



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Adoption of Green Human Resource Management Practices in Pakistan: Case of Leather Industry**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study aims to examine the adoption and implementation of Green Human Resource Management (Green HRM) practices in Pakistan's leather industry, emphasizing their role in promoting environmental sustainability, operational efficiency, and competitiveness. Pakistan's leather industry is a significant contributor to the national economy but faces considerable environmental challenges. Green HRM practices, such as eco-friendly recruitment, training, performance management, and reward systems, present an opportunity to address these challenges and align industry operations with sustainability goals. The research employed a survey-based approach, gathering data from 394 organizations within the leather industry. The study assessed the extent of Green HRM adoption and explored factors influencing variability in implementation, such as resources, awareness, and organizational priorities. The findings indicate moderate adoption levels of Green HRM practices across the surveyed organizations. Variability in implementation was observed, driven by differences in organizational capacity and awareness. Key gaps were identified in the standardization of practices, comprehensive training programs, and alignment of HR initiatives with broader environmental objectives. To embed Green HRM as a strategic priority in Pakistan's leather industry, the study recommends fostering industry-wide collaboration, providing policy support, and launching capacity-building initiatives. These efforts should focus on enhancing awareness, standardizing practices, and aligning HR strategies with environmental sustainability goals to drive a greener and more resilient industry.

**KEYWORDS** Green HRM, Green Training, Leather

**Introduction**

Harsh Global conditions have forced organizations to incorporate sustainability into their overall strategies. As a result, the idea of Green Human Resource Management (Green HRM) has surfaced, which merges classical human resource practices with sustainability targets (Renwick et al., 2013; Jabbour & Santos, 2008). Considering Pakistan, where socio economic problems and environmental destruct are in co-existence (Khan et al., 2020), organisations can use the Green HRM practice as a means of contributing positively towards protection of environment and sustainable development. In Green HRM, it is the policies, practices and systems of human resource management that promote environmental sustainability. That is the case because it integrates eco initiatives in the HR functions such as recruitment, training, performance management and employee engagement to make employee behave in a way that is environmentally responsible (Renwick et al., 2013; Jackson et al., 2011). Green HRM is developed by Renwick et al. (2013), it includes practices that create efficiency in the organization and reduce environmental impact. Paperless documentation, telecommuting, green training programs and incentives for eco friendly workplace behavior are key practices (Jabbour, 2011). Green HRM promotes sustainability by

cultivating a culture in which employees participate actively in the attainment of an organisation's environmental goals (Bansal & Roth, 2000). Organizational frameworks that incorporate sustainability are no longer optional, but strategic imperative. Sustainability means the long term viability of a business and deals with the current environmental problems like climate change, resource depletion and pollution (Elkington, 1997). According to Jackson et al. (2011), adopting sustainable practices by businesses exerts a positive influence on the business from the perspective of gaining competitive advantage, enhancing reputation, and meeting stakeholder expectations. This transition is critical where Green HRM links workforce behavior to sustainability goals, prompts innovation, and cuts operational costs (Freeman, 1984). As an example, green office practices like energy saving and waste reduction not only contributes to reduction of an organization's ecological footprint but also increase employee satisfaction and loyalty by sharing values (Ahmed & Ullah, 2020).

Green HRM practices are particularly pertinent to the socio-economic and environmental development of Pakistan. Pakistan has quite serious environmental problems like deforestation, water scarcity, and air pollution and also rapid urbanisation and industrialisation (Khan et al., 2020; Ahmed & Ullah, 2020). World Bank data shows Pakistan is one of the worst hit nations by environmental degradation, which is posing an annual drain of billions of dollars to the economy due to health impacts and resource depletion (World Bank, 2021). In addition, innovation is needed in overcoming socio economic challenges such as unemployment, inequality and limited resources (Saeed et al., 2019). Green HRM can fill this gap when green jobs are created in green sectors and when sustainable workplace practices are encouraged (Renwick et al., 2013; Jabbour & Santos, 2008). In addition, Pakistan's efforts to meet the international environmental commitments such as United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) (Khan et al., 2020; United Nations, 2022) can be assisted by introducing Green HRM. One example of this is the link of green HRM to the SDGs, for instance SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 13 (Climate Action) due to the focus on the sustainability of employment and environmental practices. Companies that practice such things make a contribution to the national sustainability goal as well as market competitiveness. Ahmed et al. (2021), (Jackson et al., 2011). For instance, companies in textile and manufacturing industries, which are very important to Pakistan economy and pollution, can practice green HR in decreasing the environmental impact by means of energy efficient process and workforce environmental conscious training (Jabbour 2011; Ahmed and Ullah 2020). This section follows the summary when Green HRM is considered as a transformative approach of aligning human resource management to environmental sustainability. The use of CSR in Pakistan can be utilized to deal with critical socio economic and environmental challenges and part of modern organizational strategy (Renwick et al., 2013; Khan et al., 2020). By leveraging Green HRM, organizations in Pakistan can achieve a dual purpose: followers to make better, more competitively improved and healthier, more environmentally sustainable state.

