



Impact of Green Servant Leadership on Organizational Sustainability: The Mediating Role of Green Human Resource Management Practices

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ABSTRACT

Green human resource management practices in the presence of green servant leadership have become a prime business concern for sustainable growth. This study examines the mediating role of green HRM practices between green Servant leadership and sustainable firm performance, particularly in the manufacturing sector. Cross-sectional data were collected from 480 owners/human resource managers working in the manufacturing industry in Pakistan using a convenient sampling technique. A partial least squares approach was applied to test the hypothesized relationships. The research findings suggest that Green Servant leadership and Sustainable Firm Performance are mediated by Green Human Resource Management Practices (GHRM). This empirical study contributes to the literature by considering GHRM as a mediator using the theoretical lens of stakeholder theory and resource-based view.



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1. Introduction

Organizational sustainability was first coined around thirty years ago when the problems related to natural resources and other environmental problems started to become prominent (1983 UN Commission on Environment and Development). In 1972, a united nations conference on the 'Human Environment' was held in Stockholm, Sweden. During this conference, the impact of human activities was discussed, and their contribution to environmental damage was highlighted. Environmental damage can not only threaten our future but can also harm the future of upcoming generations (Paglia, 2021). Since then, various steps have been taken to increase awareness about a sustainable environment. Due to its impact and legal consequences, every organization feels the need to assess its sustainable performance (Niesten, Jolink, de Sousa Jabbour, Chappin, & Lozano, 2017).

The economic development in Asian economies has been made at the expense of the environment, which is counterproductive in the long run because it requires a healthy environment with an increasing growth rate for consistent development (Rajesh Sharma, Sinha, & Kautish, 2021). In most rich progressive Asian countries, environmental degradation is a burning issue that puts a bar on their sustainable development. These resource-rich countries should conserve energy to secure the environment (Rajesh Sharma et al., 2021). Interestingly, there is a relationship between biologically productive land and sea and their corresponding economic growth sustainability. There is a dire need to improve

the quality of the environment in such developing countries in Asia (Shittu, Adedoyin, Shah, & Musibau, 2021).

The environmental hazards are visible in South East Asian economies, especially Pakistan. The industry is more inclined toward getting efficient production with low wage rates and maximum production, but efficiency concerning green production is missing. Similarly, It has been observed that economic activity in metropolitan cities of Pakistan has ruined the environment badly, and we have witnessed climate changes in this region which have adverse effects on the ecological system (Shahzad, Qu, Javed, Zafar, & Rehman, 2020). The global environment bodies have promulgated global warming and climate change issues at par; however, the results do not align with the sustainable development objectives. Thus, they have realized that the decision-makers, who are corporate leaders, managers, and politicians, do not get attracted to the goals of sustainability as compared with the goals of growth rates, profitability, and economic employment objectives (Turin, 2014).

The concept of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) has obtained impetus since its introduction. However, we only witness the green practices at corporate level strategies, which are not disseminated down to the level of employees, and the employee's green service behavior is left uninvestigated. The effective implementation of GHRM can significantly improve the environmental performance of an organization through desirable environment-friendly behavior of employees. Employees' green behavior and knowledge sharing are vital in going green. The implementation of GHRM should motivate employees to implement efficient green practices, thereby achieving lower costs and preserving resources as much as possible. Such GHRM practices may involve teleconferencing, virtual interviews, recycling, online training, and energy conserving office environment. It can be achieved by lining up human resource activities with environmental considerations to alter the business approach toward corporate green strategy (Rubel, Kee, & Rimi, 2021).

Moreover, the developed nations have also initiated benchmark promotions of green human resource management. Green human resource management practices can enhance employee commitment and performance to effective production with environmental considerations intact. Green human resource management has modified human resource management culture, processes, and policies about the environment. Therefore, green human resource management practices are necessary for the sustainability of organizations (Mandip & Joey, 2011). The GHRM has been designed to help organizations to pursue environmentally friendly processes and policies (Renwick, Redman, & Maguire, 2013). Green HRM is quickly gaining its implementation in the business arena, wherein organizations intend to follow environment-friendly policies to reduce the harmful effects of industrial production.

