

Impact of Environmental, Social and Governance Framework Implementation on Business Performance in Hospitals: A Comprehensive Analysis

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Abstract

The value of employing Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) frameworks is now more widely understood to be essential for driving better business performance and sustainability in healthcare. The purpose of this study is to use the large-scale survey data and comprehensive surveys conducted in an overview article on previous evaluative researches about hospital performance based ESG principles. These key statements were developed in view of the perceived ESG influence on staff's attitude as agree or disagree. The results show a positive association, but there are still challenges in executing the program.

Keywords: Business Performance, ESG, Hospitals, Sustainability

JEL classification: I15

Paper type: Research article

Received: 10 April 2025

Accepted: 9 June 2025

DOI: 10.54820/entrenova-2025-0049

Citation: Marković, B., & Žigo, R.I. (2025). Impact of environmental, social and governance framework implementation on business performance in hospitals: a comprehensive analysis. ENTRENOVA - ENTERprise REsearch InNOVation, 11(1), <https://doi.org/10.54820/entrenova-2025-0049>.

Acknowledgements: The publishing of this paper is financially supported by University North, Croatia.

Introduction

Economic and financial sectors have increasingly added 'Income' to the three-lettered more popular framework called ESG (Environmental, Social & Governance) in recent times. ESG criteria are a set of standards for a company's operations that socially conscious investors use to screen potential investments. Investors and other stakeholders use these criteria to evaluate how well a company manages risks and opportunities associated with environmental, social, and governance [6]

Environmental component pertains to how well a company treats the natural environment. Investors examining a company's energy efficiency, waste management, pollution control and abatement technology; conservation considerations or climate change impacts. Firms with more sustainable environmental strategies may be better equipped to respond efficiently to future operational and strategic changes resulting from changing regulatory environments or resource constraints, ensuring they will be here 10 years from now.

On the social side, ESG examines a company's employee & human capital management, its supply chain practices, interactions with customers, and its engagement with the communities in which it operates. Type of labour practices, human rights issues, health and safety standards community engagement diversity Companies that emphasized sustainability and impact performance tend to be seen as better employers, partners (leading to higher loyalty from customers), and eventually - a good citizen of the global economy.

Governance focuses on the things like a company's leadership, executive pay, audits (an inspection process used to check fraud), internal controls and shareholder rights. This is responsible and clean good corporate governance in its operations. Upholding high governance standards is a vital way for companies to establish credibility with investors, regulators and customers while reducing the risks associated with corporate wrongdoing or mismanagement.

Importance of ESG in modern economics

The incorporation of ESG factors in economic activities is evidence of a broader move toward more responsible and sustainable business practices. Investors are increasingly seeing that these types of companies with strong ESG principles, also have wanted to be looked managed better navigate in trouble waters and believe them more attractive long term. Accordingly, ESG factors are driving investment strategies and corporate policies as well as regulatory settings.

ESG framework enables a broad perspective to assess the long-term sustainability and ethical impact of a company. Adopting ESG principles therefore not only mitigates risks and enhances long-term performance for businesses, but also results in beneficial consequences to society and the environment. As the world and its economies experience growing turbulence, it is more important than ever that we ensure our society remains truly sustainable in every sense of the word by evaluating and elevating ESG considerations.

Goal

The goal of this study is to explore the effect of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) frameworks on the business performance of hospitals.

Research Proposition

We propose that the integration of ESG principles positively influences hospital performance indicators such as patient satisfaction, operational efficiency, and financial outcomes.

Method of Research

The method of systematic collection of relevant literature and its analysis is used in the theoretical part of the paper. In the practical part a structured survey with a Likert scale assessment was administered to diverse hospital employees. Demographic data, including gender, education level, and job type (doctor, nurse, non-medical staff), were collected to analyse the results.

Literature Review

Below is an overview of relevant sources related to the topic.

