

# Impact of Green Human Resource Management on Job Seekers' Attraction in a Developing Economy

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## Abstract

The main purpose of this research is to investigate the impact green human resource management practices on job seekers' attraction in a developing economy like Pakistan. It also explores the significant impact of employer reputation on the relationship of green human resource management practices on job seekers' attraction. The impact of green human resource management practices on job seekers' attraction is further investigated with the moderating role of employer reputation. A sample of 450 students attending the final year of a Master's degree in Business Administration at three universities of Southern Punjab was studied by using survey design. Green human resource management practices have positive impact on job seeker attraction and employer good reputation increases the positive impact of green human resource management practices on job seeker attraction. The results provide some inputs for organization to invest more in green human resource management activities. It also opens new avenues for organization to understand that green practices enhance the green reputation of the firms and increases job seekers' attraction towards the firm. The greening of human resource management is an emerging topic for scholars and consultants in developing economies. No previous study has explored the impact of green human resource management practices on job seekers' attraction in a developing country like Pakistan.

**Keywords:** Green human resource management, green reputation, job seekers' attraction

## 1. Introduction

Human resource management (HRM) is essential for firms to get competitive advantage, high organizational performance (Wei and Lau, 2010) and organizational success (Schuler and Jackson, 2014). In addition with such accomplishments from contemporary HRM, organizations that are striving hard to save the environment; link their corporate environmental activities with their HRM practices and this phenomenon is termed as "Green Human Resource Management" (GHRM). GHRM is based on green activities and green movements in organizations that aim to save the environment from further destruction due to business activities (Shaikh, 2010).

Renwick et al., (2013) defined GHRM as combination of HRM and environmental care activities of organization. GHRM is the HRM aspect of corporate environmental responsibility (Mandip, 2012). Organization's green reputation is an important driving force that impacts the job seekers' perception during the process of job search (Behrend et al., 2009; Williamson et al., 2003). Firms' environmental activities have a strong impact on their reputation (Gazzola, 2014; Lii and Lee, 2012). Prior studies argued that prospective job seekers consider Corporate Social Responsibility. an important factor in evaluation of companies during job seeking process (Backhaus et al., 2002). Studies have also proved the significant relationship of HRM practices and overall performance of organizations e.g. productivity, flexibility and financial performance (e.g. Ichniowski et al., 1997; Mendelson and Pillai, 1999; Collins and Clark, 2003). It is also stated that job seekers evaluate the companies as "best place to work" and firms' social and environmental activities influence their perception about the firm (Backhaus et al., 2002). In this era of intense competition, organizations strive to attain the best talent to achieve competitive advantage over rivals and the present study investigate how green human resource management activities shape the job seekers' perception about the organization and hence job seeker are attracted to pursue for the job in these organizations. Guerci et al., (2016) explored the undeviating impact of green recruitment practices to attract job seekers' in Italian context, however, the role of GHRM in attracting prospective job seekers' is not empirically explored in context of developing countries like Pakistan. This research investigates the impact of GHRM practices on job seekers' attraction and how employer reputation based on different attributes (e.g. quality, high monetary rewards) moderates the relationship between GHRM and job seekers' attraction of the firm. So the main goals of this study are

- To investigate the relationship between green human resource management practices and job seekers' intention to pursue for job in prospective firm.
- To investigate the moderating role of employer reputation on the relationship of green human resource management practices and job seeker attraction towards the firm.

