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## MANAGEMENT | RESEARCH ARTICLE

# The effects of corporate social responsibility toward green human resource management: The mediating role of sustainable environment

Sadia Cheema<sup>1\*</sup> and Farheen Javed<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** The perception of creating a sustainable environment by business entities is explored in this paper. The rising demand for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) leads to the application of management tools of green human resource management. Most organizations have adapted human resource practices that encourage a green environment with a consideration of minimal environmental pollution and destruction of the environment. As part of a conservation motive, the human resource department has played a critical role of securing the environment via their normal official activities. As a result, the senior management of an organization also an obligation of ensuring that the employees are supported as they seek to meet the social, ecological and economic benefits from a green environment. The idea of having a green environment by the human resource department is an integral process that affects the activities of green selection and recruitment, performance appraisal method, the reward and pay system and a supportive green culture. The importance of green environment is emphasized in the paper as well as the efforts by different companies in maintaining a sustainable environment. The expected outcomes of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) are evaluated and the setbacks expected when trying to achieve a green environment.

### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Sadia Cheema and Farheen Javed are HR researchers in Multan, Pakistan. Sadia Cheema is a visiting lecturer of HRM. During this time, she has attended seven conferences and published 11 articles related to human resource management. She is a current member of AL-FATTAH Apparel Association. Both researchers have similar interest and mainly focus on corporate social responsibility, human resource practices, customer loyalty, and customer relationship management. Recently, they manage to start work on green practices and wrote three papers on green practices and these studies contribute toward different sectors of Pakistan.

### PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

This study contributes toward working on methods which help to create sustainable environment through green HR practices and emphasize on mutual benefits of building strong corporate social responsibility for both firm's image and society. This research was conducted on textile sector of Faisalabad, Pakistan and findings of this study suggest that there is a lack of education among employees regarding green environment, therefore it is believed that by proper education on green practices, there can be assisted training programs in the creation of sustainable environment. Furthermore, there is a detailed discussion on GHRM practices which includes selection and recruitment process, performance appraisal, rewards, and pay systems. Understanding the role of GHRM can greatly have positive impact on environmental sustainability and corporate social responsibility. The major setback was discovered through this study was limited knowledge among organizations and employees regarding green practices in Faisalabad, Pakistan, which can be easily overcome by learning process.

**Subjects: Human Resource Management; Sustainable Development; Corporate Social Responsibility & Business Ethics; Human Resource Management**

**Keywords: green human resource management; corporate social responsibility; sustainable environment**

### 1. Introduction

The current century portrays great interest in all the concerns on the environment in a global perspective to all the fields in business. Disposition of waste materials and industrial pollution such as toxic chemicals are areas of focus that need the formulation of policies and regulations and its effects to the society. With the current situation, organizations are on the look to find out the techniques and ways to mitigate the ecological footprints in addition to handling the pressuring economic issues (Renwick, Redman, & Maguire, 2013). To achieve an organization's objectives of making profits and maximizing the shareholder's wealth, businesses attain the success by considering and concentrating on environmental and social factors. Leaders of different organizations are prioritizing sustainability issues by integrating the green environment corporate strategies to create successful ways in the business (Cherian & Jacob, 2012). Green Human Resource is conceptualized as the use of the respective Human Resource Management (HRM) policies in promoting the sustainable spending of resources in a business and with the main aim of encouraging the cause of a sustainable environment (Cheema, Pasha, & Javed, 2015). The basic elements GHRM are preserving and developing knowledge capital and the application of HR practices that are environmental-friendly. Through an eco-focus drive, the HR function is the epitome of environmental sustainability in a firm via the alignment of its policies and practices with the trajectory sustainability goals (Jabbour & de Sousa Jabbour, 2016).

The purported HR strategies inspire and reflect the ambitions of employees and the HR team by aligning with the company's strategy, cultures and values, delivery of sustainable returns to the investors, and addressing the needs of the customers (Muller-Carmem, Jackson, Jabbour, & Renwick, 2010). The process also involves addressing and influencing of the public policy agenda, the prompt response to the regulatory and government expectations and responding as well as identifying the emerging trends in the society (Rahimian, 2014). A recent study explained the relations that various firms are following to the GHRM, the importance and impacts of the applying GHRM policies and practices (Jackson, Renwick, Jabbour, & Muller-Camen, 2011).