Here's a simplified overview of the literature on ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) practices in healthcare:

- Sustainable Healthcare: Smith & Green (2023) highlight the benefits of sustainability in healthcare institutions.
- Management Integration: Johnson (2019) discusses governance principles that enhance hospital performance.
- Environmental Policies: Brown & Taylor (2018) focus on strategies for environmental management in hospitals.
- Social Responsibility: Ricci (2017) examines how social responsibility influences patient care and satisfaction.
- Financial Performance: Morris (2016) correlates ESG practices with improved financial outcomes for hospitals.
- Governance Compliance: Davis (2015) emphasizes governance frameworks for compliance and ethical operations.
- Health Equity: Hall (2019) connects social equity in healthcare with better patient outcomes.
- Performance Metrics: Nguyen (2023) measures the impact of ESG policies on hospital performance.
- Strategic Alignment: Gomez (2017) explores the alignment of business strategy with ESG goals.
- Risk Management: O'Connor (2020) looks at risk mitigation through ESG practices.
- Integration Impacts: Smith & Green (2023) find that integrating ESG frameworks leads to greater sustainability and operational efficiency.
- Financial Outcomes: Brown & Lopez (2023) observe improved financial performance linked to strong ESG commitments.
- Reputation and Satisfaction: Chen et al. (2022) identify enhancements in reputation and patient satisfaction through ESG implementation.
- Workforce Management: Williams & Garcia (2023) discuss the social impacts of ESG on workforce productivity and morale.
- Regulatory Analysis: Evans & Rodriguez (2023) show how environmental regulations influence hospital performance.
- Transparency and Trust: Miller & Chen (2023) emphasize that ESG reporting boosts stakeholder trust and financial performance.
- Strategic Future: Nguyen & Jackson (2018) highlight ESG's role in future-proofing healthcare institutions.
- This summary captures key themes and findings from the literature, aiding understanding of the importance of ESG in the healthcare sector.

Research and Methodology

The survey took place in February 2024 it was conducted by five general hospitals and two clinical hospital centers. Of the 200 participants, in terms of sex distribution, women accounted for a total of 120, and men were only about just as many, around one hundred. In terms of the level in education structure, 10% were graduates from high school, a university degree was held by half of the respondents, while another third held even higher attainment - a doctoral title. The respondents were divided into the percentage distribution of doctors (30%), nurses (40%), and non-medical staff including social workers, hygiene inspectors, etc.

Survey Statements

The survey consisted of 10 statements. Respondents were asked to answer to what extent they agree/disagree with the statements (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree).

1. Implementing ESG practices improves patient satisfaction.
2. ESG frameworks enhance operational efficiency.
3. Environmental policies in hospitals reduce costs.
4. Social responsibility initiatives improve employee morale.
5. Strong governance reduces operational risks.
6. ESG practices attract better talent in the healthcare sector.
7. Hospitals with ESG frameworks better manage patient health outcomes.
8. Environmental sustainability in hospitals fosters community trust.
9. Social equity initiatives increase patient loyalty.
10. Governance principles enhance transparency and accountability.

Results

Research results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Results of research

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Patient Satisfaction	2%	5%	10%	40%	43%
Operational Efficiency	3%	7%	15%	35%	40%
Reduces Costs	5%	10%	20%	30%	35%
Employee Morale	1%	5%	10%	45%	39%
Reduces Risks	4%	6%	15%	40%	35%
Attracts Talent	2%	8%	15%	40%	35%
Manages Outcomes	3%	5%	15%	42%	35%
Community Trust	2%	6%	18%	40%	34%
Patient Loyalty	3%	7%	20%	40%	35%
Transparency	1%	5%	14%	45%	35%

Source: Authors' work

For each statement from the results, the mean value and standard deviation were calculated and are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Results of research

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
Patient Satisfaction	4,17	0,94
Operational Efficiency	4,10	0,91
Reduces Costs	3,55	1,02
Employee Morale	4,07	0,88
Reduces Risks	4,00	0,88
Attracts Talent	3,85	0,93
Manages Outcomes	4,02	0,82
Community Trust	3,82	0,95
Patient Loyalty	3,75	0,92
Transparency	4,10	0,91

Source: Authors' work

Analysis of distribution and variance

The descriptive results indicate an overall positive assessment across the examined statements, while a non-negligible share of neutral responses suggests that a subset of respondents may be uncertain or insufficiently informed about certain areas. Patient satisfaction shows high agreement, with only a small minority expressing disagreement. Perceived operational efficiency is predominantly positive; however, the comparatively high proportion of neutral answers implies that some respondents are not fully confident in evaluating this claim.