## 2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

### 2.1 Green Human Resource Management

To achieve competitive advantage and to win the global war of talent, firms now implement environmental care activities as the part of organization's strategy (Daily and Huang, 2001). With this strategic implementation of environmental activities, organizations achieve good control on firm's environmental impacts (Florida and Davison, 2001). Fayyazia et al., (2015) stated that when environment management activities are merged with human resource management then this phenomenon is known as Green Human Resource Management (GHRM). It is also argued that if a firm wants to build its image as environmental sensitive organization then it requires special efforts of human resource department (Rothenberg, 2003). Researchers define GHRM in different ways, but share the same point of view that GHRM is linked with environment and organizational sustainability. The concept of GHRM was first defined by Wehrmeyer (1996) in his book, as "GHRM is the use of HRM policies to promote the sustainable use of resources within organizations and, more generally promotes the causes of environment sustainability" (Marhatta and Adhikari, 2013). Mandip (2012) stated that GHRM uses employee as a source to promote sustainable environmental initiatives and focuses on commencement of environment sensitive activities that result in high efficiencies, low costs, high employee engagement and high employee retention and these environmental sensitive activities help organizations to minimize employee carbon footprints by using teleconferencing, online interviews, recycling, telecommuting, online training, electronic filing, energy-efficient office spaces and etc. Opatha and Arulrajah (2014) stated that GHRM shapes policies, practices, and systems of organizations and create green employees for the organization, environment and society as a whole. Marhatta and Adhikari, (2013) and Zoogah, (2011) stated that GHRM refers to the use of HRM policies for effective and sustainable use of resources within business entity and generally promotes the environmental sensitive behavior in organizations. GHRM is also referred to the use of HRM practices to endorse ecological practices and to increase employee mindfulness and obligations on the issues of environmental awareness and sustainability (Mandip, 2012). Against this background we argue that GHRM is all about implementation of the concept of sustainability in organization and it involves green actions that result in high efficiencies, low wastage, high employee job engagement, improved work life balance, high employee performance and retention which helps organization to reduce employee carbon footprints. In fact GHRM promotes various green initiatives and practices with different HR functions. Shaikh (2010) stated that GHRM affects firms' HR policies and practices i.e. employee training on environmental issues and commencement of rules linked to environment protection. A green business is more effective towards environment and creates awareness on social responsibilities and economical use of resources in all stakeholders (Sathyapriya et al., 2013). Google is not only leading in green practices, additionally it is successful in publication of its green records (Kaur, 2013).

### 2.2 Impact of Green Human Resource Management on job seekers' attraction

According to Mandip (2012) the concept of GHRM is aligned with the HRM practices, such as recruitment, training, compensation etc; these HRM practices are connected with environmental practices to create GHRM practices. The framework of GHRM is aligned with recruitment and selection (Grolleau et al., 2012), employee performance appraisal and organizational culture (Jabbour et al., 2010) employee training and development (Unnikrishnan and Hegde, 2007). In the present study we are only concerned with two GHRM practices i.e. green recruitment and green training & development. GHRM framework creates green culture in organization and it is also linked with organizational environmental policy in order to attain green reputation. Organizations that are concerned about environmental safety; incorporate green goals in their vision and mission statements. Such organizations do long term planning for the green outputs e.g. the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (Albino et al., 2009). In present days, organizations take practical steps to minimize the negative impact of their activities on environment. Backhaus et al., (2002) investigated that corporate environmental and social responsibilities have great impact on employer attractiveness. Greening and Turban (2000) also confirmed that organizations with a strong reputation as environmental responsible organizations attract best talent because young job seekers are more likely to pursue for the jobs in these organizations as compared to other organizations with a poor environmental reputation. Previous researches confirmed that job seekers have great attraction for companies with clear environmental policies and practices and hence these companies win the war of talent (Albinger and Freeman, 2000; Backhaus et al., 2002; Aiman-Smith et al., 2001; Behrend et al., 2009). The above arguments are confirmed in a survey by Hill and Knowlton (2008). This study of 527 MBA students in 12 top business schools in the USA, Europe and Asia, Hill and Knowlton (2008) explored that an organization's social and environmental activities build its reputation as "attractive employer" and "best place to work". According to this survey 68% job seekers give preference to environmental conscious organizations. In another survey of 1000 HR professionals, 47% stated that employees prefer working for companies with a strong environmental approach (Phillips 2007). On the basis of above arguments we state that,

H1: Green HRM practices have significant positive impact on job seeker attraction.

