, and external pressures. These barriers interact with one another, thereby amplifying the complexity of collaboration. In the absence of a comprehensive understanding of these obstacles, green strategies risk losing their driving force. Therefore, systematic identification of such barriers constitutes an essential initial step in comprehending the dynamics of cross-functional collaboration in the development of eco-friendly products aligned with the demands of modern consumers.

D. CONCLUSION

Cross-functional collaboration between HRM and marketing has proven to be a strategic mechanism capable of facilitating the development of environmentally friendly products that address consumer needs. Through established synergies, HRM can provide a foundation of green competencies, manage a sustainability-oriented work culture, and ensure that organizational incentives support green innovation. Conversely, marketing offers insights into consumer preferences and market trends, thereby enhancing the commercial competitiveness of green innovations. The dynamic interaction between these functions demonstrates that the success of eco-friendly products is not the result of efforts by a single department, but rather the outcome of structured cooperation.

Nevertheless, various tangible barriers continue to hinder the effectiveness of collaboration, including differences in strategic objectives, limitations in communication, resource allocation issues, organizational cultural resistance, and the pressures of external regulations and markets. This complexity indicates that cross-functional collaboration is not merely an exercise in administrative coordination, but instead demands a clear strategic foundation, interdepartmental openness, and sustained mutual trust.

The proposed recommendation is to strengthen organizational structures that position HRM and marketing as equals in strategic decision-making processes. Additionally, the

development of integrated performance indicators and comprehensive green training systems can further enhance collaborative capacities. Through such an approach, cross-functional collaboration may become a primary instrument for realizing sustainable innovation that not only meets consumer demands but also reinforces organizational commitment to global environmental sustainability.

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