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RESEARCH PAPER

Mediating Effect of Green Core Competence in the Relationship between Green HRM practices and Green Corporate Image among the Employees

[1]Muhammad Alamgir* and [2]Mehak

1. PhD Scholar, Department of Business Administration, NCBA&E Multan, Punjab, Pakistan
2. PhD Scholar, Department of Business Administration, NCBA&E Multan, Punjab, Pakistan

***Corresponding Author:** alamgirsumra@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The current study tends to highlight the impact of green practices on employees' performance, and, focuses on whether or not we could enhance employees' performance through the use of green practices. Lot of work has been done in developed countries on sustainability, environmental management and going green as corporate social responsibility; however, developing countries like Pakistan are far behind in academic as well as managerial contribution on these concepts. For some academicians and managers, these concepts are rather new, and, even some of them are unaware of green management and sustainability. Analysis was conducted using data from a sample of 315 employees working in oil refineries and fertilizer plants in Southern Punjab. Data was collected through a questionnaire based on adopted scales. The most recent version of compliance with established Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) is can also be used to ascertain data extracted, and finalized by doing questionnaire coding as per the described scale. Additionally, data analyzed in terms of complete and accurate descriptive statistics is done by utilizing SPSS. For the purpose of verification of the study's outcomes, Multi-Collinearity, KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, Direct & Indirect Effects on Dependent Variable. Hence, Green practices i.e Green recruitment & selection (GRS), Green orientation (GO) and Green training (GRT) were found significant through direct relation with Green corporate image (GCI). Similarly, above mentioned green practices were also found significant through mediated relationship of green core competence GCC on green corporate image GCI. Also, current study recommended that a conceptual model can be made better by adding or removing a few constructs or it may also be applicable to some other provinces and industries.

KEYWORDS Green Core Competence, Green Corporate Image, Green Orientation, Green Recruitment, Green Training

Introduction

A company's green image is always extremely important for all types of organizations—commercial, non-profit, and government. A positive reputation helps an organization gain the acceptance and support of stakeholders, which is necessary for them to achieve their objectives, remain competitive, and thrive. When feasible, even businesses operating in morally challenging situations should maintain a positive reputation. Businesses are realizing more and more how crucial corporate image is to achieving their objectives and remaining competitive. (Kim & Lee, 2010). An essential organizational strategic resource for building, maintaining, and enhancing competitive advantage is corporate image. The literature has identified a variety of antecedents for corporate image, such as the distribution system, consumer consideration, and the caliber of goods and services. It seems that green practices precede corporate image as well. In turn, it is asserted that corporate environmental proactivity is linked to advantageous internal outcomes like decreased waste and discharges, enhanced efficiency, lower energy and resource costs, decreased risk and improved reputation, and decreased compliance costs. (Sharma & Vredenburg, 1998). Research on environmental management has, to date, focused a great

deal on environmental motivations as the fundamental catalyst for organizations' environmental proactivity. These incentives essentially represent a blend of stakeholder, business, and ethical incentives. (Bansal & Roth, 2000).

In addition to, by studied previous literature it had been detected that the combination of these variables i.e. green HR practices and its impact on green-corporate image seemed to never considered before having intermediating role of the green core-competence. For that oil and automobile sectors in the Punjab were chosen here owing to various possible reasons i.e these industries need to adopt green practices in developing nations like Pakistan in order to create sustainability and protect the environment. Owing to time and space limitations, other units within the same industry, like the automotive sector in Karachi, Sindh, are not included here. Aside from that, the method relies on convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling technique which can solve the related problems of generalizability. The key goal of this study is to govern how and why the components of green practices affect an organization's green corporate image. The greater focus on corporate image can be attributed to become quite the growing pressures on businesses remain competitive. These pressures require organizations to be more productive and useful, and undertake their business strategies better, and accomplish more with less resources. The fertilizer units in developing nations such as Pakistan barely meet health and safety regulations. Some individuals may experience health problems as a result of this carelessness, which could ultimately result in decreased productivity, disaffection, sick days, low morale, and absenteeism rates. However, in the majority of Pakistani units, preventive measures are not at their best. Furthermore, it appears that sustainability, corporate social responsibility, and environmental management have received more attention in recent years. In developed nations, going green is popular, ethically and socially. businesses must implement environmental protection both ethically and socially.