Such preferences of buyers of Pakistani textile produce directly affect textile sector firms in Pakistan. Besides, the issues of environmental hazards related to textile production and processes have the potential to decrease the overall exports of Pakistan. It is the rationale behind conducting the present research study so that Pakistani textile production is aligned with the standard development goals of international bodies. Such organizational preferences create awareness among employees and train them for a safe environment. Indeed, many research studies have discussed different practices and dimensions of leadership, such as transactional leadership, transformational leadership, ambidexterity leadership, Servant leadership, etc. However, the literature still lacks substantial empirical research on green Servant leadership.

Theoretically, Stakeholders Theory and Resource Base Theory are the foundations for the edifice of this research study. The study's objective is to measure the effect of green Servant leadership on economic, environmental, and social problems and to check the mediating role of green HR practices and green employee performance.

Green servant leadership has been discussed to incorporate environmental concerns in organizations' production and processes (Afsar, Cheema, & Javed, 2018; Siddiquei, Asmi, Asadullah, & Mir, 2021). Therefore, in the present research study, green servant leadership has been described as the first independent variable of this study. The approach of green

Servant leadership is intended to motivate the employees to pro-environmental targets of the company while ensuring that the teammates serve according to the selected environmental profile of the organization (Manz et al., 2010; Tuan, 2021).

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Past studies on GHRM practices and Green Employee performance has concluded varied results. For instance, (Aggarwal & Sharma, 2015) has described the significance of GHRM and its pros and cons for the organization's sustainability. On the other hand, (Rangarajan & Rahm, 2011) elaborated that the organizations implementing GHRM reflect their corporate social responsibility-CSR program and set their precedence according to their environmental concerns and social primacies employees who generate an attractive organizational image for customers and prospective employees. The firms employing a strategy of GHRM give a clear indication of their corporate social program and priorities for environmental and social preservation (Rangarajan & Rahm, 2011).

Such research studies illustrated the significant positive impact of GHRM and green production on environmental performance (Amui, Jabbour, de Sousa Jabbour, & Kannan, 2017). On the other (Mishra, 2017) suggested for the developing economies that the GHRM practices like recruitment, training, and development, employee engagement, salary package, etc., promote environmental behaviors in the organization. However, these results were conditioned by support from top management and interdepartmental coordination (Mishra, 2017). In this respect, some studies have shown Servant leadership as the main predictor of environment-related performance. The concepts like Servant leadership, environment considerations, and GHRM have a commonality in encouraging and influencing the community for common interests and preservation of the environment. It is evident from the literature that servant leaders modify and mold employee behavior through stakeholder management by employing the stakeholder theory (Neubert, Hunter, & Tolentino, 2016). In organizations with environmental orientations, green servant leadership, helping attitude, and GHRM practices encourage employees to implement green practices and perform highly economically, socially, and environmentally.

2.1. Green Servant Leadership and Organizational Sustainability

Green servant leadership is related to the internal want to lead other persons and connecting own beliefs in meeting the needs of others. In this context, green servant leadership is related to respecting green considerations and environment preservation for future generations (Li, Wang, & Mobley, 2011; Tuan, 2020). The approach of green Servant leadership is intended to motivate the employees to pro-environmental targets of the company while ensuring that the teammates serve according to the selected environmental profile of the organization (Manz, Manz, Adams, & Shipper, 2011; Tuan, 2021). Similarly, sustainability considers the fulfillment of the needs, wants, and demands of the present generation so that the future needs, wants, and demands of coming generations are not compromised. After creating awareness among employees, employee motivation toward organizational sustainability is exceptionally significant, enabling them to perform high while meeting environmental standards efficiently (Kumar, Das, Das, Goswami, & Singh, 2016). Sustainability means the progress which fulfills existing wants and does not alter the needs of the present but not at the cost of future needs.