The main focus of this study is to find out how the Green HRM practices are adopted and implemented in Pakistani leather industry. The leather industry is also one of the most resource intensive and environmentally challenging sectors in Pakistan and makes a sizeable contribution to the country's export returns and employment. This study aims at finding out how sustainable practices are incorporated into human resource management strategies of the organizations in this sector and the eventual environmental and organizational outcomes. This study not only contributes to the existing body of knowledge about industrial practices in harmony with Pakistan's environment and economy objectives but it also sets out through the achievement of these objectives to create a knowledge base on the possibility of Green HRM to play a

role at this crossroad. The increasing demand for ecofriendly products in the international markets makes this study's insight useful for improving Pakistan leather industry's global competitiveness.

A detailed study of the Green HRM practices in Pakistan's leather industry is undertaken in this research. Further, it involves an evaluation of HR policies and operational strategies and also an organization culture in leading leather companies in the country. With regard to the relevance of environmental sustainability to industrial growth, this study focuses on a high pollution and resource dependent industry, to illustrate how environmental sustainability can apply to industrial growth. (Renwick et al., 2013; Jabbour, 2011). Pakistan is a big leather industry and the leather industry is a big economic sector in Pakistan a major contributor in GDP and employment. Leather processing is high in chemicals, water and energy consumption, having a large environmental footprint (Khan et al., 2021; Saeed et al., 2019). This is an important research because it sets out to discover how Green HRM can relieve these environmental outcomes by encouraging green practices among employees (Ahmed et al., 2021). Learning about the adoption and outcomes of Green HRM in this sector can help organizations improve their environmental compliance, reduce costs and reputation in the eco conscious markets (Renwick et al., 2013; Jackson et al., 2011). For instance, a green training program and eco friendly recruitment practices will improve resource efficiency and improve part of employee engagement (Jabbour & Santos, 2008). From a policy perspective, this research provides some novel insights for policymakers on how to encourage sustainable industrial practices by means of Green HRM. Identifying these challenges, therefore, allows policy formulation and incentives that promote greening initiatives (Bansal & Roth, 2000). Subsidies, tax allowances for industries that invest in green technologies and training can be introduced in the case to encourage greater use of eco friendly practices.

Furthermore, study practically provides industry leaders actionable strategies to integrate sustainability into HR functions such that workforce behavior is in line with environmental goals (Freeman, 1984; Ahmed & Ullah, 2020). This study is particularly suitable to Pakistan's larger sustainability agenda as recorded in its commitments to the Paris Agreement and United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The research focuses on the leather industry, where pollution, water scarcity and waste management are critical environmental challenges (United Nations, 2022). Additionally, the study shows the role of Green HRM in development of green jobs and boosting of the global competitiveness of Pakistan's exports for the economic resilience and sustainability (Khan et al., 2020; Ahmed et al., 2021).

This significance and research scope indicates the need for Green HRM as an innovative way to tackle environmental problems in the leather industry. This study also helps bridge the academic discourse on Green HRM and provides practical solutions to sustainable industrial growth in Pakistan (Renwick et al., 2013; Jackson et al., 2011). The alignment of the leather industry guarantees the sector not only economic fulfilment, but also a contribution in its entirety towards Pakistan's environmental and social well being.

## **Literature Review**

### **Theoretical Framework of Green HRM**

An emerging field of Green HRM is one which incorporates environmental management into standard human resource management processes. This is a strategic view of the business that can be used to align HR policies and activities to support its

sustainability goals to build an eco friendly work environment (Renwick et al., 2013; Jabbour, 2011). Green HRM principles reflect eco aware HRM recruitment, green training and development, green performance appraisals and employee involvement in green initiatives (Jackson et al., 2011, Ahmed & Ullah, 2020). Green HRM contributes both to organizational efficiency and ecological sustainability by fostering pro environmental behavior amongst employees (Bansal & Roth, 2000; Jabbour & Santos, 2008). The integration of environmental goals in all aspects of the HR functions is one of the core ideas in Green HRM. This includes, for example, green recruitment, which tries to employ people who are aware of the environment or have skills competent to practice sustainability (Khan et al., 2020; Renwick et al., 2013). Green training programs also target employees to improve their environmental awareness and capabilities on eco friendly practices (Saeed et al., 2019). Employees are motivated to meet sustainability targets of the organization through green performance management systems; in fact, the employees are given incentives to achieve the targets in case of their significant contribution towards organizational environmental goals (Jackson et al., 2011; Jabbour, 2011). Another main principle is the reinforcement on cultivation of a sustainability oriented culture. It means incorporating environmental values in organizational mission statements, policies and other daily operations (Ahmed et al., 2021). The research indicates that it is organizations with strong green cultures that have higher employee motivation and retention rates, because employees want to work for environmentally responsible companies (Jabbour & Santos, 2008; Freeman, 1984). Additionally, integration of Green HRM into organizational culture ensures that employee's behavior is consistent with sustainability goals, encourages innovation and long term sustainable environmental stewardship (Elkington, 1997; Ahmed & Ullah, 2020).

