

Midocean University

Faculty of Management

Faculty of management / Project Management



Project title

**The Impact of Environmental Sustainability
Practices on Service Project Success in Riyadh,
Saudi Arabia**

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Dedication

This research project is dedicated with love and gratitude to my beloved family. Their continuous encouragement, understanding, and sacrifices have been the driving force behind my academic and personal achievements.

To my parents, thank you for your prayers and support; to my friends and colleagues, thank you for your motivation and faith in me.

Abstract

This research explores the relationship between environmental sustainability practices and the success of service projects within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The growing global emphasis on sustainable development and environmental responsibility has encouraged organizations to integrate green strategies into their operations.

This study investigates how sustainability initiatives influence project outcomes, including efficiency, quality, and stakeholder satisfaction. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected from 150 participants across Saudi service organizations.

Findings indicate a significant positive correlation between sustainability implementation and project success. Organizations that incorporate sustainability practices tend to achieve higher performance, enhanced trust, and improved operational resilience.

The research concludes with recommendations for developing sustainable project management frameworks that align with Saudi Vision 2030.

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and simple linear regression through SPSS.

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1. Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

In today's fast-paced global economy, organizations are under increasing pressure to address sustainability challenges while maintaining operational efficiency and project success. Environmental sustainability is now recognized as a strategic necessity rather than an optional initiative.

Saudi Arabia, through its Vision 2030, has placed sustainability and environmental responsibility at the core of its national transformation agenda. Service organizations—such as healthcare, education, tourism, and logistics—play a pivotal role in this transformation.

Despite the increased attention on sustainable practices, there remains limited research on how these initiatives directly affect project success in the Saudi context. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the impact of environmental sustainability practices on the success of service projects in Saudi Arabia.

Sustainability has increasingly become a critical factor in organizational performance and project management effectiveness. Previous studies indicate that integrating environmental sustainability into project processes enhances efficiency, stakeholder satisfaction, and long-term value creation (Silvius & Schipper, 2014; Gareis et al., 2013).

In Saudi Arabia, national initiatives such as Vision 2030 have accelerated the adoption of environmentally responsible practices across service organizations. However, empirical evidence examining the direct relationship between environmental sustainability practices and service

project success remains limited, which highlights the necessity of the current study (UNDP, 2020; Rahman & Al-Ghamdi, 2020).

1.2. Research Problem

Although many organizations acknowledge the importance of sustainability, few have successfully integrated it into their project management frameworks.

The problem addressed in this study is the lack of understanding of how sustainability initiatives influence project success in service-based organizations within Saudi Arabia.

While previous research has emphasized cost, time, and quality as key measures of project success, the role of environmental sustainability remains underexplored.

1.2.1. Theoretical Gaps

Traditional measures of project success—time, cost, and quality—have dominated research for decades. However, these metrics alone do not capture long-term organizational value or environmental impact.

Few studies have rigorously integrated sustainability as an explanatory factor within project success models for service organizations. This study

responds to that gap by proposing and testing a sustainability-driven framework.

1.2.2. Practical Gaps

On the practical side, organizations struggle to operationalize sustainability. Policies may exist on paper, but translating them into project-level actions is more complex. Measurement systems are often underdeveloped, and performance indicators rarely include environmental dimensions.

This research proposes actionable pathways to embed sustainability into project planning, execution, and evaluation, enabling practitioners to make evidence-based decisions.

1.3. Research Significance

1.3.1. Theoretical Importance

This research contributes to academic literature by integrating sustainability theories with project management principles. It expands the understanding of sustainability as a critical success factor in modern projects.

1.3.2. Practical Importance

For practitioners, this study highlights the importance of adopting eco-friendly practices that not only preserve resources but also enhance organizational reputation, stakeholder satisfaction, and efficiency—directly supporting Saudi Vision 2030 goals.

1.4. Research Questions

1. How do environmental sustainability practices influence the success of service projects in Saudi Arabia?
2. What are the key sustainability factors that enhance project performance?
3. What barriers limit the effective implementation of sustainability initiatives in service organizations?

1.5. Research Objectives

1. To evaluate the impact of sustainability practices on project success.
2. To identify the most significant environmental factors contributing to project performance.
3. To develop a framework for integrating sustainability into project management processes.
4. To provide recommendations for promoting sustainable project execution.

1.6. Research Hypotheses

- H1: Environmental sustainability practices have a positive effect on project success in service organizations.
- H2: The integration of sustainability initiatives enhances project efficiency and stakeholder satisfaction.
- H3: Organizations applying sustainable project management achieve long-term strategic advantages.