Theoretically, this research contributed to earlier studies by various levels. Specifically, the past literature enriched to the green human resource management through examining recruitment, selection, performance and appraisal and rewards systems that develop corporate social responsibility. Furthermore, this study also contributes to the sustainable environment literature that is contingent to the green human resource management practices toward employees. Practically, results of this research provide significant knowledge and guidelines to green practitioners that how managers can be involve in greening HR practices to account for multiple levels of sustainable environmental developments. The research question was based on the Ability-Motivation-Theory, what are the HR departments in different organization of textile sector doing to ensure corporate social responsibility? Accordingly, this study has two objectives. First objective was to analyze the increased need for HRM skills in green practices including selection, recruitment, rewards and training implementation. The second objective was to examine the relationship of sustainable environment by testing the mediation between green human resource management and corporate social responsibility.

### 2. Literature review

To achieve an effective environment system, a business must incorporate environmental strategies and objectives in its overall strategic development goals. There are several factors that influence a company's adoption of the environmental strategies. The factors may include the stakeholder's pressure, the financial performance and the corporate image. In 1994, Wilson and Lado gave a

definition of HRM as a combination of inter-related function, processes and activities aimed at directly developing, maintaining and attracting the human resources of an organization (Renwick et al., 2013). The implementation of effective HR practices with the strategic systems must concur with the business strategies and the company's culture. The management and technical skills of employees are required to implement corporate green management systems that are effective. There are different initiatives and innovative tools by companies of environmental management that affect the firm's sustainability and competitive advantage promotion (Ahmad, 2015). Such frameworks are only achieved by efficient practices such as strict strategies of recruitment, pay and reward systems, training, and environmental programs that enhance new competencies and skills for enhancing a green environment.

The word green has its relevancy depicting the description of nature from the general meaning of a leafy plant to a deeper meaning of an environmentalist and preservationist or an eco-activist. The important thing to note is that green relates to the natural meaning. In human resource and the management of people, there are four derived meanings of green (Liu & Xie, 2013). Firstly, green refers to natural environment preservation by protecting it from negative change, loss and harm. The second meaning is the conservation of the natural environment through minimal usage, and safeguarding it for the future generation. The third meaning of green in relation to human management is the minimization or avoidance of environmental pollution. The contamination of atmosphere, air, and water is avoided and also the release of waste, poisonous, and unpleasant substances (Renwick et al., 2013).

## **2.1. Theoretical framework**

### *2.1.1. Ability-motivation-opportunity theory*

Besides the common ethical theories that emphasize on the values and good outcome of actions, the Ability-motivation-opportunity (AMO) theory is used to decide the concerns of people management in the GHRM. The theory identifies the critical areas of HRM that create an impact on outcomes of environmental management (EM) (Cheema, Durrani, Khokhar, & Pasha, 2015). The theory emphasizes that all the practices and policies by the HRM that increase the human capital of a firm through enhancing the human capabilities results in better performance outcomes (Renwick et al., 2013). The outcomes include the reduction in waste, high productivity and increased profits and revenue generation. The AMO model has three important aspects of success. They include increasing the ability of employees by developing an attracting a staff that is high-performing. The other aspect is enhancing the motivation of employees and ensuring commitment via practices that may include effective management of performance and rewards. Finally, AMO entails the provision of employees with the opportunity of engagement to several activities such problem-solving and the sharing of knowledge and the application of Employee Involvement (EI) activities (Renwick et al., 2013).

Based on the AMO theory, the model applied has its particular policies and structure related to the management of people. Having in mind that we have the basic pillars of AMO, we find out the creation of these abilities, opportunities and motivation to the management of people by the HRM. Senior managers have an important role to play in implementing the AMO model.