Literature Review

Bathmanathan and Hironaka (2016) defined green corporate image as one that allows businesses to continue operating normally without endangering the next generation. In an effort to become more competitive and capture more market share, businesses work to develop a green corporate image. Alam, & Islam, (2021) revealed that, when it comes to creating a green competitive advantage (GCA) and green corporate image (GCI) at the corporate level, the environmental corporate social responsibility (ECSR) dimensions had crucial impacts on it. Solekah, (2019) exerted that while green banking products and green customer satisfaction is directly impacted by a company's green image, on the other hand green customer loyalty is directly impacted by green corporate image, not directly by green banking products. Mukonza, & Swarts, (2020) demonstrated that the implementation of a green marketing strategy improves both corporate image and business performance. Green recruitment reduces possible ecological impact by employing a paperless approach. One of the main HR challenges in the "war for talent" is looking to attract top talent. It appears that certain employers particularly those in big, multinational firms (Ehnert 2009), are working to implement GHRM practices as a means of "employer branding" to make them more compelling to a younger audience that is growing increasingly concerned about the environment. General Electric (GE), for instance, brags on how its wind generators save millions of tons of greenhouse gas emissions annually, which is the same as keeping thousands of cars off the road. Employees can be encouraged to create online videos about their company's environmental practices, which will make the information even more appealing to recruits (Paul & Nilan, 2012). The research of Das, & Dash, (2023) was to assess how green recruitment and selection affected the ecological sustainability of the selected institutions in Odisha, India, as well as organizational development. And its conclusions showed that there is a strong positive correlation between the sustainability of IT factories and green hiring and selection practices. Fapohunda, Genty, & Olanipekun (2022) concluded that manufacturing companies must support and integrate these practices into their corporate agenda to promote their sustainability because green recruitment and selection

practices have a substantial impact on organizational sustainability. The findings of Towett, Sang & Kingori (2022) highlighted the relationship between the sustainability of the tea factories recruiting and selection green practices. The study came to the conclusion that the factories' sustainability was impacted by green selection and recruitment practices.

Khan et al. (2020) Examined the relationship between Organizational Sustainability Performance and environmentally friendly human resource strategies, including environmentally friendly recruitment, training, and development, as well as environmentally friendly assessment. Alqudah, & Yusof, (2024) The results demonstrated the mediating roles that academic citizenship behavior played in the relationships between green training and development and organization environmental performance as well as between green recruitment and selection and organization environmental performance. These relationships showed a positive correlation between green training and development and two variables, namely academic citizenship behavior and organization environmental performance. Companies today begin the recruitment and selection process with orientation in order to create a more positive impression of the organization in the eyes of their staff. HR managers are responsible for making sure that information about the company's sustainability policies and goals, as well as how staff members can get involved in voluntary and environmental improvement projects, is included in employee onboarding programs (Perrot et al., 2012). Coelho and Augusto (2010) expressly stated that a job or sense of identity at work fosters the feeling that a task has purpose and merit, inspiring and motivating the employee to perform well. The ability to enhance and sustain a sustainable competitive advantage is the industry's core competency, and in the current highly competitive market, this competency is crucial to boosting the industry's competitive advantage. (Hastjarjo, et. al, 2016). The results of Kuo, Fang & LePage, (2022) demonstrated the beneficial relationship between Proactive Environmental Strategies and Eco-Innovation, which in turn influences Green Core Competence. Additionally, Green Competitive Advantage is impacted by Green Core Competence. Also, Al Halbusi, Klobas, & Ramayah, (2023) showed that the performance of green core competence increased with green product and process innovation. Chen, Lien, & Lee, (2019) indicated that through green core competence, environmental pressures from both the outside and the inside can indirectly affect corporate performance. This means that businesses can benefit greatly from a suitable level of environmental protection-related pressure.

Hypotheses development:

H1: Green recruitment & selection has the impact on Green corporate image

H2: Green recruitment & selection has the impact on green core competence

H3: Green recruitment & selection has the impact on Green corporate image through Green core competence

H4: Green core competence has the impact on Green corporate image

H5: Green orientation has the impact on Green corporate image

H6: Green orientation has the impact on Green core competence

H7: Green orientation has the impact on Green corporate image through Green core competence

H8: Green training has the impact on green corporate image

H9: Green training has the impact on green core competence

H10: Green training has the impact on green corporate image through green core competence