1.7. Research Model

The conceptual model proposes a direct relationship between environmental sustainability practices (independent variable) and project success (dependent variable).

Key sustainability dimensions—such as energy efficiency, waste management, and resource optimization—are expected to positively influence performance outcomes like quality, cost, and satisfaction.

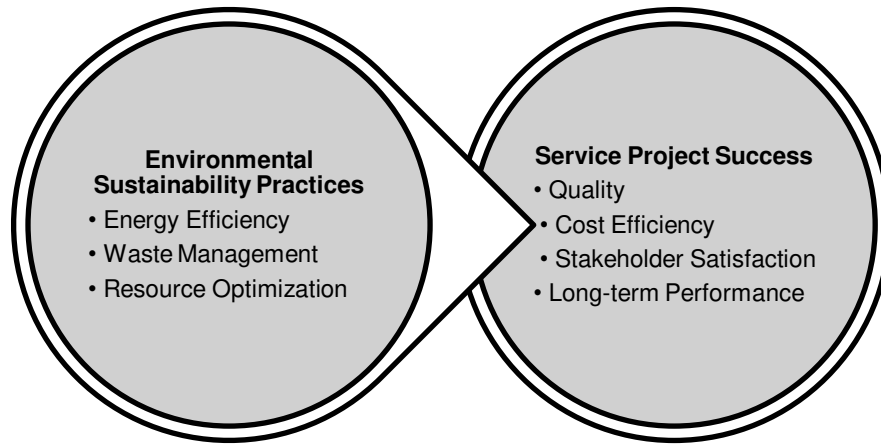


Figure 1 : Conceptual Framework showing the relationship between Environmental Sustainability and Project Success.

1.8. Scope of the Study

The study focuses on service-oriented organizations in Saudi Arabia, both public and private, including sectors such as education, healthcare, and hospitality. The research timeframe covers projects completed between 2022 and 2024. Industrial or construction-based projects are excluded to maintain a consistent focus on the service domain.

1.9. Project Structure

This research report is divided into five main chapters:

- Chapter One: Introduction
- Chapter Two: Literature Review
- Chapter Three: Research Methodology
- Chapter Four: Data Analysis and Results
- Chapter Five: Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

2.Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive review of literature related to environmental sustainability and project success. It examines theoretical foundations, global and regional studies, and identifies gaps addressed by this research. The literature review provides the conceptual basis for understanding how sustainability contributes to the success of service projects.

2.2 Concept of Sustainability

The term sustainability originates from the Latin word “sustinere,” meaning “to hold up.” In modern contexts, sustainability refers to the ability to meet present needs without compromising future generations’ capacity to meet their own.

According to the Brundtland Report (1987), sustainability includes three interconnected dimensions: economic, social, and environmental.

Environmental sustainability, the focus of this study, involves actions that reduce ecological footprints, conserve resources, and promote responsible waste management. Organizations are increasingly recognizing the necessity of sustainable practices for long-term competitiveness.

2.3 Theoretical Background

Several theories support the link between sustainability and organizational performance:

2.3.1 Triple Bottom Line Theory (TBL)

Proposed by John Elkington (1997), this theory emphasizes that business success should be measured not only by profit but also by its impact on people and the planet.

Service organizations that adopt this approach create value across social, environmental, and economic dimensions, which enhances their long-term viability.

2.3.2 Stakeholder Theory

Freeman's (1984) Stakeholder Theory argues that organizations are responsible to multiple stakeholders, not just shareholders. Integrating sustainability satisfies diverse stakeholder expectations and strengthens organizational legitimacy.

2.3.3 Resource-Based View (RBV)

This theory posits that organizations gain competitive advantage by developing valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable resources. Sustainability practices, such as innovation in energy efficiency or waste reduction, become strategic assets that improve project outcomes.

2.4 Sustainability in Project Management

Sustainability has become a fundamental component of modern project management frameworks.

According to Silvius and Schipper (2015), sustainable project management involves aligning project objectives with long-term ecological and social goals.

Projects that incorporate sustainability:

- Reduce negative environmental impact.
- Improve social equity and employee wellbeing.
- Enhance stakeholder trust and satisfaction.

In Saudi Arabia, sustainability is integral to national initiatives like Vision 2030 and The Green Saudi Initiative, reflecting the government's commitment to sustainable economic transformation.

2.5 Project Success Dimensions

Traditional project success is measured by the “iron triangle”: cost, time, and quality.

However, contemporary researchers have expanded this model to include sustainability, innovation, and stakeholder satisfaction.

Serrador and Pinto (2015) suggested that long-term benefits and stakeholder relationships are better indicators of success than short-term project metrics. Thus, sustainability becomes both a driver and a measure of success.