*2.1.1.1. The selection and recruitment of staff.* In most organizations, the attraction of a top-notch staff is important and challenging for the HRM departments. In big companies such as the multinationals, the adoption of GHRM practices has ultimately served the purpose of employer branding (Javed & Cheema, 2015). The reason for employer branding is to ensure that companies attract and select a staff that consists of a very young generation that is aware of its environment. In the recruitment efforts, the prominence of the process is determined by the selection of employees that understand the values of an organization and its images and reputation associated with the environment (Renwick et al., 2013). Currently, there is an increase in recruitment activities via websites that have allowed the employers to acquire relevant information such as the interest of potential employees in the EM activities. Various studies show that most organizations prefer the use of a good

environment image to select the highly attractive employees. According to research, students prefer working in the organizations that are environmental friendly and a good image too (Ahmad, 2015). Where candidates have no knowledge on the recruitment processes by organizations, a web search facilitates with the clues about a firm and great concern on its trends and future actions and intentions of the business with the environment. Candidates and firms have the opportunity to provide their information on web

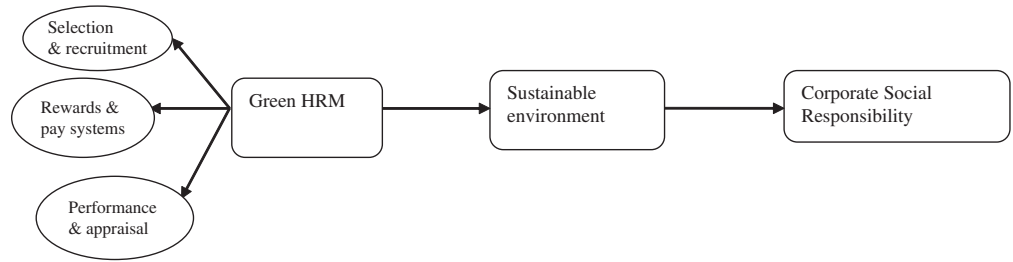
Potential employees and candidates in the hiring process check the environmental ratings of a company to increase the chances of absorption as a positive way of succeeding in interviews. Individuals with such knowledge tend to have the education and skills required and hence the companies with positive reputations or EM retain the potential of hiring staff that perform excellently. In the United Kingdom, top graduates compare a firm's reputation with its performance in the environment area when selecting their potential employers in job application (Liu & Xie, 2013). A strong green approach is vital to candidates with several interviews in UK indicating that companies that have a good and highly positive reputation hire the best staff. Besides the existence of pro-environment activities, the absorbed employees must engage and portray willingness in the EM programmes and activities.

*2.1.1.2. Reward and pay systems.* As a way of incentivizing EM for the top-level managers, effective reward systems are developed. There is an existing relationship between the compensation for Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and the environmental reputation of a firm (Rahimian, 2014). The total pay for CEOs affects the activities of organizations toward the conservation of the environment (Renwick et al., 2013). While the rewards are normally for the senior managers, there is no supportive evidence that the other staff is motivated by a higher reward system. However, the use of competence-based system of rewarding may impact positive thinking toward EM. For instance, staffs with knowledge of environmental laws and policies are of great help to an organization and are rewarded. For the other staff, recognition-based rewards or other non-monetary systems are used to motivate employees. The use of company awards allows open and effective communication of employees while deliberating on environmental ideas (Cherian & Jacob, 2012). For instance, some companies in the UK use the green credit cards to enable employees buy green products.

*2.1.1.3. Performance appraisal and management.* The success of EM requires PM (performance management) by the managers through the use of specific measures such as developing performance indicators, green audits and information systems. Performance appraisal is encouraged and entails communication in environmental policies or other concerns (Renwick et al., 2013). In performance appraisal, managers are responsible and accountable for the objectives on performance. In PM, the negative repercussions such as criticisms and suspensions are encouraged to keep employees on their toes.

For the tacit knowledge, some staff possesses the skills and knowledge that managers do not have. These abilities are used to develop methods of identifying pollution sources, solving and handling emergencies as well as preventing the situations with adequate solutions (Liu & Xie, 2013). Empowering and engaging employees begin with commitment from senior staff through planning of EM activities that facilitate the management of pollution. Senior managers must show interest in EM activities and some of their behaviors such as rewarding employees, efficient communication and building competence correlate with innovative EM practices (Renwick et al., 2013).