Cost reduction records the lowest level of agreement among all statements. The notable share of neutral responses (around one fifth) may reflect reservations about the effectiveness or visibility of cost-saving effects. In contrast, employee morale is evaluated very favorably, with high agreement suggesting a positive work climate and enjoyment of work. Risk reduction follows a pattern similar to operational efficiency: most respondents agree, yet a moderate neutral segment remains.

The ability to attract talent receives a moderately dispersed response distribution, though the prevailing direction is positive. Managing outcomes is also assessed positively, accompanied by a visible, but not dominant, neutral group. Community trust is rated at a solid level; nevertheless, a proportion of neutral responses indicates that trust may not be uniformly experienced or sufficiently salient to all respondents. Patient loyalty is perceived to increase, but the presence of neutrality points to potential room for strengthening loyalty-related effects. Finally, transparency is endorsed at a high level, underscoring its perceived importance, while the remaining neutral responses again suggest some uncertainty or variability in how transparency is recognized or enacted in practice.

General conclusion about the distribution of answers

The responses to the statements were collected using a Likert-type scale. As shown in Table 1, respondents expressed a predominantly positive assessment of the implementation of the environmental, social, and governance approach and its perceived effects on hospital business performance. In more than half of the cases, responses fall within the "Agree" and "Strongly agree" categories, with aggregated agreement levels typically ranging from approximately 70% to 83%. This pattern is consistent with the mean scores, which cluster around the value 4, indicating overall agreement with the statements. The standard deviations suggest an acceptable

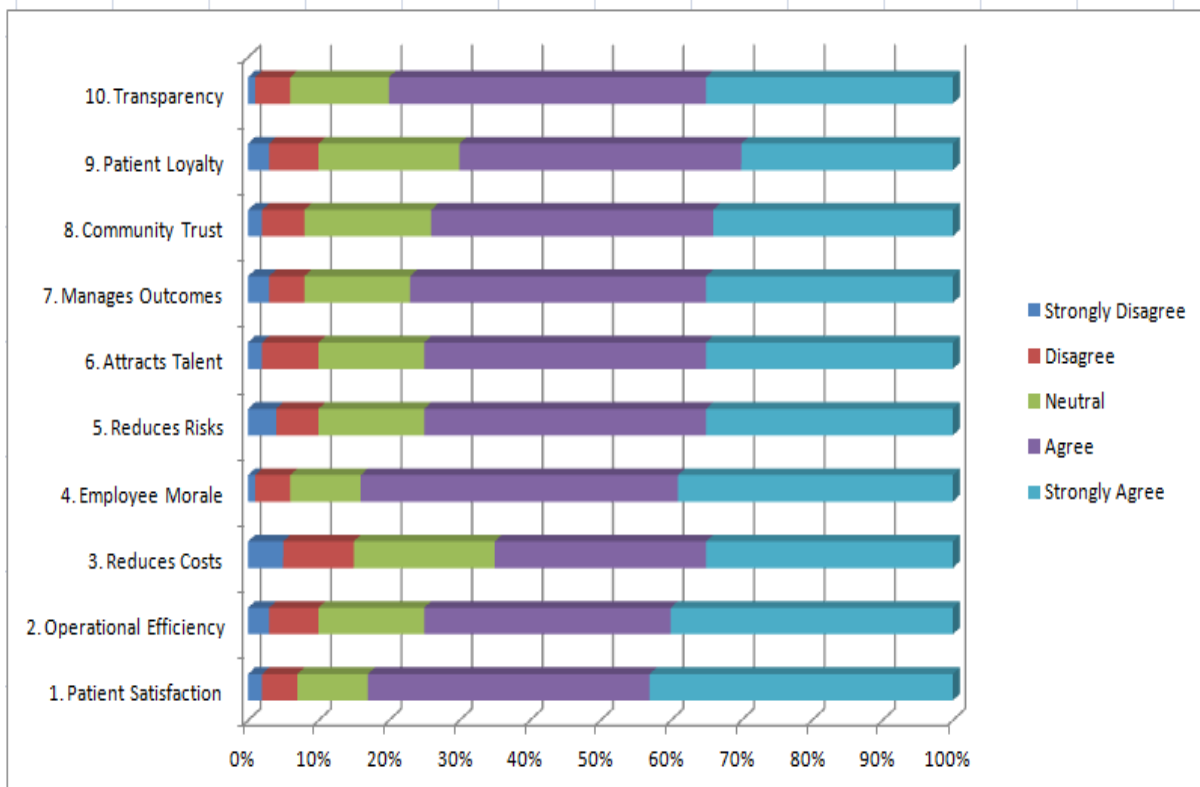
dispersion of responses, implying that while perceptions are generally favorable, they are not fully homogeneous across respondents.