The organizational sustainability aspirations assist in developing a sense of environmental protection in employees and encourage them to manage expected hurdles effectively (Das & Singh, 2016). Therefore, the role of Servant leadership is essential in motivating employees toward sustainability and other organizational objectives (Hair, Ortinau, & Harrison, 2010). (Haddock-Fraser & Tourelle, 2010) they explored that the organizations which design their HRM strategy under consideration of GHRM while recruiting, selecting, training, and ensuring actual performance management through incentivizing environmental sustainability is quite significant in achieving the long-term objectives of a green image bearer company.

The concepts like Servant leadership, environment considerations, and GHRM have a commonality in encouraging and influencing the community for common interests and preservation of the environment. Servant leadership is the most significant subject from a

managerial perspective, which has been studied concerning many employee performance perspectives (Swanson, Kim, Lee, Yang, & Lee, 2020). Servant leaders assist their subordinates in the learning process. It involves discerning, framing, and replicating the behaviors, attitudes, and passionate responses of others. It also reflects the interaction of environmental and perceptive factors affecting the learning and behavior of humans (Bandura, 1985). Servant leaders develop skills and capabilities in their subordinates and stimulate service-focused behaviors by delegating authority and involving them in managerial roles (Liden, Wayne, Liao, & Meuser, 2014). Servant leaders use retribution to inculcate specific behaviors in a firm and encourage employees to perform specific roles and actions to achieve organizational objectives (Saleem, Zhang, Gopinath, & Adeel, 2020). Past research studies indicated servant leadership problems associated with the environment (Luu, 2019; Tuan, 2020). It indicates that Servant leadership must have some relationship with organizational sustainability. Thus following hypothesis is developed:

H1: Green servant leadership has a significant positive effect on organizational sustainability.

Sustainability is a multidimensional construct that consists of economic, social, and environmental constructs (Distaso, 2007; Pulselli, Ciampalini, Tiezzi, & Zappia, 2006). While evaluating green practices in HRM, this study has further included hypotheses:

H1a: Green servant leadership has a significant direct effect on economic performance.

H1b: Green servant leadership has a significant direct effect on environmental performance.

H1c: Green servant leadership has a significant direct effect on social performance.

H1d: Green servant leadership directly affects green human resource management (GHRM) practices.

2.2. Green human resources management practices (GHRM), Green Servant Leadership and Organizational Sustainability: Mediation Analysis

Organizations that design their HRM strategy under consideration of GHRM while recruiting, selecting, training, and ensuring actual performance management through incentivizing environmental sustainability are pretty significant in achieving the long-term objectives of a green image bearer company (Haddock-Fraser & Touelle, 2010). Applying GHRM practices and such considerations in developing a performance evaluation system that enhances employees' awareness of environmental sustainability is very effective (Renwick et al., 2013). The firms employing a strategy of GHRM give a clear indication of their corporate social program and priorities for environmental and social preservation (Rangarajan & Rahm, 2011).

This program enhances the outsider's image of the organization, and workers are attracted to be part of such a company. In this connection, employees' recognition of GHRM would associate with their impression and identification of the organization. The resource-based view theory suggests that all the resources are valued in the organizations. The green Servant leaders and employees get assistance from their leaders and will perform highly under GHRM in social, economic, and environmental objectives. The GHRM comprises green practices and policies concerning sustainability in financial, social, environmental, and HR-related issues (Renwick et al., 2013). The Servant leader in organizations having green HR objectives must achieve green employee performance through the role of GHRM Practices for sustainable economic, environmental and social performance, which are integrated to bring sustainability to the organizational system. The green performance measurement of manufacturing quality with environmental preservation (Ridhi Sharma & Gupta, 2015).

Servant leaders use performance appraisal to inculcate particular behaviors in a firm and encourage employees to perform specific roles and actions to achieve organizational objectives (Saleem et al., 2020). It indicates that Servant leadership must have some relationship with organizational sustainability. On the other hand, some other research studies illustrated the significant positive impact of GHRM and green production on environmental performance (Amui et al., 2017) and sustainability. They further concluded that the ultimate procedure of desirable environmental performance is GHRM, in which

employees are encouraged to perform green practices. In this way, the following hypotheses are developed.

H2: Green human resources management practices (GHRM) mediate the significant relationship between green Servant leadership and organizational sustainability.