**Theoretical framework**



**Hypothesis**

- H1: Green HRM is positively associated with sustainable environment.
- H2: Green HRM is positively associated with corporate social responsibility.
- H3: Sustainable environment mediates the relationship between Green HRM and corporate social responsibility.

**3. Methodology**

As data collection tool, the questionnaire was distributed among four textile sectors of district Faisalabad. The sample size was consisted of 273 respondents for further study. For sample size calculation, the criteria of (Chou, Bentler, & Satorra, 1991) was adopted. the total questions of questionnaire was taken and multiplied by 5, 7, or 15 to obtain an adequate sample size for fulfilling the criteria of SEM analysis. This study adopted the criteria of seven per case per predictor. In this study, three items for GHRM were taken from (Green, Wu, Whitten, & Medlin, 2006). Five items were adopted for corporate social responsibility from (Abbott & Monsen, 1979; Quazi & O'Brien, 2000) and four items for sustainable environment from (Yu, Chancellor, & Cole, 2011). Furthermore, four items were adopted per each for recruitment, five items for performance, and five items for rewards systems from (Harrison, Price, Gavin, & Florey, 2002; Hartog & Verburg, 2004). The questionnaire was designed into five-point Likert scale from one, strongly disagree to five, strongly agree. The data were analyzed through SPSS 23 for descriptive statistics and measurement reliability for the adopted instruments. AMOS 23 was used to analyze the validity of this study model and variables relationship through confirmatory factor analysis to acquire empirical results.

**Respondents profile**

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
<i>Gender</i>				
Male	247	92.5	92.5	92.5
Female	26	7.5	7.5	100.0
<i>Employment</i>				
Lower manager	199	72.9	72.9	72.9
Middle manager	69	25.3	25.3	98.2
Higher manager	4	1.8	1.8	100.0
<i>Education</i>				
Graduation	46	16.8	16.8	16.8
Master	146	53.5	53.5	70.3
Other	81	29.7	29.7	100.0
<i>Age</i>				
21-30	73	26.7	26.7	26.7
31-40	152	55.7	55.7	82.4
41-50	40	14.7	14.7	97.1
51-60+	8	2.9	2.9	100.0

**Table 1. Alpha reliability coefficients of composite scales. Reliability statistics**

Construct	Cronbach's $\alpha$	Cronbach's $\alpha$ based on standardized items	No. of items
Green HRM	.824	.819	3
Selection & recruitment	.858	.820	4
Rewards & Pay system	.836	.801	5
Performance & appraisal	.871	.836	5
Sustainable environment	.832	.812	4
Corporate social Responsibility	.866	.802	5

The demographic statistics explored that 92.5% respondents were males, while only 7.5% were females in this study. In employment status, the maximum response was found from lower managers at 72.9%, while the least response was recorded from higher manager at 1.8%. Maybe, due to the limit time and less availability to higher managers was the main reason. On the other hand, the maximum respondents were holding Master's degree at 53.5%. The age distribution showed the maximum response among 31 to 40 years that were 55.7% (see Table 1).

There was measured reliability test for Green human resource management, S&E, R&P that showed .824, .858 and .836 cronbach's  $\alpha$ , respectively. In addition, performance and appraisal, sustainable environment and corporate social responsibility also reported .871, .832, and .866 cronbach's  $\alpha$ , respectively.

**KMO and Bartlett's test**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy.		.821
Bartlett's test of sphericity	Approx. $\chi^2$	2,953.215
	Df	231
	Sig.	.000

To analyze the linear relationship between all variables, firstly PCA test was conducted to check the sampling adequacy. KMO showed the .821 with significance of .000. The degree of freedom showed 231 with  $\chi^2$  of 2,953.2 that is acceptable for further study. In pattern matrix, all the outputs are greater than .35 that showed the acceptability of study.