### **2.2.1 Impact of Green Recruitment Practices on job seeker attraction**

It is argued that in order to attract top talent, green information by company's website plays the role of effective and efficient green recruitment tool (Walker et al., 2011; Lievens and Highhouse, 2003). It is also argued that content of information on company's web sites plays important role in attracting prospective job seekers (Baum and Kabst, 2014; Breugh, 2012; Williamson et al., 2010). Job related information and employment conditions provided on the company's website reduces the job seekers' ambiguity about the job and the employer (Celani and Singh, 2011; Thompson et al., 2008). Information provided on company's website regarding its environmental policies and practices, plays the role of green recruitment tool for the company (Walker et al., 2011). Guerci et al., (2016) also used the green information provided on company's website as green recruitment practice in their study to explore the direct impact of green recruitment practices on attracting job seekers' in Italian context. Moreover, job seekers consider the extent of information on company websites as a signal of the company's worth and quality as an employer (Yuce and Highhouse, 1998). The content and extent of information provided on the website play a significant role in order to attract qualified prospective employees (Chen et al., 2012; Dineen et al., 2007; Dineen and Noe, 2009; Gregory et al., 2013). According to previous research in the field of GHRM it is argued that potential job seekers are expected to take into consideration the company's green recruitment practices in the process of job search (Aiman-Smith et al., 2001; Greening and Turban, 2000; Jones et al., 2014; Zhang and Gowan, 2012). On the basis of above argument we conclude that the green recruitment practices i.e., quantity of green information provided on a company web site may be expected to have positive impact on potential job seekers.

H1a: Green recruitment practices have significant positive impact on job seekers' attraction.

### **2.2.2 Impact of Green Training & Development on job seekers' attraction**

Green Training & Development (GT&D) is a new concept and it is derived from the broad "green" concept. The aim of GT&D is to create awareness on different environmental issues and to implement the comprehensive green practices in the organizations that would lead to a sustainable competitive advantage in future. According to Mandip (2012) GT&D program leads to competitive advantage for organizations and covers various environmental risks. Daily et al., (2007) stated that without GT&D the organization cannot fulfill its aim of becoming green. GT&D program is different from traditional T&D program and includes the concepts of waste management, recycling, safety and save energy. GT&D program is responsible to enhance environmental knowledge on emerging environmental issues and create awareness regarding the future risks the organization may face. Saks and Haccoun, (2010) argued that T&D helps organizations to achieve long term goals and objectives. Previous studies proved that job seekers spend a substantial amount of time in search for information on the training and development opportunities offered by potential employers (Cable and Graham, 2000; Maurer et al., 1992) and this information is positively related with job seekers' intention to pursue for job in the specific company. (Allen and O'Brien, 2006; Chapman et al., 2005; Terjesen et al., 2007; Turban, 2001). We thus formulate the following hypothesis:

H1b: Green training and development opportunities have significant positive impact on job seekers' attraction towards the company.