H2a: Green human resources management practices (GHRM) mediate the significant relationship between green Servant leadership and economic performance.

H2b: Green human resources management practices (GHRM) mediate the significant relationship between green servant leadership and environmental performance.

H2c: Green human resources management practices (GHRM) mediate the significant relationship between green servant leadership and social performance.

H2d: Green human resource management practices significantly affect economic performance.

H2e: Green human resource management practices significantly affect environmental performance.

H2f: Green human resource management practices significantly affect social performance.

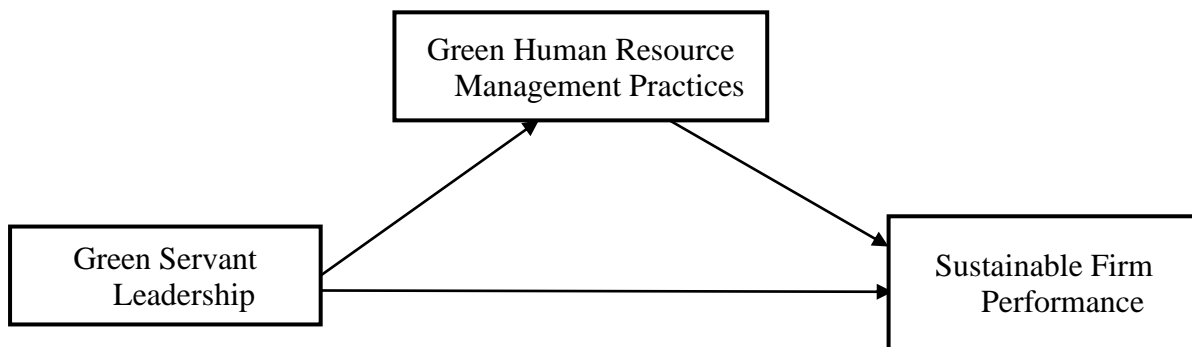


Figure 1: Research Framework

3. Methodology

The research design for the present study is a quantitative method for hypothesis testing. The quantitative research design helps in the accurate measurement of study variables, and it also assists in conducting accurate data analysis. According to (Malhotra, Nunan, & Birks, 2017), quantitative research is more effective because this research has given more objective results. As per the study conducted (Creswell, 2014), the quantitative research method is adequate to identify factors that affect a study's results or measure the intervention that can bring an outcome. Resultantly, this study's nature is suited to quantitative research design. Besides, it also suits research studies having a large sample size spread across the study respondents. The present study concentrates on all the employees working in manufacturing companies in Pakistan. In this study, the population consists of all the employees working in manufacturing companies in Pakistan. The reason for focusing on this population for the study is that the companies working manufacturing industry (such as food, chemical, textile, automotive, and pharmaceutical companies) are known to generate the highest levels of polluting emissions into the environment (Fernando & Hor, 2017) and because these are in the frontline who undergo those manufacturing processes which cause environmental pollution. Therefore, the manufacturing industry of Pakistan has been selected for this study. The total sample size for this study is 459 individuals from the target population. The study used a convenient sampling technique during data collection.

3.1. Measurements

The Questionnaire contained questions related to 1) Green Servant Leadership (GSL) with eleven questions, 2) GHRM practices (GHP) with five questions; 3) Economic Performance (ECP) with five questions, 4) Social Performance (SCP) with five questions, and 5) Environmental Performance (ENP) with five questions.

4. Results and Analysis

The measurement model represents the quality of constructs given in the study framework. The quality criteria for the measurement model are factor loadings, construct validity, and reliability. The factor loadings reflect the degree of correlation among all the items of study variables with the primary variable. The higher the value of factor loadings, the more the correlation of items with the primary construct. Considering the output given in the table below, no value of factor loadings is below 0.50, indicating a sufficient correlation between the items of variables (Hair et al., 2010). Hence, from the present study information, no item was required to be removed from the study data.

The value of reliability evaluates the consistency and stability of the study instrument. Once the results consistently repeat the study, the constructs are reliable. Therefore, it can be stated that the study instrument is reliable when they yield the same results. The most common technique to check instrument reliability is Cronbach alpha and composite reliability. Since the values of both measures are above the threshold value of 0.7, the study result's construct reliability is also proven.