**Pattern matrix<sup>a</sup>**

	Factor				
	1	2	3	4	5
Csr1				.431	
Csr2				.691	
Csr3				.553	
Csr4				.624	
Sustainable_E1			.690		
Sustainable_E2			.612		
Sustainable_E3			.694		
Sustainable_E4			.803		
S.R_1					.523
S.R_2					.476
S.R_3					.432

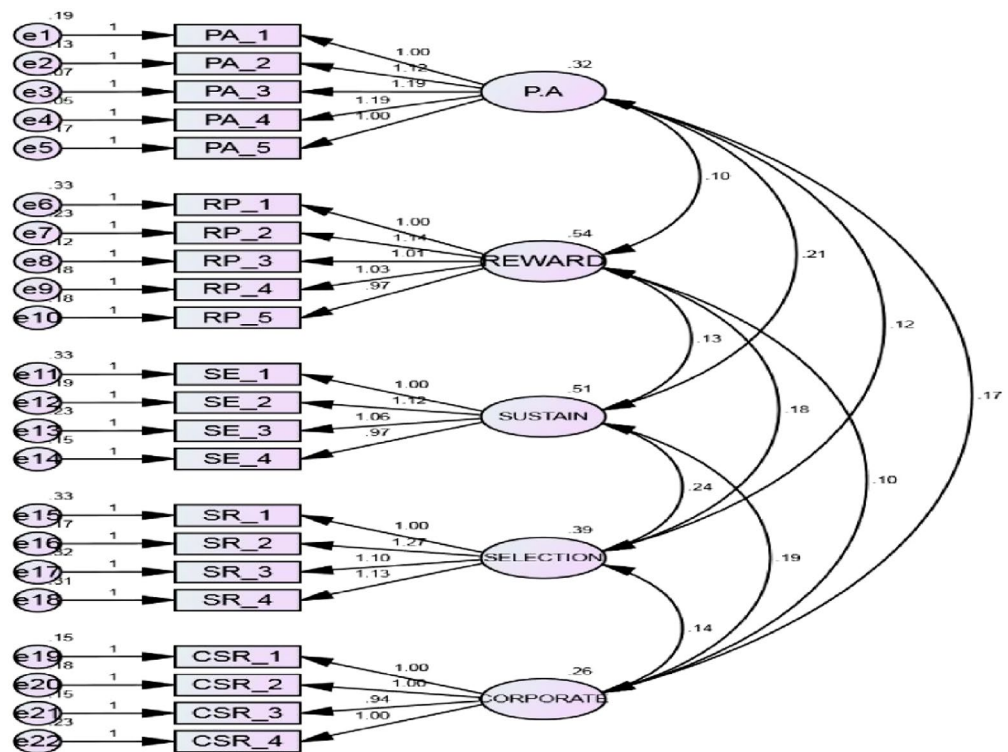
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(Continued)

	Factor				
	1	2	3	4	5
S.R_4					.361
R.P_1		.722			
R.P_2		.900			
R.P_3		.769			
R.P_4		.771			
R.P_5		.747			
P.A_1	.781				
P.A_2	.838				
P.A_3	.932				
P.A_4	.958				
P.A_5	.814				

Notes: Extraction method: Maximum Likelihood.  
 Rotation method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.  
 \*Rotation converged in 4 iterations.

We applied CFA to study the number of factors specification that requires data collection and further variables measurement that relates to study latent variables. Primarily, the individual constructs were explained because for CFA, minimum four constructs, three items per construct must exist in the study. In addition, sample size was greater than 200 and the data were taken from random sampling technique. In confirmatory factor analysis, the discriminant validity showed less than .8 to support this study. Performance appraisal and reward showed .10. Further, reward and sustainable environment showed .13, sustainable environment and selection showed .24 and in last, selection and corporate social responsibility showed .14, respectively. In addition, convergent validity also supported this study. The output revealed CFI = .964, CMIN = 239.181, GFI = .940, RMSEA = .079, *p*-value = .000



significance. The results showed that all variables, green human resource, sustainable environment, and corporate social responsibility fit the data adequately and significantly appropriate with this hypothesized model. Generally, the discriminant validity confirmed all the following constructs positively. The inter class correlation was also analyzed to evaluate CSR and the output was shown ( $F = 1.367$ ,  $p > .10$ ,  $ICC = .054$ ). The results showed no systematic difference among managers of corporate social responsibility. Therefore, we applied confirmatory factor analysis to test all hypotheses.