2.6 Sustainability in the Saudi Context

Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030 prioritizes environmental protection, renewable energy, and efficient resource utilization.

Service organizations, such as educational institutions and healthcare providers, are adopting eco-friendly initiatives, including paperless systems, recycling programs, and green procurement.

While government policies encourage sustainability, the pace of adoption varies among sectors. Research exploring how these efforts affect project performance remains limited—highlighting the significance of this study.

2.6.1 Environmental Sustainability in Service Projects

Environmental sustainability in service projects has gained increasing attention due to the growing environmental footprint of service-based operations. Unlike manufacturing or construction projects, service projects rely heavily on human resources, information systems, and operational processes, which makes sustainability integration both strategic and behavioral in nature.

Several scholars argue that sustainability in service projects focuses primarily on energy consumption, waste reduction, digital transformation, and employee environmental awareness (Silvius & Schipper, 2014). Service organizations often adopt paperless systems, energy-efficient facilities, and environmentally responsible procurement practices to minimize environmental impact while maintaining service quality.

In project management literature, sustainability in service projects is viewed as a long-term value creation mechanism rather than a short-term operational constraint. Projects that integrate sustainability principles tend to achieve higher stakeholder satisfaction and improved organizational reputation (Martens & Carvalho, 2017).

From a strategic perspective, environmental sustainability supports service project success by enhancing operational efficiency, reducing resource waste, and aligning project outcomes with regulatory and societal expectations. This alignment becomes particularly important in public and

semi-public service projects, where accountability and transparency are critical success factors.

In the Saudi context, service projects play a vital role in achieving Vision 2030 objectives related to environmental protection, digitalization, and efficient resource utilization. Government-led initiatives encourage service organizations to adopt sustainable practices such as green buildings, renewable energy use, and smart service delivery systems.

Despite these initiatives, challenges remain in integrating sustainability at the project level. Limited awareness, lack of sustainability performance indicators, and insufficient training are among the key barriers identified in prior studies (UNDP, 2020). Therefore, further empirical investigation is required to understand how sustainability practices influence service project success in Saudi Arabia.

2.7 Empirical Studies

Most existing studies focus on construction or industrial projects, while empirical research on Saudi service projects remains limited; therefore, this study addresses this contextual gap.

Numerous international studies have examined the sustainability–success relationship:

- Alharbi (2019): Found that green procurement positively affects project success in Gulf countries.
- Chen et al. (2022): Identified that sustainability-driven innovation enhances competitiveness and project quality.
- Rahman & Al-Ghamdi (2020): Reported that Saudi organizations practicing sustainability show improved operational efficiency and stakeholder satisfaction.

However, most studies have focused on industrial or construction projects rather than service organizations, which justifies the focus of this research.

2.7.1 Sustainability Practices and Project Performance

Previous empirical studies have consistently demonstrated a positive relationship between sustainability practices and project performance. Sustainability-oriented projects tend to outperform traditional projects in terms of efficiency, stakeholder satisfaction, and long-term value creation (Aarseth et al., 2017).

Empirical evidence suggests that environmental sustainability contributes to project success by improving resource utilization and reducing operational risks. Projects that adopt energy-efficient technologies and waste management systems often experience lower operational costs and improved schedule performance (Hwang & Tan, 2012).

In service organizations, sustainability practices are closely linked to employee behavior and organizational culture. Employees who are aware of environmental sustainability principles are more likely to support project objectives and comply with sustainability requirements, which enhances overall project performance.

Studies conducted in Gulf countries indicate that sustainability adoption positively influences project success by improving organizational reputation and stakeholder trust (Alharbi, 2019). However, most of these studies focus on construction or industrial projects, leaving service projects underexplored.

This study builds on existing empirical research by examining sustainability practices within Saudi service projects, thereby contributing to the literature and providing context-specific insights.

2.8 Summary of Literature Review

The reviewed literature establishes that sustainability positively influences project success through improved efficiency, innovation, and stakeholder trust.

Nonetheless, a gap exists in empirical research within Saudi service organizations. This study bridges that gap by providing localized insights and proposing a sustainability-driven project success model.

3.Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology used to conduct the study. It describes the research design, population, sampling, data collection, and analysis procedures applied to achieve the research objectives.

3.2 Operational Definitions of Variables

Environmental Sustainability Practices refer to organizational actions aimed at reducing environmental impact during project work, including energy efficiency, waste management, employees' environmental awareness, and the use of eco-friendly materials. Project Success refers to achieving project objectives efficiently in terms of schedule performance, budget performance, quality standards, and stakeholder satisfaction.