Conceptual Framework

The research model is as follows

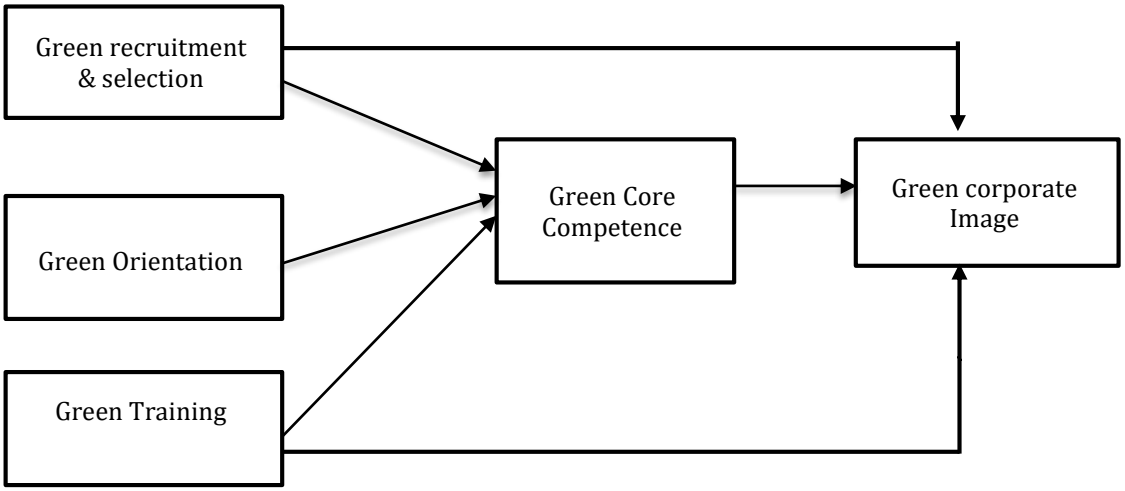

Fig:1 Conceptual Framework

Materials and Methods

Data Collection Procedure

Employees of Pakistani automobile assembling units and oil purification facilities were the study's target respondents. 315 workers from specific oil and automotive assembly industry units make up the sample of the population, which is determined by applying the guidelines established by the Chou & Bentler (1986). Convenience sampling seemed to be best sample method when the population is inadequately documented and data collection is challenging. This technique has been used for data collection. The two main components of Punjab's oil industry are the Pakistan-Oil Field, located in Rawalpindi, and the Pak Arab Oil Refinery (PARCO) plant, which is located close to Muzaffar Garh. Similarly, this study taken into consideration two auto assembly plants of Punjab that is: Atlas Honda, which is located close to Lahore, and Al-Ghazi Tractors, which is located close to Dera Ghazi Khan. Primary data for this study was gathered through the use of a questionnaire. Respondents at the places were requested to fill the questionnaire. Personally asked some of their colleagues to complete the questionnaire, administrators, overseers, and even a few peers were found to be vital and supportive in the data collection process. The most recent version of SPSS is utilized for the examination of data that has been gathered, and finalized questionnaire coding is done based on a defined scale. Additionally, data analysis in terms of comprehensive descriptive statistics is done using SPSS. For the authentication of the outcomes achieved in the study, Multi-Collinearity, KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, Direct & Indirect Effects on Dependent Variable.

Operationalization of Variables

Green Recruitment and Selection

In the current study, Green recruitment & selection is a uni-dimension variable containing 4 items and the measurement scale developed by Jabbour (2011).

Green Orientation

Here, there is a focus on green orientation because the staff members are keenly aware of their environmental responsibilities. This is a uni-dimension variable containing 11 items and the measurement scale developed by Dunlap etl al., (2000).

Green Training

This study refers to green training as an essential component of the organizations under investigation. This is again a single dimension variable with 3 items and the measurement scale that was established by Jabbour (2011).

Green Core Competence

This is single dimension variable with 5 items and the measurement scale that was established by Prahalad & Hamel (1990).

Green Image

There are two dimensions to this variable. For example, green credibility and reputation with eight items of both and the measurement scale that was developed by Martinez & Pina (2005).

Results and Discussion

Descriptive analysis was used to examine several demographic characteristics of the study sample, including area, education, age, & gender. Summary is provided in the tables below.

Table 1
Demographic Distribution of Respondents with Respect to area in Punjab

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	DG Khan	63	20	20	95
	Muzaffar Garh	107	34	34	97
	Lahore	92	29	29	96
	Rawalpindi	53	17	17	75
	Total	315	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 illustrates that, out of 315 respondents, only 107 (or 34% of the total) were from PARCO Muzaffar Garh, and 29% were from Honda Lahore.