### **2.3 Moderating role of employer reputation**

In this era of intense competition, organization's reputation is an important factor to attract the qualified and talented employees (Williamson et al., 2003; Baum and Kabst 2013). It is argued that organization's reputation is an important factor that influences the job seekers' perceptions about a firm in the job-seeking process (Behrend et al., 2009; Williamson et al., 2003). Organization's reputation indicates important job features (Cable and Turban, 2003). Organization's reputation influences the prestige and respect that individuals expect from organizational membership. Social identity theory states that individuals identify themselves through the groups in which they claim membership (Turner and Tajfel, 1986). Job seekers pursue for the job in organizations that have good reputation and expect to feel respect and personal pride as a result. Therefore, intentions of job seekers' to pursue for the job in the prospective organization are highly influenced by an organization's prestige and reputation (Cable and Turban 2003). Thus, the organizations' reputation is a significant factor that influences the applicant's intention (Baum and Kabst 2013). A significant relationship between employer reputation and job seekers' attraction is proved by researchers (e.g. Edwards, 2009; Belt and Paolillo, 1982; Gatewood et al., 1993, in Cable and Turban, 2003). According to Edward (2009) job seekers apply for jobs in organizations with the good employer reputation. Collins and Stevens (2002) stated that positive perception about the organizations depends on employer reputation and it also affects the intentions to pursue for the job in specific organizations. According to Lange et al., (2011) an organization's reputation is based on different dimensions and these dimensions and attributes may have different level of attraction for different potential candidates. For example, 'an organizations may have different types of reputation e.g. reputation as quality oriented products, reputation as high competitive rewards, reputation as poor labor relations, or high environmental practices' (Deutsch and Ross, 2003, p. 1004). In addition, different job seekers have different level of interest for different types of

reputational attributes; so job seekers have different perception about the same company based on the extent to which the company fulfills their particular interest. From these arguments we believe that different attributes of organization's reputation play a specific role in attracting potential job applicants. So we propose that  
 H2: Employer reputation has significant positive impact on job seeker attraction  
 H3: Employer reputation moderates the relationship between GHRM and job seekers' attraction.

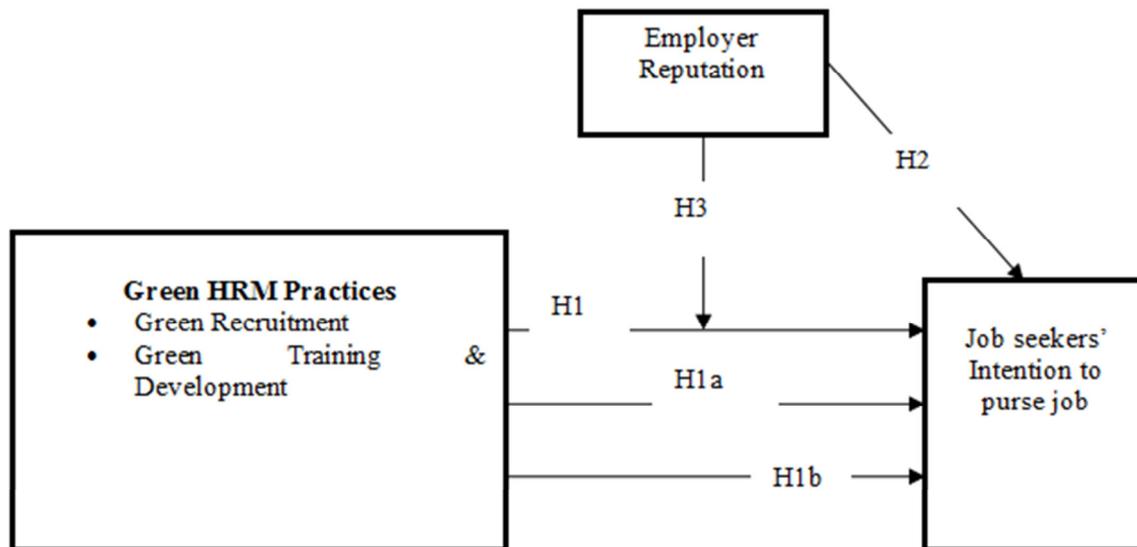


Fig 1: Hypothesized Framework

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Sample

This study implements a self administered survey to gather the primary data through well structured questionnaires. To collect data, a sample of 300 students attending the final year of a Master's degree in Business Administration at three universities of Southern Punjab was studied. The major cause for selecting Business Administration students for research is because these students have high knowledge of goals and objectives of their targeted firms. 400 questionnaires were distributed among the students of different universities of South Punjab, Pakistan. However out of 450; 300 were properly answered. The demographic analysis showed that out of 300 total respondents, 60.5% are male and 39.5% are female respondents

#### 3.2 Measurement

##### 3.2.1 Green HRM

Items for measuring the independent variable (GHRM) were adopted from Jose et al., (2011). We chose the items regarding recruitment and training. Respondents were asked to evaluate each item on a five-point scale (1 for strongly disagree; 5 for strongly agree). The overall Cronbach's alpha of three green recruitment items was .660 and three green training and development was .618.