The impact of selection rewards and performance was tested at corporate social responsibility. The results showed the  $R^2$  of .90 on CSR while the regression weight were also significant to support this study .04, .94, and .03, respectively. For selection rewards, the results showed a positive influence on corporate social responsibility with  $\beta$  of .039. Further, rewards showed the significant and positive influence on corporate social responsibility with .93 of  $\beta$  estimate. In the last, performance also showed a positive influence on corporate social responsibility with .049  $\beta$ ,  $p = .000$ .

**Regression weights:**

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	p-value	Label
CSR ← Selection_R	.039	.017	2.225	.026	Sig.
CSR ← Rewards_P	.936	.013	74.230	.000	Sig.
CSR ← Performance_A	.049	.019	2.753	.000	Sig.

This study supports the Hypothesis 3, stating that “sustainable environment mediates the relationship between green human resource management and corporate social responsibility”. Therefore, the impact of independent variable on dependent variable was checked in the absence of mediator and  $\beta$  showed .800. Now it is proved that before entering the mediating variable sustainable environment, the  $\beta$  estimate showed .800 with p value of 0.000 that showed the significance of study.

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	p-value	Result
Sustainable ← GHRM	.877	.025	35.100	.000	Sig.
CSR ← GHRM	.365	.076	4.787	.000	Sig.
CSR ← Sustainable	.495	.078	6.344	.002	Sig.

After analysis of mediator, the  $\beta$  estimate reduced from .800 to .365 and the p-value was .000. Thus, the results showed that the mediation is partial and green human resource management has a significant effect on corporate social responsibility. Analysis explores that H1, H2, and H3 support the research and get significant study.

**4. Discussion**

The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between green human resource management, sustainable environment, and corporate social responsibility. The mediating relationship of sustainable environment between GHRM and CSR was focused to show consistent results. Three hypotheses were developed that suggested three considerable conclusions. Firstly, the findings explored that green human resource management sets the admirable atmosphere to pursue sustainable environment. Managerial role, selection & recruitment, rewards and pay systems, performance and appraisal were found to have a positive influence on corporate social responsibility. Secondly, green human resource management, in contrast, was analyzed to have a more powerful effect on sustainable environment. Under rewards and pay systems improvements, selection and recruitment, performance and appraisal, stability and sustainability with high environmental implications in organizations were found in every level of managerial practices. More sustainable environment was found where these green human resource management practices were applied significantly. Thirdly, managers in lower, middle, and upper level that indulged in sustainable environment mediated the relationship between green human resource management and corporate social responsibility. Thus, the results showed that more the manager practices of greening by increasing their



human resource implications, the more managers are involved to experience the work responsibility as organizational concerns and objectives within sustainability.

## 5. Conclusion

The study showed the results on the base of green human resource management as the key determinant of sustainable environment. To examine the impact of the independent variable with corporate social responsibility as a dependent and sustainable environment as a mediator, there was conducted primary research with empirical data from textile sector of Faisalabad District, Pakistan, Academically this research identified the significance of study by giving in two different modes. On one hand, it applied an integration of framework to anticipate corporate social responsibility with other intervening variables. Further, respondents output from getting recruitment, rewards, and appraisal systems and as a result of green practices. GHRM practices showed most organizations that require survival, sustainability, and the creation of a good positive image. As the results showed that most firms encouraged a green approach as a way of acting socially responsible and creating a sustainable environment. The AMO model was used by firms to engage employees, senior management and the organization as a whole, to motivate a sustainable environment. The AMO theory consisted of three critical approaches of essence in sustainable environment. The results showed the partial mediation between green human resource management and corporate social responsibility. In addition, H1 and H2 showed strong support to this study. The covariance residual was lower and near to zero and the entire results are shown in this model. The outcome of age, gender, education, and employment status explored the powerful impact on research. SEM, AMOS 23 was applied to support the study and significant impact was found on green human resource management within factors. Recommendations for further studies are as follows: (a) To strengthen sustainable environment in the organization especially in textile sectors, organizations should introduce green practices which will improve and also helps to build strong concept of corporate social responsibility in all sectors. (b) For greening practices purpose, proper education should be given to the employees to increase learning level in the organizations which eventually improve overall sustainability.

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