Table 2
Demographic Distribution of Respondents in Relation to Education

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Bachelors	40	12.5	12.5	89
	Masters	267	85	85	98
	MS/PhD	8	2.5	2.5	100
	Total	315	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 demonstrates that the majority of the workers had master's degrees or above when they completed the questionnaire.

Table 3
Demographic Distribution of Respondents with Respect to Age

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	25-30	34	11	11	90
	31-35	71	22	22	85
	36-40	103	32	32	95.6
	More than 40	107	35	35	98
	Total	315	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 demonstrates that 35% of employees are older than 40, indicating that a large amount of the data was gathered from adults.

Table 4
Demographic Distribution of Respondents with Respect to Gender

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Male	271	86	86	96
	Female	44	14	14	88
	Total	315	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 illustrates that, accounting for 86% of the study's total population, these two sectors are likewise dominated by men.

Descriptive Statistics

It is evident from the current study's handling of skewness and kurtosis that the data is normal. The result should range from +5 to -5 when dividing the statics value by the standard error value. After dividing the skewness results with respect to standard deviation, all of the current study's results fall between +5 and -5. Additionally, the mean value in the previously stated data indicates the average of the research participants' responses.

Table 5
Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
						Statistics	Std. Error	Statistics	Std. Error
com_GRS	315	1.00	4.75	2.3500	.71905	.373	.137	-.019	.274
com_GO	35	1.00	4.40	2.4178	.64061	.228	.137	.068	.274
com_CT	315	1.00	3.50	2.1889	.48220	.184	.137	-.320	.274
com_GCC	315	1.00	2.00	1.3206	.46746	.772	.137	-1.413	.274
com_GCI	315	1.00	4.75	2.3500	.71905	.373	.137	-.019	.274
Valid N (listwise)	315								

Assessment of multi-collinearity

The variance inflation factor (VIF) is a helpful tool for figuring out whether multi-collinearity is present (Stone, 1995). According to some researchers, if the tolerance is less than 0.1 and the V.I.F is greater than 10, multi-collinearity is present in the data. The multi-collinearity with respect to the model under investigation is shown in Table 6. Considering that tolerance values are larger than 0.1 and all VIF values are less than 10. The criteria for non-multi-collinearity is met by the two values.

Table 6
Collinearity Statistics

Variable	Tolerance	VIF
com_GRS	.508	1.967
com_GO	.418	2.390
com_GRT	.470	2.129
com_GCC	.573	1.746

a. Dependent Variable: com_GCI

KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity

A test of sphericity known as KMO & Bartlett's Test is advised in order to verify the case to variable ratio for the analysis being carried out. The global accepted index for KMO is greater than 0.6, and its range is 0 to 1. The study's significance is further supported by the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, which verifies the accuracy and suitability of the data

collected in relation to the problem the study is attempting to address. It is necessary for the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity to be less than 0.05 in order to recommend factor analysis (Peri, 2014). The table below reports the research findings for the proposed construct using KMO and Bartlett's Test.

Table 7
K.M.O & Bartlett's Test

KMO & Bartlett's Test	GRS	GO	GRT	GCC	GCI
K-M-O (The Measure of of Sampling Adequacy)	.773	.827	.750	.712	.768
Approx. Chi-Square	318.55	825.268	223.779	168.084	328.975
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	55	55	6	10	28
Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Direct Effect

The table below shows direct correlation between the explanatory & dependent variables. The outcomes demonstrated that the independent variables i.e. (green orientation, green training, and green recruitment & selection) had a substantial impact on the dependent variable i.e. (green corporate image). At ρ <.05., all of the variable's relationships seemed to be significant. The table below lists relations. Green corporate image (GCI) is significantly impacted by green recruitment and selection (GRS) at (ρ <0.05, β = -0.718) and Green corporate image and Green orientation (GO) are significantly correlated at (ρ <0.05, β =0.25). Likewise, Green corporate image is significantly impacted by Green training (GRT) at (ρ <0.05, β = -0.407)

Indirect Effects

The table below shows indirect association in between the independent & dependent variables, even with or without a mediator. The results demonstrated the significance of both the paths with and without mediators, pointing to partial mediation. Along with the mediating variable (green core competence), other pathways that have an impact on the dependent variable (green corporate image), such as independent variables (green recruitment & selection, green orientation, and green training), are also important. In the current study, the mediator (Green core competence) also shows a significant path with the dependent variable. At ρ <.05., all other relationships are significant. The table below lists relations. Green core competence (GCC), which mediates between green recruitment and selection and green corporate image, is significant at (ρ=0.000, β =0.141). Similar to this, GRT and GCI have a significant relationship that is mediated by GCC at (ρ =0.000, β = -0.573) and (ρ =0.000, β =0.889), respectively. Green Orientation has a significant impact on GCI.