Despite the overall positive profile, neutral responses are present to a meaningful extent for several items, most notably those referring to operational efficiency and cost reduction. This concentration of neutral answers may indicate respondent uncertainty, limited visibility of performance effects, or insufficient information to form a definitive judgment. In substantive terms, the item related to cost reduction represents the clearest deviation from the otherwise positive pattern: it yields the lowest mean and the weakest agreement, suggesting that respondents are less convinced that the environmental, social, and governance approach translates into tangible cost efficiency gains.

Items with the highest mean values (approximately 4.1) relate to patient satisfaction and trust, pointing to particularly strong perceived benefits in patient-facing outcomes and broader stakeholder confidence. Employee morale also scores highly, which is consistent with the interpretation of a supportive internal climate and positive workplace dynamics. Overall, most statements exceed a mean value of 3.5, reinforcing the conclusion of broadly positive sentiment toward the surveyed dimensions, while simultaneously highlighting cost-related outcomes as a potential area for improvement.

Figure 1. visually presents the survey results, which also indicate a positive effect of the ESG approach on the hospital's business performance.

Figure 1
Graphic presentation of research results



Source: Authors' illustration

Survey results by gender

Gender differences in survey responses were examined for ten statements using independent-samples t-tests. The items captured perceptions of key outcomes associated with the hospital's approach and were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Weighted mean scores were first calculated separately for female and male respondents for each statement, after which t-tests were applied to assess whether the observed mean differences between the two gender groups were statistically meaningful.

The descriptive results indicate a high degree of convergence in perceptions across genders. Mean values were identical for several statements: Operational Efficiency (female M = 3.67; male M = 3.67), Employee Morale (female M = 3.67; male M = 3.67), Manages Outcomes (female M = 3.67; male M = 3.67), Community Trust (female M = 3.67; male M = 3.67), Patient Loyalty (female M = 3.67; male M = 3.67), and Transparency (female M = 3.67; male M = 3.67). For Reduces Costs, the difference was small (female M = 3.67; male M = 3.60), while for Attracts Talent the mean was slightly higher among male respondents (female M = 3.67; male M = 3.73). The statements showing the most visible descriptive differences were Patient Satisfaction (female M = 3.57; male M = 3.67) and Reduces Risks (female M = 3.36; male M = 3.67).

Consistent with these descriptive patterns, the t-test results showed that for most statements the near-identical means produced t-values close to zero, indicating minimal gender-related variation in responses. The largest departures from zero were observed for Patient Satisfaction ($t = -0.707$) and Attracts Talent ($t = -0.424$), both reflecting small differences. The most pronounced difference occurred for Reduces Risks ($t = -2.191$), suggesting that male respondents evaluated this dimension more positively than female respondents in this sample. Overall, the findings indicate largely comparable perceptions across genders for the majority of statements, with only one item (Reduces Risks) exhibiting a noticeably larger divergence in mean scores.

Based on this analysis, there appear to be *no statistically significant differences between male and female responses for most statements regarding ESG practices in healthcare.*

Survey results by level of education

The results show that the application of ESG to increase work efficiency is supported to a greater extent by those with higher education.