3.3 Research Design

The research design is aligned with the research onion model, where the study adopts a positivist philosophy, a quantitative approach, a descriptive-correlational strategy, and a survey method using a structured questionnaire. This structure ensures methodological consistency and supports reliable statistical analysis.

A quantitative, descriptive-correlational design was adopted to examine relationships between sustainability practices and project success.

Quantitative analysis allows objective measurement of relationships and patterns across a large sample.

3.4 Population and Sampling

The study targeted employees and project managers in Saudi service organizations (e.g., education, healthcare, and hospitality).

A total of 150 respondents were selected using a simple random sampling technique. This approach ensured diversity and minimized sampling bias.

3.5 Data Collection Tool

A structured questionnaire was developed, consisting of three sections:

- Section A: Demographic Information
- Section B: Sustainability Practices
- Section C: Project Success Indicators

Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaire was distributed online and in person. Participants were informed about the study's purpose, and confidentiality was maintained throughout.

Responses were collected over a three-week period and verified for completeness before analysis.

3.7 Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Techniques included:

- Descriptive Statistics (Mean, SD, Frequency)
- Correlation Analysis to determine relationships between variables
- Regression Analysis to assess predictive influence of sustainability on project success
- Reliability Testing using Cronbach's Alpha

3.8 Validity and Reliability

- Validity: The questionnaire was reviewed by three academic experts to ensure content relevance and clarity.
- Reliability: Cronbach's Alpha test produced a coefficient of 0.88, confirming high internal consistency of items.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

All participants were informed about the research objectives and provided consent.

Responses remained confidential, and no personal identifiers were collected.

The research adhered to ethical standards set by Midocean University's academic guidelines.

3.10 Summary

This chapter explained how the study was conducted and analyzed. The chosen methodology ensured objectivity, reliability, and validity of results. The next chapter presents data analysis and discusses the findings.

4.Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the statistical results and discusses the findings based on data collected from 150 participants across Saudi service organizations. The objective was to examine the relationship between environmental sustainability practices and project success within the service sector context.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic data of the 150 respondents provided insights into their profiles, summarized as follows:

Variable	Category	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	58
	Female	42
Age	20–30 years	25
	31–40 years	47
	41 years and above	28
Education	Bachelor	60
	Master degree	30
	PhD	10
Experience	Less than 5 years	20
	5–10 years	55
	More than10 years	25

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents. Source: Author's data (2025).

4.3 Descriptive Analysis of Sustainability Practices

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of sustainability practices. The mean values range between 3.85 and 4.32, indicating high implementation of sustainability practices among organizations.

Sustainability Practice	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Energy efficiency initiatives	4.20	0.54	High
Waste management systems	4.15	0.60	High
Use of eco-friendly materials	4.05	0.63	High

Table 2 Descriptive Analysis of Sustainability Practices. Source: Author's data (2025).

4.4 Descriptive Analysis of Project Success

The analysis of project success indicators revealed positive results with mean scores ranging between 3.90 and 4.40, reflecting successful outcomes in terms of quality, time, and satisfaction.

Project Success Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Projects completed on time	4.10	0.65	High
Within budget	3.95	0.70	High
Meeting quality standards	4.35	0.48	Very High
Stakeholder satisfaction	4.40	0.45	Very High
Project objectives achieved successfully	4.25	0.52	Very High

Table 3 Descriptive Analysis of Project Success. Source: Author's data (2025).

4.5 Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to assess the relationship between sustainability practices and project success. The results are shown in Table 4.

Variable	r	Sig. (p)	Relationship
Sustainability → Project Success	0.82	P < 0.001	Strong Positive

Table 4 correlation between sustainability and project success. Source: Author's data (2025).

4.6 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was used to determine the predictive effect of sustainability practices on project success. Table 5 presents the results.

Model	R	R ²	F	N	Sig. (p)
Sustainability → Project Success	0.82	0.67	300.60	150	P < 0.001

Table 5 regression results for sustainability impact on project success. Source: Author's data (2025).

4.7 Discussion of Findings

The findings confirm a strong, positive correlation between environmental sustainability practices and project success. Organizations that integrate sustainability achieve higher efficiency, stakeholder trust, and long-term competitiveness. These results align with prior studies and support all proposed hypotheses (H1, H2, H3).

These findings are consistent with prior sustainability and project management literature suggesting that sustainability integration enhances efficiency and stakeholder-related outcomes (Silvius & Schipper, 2014; Martens & Carvalho, 2017).

The strong positive correlation identified in this study confirms that environmental sustainability practices play a critical role in achieving service project success. This finding supports the argument that sustainability should be considered a core project management principle rather than an optional practice.