A few theoretical models serve as the foundation for the understanding and application of Green HRM. The two most prominent are the sustainability model and the resource based view (RBV) of the firm. Second, the sustainability model requires that one espouses a balance between the economic, social and environmental aspects of organizational practice (Elkington, 1997; Renwick et al., 2013). In this model, Green HRM is aligned with this view because it ensures that HR practices contribute to both financial performance and environmental responsibility and societal well being (Jackson et al., 2011). In accordance with the triple bottom line framework of Elkington (1997), such sustainability is attained by organizations focusing on providing "people, planet, profit." This model is operationalized in Green HRM, which incorporates ecofriendly practices in workforce management also to address environmental concerns, as well as employee well being (Bansal & Roth, 2000; Ahmed & Ullah, 2020). According to the resource based view of the firm, resources and capabilities of an organization are the determinants of its competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Jabbour, 2011). From this viewpoint, Green HRM treats human capital as a key factor resource for the attainment of sustainability goals. Training, motivation and engagement of employees in ecofriendly practices make them an asset for organisations that want environmental innovation and compliance (Jabbour and Santos, 2008; Saeed et al., 2019). For instance, green investments in training and skills development enable companies to empower employees with the knowledge of how to implement sustainable technologies and processes, ultimately leading to more favorable environmentally and economically (Renwick et al., 2013; Khan et al., 2020). Another lens to understand Green HRM is institutional theory, which emphasises how external pressures (regulatory requirements and societal expectations), shape organizational behaviour (Bansal & Roth, 2000; Ahmed et al., 2021). Owing to these pressures companies implement Green HRM practices to sustain legitimacy and fulfill stakeholder demands. For instance, in manufacturing and textile industry compliance to the environmental regulations requires companies to implement environmental compliance into the HR

policies (Saeed et al., 2019; Jackson et al., 2011). The institutional theory emphasizes the impact of government policies, as well as international standards on corporate sustainability behaviors that have made Green HRM an important means to achieve synchronisation of organisations with these expectations. Furthermore, stakeholder theory focuses on the fact that organizational stakeholders' interests should be met (i.e. employees, customers and community) (Freeman, 1984; Jabbour, 2011). Aligning with this theory, green HRM has the purpose to appeal employees in sustainability initiatives and to response social expectations of conducting environmentally responsible business (Ahmed & Ullah, 2020). Bansal and Roth (2000) and Renwick et al. (2013) provide examples of how organizations that adopt Green HRM enjoy increases in stakeholder trust and loyalty, which ultimately enhances their long term success. For instance, by involving employees in sustainability initiatives, including energy saving campaigns or recycling programs, not only can relationships with internal and external stakeholders be strengthened but the environmental outcomes can also be enhanced. Through the integration of these theoretical models, Green HRM is shown to be a multidimensional approach which not only increases organisational sustainability, but in so doing, also aligns to societal and environmental expectations and thereby increases long term competitiveness and resilience.

The above mentioned theoretical models have been integrated into one robust framework which could serve as a guide in the implementation and understanding of Green HRM. Renwick et al. (2013), Jackson et al. (2011) stress out the strategic significance of integrating HR functions for the achievement of organizational competitiveness and environmental stewardship. For example, integrating the RBV and sustainability models helps organizations use its human capital to generate innovative responses to environmental problems (Barney, 1991; Jabbour & Santos, 2008). The employees to be trained in sustainable practices are not only useful assets but also add to innovation and compliance with environmental standards and help in operational efficiency (Ahmed & Ullah, 2020; Saeed et al., 2019). At the same time, institutional and stakeholder theories inform how external pressures and expectations should be addressed. According to the Institutional theory, government regulations and societal needs compel organizations (companies) to adopt Green HRM practices in order to remain legitimate and comply with the state rules and the demands of society (Bansal & Roth, 2000; Ahmed et al., 2021). In addition, stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984; Jabbour, 2011) underscores the need for attending to the needs of the stakeholders including employees, customers, and communities through more sustainable practices. For instance, organizations that engage employees in green initiatives, and clearly connect their objectives with those of stakeholders, are reported to earn more trust, loyalty and competitive edge (Renwick et al., 2013; Khan et al., 2020). Briefly, this theoretical basis of Green HRM lies on the dimension of activities, that is, the environmental, economic and social aspect of workforce management (Elkington, 1997; Ahmed et al., 2020). Organizations can make use of these theories to construct an elaborate Green HRM strategy that involves changing the workforce to match wider global environmental goals on the basis of societal requirements (Jackson et al., 2011; Renwick et al., 2013). Additionally, these frameworks provide actionable insights for matching internal capabilities to external environmental needs in order to maintain organizational resilience and success in the longer term.

### **Global Practices of Green HRM**

The Green Human Resource Management Practices (Green HRM Practices) has caught some global attention by organizations in response to sustainability rise, overcoming environmental challenges and due to adherence to international standards.

There is, however, large variation in the implementation and sophistication of the Green HRM practices among developed and developing countries. These variations are shaped in part by economic resources, regulatory environments, cultural attitudes, and organizational priorities.