Table 1
Reliability, AVE, Loadings, VIF

Construct	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Extracted (AVE)	Variance	VIF
GHRM Practices	GHP1	0.815	0.770	0.845	0.523		1.72
	GHP2	0.659					1.71
	GHP4	0.690					1.68
	GHP5	0.753					1.43
	GHP6	0.689					1.62
	GSL1	0.692					0.863
Green Servant Leadership	GSL3	0.761	0.817	0.875	0.589		1.44
	GSL4	0.732					1.70
	GSL6	0.708					1.40
	GSL7	0.701					1.84
	GSL9	0.724					1.45
	GSL10	0.658					1.46
Social Performance	GSL11	0.735	0.800	0.862	0.560		1.51
	SCP1	0.815					1.71
	SCP2	0.878					1.66
	SCP3	0.794					1.96
	SCP4	0.773					2.07
Economic Performance	SCP5	0.532	0.795	0.866	0.618		1.99
	ECP1	0.791					2.12
	ECP2	0.828					1.69
	ECP3	0.784					2.01
	ECP4	0.756					1.83
Environmental Performance	ECP5	0.548	0.774				2.06
	ENP1	0.826					2.73
	ENP2	0.783					2.02
	ENP3	0.774					1.61
	ENP5	0.760					1.15

4.1. Discriminant Validity

The HTMT is used, which depends on the estimation of correlation among study variables which elaborates the discriminant validity of the study variables. Various researchers (Kline, 2011; Toe et al., 2008) have mentioned the threshold value for HTMT, e.g., 0.85 or less, a maximum of 0.90 or less.

Table: 2
Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratios (HTMT)

	ENP	ECP	GHP	GSL	SCP
ENV. Performance					
Economic Performance	0.742				
GHRM Practices	0.784	0.846			
Green Servant Leadership	0.818	0.814	0.782		
Social Performance	0.803	0.792	0.754	0.652	

4.2. Hypotheses Testing Direct Relationships

The following hypotheses were tested using smart PLS-SEM by doing 5000 bootstrapping. The results were obtained using one-tailed analysis, which illustrates that if the values are above the t-value of 1.63, then the hypotheses will be significant. However, in the current study, all the hypotheses are found to be significant.

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Table 3
Hypotheses Testing (Direct)

Direct Hypotheses	Beta	STDEV	T Stats	P Values	Decision
GHRM Practices -> ENV. Performance	0.125	0.069	1.807	0.035	Supported
GHRM Practices -> Economic Performance	0.235	0.066	3.580	0.000	Supported
GHRM Practices -> Social Performance	0.222	0.060	3.716	0.000	Supported
Green Servant Leadership -> ENV. Performance	0.461	0.061	7.506	0.000	Supported
Green Servant Leadership -> Economic Performance	0.376	0.055	6.835	0.000	Supported
Green Servant Leadership -> Green Employee Performance	0.260	0.064	4.050	0.000	Supported
Green Servant Leadership -> GHRM Practices	0.733	0.022	33.439	0.000	Supported
Green Servant Leadership -> Social X'Performance	0.478	0.073	6.518	0.000	Supported

4.3. Hypotheses Testing Mediation Analysis

In the following discussion about mediation analysis, as mentioned in the table, the effect of the predictor on the predicted variable through the mediating variable. At the same time, the total effect represents the effect of a predictor variable on a predicted variable without the presence of a mediator. At the same time, the direct effect reflects the impact of the predictor variable on a predicted variable in the presence of the mediator.