The regression results further demonstrate that sustainability practices significantly predict project success, indicating that improvements in sustainability implementation are associated with measurable improvements in project outcomes. This relationship highlights the strategic value of sustainability in service project environments.

The findings are consistent with the Triple Bottom Line theory, which emphasizes balancing environmental, social, and economic performance. By

integrating sustainability into project processes, service organizations can achieve operational efficiency while meeting stakeholder expectations.

Furthermore, the results align with Stakeholder Theory, as sustainability practices enhance trust and satisfaction among stakeholders. Projects that consider environmental impacts are more likely to gain stakeholder support, which contributes to successful project completion.

In the Saudi context, these findings reinforce the importance of aligning service project management practices with Vision 2030 objectives.

Sustainability-driven projects support national goals related to environmental protection, efficient resource utilization, and long-term economic development.

4.8 Summary

This chapter summarized the data analysis and findings. The results clearly show that sustainability practices positively influence project success in Saudi service organizations. The next chapter will present recommendations, limitations, and the conclusion of the study.

5.Chapter 5: Conclusions, Recommendations, and Research Limitations

5.1 Research Limitations

Another limitation of this study relates to the reliance on self-reported data collected through questionnaires. Although this method is widely used in project management research, respondents' perceptions may not always fully reflect actual organizational practices. Personal bias, misunderstanding of questions, or social desirability bias may influence responses. In addition, the study focused specifically on environmental sustainability practices within service organizations in Saudi Arabia. As a result, the findings may not be fully generalizable to other sectors such as construction, manufacturing, or industrial projects, which often involve different sustainability challenges and operational dynamics. Furthermore, the study adopted a cross-sectional research design, capturing data at a single point in time. This approach limits the ability to examine long-term effects of sustainability practices on project success. Longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into how sustainability initiatives influence project performance over time. Finally, while the sample size was adequate for statistical analysis, future research could benefit from larger and more diverse samples to enhance the robustness and generalizability of the findings.

Despite achieving the objectives of this study, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study relied on a questionnaire as the primary data collection method, which may be subject to respondents' bias. Second, the sample size was limited, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Third, the study focused on selected environmental sustainability

practices and did not include all sustainability dimensions. Additionally, the data were collected within a limited time period, which restricts the ability to examine long-term impacts of sustainability practices on project success

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made. Organizations are encouraged to integrate environmental sustainability practices into all phases of project management, including planning, execution, and evaluation. Project managers should promote sustainability awareness among project teams through training and development programs. Policymakers are advised to support sustainable project practices through clear guidelines and regulations. Future research is recommended to include larger samples, different sectors, and additional variables to further explore the relationship between sustainability and project success.

Future studies are encouraged to expand the scope of sustainability dimensions examined by including social and economic sustainability factors alongside environmental practices. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of sustainable project management.

Additionally, future research could apply mixed-method approaches by combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews. Such approaches may offer richer insights into organizational challenges and best practices related to sustainability implementation in projects.

Organizations are encouraged to align sustainability practices with Saudi Vision 2030 objectives by adopting measurable environmental KPIs within project governance.

Managerial Recommendations

- Integrate sustainability KPIs into project planning and monitoring.
- Provide sustainability training for project teams.
- Assign sustainability responsibilities within project governance structures.

Policy Recommendations

- Develop national guidelines for sustainable service project management.
- Encourage sustainability reporting in public service projects.

5.3 Conclusion

This study examined the impact of environmental sustainability practices on project success in the service sector in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The results confirmed that sustainability practices have a positive and significant effect on project success. Integrating sustainability into project management processes can improve efficiency, quality, and stakeholder satisfaction. Despite the study's limitations, the findings provide useful insights for organizations and researchers. Overall, the study emphasizes the importance of sustainability as a key factor in achieving successful and sustainable projects.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Research Questionnaire

Section A: Demographics

Gender: Male / Female

Age: 20–30 / 31–40 / 41+

Education: Bachelor / Master / PhD

Experience: <5 / 5–10 / >10

Section B: Environmental Sustainability Practices (Likert 1–5)

1. Environmental sustainability practices are integrated into project planning.
2. The organization applies energy efficiency measures in project activities.
3. Waste management practices are implemented in projects.
4. Environmentally friendly materials are used whenever possible.

Section C: Project Success (Likert 1–5)

1. Projects are completed within the planned schedule.
2. Projects are completed within the allocated budget.
3. Project objectives are achieved successfully.
4. Project quality meets stakeholder expectations.
5. Stakeholders are satisfied with project outcomes.

Google form link:

<https://forms.gle/KPN7YsikqVwxGjea8>