The Green HRM practices have been taken up by developed countries including the United States, Germany and Japan. In these regions, these organizations have integrated sustainability into the corporate strategy and use advanced technologies to support eco-friendly practices (Renwick et al., 2013; Jabbour, 2011). Thus, companies in developed countries apply green recruitment strategies in which the environmental values are given great importance during hiring, and candidates with sustainability orientation are preferred (Jackson et al., 2011; Ahmed and Ullah, 2020). Sustainability practices are also built into training and development programs in developed countries. For example, the workshops on energy efficiency, waste management or on the application of green technologies (Bansal & Roth, 2000; Jabbour & Santos, 2008), belong to the green training. In addition, performance management systems usually incorporate sustainability metrics, like an employee's input to reduce resource use or comply with environmental objectives (Renwick et al., 2013; Khan et al., 2020). The incentive programs, including financial bonuses, public recognition, etc. to achieve the sustainability targets, encourage the employees to perform the behaviors that are environmentally responsible (Elkington, 1997; Saeed et al., 2019). The institutional environment is also very important in developed countries. Organizations are pressed by stakeholders and are compelled by stringent environmental regulations to employ comprehensive green HRM practices (Freeman, 1984; Ahmed et al., 2021). For instance, the directives of the European Union for sustainability and corporate social responsibility advise companies to incorporate green practices in their operations (Renwick et al. 2013; Jabbour, 2011). Moreover, there is cultural awareness of environmental issues existing in developed countries which gives birth to the vast support for the organizational sustainability efforts of employees and customers (Jackson et al., 2011; Ahmed & Ullah, 2020).

On the other hand, economic and cultural issues, as well as institutional constraints, limit adoption of Green HRM practices in developing countries, such as Pakistan, India and Nigeria. These countries have organizations facing problems like lack of financial resources, weak regulatory frameworks and poor awareness about sustainability (Khan et al., 2020; Saeed et al., 2019). Companies cannot commit to investing in complete sustainability initiatives because of these constraints; therefore, Green HRM practices are less formalized and less widespread in developing nations compared to developed nations (Ahmed & Ullah, 2020; Bansal & Roth, 2000). For example, green recruitment in developing countries is often neglected since organizations in those countries will normally choose to utilize cost efficiency over the environmental perspective (Renwick et al., 2013; Jabbour, 2011). As with training programs, programs on sustainability are also underdeveloped, with only a few organizations investing in skill building initiatives to help develop employees' eco-friendly behaviors (Jackson et al., 2011; Jabbour & Santos, 2008). These regions generally do not have environmental metrics in their performance management systems and only use traditional metrics like productivity and financial performance (Ahmed et al., 2021). Nevertheless, these limitations are mitigated as some developing countries are thriving in Green HRM adoption especially in response to the rise in globalization and international market pressure (Freeman, 1984; Saeed et al., 2019). Textiles and manufacturing in Pakistan, which are export oriented, are now beginning to adopt basic Green HRM practices in order to meet the environmental standards of the international buyers (Khan, et al., 2020; Ahmed, et al., 2021). For instance, modern organizations are

promoting the development of resource efficient processes and giving basic green training to their employees (Renwick et al., 2013; Elkington, 1997) because of meeting global sustainability requirements. Although these practices are scaled and effective, however, there is a big gap between policy implementation and the real outcomes (Jabbour, 2011; Ahmed & Ullah, 2020).

The varying resources levels, awareness and institutional support of Green HRM practices in developed and developing countries are the key differences. Green HRM in developed countries refers to proactive strategies, well developed policies and high level of integration in corporate frameworks (Renwick et al., 2013; Jabbour, 2011). In these countries, organizations usually see sustainability as a strategic advantage and have invested in building a greener climate (Jackson et al., 2011; Ahmed, & Ullah, 2020). For instance, green principles are integrated by advanced economies such as Germany and Japan into their HR processes, backed by strong regulations and culture that owns environmental issues (Elkington, 1997; Bansal & Roth, 2000). On the other hand, Green HRM practices in developing countries tend to be reactive as they are pushed by the external pressure from international regulations or buyer demands (Khan et al., 2020; Saeed et al., 2019). A lack of financial resources and institutional support hinders organization's ability to fully adopt green practices (Ahmed et al., 2021). For example, Green HRM practices tend to be limited in export orientated industries like textiles in Pakistan and India (Jabbour & Santos, 2008; Renwick et al., 2013), where compliance with international environmental standards motivates these practices mainly to satisfy buyers and not as a strategic initiative. Cultural factors are also in play; in most developing countries, environmental issues have not been included into the workforce, and hence, finding ways of initiating Green HRM initiatives to the workforce is difficult (Freeman, 1984; Ahmed et al., 2020). In such contexts sustainability may be seen as a low priority by employees compared to more economic considerations, for example, the security of the job or cost efficiency (Saeed et al., 2019; Bansal & Roth, 2000). But there are places where we converge. Employee engagement is considered to be important not only in developing but also in developed countries for achieving sustainability goals (Jackson et al., 2011; Renwick et al., 2013). Globally initiatives, such as green teams, eco-friendly workplace practices, and employee participation in environmental campaigns are seen to varying degrees of sophistication (Elkington, 1997; Khan et al., 2020). For instance, both set of organizations have noted success in employee engagement through sustainability training and green behavior incentives (Jabbour & Santos, 2008; Ahmed & Ullah, 2020).