Table 4
Mediation Hypotheses

Mediation Hypotheses	Beta	SD	T Stats	P Value	5.00%	95.00%	Decision
Green Servant Leadership -> GHRM Practices -> ENV. Performance	0.253	0.050	5.083	0.000	0.169	0.334	Mediation
Green Servant Leadership -> GHRM Practices -> Economic Performance	0.304	0.046	6.650	0.000	0.224	0.375	Mediation
Green Servant Leadership -> GHRM Practices -> Social Performance	0.330	0.048	6.836	0.000	0.250	0.409	Mediation

4.4. Discussion

The present study evaluated the impact of green Servant leadership, GHRM practices, and green employee performance on sustainability dimensions directly and indirectly. The present study evaluated the mediating role of GHRM Practices and Green Employee Performance in the relationship between green Servant leadership and sustainability performance. A novel aspect of this research study is moderator analysis of organization environmental orientation in the relationship between green Servant leadership and GHRM practices, as well as green Servant leadership and green employee performance.

The study's hypotheses and corresponding relationships were evaluated through a self-administered questionnaire adopted from past studies. For this purpose, primary data was collected from the sample of the target population. The study population comprised executives and human resource managers from various manufacturing organizations in Pakistan, including CEOs, HR directors, and HR Managers. Thus the population selected for the present research study is the HR Professionals in manufacturing companies based in Karachi, Islamabad, Lahore, Faisalabad, and Multan. Finally, a sample of 459 individuals working in managerial positions in the sectors mentioned above was selected.

After the data collection, statistical software for variance-dependent structural equation modeling (SEM) through the partial least squares (PLS) path modeling method, called Smart PLS, was used. Through this software, model estimation was performed through the acquired data. According to the data analysis through Smart PLS performed, all the study hypotheses are supported. In the Pakistani manufacturing sector, HR managers

and HRM professionals play a significant role in bringing environmental considerations into the manufacturing and production processes of the company. This study's findings are consistent with those of (Sheopuri & Sheopuri, 2015).

The study investigated the relationship between green Servant leadership and sustainability concerning the first research question and research objective. As per the study proposition, a significant positive impact was found, revealing a significant positive association between green Servant leadership and organizational sustainability. These findings coincide with the general research studies on this relationship (Elkington, 1994). The relationship with organizational sustainability is explained through the relationship with dimensions of organizational sustainability, i.e., economic performance, environmental performance, and social performance. The result is consistent with the stakeholder and resource-based theories, which are also the underpinning theories of the present study research framework (Amrutha & Geetha, 2020).

The mediating effect of green human resource management between the relationship of green Servant leadership and sustainability and its dimensions (economic performance, environmental performance, and social performance), respectively. As per the hypotheses, the results also revealed i) the mediating impact of GHRM on the relationship between green Servant leadership and organizational sustainability, ii) the mediating effect of GHRM on the relationship of green Servant leadership on economic performance, iii) the mediating impact GHRM on the relationship of green Servant leadership on environmental performance iv) the mediating effect of GHRM on the relationship of green Servant leadership on social performance. These findings are also consistent with existing literature.

5. Implications

The present study has many significant theoretical implications. While examining the moderating role of organizational environmental orientation in the relationships between green Servant leadership and GHRM practices, green Servant leadership, and sustainability, this research study validated the resource-based view theory and stakeholders theory. It has mentioned the social behavior of manufacturing employees and leadership in Pakistan for the interaction of various stakeholders, along with the environmental constructs' cost and benefit, risks, and returns. So, in this study, the relationship between various stakeholders is social and economic.

Also, the present study offers significant inferences for the administrators of manufacturing organizations who face the challenge of aligning their economic goals with sustainable development goals. Through the findings of this study, the administrators and managers of manufacturing companies in Pakistan have a better view of environmental concerns and employees' priorities and subsequent limitations in implementing environmental considerations into a firm. Thus managers and executives of organizations have better information to manage and motivate their employees for green human resource practices in Pakistan. The study outcomes can also be generalized to other countries of Asia, mainly south Asian regions, due to similar demographics, raw material resources, and climatic conditions.

5.1. Limitations of the Study and future recommendations

The main limitation of the present study can be the cross-sectional study limitations as it cannot be deployed for an extended period. Though it had cost benefits to conduct this cross-sectional study, it cannot account for a sequence of events and requires a large sample to study. Moreover, manufacturing firms face contrasting issues in the public and private sectors, and therefore the present study can also not consider these sectors and their dynamics separately. Therefore, checking the same research model for public and private organizations is recommended for future research studies.

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