Table 9
Direct and Indirect Path on Dependent Variable

Variables	Total effects	Direct effects	Indirect effects	Results	Mediation level
GRS-GCC-GCI	β = .482 ρ = .000	β = -.407 P= .000	β= .889 ρ = .000	Supported	Partial Mediation
GO-GCC-GCI	β = -.372 ρ = .000	β = .201 P= .023	β = -.573 ρ = .000	Supported	Partial Mediation
GRT-GCC-GCI	β = .422 ρ = .000	β = -.718 P= .000	β = .141 ρ = .000	Supported	Partial Mediation

Analysis of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

In this case, hypothesis 1, which claims that green hiring and selection practices affect green corporate image, is validated, having significant p value i.e. .000. Similarly, there is a -.407 negative impact of Green recruitment & selection on Green corporate image.

Hypothesis 2

The GRS-GCC relationship's standardized estimates give us a value of.632, and a ρ of.000 indicates that there is a significant relationship between the two constructs. The findings thus confirm Hypothesis 2, which holds that green core competence is positively impacted by green recruitment and selection practices.

Hypothesis 3

Green corporate image and green recruitment and selection are significantly mediated by green core competence, which has a strong correlation with the mediator (weight of.889), with ρ =.000. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 is supported.

Hypothesis 4

The green corporate image and green core competence have a significant relationship (ρ = 0.000). Therefore, hypothesis 4 is validated.

Hypothesis 5

There is a significant impact of green orientation on green corporate image is supported by the GO& GCI relationship's ρ= 0.000, which supports hypothesis 5.

Hypothesis 6

A strong correlation is observed between Green image & Green training, with a ρ of.017. Thus, hypothesis 6 is validated, and the results obtained indicate that green corporate image is negatively impacted by green training, with a weight of -0.408.

Hypothesis 7

Green corporate image and green training are significantly mediated by green core competence and has negative relationship with the mediator having a weight of -.573, and has ρ=.000.

Hypothesis 8

With a correlation coefficient of.000, there is a significant relationship between green corporate image and green training. With a weight of -.718, the results show that green training has a negative effect on a company's green image, supporting hypothesis 8.

Hypothesis 9

There is a significant correlation (ρ = 0.000) between green core competence and green training. Therefore, hypothesis 9 is validated. The relationship between these two variables is similarly supported by earlier research, which the current study also supports.

Hypothesis 10

With the significant value i.e ρ.000, it has been proved that green core competence act as the significant mediator in between green training & green corporate image. The

relationship is positive, with a weight of.141 for the mediator. Therefore, hypothesis 10 is confirmed.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the current study, a significant and notable partial mediation occurred in between the relationships of proposed independent & dependent variables by Green core competence. The results, however, defied previous research and were as follows: (a) green orientation and recruitment; (b) green training; and (c) green training has a significant relationship with the green corporate image. The purpose of this study was to help organizations, particularly H.R managers in the Punjab province of Pakistan, consider the significance of three highly significant factors that could be used in the oil and automotive sectors to develop effective strategies and project a more environmentally friendly (green) image.

Similarly, results exposed that the automobile industry is far more conscious of environmentally friendly practices than the oil industry as a whole. However, when comparing it by organization, the Honda plant in Lahore produced better results than the Ghazi tractor DG Khan, which is the same automobile organization. Furthermore, the Attock refinery in Rawalpindi and PARCO Muzaffargarh both demonstrated a high level of environmental responsibility. Out of the four organizations in Punjab, the Atlas Honda plant was the most sustainable, and its employees had a more positive perception of the company as a green one.

Recommendations

Even though the current research was carried out in a methodical and planned manner, it still offers additional areas that facilitate investigation and the application of cutting-edge research techniques. This study provides following recommendations:

A conceptual model can be made better by increasing the complexity of the suggested model and by adding or removing a few constructs. By gathering data from various sample sets or populations, the same conceptual model can be used for a comparative study, and it can be applied to cross-national or cross-country analysis. Future studies could employ different sampling techniques, such as probability sampling, to improve the generalizability of their findings. The present study focuses on workers in Punjab's oil and automotive industries, though it may also be applicable to some other provinces and industries. The study's findings can be influenced by time, so longitudinal analysis can be used to comprehend the elements influencing green corporate image.

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