It also shows that the need for Green HRM tailored for different contexts exists. Role models are developed countries, which developed frameworks and best practices which developing countries can adapt to their particular challenges (Renwick et al., 2013; Jackson et al., 2011). Germany, Japan and the United States, as developed nations, have highly developed Green HRM practices, underpinned by very strong regulatory frameworks, advanced technology and a high level of environmental awareness (Elkington, 1997; Jabbour, 2011). These nations show how active incorporation of the green principles into HR functions including recruitment, training, and performance management could improve sustainability and employee engagement (Bansal & Roth, 2000; Ahmed & Ullah, 2020). International collaboration, capacity building initiative and government incentives can be extremely beneficial for developing countries for the adoption of Green HRM (Khan et al., 2020; Ahmed et al., 2021). For example, international organizations, such as CITES can provide technical expertise and funding to green training programs and resource efficient practices (Freeman, 1984; Saeed et al., 2019). Likewise, the governments of developing nations could facilitate the Green HRM through policies that would motivate sustainability, for instance providing subsidies for

using green technologies or tax breaks for companies that are green oriented (Renwick et al., 2013; Jabbour & Santos, 2008). To summarize, as contrast to developed and developing countries the adoption of Green HRM practices but the rising global spotlight on sustainability makes it worth moving these practices worldwide (Jackson, McLean, and Hamilton, 2011; Ahmed, Kazmi, and Masood, 2020). Adapted to local constraints, learning from the experience of developed nations, organizations in developing countries can develop their Green HRM Capabilities in a gradual manner to reach environmental as well as organizational sustainability (Elkington, 1997; Bansal & Roth, 2000). Efforts such as these are necessary to realign workforce behavior with broader environmental goals, and secure long term competitive advantage in an ever greener world economy (Renwick et al., 2013; Khan et al., 2020).

### **Current Status of Green HRM**

Green Human Resource Management (Green HRM) as a concept is still in the infancy stage in Pakistan and there are few research and adoption in industries. The desire to adopt ecofriendly practices is fuelled by growing environmental concerns and the international pressure to promote sustainability but the introduction of Green HRM in Pakistani organizations is sporadic and sector specific (Khan et al., 2020; Ahmed & Ullah, 2020). In this part, existing research on Green HRM in Pakistan is discussed, important gaps to be filled in Green HRM, and cultural and regulatory factors that may impact the adoption of such practices in the country are elaborated. The studies regarding Green HRM in Pakistan trail behind that of the developed countries. Whilst such studies have concluded that most of the previous studies have focused on general organisational sustainability, paying little attention to the role of human resource practices in the achievement (Renwick et al., 2013; Jabbour, 2011). For example, there are only a few studies that have focused on Green HRM in export oriented sectors, such as textiles and leather while what prompts the adoption of eco friendly practices is the demand of the international buyers (Khan et al., 2020; Saeed et al., 2019). While some of the organizations have started to adopt the environmental considerations in their HR and functions, studies show that they have not done it comprehensively and did not link them strategically with other sustainability goals (Ahmed et al., 2021; Jabbour & Santos, 2008).

The literature is missing wide sectoral interpretation of Green HRM adoption as a major gap. Current research on the subject mostly comprises of case studies of individual organizations giving limited insight into the industry wide trends and challenges (Jackson et al., 2011; Ahmed & Ullah, 2020). Moreover, there is very little known about the impact of Green HRM on organizational outcomes such as employee engagement, operational efficiency and environmental performance (Khan et al., 2020) in the Pakistani context. Yet, the lack of longitudinal studies precludes us from making long term analysis of long term benefits and challenges of Green HRM adoption (Renwick et al., 2013; Ahmed et al., 2021). Second, there is a paucity of research at the points of convergence between cultural and regulatory factors and Green HRM practices. It is important to understand these dimensions in order to tailor Green HRM strategies for Pakistani socio economic and cultural environment (Bansal & Roth, 2000; Freeman, 1984). The addressing of these gaps would mean a fuller picture of Green HRM and how it can be effectively utilized and scaled up in different industries in Pakistan. Attitudes and beliefs rooted in the cultural context are crucial in practice of Green HRM adoption in Pakistan. The majority of people and workforce are not environmentally conscious in fact they are guided by more immediate economic concerns such as job security and financial stability (Ahmed & Ullah, 2020; Saeed et al., 2019). Thus, employees might also think the sustainability initiatives are not a priority in relation to other organisational



priorities (Jabbour & Santos, 2008; Khan et al., 2020). Green HRM implementation is also influenced by hierarchical and authority driven organisational culture, that exist in Pakistan. Employees are often not involved in any discussions or initiatives within sustainability (Renwick et al., 2013), and so, decision making is often centralized. The use of this top down approach prevents the successful integration of Green HRM practices since employee engagement and participation influence the creation of a green workplace culture (Jackson et al., 2011; Ahmed et al., 2021).