Differences between respondents with a high school degree and those holding a doctoral degree were examined using independent-samples t-tests for each statement. The analysis compares group means and evaluates whether observed differences are unlikely to have occurred by chance. In this context, the t-statistic quantifies the standardized difference between the two group means, whereas the p-value indicates the probability of obtaining a difference of that magnitude (or larger) under the null hypothesis of no group difference. Following conventional criteria, results with p-values at or below 0.05 are interpreted as statistically significant, while p-values slightly above this threshold are treated as suggestive trends rather than conclusive evidence.

The results reveal several statistically significant differences, consistently indicating stronger agreement among PhD respondents. First, doctoral-level respondents reported higher agreement that the environmental, social, and governance approach improves patient satisfaction ($p = 0.006$). A similarly robust difference was observed for perceived operational efficiency, where PhD respondents again agreed more strongly ($p = 0.002$). For the item relating to cost reduction, the between-group

difference was marginally significant ($p = 0.053$), suggesting a tendency for PhD respondents to perceive stronger cost effects, although this finding does not meet the conventional 0.05 threshold.

No statistically significant difference emerged for employee morale ($p = 0.413$), indicating that both education groups expressed comparable levels of agreement regarding the role of social initiatives in improving workplace climate. In contrast, PhD respondents showed significantly stronger agreement that governance reduces risks ($p = 0.017$). The statement concerning the ability of ESG to attract higher-quality employees did not yield a significant difference; however, the pattern suggested a directional tendency toward stronger endorsement among PhD respondents ($p = 0.095$).

Further significant differences were detected for outcomes and trust-related dimensions. PhD respondents agreed more strongly that ESG improves patient health outcomes ($p = 0.004$) and that environmental sustainability increases community trust ($p = 0.042$). No significant group difference was found for patient loyalty ($p = 0.195$), implying broadly similar perceptions regarding the effects of social equality initiatives on loyalty. Finally, PhD respondents expressed significantly higher agreement that governance principles improve transparency and accountability ($p = 0.026$).

Overall, the t-test results indicate that educational attainment is associated with systematically more favorable evaluations of several ESG-related outcomes, particularly those linked to patient satisfaction, operational efficiency, risk reduction, patient outcomes, community trust, and transparency. At the same time, perceptions of employee morale and patient loyalty appear comparatively stable across the two education groups, and the evidence for cost reduction and talent attraction is suggestive rather than definitive based on the reported p-values.

Survey result by related to the type of jobs

To examine whether acceptance of the environmental, social, and governance approach differs across employee categories, responses were compared among three groups: medical doctors, nurses, and non-medical employees. The analysis was conducted using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), which is appropriate when the independent variable is categorical with more than two groups and the dependent variable is measured on an approximately interval scale.

Prior to analysis, Likert-type responses were coded numerically (strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, neutral = 3, agree = 4, strongly agree = 5). Where the data were available in aggregated form, category frequencies were used as weights to compute group-level summary statistics. For each statement, ANOVA was then applied to estimate the F-statistic and the corresponding p-value, adopting a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. In interpretive terms, the F-statistic evaluates whether between-group variability in mean responses exceeds the within-group variability expected due to random fluctuation.

Across most statements, the resulting F-statistics were equal to, or extremely close to, zero. This pattern indicates that the estimated group means are essentially identical and that the between-group variance is negligible relative to the within-group variance. Under these circumstances, the p-values typically approach 1.00, implying that the null hypothesis of equal means cannot be rejected at the chosen significance level. Substantively, these findings suggest that, for the majority of items, medical doctors, nurses, and non-medical employees do not differ meaningfully in their expressed acceptance of the environmental, social, and governance approach; the observed response patterns are consistent with random variation rather than systematic differences attributable to employee category.