##### 3.2.2 Applicant attraction

In lines with previous research (Ehrhart and Ziegert, 2005; Williamson et al., 2010), this study measured the attraction of the company for prospective job applicants through a set of items taken from Highhouse et al., (2003), and Williamson et al. (2010). Respondents were asked to evaluate each item on a five-point scale (1 for strongly disagree; 5 for strongly agree). The 11 job seekers' attraction items were found to have an overall Cronbach's alpha of .717.

##### 3.2.3 Employer reputation

The repute of a corporation as an employer was measured by using items from Williamson et al. (2010) and Walsh and Beatty (2007). A five-point scale (1 for strongly disagree; 5 for strongly agree) was used to evaluate the respondents. The overall Cronbach's alpha of employer reputation items was .829.

### 4. Analysis and Results

#### 4.1 Reliability

Composite reliability for each construct was above 0.60 (Bagozzi et al., 1998). The construct green recruitment is .660 and reliability of green training and development is .618, reliability of job seekers' intention is .717 and reliability for employer reputation .829. Correlations mean and standard deviations of variables are given in Table I. Table II signify the loading of factors used in this study.

**Table 1: Correlations, Mean and Standard Deviation of the population**

Correlations		1	2	3	4
Green recruitment	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	300			
Green training & development	Pearson Correlation	.500**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
	N	300	300		
Employer Reputation	Pearson Correlation	.771**	.702**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		
	N	300	300	300	
Job Seeker Attraction	Pearson Correlation	.508**	.579**	.600**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	300	300	300	300

**\*\*.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

**Table II: Factor Analysis of Scales**

	Item Statement	Factor Loading
<b>Green HRM</b>		
<b>Green Recruitment</b>		
GR1	Environmental standard of this firm attracts job seekers.	.921
GR2	This company recruits employees that have environmental awareness.	.983
GR3	Recruitment in this firm takes environmental motivation into consideration.	.834
<b>Green Training</b>		
GT1	This company conducts environmental training continuously.	.765
GT2	Environmental training is considered a priority in this company.	.853
GT3	This company invest huge amount on environmental training.	.921
<b>Employer Reputation</b>		
ER1	This management of this company pays attention to the needs of its employees.	.766
ER2	This management of this company treats its employees well.	.688
ER3	This company has good reputation as employer.	.734
ER4	This company possesses excellent leadership.	.688
ER5	This company seems to have good employees.	.722
<b>Job Seekers' Attraction</b>		
JA1	I would like to sign up for an interview in this firm.	.921
JA2	I would like to send my resume to this company.	.920
JA3	I will exert great effort to work for this firm.	.732
JA4	I would keenly accept a job in this company.	.845
JA5	I would like this firm to recruit on my campus.	.911
JA6	This firm is my first choices as an employer.	.910
JA7	I would like to suggest this company to my friends.	.766

#### 4.2 Hypothesis testing and analysis

This study used hierarchical moderated multiple regression analyses (Cohen and Cohen, 1983) to check hypotheses. It was found that green recruitment ( $\beta=0.306^{***}$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) and green training and development ( $\beta=0.325^{***}$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), both have significant positive impact on Job seekers' intentions, respectively. H1a and

H1b are accepted So H1 is also accepted. H2 was confirmed as employer reputation was found to have a significant positive impact on job seeker intention ( $\beta=0.330$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). The moderated regression analysis seeks to determine the change in  $R^2$  that results during a hierarchical test of three regression equations. In the first regression, the dependent variable job seekers' intention is regressed on the GHRM practices e.g. green recruitment and green training and development.