In addition, HR professionals and the employees lack awareness and training regarding environmental issues which hinders the adoption of Green HRM. Sustainability is not seen as everyone's business in many organizations, breaking the link between environmental objectives and day to day operating practice (Bansal & Roth, 2000; Jabbour, 2011). These cultural barriers must be addressed through targeted awareness campaigns, capacity building programmes and programmes to embed environmental values within organisational culture (Freeman, 1984; Ahmed and Ullah, 2020). Pakistan's regulatory environment is simultaneously a challenge and an opportunity for Green HRM. Despite the country enacting environmental regulations, such as the Pakistan Environmental Protection Act of 1997, enforcement is weak, especially in industries with a large environmental footprint, (e.g., textiles, leather and energy) (Khan et al., 2020; Ahmed et al., 2021). Many organisations have chosen to put cost reduction ahead of compliance with environmental standards in the absence of stringent regulatory oversight (Renwick et al., 2013; Jabbour & Santos, 2008). Moreover, the national environmental policies are not aligned much with the companies' practices. In contrast to the developed nations where government incentives and support are used to support businesses to apply Green HRM (Saeed et al., 2019; Ahmed, & Ullah, 2020), the policy frameworks relevant for encouraging Green HRM is not robust in Pakistan. For example, awards for sustainability business practices, tax incentives, or subsidies for green technologies are rare and organizations have little motivating reason to invest in Green HRM initiatives (Bansal & Roth, 2000; Jackson et al., 2011). However, there is indication of progress. Some Pakistani organizations have been spurred on by international trade agreements and by pressures in global supply chains to adopt basic Green HRM practices (Renwick et al., 2013; Khan et al., 2020). In the first place, export oriented industries are increasingly realizing that sustainability is essential to the competitiveness in green markets (Jabbour, 2011; Saeed et al., 2019). Yet, these efforts are usually reactive, and dictated by exogenous forces, as opposed to proactive internal strategies (Ahmed et al., 2021; Freeman, 1984).

For the promotion of Green HRM's adoption in Pakistan, however, some measures need to be taken. Second, policymakers need to strengthen environmental regulations, their enforcement and provide incentives to organizations that take up sustainable practices (Elkington, 1997; Bansal & Roth, 2000). Secondly, awareness and education campaigns should be conducted not only with employees, but also with organizational leaders to develop an environmental responsible culture (Renwick et al., 2013; Jabbour, 2011). Third, academic and research institutions have to fill up identified literature gaps in Green HRM by conducting the sector wide and longitudinal studies (Khan et al., 2020). Lastly, it can be seen that collaboration between government, industry and non-governmental organisations can facilitate scaling up of Green HRM initiatives and inclusion of them in Pakistan's wider sustainability agenda (Ahmed & Ullah, 2020; Saeed et al., 2019). Finally, although at an emerging level in Pakistan, Green HRM has potential to achieve a balance between organizational effectiveness and environmental sustainability. Pakistani organizations can, however, unlock the benefits of Green HRM by addressing cultural and regulatory challenges and filling research gaps to align their practices with global sustainability trends (Renwick et al., 2013; Jackson et al., 2011).

## Material and Methods

A descriptive research design, was used to find out the adoption level of Green Human Resource Management (Green HRM) practices in Pakistan's leather industry. This project was a survey of 394 leather organizations to provide a comprehensive view into one of the country's most resource intensive and environmentally impactful sectors in terms of integrating eco friendly human resource practices. This research design enabled the authors to collect and analyze quantitative data systematically and provided a picture in detail of the present deployment and trend of Green HRM in leather industry. Data was gathered by the authors by using a structured questionnaire from HR professionals, managers, and other key stakeholders from the 394 surveyed organisations (Ahmed et al., 2021). It was about green recruitment, training and development, performance appraisals, green employee engagement in sustainability initiatives, etc. The environmental sustainability standards are predefined metrics against which respondents rated their organization's practices and policies. Due to the large and diverse sample the study captured different types of organizational behaviors and strategies, thus providing useful information about 'leaders' and 'laggards' in Green HRM adoption (Renwick et al., 2013; Jabbour, 2011).

In this study, GHRM is evaluated by examining five key green HR practices: green recruitment, green training, green performance management, green compensation, and green involvement. Each of these dimensions is measured with a single item scale that sums up GHRM. For example, green recruitment is the extent to which organisations attract such people while green training is the extent to which organisations enable employees to acquire environmental skills (Tang et al., 2018; Pham et al., 2020). Adapted from Tang et al. (2018) validated scale, this study uses the measures that assess various dimensions of GHRM practices. The reliability and validity of these measures are based on proven reliability and validity across diverse organizational contexts. Tang et al.'s (2018) framework has been successfully adopted to study GHRM practices, as it provides powerful tools to evaluate their effectiveness. For instance, to assess the impact of GHRM on organizational sustainability, Pham et al. (2020) utilized these measures to ascertain the relationship of GHRM practices with employee environmental behaviors in the hospitality sector, thereby validating the applicability of these measures to evaluate the impact of GHRM on organizational sustainability. These measures can be considered to have relevance and reliability in capturing the critical dimensions of GHRM in different contexts, for which empirical evidence is provided, and hence can be used in this study. Through their application, green HR practices are systematically and comprehensively evaluated for what they contribute to organizational sustainability efforts and employee environmental engagement (Tang et al., 2018; Jabbour et al., 2013; Pham et al., 2020).