Discussion

The survey results show broadly positive staff perceptions of the influence of environmental, social, and governance frameworks on multiple dimensions of hospital performance. The highest levels of agreement were observed for statements related to patient satisfaction, operational efficiency, and transparency, indicating that respondents most strongly associate ESG integration with improvements in core service quality, internal processes, and governance-related practices. Overall, the pattern of responses suggests that ESG practices are viewed as relevant and beneficial to both hospital operations and patient-facing outcomes.

Group comparisons provide additional nuance. Gender-based analyses indicate no meaningful differences in agreement between female and male respondents; both groups display highly similar response patterns across statements, implying that gender is not a salient factor in shaping perceptions of ESG initiatives in this context. In contrast, education-level comparisons reveal a consistent tendency for respondents with higher educational attainment to report stronger agreement with the positive effects of ESG. This pattern may reflect greater familiarity with sustainability, governance, and social responsibility concepts, as well as stronger capacity to connect these principles to organisational performance mechanisms. Comparisons across employee categories show that medical doctors report the highest agreement levels, followed by nurses and then non-medical staff, although these differences are not statistically significant. A plausible interpretation is that doctors' proximity to clinical decision-making and outcomes may strengthen perceived links between ESG practices and performance, whereas other groups may have more variable exposure to strategic and governance-related initiatives.

Several key observations emerge. First, staff perceptions are consistently favourable across the majority of ESG-related performance statements, reinforcing the overall positive sentiment. Second, while gender does not differentiate views, educational attainment appears to be associated with stronger endorsement of ESG benefits. Third, role-based differences are directionally present, with doctors tending to be more supportive than other groups, but the available evidence does not support a definitive claim of group differences in statistical terms. These findings are best interpreted as perception-based associations rather than demonstrations of causal effects, given the cross-sectional design and self-reported measures.

From an applied perspective, the results suggest that hospitals may benefit from targeted internal communication and training on ESG principles, particularly for employee groups with fewer opportunities to engage with sustainability and governance frameworks in their daily work. Training that explicitly links ESG initiatives to concrete operational and patient-care impacts by role category may help reduce uncertainty and strengthen shared understanding. To deepen insight beyond survey averages, future research could incorporate qualitative methods (for example, semi-structured interviews or focus groups) across education levels and staff categories to clarify how ESG is understood, which mechanisms are viewed as credible, and where perceived gaps remain. In addition, longitudinal designs integrating objective performance indicators would be valuable for assessing whether perceived ESG benefits translate into measurable improvements over time.

In summary, the findings support the research proposition that ESG integration is associated with favourable perceptions of hospital performance, with particularly strong endorsement for patient satisfaction, operational efficiency, and transparency. At the same time, interpretation should account for limitations related to sample size, potential response bias, and the inherent constraints of self-reported cross-sectional data. Further studies on larger samples and with complementary qualitative and

longitudinal evidence would strengthen inference regarding the robustness and persistence of these relationships.

Conclusion

Summary of research results

The survey examining perceptions of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) frameworks and their relationship with hospital business performance provides empirical evidence on how different employee groups evaluate sustainability-oriented practices in healthcare settings. Overall, the findings indicate that hospital staff largely perceive ESG integration as beneficial for both organisational functioning and patient care, while also revealing systematic variation by educational attainment and, to a lesser extent, by employee category.

With respect to gender, the results suggest largely comparable evaluations of ESG-related benefits among female and male respondents. Mean response patterns and inferential tests do not indicate statistically meaningful differences, implying that perceptions of ESG relevance and contribution are relatively stable across genders within the sampled hospitals.

In contrast, educational attainment appears to be associated with stronger endorsement of ESG impacts. Respondents with higher levels of education, particularly those with doctoral degrees, more frequently report higher levels of agreement that ESG frameworks enhance dimensions such as patient satisfaction and operational efficiency, and they also express stronger support for governance-related outcomes (for example, risk reduction and transparency). This pattern is consistent with the interpretation that greater familiarity with sustainability and governance concepts, as well as higher exposure to strategic and regulatory considerations, may shape how ESG mechanisms are recognized and evaluated.