In second regression, the job seekers' intention is regressed with both the independent variable GHRM practices and moderator employer reputation. In the third regression, an interaction term obtained by multiplying the independent variable with the moderator variable is also entered. The increase in  $R^2$  value from 0.700 to 0.745 shows that there is a statistically significant direct moderation effect of employer reputation ( $F=170.200$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Employer reputation enhance the positive effect of green recruitment ( $\beta=-0.559$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and green training and development ( $\beta=0.455$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) on job seeker intention.

**Table III: Regression Analysis**

<b>Job Seekers' Attraction</b>			
	<b>Regression Equation 1</b>	<b>Regression Equation 2</b>	<b>Regression Equation 3</b>
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	0.665	0.700	0.745
<b>Adj R<sup>2</sup></b>	0.689	0.715	0.735
<b>F</b>	273.443***	240.037***	170.200***
<b>Independent Variable</b>			
Green recruitment	0.306***	0.265**	0.199**
Green training & development	0.325***	0.277**	0.236**
<b>Moderating variable</b>			
Employer reputation		0.330***	0.220**
<b>Interaction</b>			
Employer reputation*Green Rec			0.559**
Employer reputation*Green T & D			0.455**
Notes: ** $p<0.005$ ; *** $p<0.001$			

## 5. Discussion

This research is based on a sample of Pakistani students from different universities of southern Punjab. This study concludes that young generation of Pakistan is more conscious about environment friendly activities and policies of the companies. With regard to the this aspect, the study finds out that green recruitment practices have a significant positive influence on the job seekers' intention to pursue for job in a specific organization. The study also concludes that GT&D have significant positive impact on job seekers. This study also confirms that relationship between GHRM practices and job seekers' attraction is further strengthening by employer reputation. This shows that employer reputation based on different attributes (quality, customer care etc.) has additive effect on environment conscious job seekers. Overall this study concludes that environmental care and consciousness is arising in Pakistani organizations and job seekers.

### 5.1 Managerial Implications

This study has significant managerial implications. For many developing countries, economic conditions and recruitment system plays a major role in influencing job seekers' behavior. The model used in this study argues that, in developing countries GHRM practices also influence job seekers intention to pursue for job. Outcomes of this study are critically important for HR managers and recruitment officers specifically trying to attract the best talent. This study suggests that GHRM practices positively influence the job seekers' intention to pursue for job, therefore HR managers should focus on more green human resource management initiative to attract the best young talent. This study enhances managers' understanding to use better strategies for attracting the young environmental conscious job seekers. The result of this study also suggests that managers can win the war of talent by combining strategies relating to employer reputation along with green reputation. Managers could design their future strategies based on the result of this study.

### 5.2 Limitations and Future Research

This study has some limitations that provide basis for further research. First of all, the present study is only focused on Pakistani job seekers. Pakistan has its own specific economic conditions, organizational setting and recruitment practices so this study cannot be generalize for other developing countries. Further research in other countries with different cultures will measure the overall attitude of young job seekers towards GHRM and green reputation. Second, this study does not measure attributes of employer reputation that makes green reputation

more worthy for the job seekers. In future it would be interesting to research that which attribute strengthens the relationship between green reputation and job seekers attraction most significantly. Third, this study only focuses on young job seekers and future research would therefore benefit from behavioral comparison between different age groups. It would be interesting to know that older age group of respondent may have different attitude towards GHRM and this might affect their attraction towards specific organizations. Fourth, this study focuses on students of Southern Punjab which is underdeveloped part of Pakistan. Future research would benefit from testing the same model on larger samples in other developed cities of Pakistan. By comparing results, it would be interesting to consider whether job applicants in developed cities have a different attitude towards “green” then from respondents of underdeveloped cities of Pakistan.

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