## Results and Discussion

A detailed analysis of Green HRM adoption in leather industry of Pakistan leads us to some major conclusions about how environmental sustainability is being integrated in HR practices of organizations. Overall, there are low levels of adoption with mean scores across the dimensions rated from 3.50 to 3.76 on a scale of 1 to 5. Overall, the scores received indicate that there is progress in the green integration of HR functions, but there is much room for further progress, particularly in the promotion of consistent and wide spread implementation across the industry. This analysis reveals that organizations set green goals for employees moderately and the mean score is 3.64 in GHRM1. However, there is an understanding that the incorporation of environmental objectives into employee roles represents a recognition of its significance; albeit, in certain cases the implementation may be inconsistent or insufficiently supported to link with wider

organizational sustainability initiatives. In terms of training, GHRM2 and GHRM3 obtained scores of 3.62 and 3.50 respectively indicating that they exerted moderate training efforts in green values and training employees to have green management skills. However, there are trainings, but the extent of variability across the organizations indicates the need for more standardized and more comprehensive trainings covering the needs of the specific leather industry.

Furthermore, performance management systems that have been designed to include workplace green behaviors are moderately adopted with a GHRM4 of 3.66. It implies a greater understanding that the value of tying performance evaluations to sustainability objectives. However, effective integration of these behaviors into appraisal systems has not been achieved. Interestingly, GHRM5, which stresses rewarding employees for green behaviors, received the highest level of adoption (mean score 3.76). Here is proof that organizations are realizing the motivational power of tying rewards and compensation to environmental achievement. Yet, the somewhat high variability in responses on this dimension indicates that green rewards are still inconsistently structured and implemented. Likewise, GHRM6 scored 3.73, and as the evaluation of workplace green behavior in promotions is gaining favor. Some organizations seem to have tied their career progression with values of sustainability, but others can be said to lag behind in this aspect. The analysis also shows considerable variation in adoption levels across organizations, as standard deviations vary from 0.69 to 0.80. These differences point to differences in the organizations' implementation of Green HRM practices in terms of differences in awareness, resources and organizational priorities. For all the dimensions, it had the minimum score of 1 meaning that there are organizations that do not practice these at all. On the contrary, the score of 5 in all dimensions points out the existence of outstanding organizations in which Green HRM has been integrated thoroughly into their operations.

**Table1**  
**Descriptive Measures**

	GHRM1	GHRM2	GHRM3	GHRM4	GHRM5	GHRM6
Mean	3.637	3.617	3.503	3.657	3.761	3.731
SD	0.796	0.726	0.700	0.736	0.734	0.734
Min	1	1	1	1	2	1
25%	3	3	3	3	3	3
50%	4	4	3	4	4	4
75%	4	4	4	4	4	4
Max	5	5	5	5	5	5
Mean Adoption	3.637	3.617	3.503	3.657	3.761	3.731

As far as green goals for employees are concerned, under GHRM1, the results show a mean score of 3.64, an indication of moderate level of integration in organisations. What this indicates is that many companies in the leather industry are putting environmental objectives in place for their employees, thus recognizing the importance of building sustainability into day to day operations. Nevertheless, the portion of a moderate score indicates that the goals seem to be not yet entirely institutionalized or fully applied across the entire organizations. The differences in organizational commitment and capacity to define and implement green goals effectively explains the variability in scores. However, for some firms, the environmental impact may be constrained by a lack of clear frameworks or mechanisms that establish a connection between individual employee objectives and broader environmental targets.

Green training is evaluated through two dimensions: GHRM2 captures the promotion of green values while GHRM3 is the measure for the improvement of employees' skills for green management. The results indicate that training in these dimensions is adopted at moderate levels: the mean scores are 3.62 and 3.50 respectively, indicating that some organizations provide training, but this is not yet comprehensive, nor standardized across the industry. Training that promotes green values helps employees have the green values internalized and they also have the skills to practice sustainability. However, moderate scores indicate that some schools may not have nearly enough programs, or that they may not be accessible or of high quality. In particular, smaller firms may be deficient in both the resources and expertise to themselves develop and deliver green training, creating discrepancies in adoption. This means that industry-wide training initiatives are needed to equip all employees with the knowledge and skills to operate in a sustainable way.

The mean score for the inclusion of workplace green behavior in performance appraisals (GHRM4) was 3.66. This is being influenced by increasing emphasis by organizations on assessing employees not only on traditional performance parameters but also on their contribution to environmental sustainability. Companies can encourage employees to follow eco friendly practices by including green behaviors in appraisals. Nevertheless, this integration is not a common practice yet and its score is moderate. Responses vary, indicating that some firms are leaders in green behavior, and others do not integrate green behaviors into their evaluation of performance. The findings shed light into the need for formalizing criteria around these criteria and assuring that all employees are evaluated in a similar manner based on their contributions to the environment.