Differences by employee category follow a similar directional pattern. Medical doctors tend to report higher agreement levels across statements compared to nurses and non-medical employees; however, where formally tested, these role-based differences are not statistically significant in the present sample. Substantively, this pattern may reflect variation in professional proximity to clinical outcomes and decision-making processes, which could influence the perceived salience of ESG practices. Nevertheless, given the absence of consistent statistical significance, these differences should be interpreted as indicative tendencies rather than definitive group effects.

Descriptively, the strongest support is observed for statements linking ESG implementation to overall business effectiveness and efficiency, where 83% of respondents report agreement or strong agreement. A similarly favourable assessment is reported for operational efficiency, with 75% agreement or strong agreement. Perceived cost reduction receives comparatively weaker support, although a majority still report agreement (65%), suggesting that cost effects may be less visible, less immediate, or more difficult for employees to assess relative to service quality and operational process improvements.

From an organisational perspective, the results imply that hospitals may benefit from strengthening internal dissemination and capability-building around ESG principles. Targeted education and training initiatives could reduce uncertainty and promote a shared understanding of how ESG practices translate into operational and patient-care outcomes, particularly among staff groups with less direct exposure to strategic management and governance processes. Moreover, role-sensitive communication and engagement strategies may help align ESG initiatives with day-to-day

responsibilities and strengthen implementation consistency across clinical and non-clinical functions.

In summary, the findings support the study's central proposition that ESG integration is associated with more favourable perceptions of hospital performance, particularly for effectiveness, efficiency, and patient-related outcomes, while also indicating that education level is an important correlate of stronger endorsement. At the same time, conclusions should be interpreted in light of the study's reliance on self-reported perceptions and the characteristics of the available sample, which may limit generalisability and causal interpretation.

Future Research Directions

Future research should move beyond cross-sectional perception measures and address the temporal and contextual conditions under which ESG integration translates into measurable performance improvements. First, longitudinal designs are needed to examine whether the perceived benefits observed in this study persist over time and whether they are associated with changes in objective hospital performance indicators. Such studies should track ESG implementation intensity alongside operational metrics (for example, throughput, waiting times, resource utilisation), patient-related outcomes (for example, satisfaction, safety indicators), and governance-related measures (for example, compliance incidents, risk events, transparency indicators). This approach would strengthen causal inference by enabling the assessment of lagged effects and the durability of ESG-related improvements.

Second, comparative research across hospitals with different levels of ESG maturity would help disentangle whether stronger ESG implementation is associated with systematically different outcomes and staff perceptions. Benchmarking studies could compare institutions across ownership types, size, and regional contexts, and could identify best-practice configurations of ESG governance, staff engagement, and reporting. Where possible, comparative designs should incorporate external validation (for example, independent ESG ratings, accreditation status, or audited sustainability reports) rather than relying solely on self-reported implementation.

Scientific contribution

The scientific contribution of the study lies in its empirical examination of ESG integration in a hospital context and its structured assessment of heterogeneity in staff perceptions. First, the study provides evidence that hospital employees generally perceive ESG frameworks as positively related to effectiveness, operational efficiency, and patient-oriented outcomes, with comparatively weaker endorsement for cost-reduction effects. Second, by testing differences across gender, education levels, and employee categories, the study offers a differentiated picture of how ESG is interpreted within hospitals, indicating that educational attainment is associated with stronger endorsement of ESG benefits, while gender-based differences are negligible and role-based differences are directionally present but not consistently statistically significant. Third, these findings support the argument that organisational capability building around ESG is not merely a compliance activity but also an internal alignment challenge, where perceived relevance varies with exposure to strategic, governance, and clinical decision-making.

In practical terms, the results inform hospital management that ESG implementation may be strengthened through targeted education and role-sensitive engagement strategies. Aligning ESG objectives with job-relevant outcomes and clarifying the mechanisms through which ESG initiatives affect day-to-day work may reduce

neutrality or uncertainty in responses and increase implementation coherence across clinical and non-clinical functions. Overall, the study extends the healthcare management literature by linking ESG frameworks to perceived hospital performance outcomes, identifying relevant subgroup patterns, and specifying concrete avenues for future research aimed at testing robustness, mechanisms, and longer-term effects.

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