GHRM5 scored the highest mean with a score of 3.76 out of all dimensions that measures the linkage of workplace green behaviours to rewards and compensation. That means many organizations in the leather industry appreciate the motivational power of rewarding employees for their sustainability efforts. By linking rewards to green behaviours you can solidify those behaviours and create a green culture. While the highest scoring dimension, the standard deviation means there is a lot of variability in how this practice is implemented. For instance, some organizations have a physical incentive for their staff, e.g. bonuses or benefits; some organizations have no physical incentives for staff. Consistent practices in these areas could be key to broad, effective adoption of green behavior.

The consideration of employees' workplace green behaviors in promotions obtained a mean of 3.73 under GHRM6. So many organizations are starting to match career progression opportunities with sustainability values and reward people who are helping the environment in their work. Promotions related to green behaviors not only motivate employees but also communicate to the organization's commitment to sustainability. Yet, as with other dimensions, disparities in adoption are demonstrated by the variability in scores. Conversely, organizations which focus more on short term productivity than long term sustainability could be less likely than to include green criteria in their promotion decisions and hence have a smaller resultant effect of green practice integration.

## Conclusion

The insights from the dimensions of Green HRM give a valuable insight in the efforts of the leather industry to integrate sustainability into HR practices. Evidence of progress exists, however moderate adoption levels and variability of scores suggest that,

across the common practices, these practices are not universally being applied. These gaps must be resolved by the organisations by standardising practices, providing complete training and aligning rewards and promotions with environmental objectives. Collaboration between policymakers and industry leaders is extremely important to design supportive frameworks and incentives that embed Green HRM as a core element of organizational strategy in the leather industry. By doing so, the industry will improve environmental sustainability and its long term competitiveness and success.

The implications of these findings are important for the leather industry in Pakistan, where the sector is under pressure to become more sustainable owing to its environmental footprint. This moderate adoption level indicates that organizations are clearly aware that change is necessary but they do not find it easy to implement Green HRM consistently. For instance, whereas some firms are pioneers in structured training programs, others do not have necessary resources and capacity to implement them. Likewise, green behaviors are not utilized equally across the industry when it comes to performance appraisals and promotion criteria. Organizations must prioritize capacity building, so they can address these gaps by developing and implementing industry wide training programs and workshops that increase environmental skills of employees. Standardize green behavior incentive structures such that their rewards and promotion systems are more consistent. Moreover, performance management systems should include green metrics clearly as part of employee evaluation metrics to ensure that employee evaluations are linked to organizational sustainability objectives. On the other hand, policymakers should play a part by strengthening regulations and offering incentives for organizations to internalize the extensive Green HRM practices.

### **Recommendations**

For successful implementation of Green HRM practices in Pakistan leather industry a multi faceted approach is required. As a strategic imperative, sustainability must be a priority for those industry stakeholders – ranging from policymakers to industry leaders and HR professionals – that define our work and workplace. For this to succeed, a collaborative approach is needed to enable an enabling environment for the Green HRM to thrive and make contribution towards operational and environmental improvement.

In the first place, policy support and regulatory frameworks make a difference. Government should provide clear guidelines and incentives to organizations for this adoption of Green HRM practices. They can be tax rebates for going green, subsidies for certain training programs, and very stringent environmental compliance requirements. The adoption of eco friendly standards in the industry should be driven through the alignment of HR practices to sustainability goals, which should be emphasized through national policies.

Second, capacity building initiatives are required to enable organisations to learn Green HRM knowledge and skills for implementation. It consists in creating, and supplying, full training programmes for HR professionals and managers to inform them about sustainable recruitment, green performance management and environmental rewards systems. Industry associations can contribute to delivery of workshops, seminars and knowledge sharing platforms to disseminate best practice.

Third, industry wide practice of Green HRM could be improved by standardization. The setting up of a consortium of leather industry stakeholders will go a long way in making it be possible to share resources, tools and frameworks for

consideration. This collaboration would enable small organizations that lack financial and resource capacity to benefit from the knowledge and infrastructure to adopt Green HRM. Besides, it would bring uniformity in sustainability practices and improve the industry's credibility in global eco conscious markets.

Moreover, awareness campaigns should be made to informing the individual and society at large of the advantages of Green HRM which is not just in terms of environmental sustainability but also operational efficiency and competitive advantage. The industry leaders may be the targets of these campaigns to highlight the long term value of incorporating environmental goals into the HR strategies. Potential outcomes can be illustrated and action inspired by case studies and success stories from other sectors or other countries.

Finally, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are also important to assure the effectiveness of Green HRM practices. Sustainability efforts should be tracked by defining metrics that will quantify the environmental and business impact that these sustainability efforts have. Audits and feedback loops can be conducted regularly and as such help identify areas for improvement and ensure that Green HRM remains aligned with the latest environmental goals.

This study recommends that if implemented, these recommendations serve to embed Green HRM as a core component of Pakistan's leather industry sustainability agenda. Besides offering a solution to the most immediate environmental issues, this strategic shift is designed to improve the industry's resilience and competitiveness within the global market.

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