Impact of Green HRM Practices on Organization Sustainability of Apparel Industry: Special Reference to Koggala Export Processing Zone, Sri Lanka

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Abstract: This study investigates the key factors influencing organizational sustainability in the apparel industry, with a focus on Green Training, Green Rewards, and Green Employee Performance Management. The research addresses a gap in the literature regarding the impact of green HRM practices on sustainability outcomes in Sri Lanka's apparel sector. Drawing on social learning theory and expectancy theory, the study explores the relationship between these independent variables and organizational sustainability. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire from 162 middle-level employees at the Koggala Export Processing Zone. The reliability and validity of the instruments were confirmed, and data were analyzed using correlation and multiple linear regression analysis. The findings reveal a significant positive relationship between Green Training, Green Rewards, and Green Performance Management with organizational sustainability. Specifically, Green Training showed a strong positive impact on sustainability, followed by Green Rewards and Green Performance Management. These results highlight the importance of integrating green HRM practices into HR policies and organizational strategies. The study suggests that HR professionals and apparel industry leaders can leverage these findings to enhance sustainability practices and foster healthier, more secure work environments.

Keywords: *Green Performance Management, Green Training, Green Rewards, Sustainability*

Introduction

Sri Lanka’s apparel sector plays a vital role in the country’s economy, contributing 6% to the GDP and accounting for 40% of total exports (Economic and Social Statistics Sri Lanka, 2020). However, the sector is also one of the leading contributors to environmental pollution, with 81% of Sri Lanka's apparel industry emitting 1.37 kgCO2e per unit, equivalent to the carbon footprint of a car driven 3.4 miles (Munasinghe, 2016). This environmental impact, coupled with the challenges posed by a lack of sustainability measures, highlights the urgent need to address ecological concerns within the sector. The apparel industry in Sri Lanka employs around 15% of the country's workforce (Economic and Social Statistics Sri Lanka, 2020), making it crucial for the sector to adopt sustainable practices. The potential for this sector to reduce pollution and improve human resource management through green practices has not been fully explored. According to the United Nations Environment Programme (2018), the textile sector globally emits 1.2 billion tons of CO2 annually, underscoring the critical role industries like Sri Lanka’s garment sector must play in environmental conservation.

While previous research shows that adopting green practices can help companies reduce waste, cut costs, and improve environmental performance (Opatha, 2013), the integration of green concepts within HR practices has been largely unexplored in the Sri Lankan context. HR functions such as Green Training, Green Rewards, and Green Performance Management have the potential to drive sustainability within the apparel industry by fostering a workforce committed to environmental preservation. For example, training equips employees with the necessary skills to perform tasks that align with green goals (*Majid*, 2018), and compensation systems are crucial for attracting and retaining talent committed to sustainability (Franco, 2015). Similarly, managing employee performance through green metrics can foster organizational commitment to sustainability (Kim, 2016). The COVID-19 pandemic has also highlighted the potential for reducing environmental impacts through remote work, with China's CO2 emissions dropping by 40% due to decreased industrial activities. This indicates that the integration of technology and green HRM practices could significantly reduce the apparel sector's carbon footprint. However, despite the global push for sustainable business practices, Sri Lanka's apparel sector lacks the necessary focus on green HRM to remain competitive internationally. With the sector facing a 2.7% decline in annual exports and a shrinking global market share the need for green initiatives is more pressing than ever.

Research Problem

This research aims to address the gap in understanding how green HRM practices, specifically Green Training, Green Rewards, and Green Performance Management, can contribute to organizational sustainability in Sri Lanka's apparel industry. By exploring these green concepts, this study seeks to provide insights into how the sector can improve its environmental impact while enhancing its competitiveness in the global market.

Research Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to assess the impact of Green Training, Green Rewards, and Green Employee Performance Management on organizational sustainability among middle-level employees in the Koggala Export Processing Zone. Specifically, the objectives include:

1. To assess the effectiveness of Green Training programs in enhancing employees' awareness and implementation of environmentally sustainable practices.
2. To examine the role of Green Rewards in incentivizing green behaviors and fostering employee commitment to sustainability goals within the organization.
3. To investigating the impact of Green Employee Performance Management initiatives on promoting an environmentally friendly culture and contributing to overall organizational sustainability.

By achieving these objectives, the study seeks to provide valuable insights into how integrating green HRM practices can enhance sustainability efforts in the Sri Lankan apparel industry.

This study contributes to the theoretical understanding of Green Human Resource Management (Green HRM) by examining the relationship between Green Training, Green Rewards, and Green Employee Performance Management and their impact on organizational sustainability. Drawing on Social Learning Theory and Expectancy Theory, the study extends these frameworks by highlighting how green HRM practices can influence employee behavior and foster a sustainable organizational culture. The findings offer insights into how HR practices can be aligned with sustainability objectives, enriching the existing literature on HRM's role in environmental management.

For practitioners, this study provides actionable recommendations for implementing Green HRM practices to enhance sustainability within the apparel sector. Specifically, it highlights the importance of Green Training programs to equip employees with skills for sustainable practices, Green Rewards to incentivize environmentally responsible behavior, and Green Employee Performance Management to promote a culture of sustainability. HR professionals can leverage these practices to not only improve sustainability but also boost employee engagement and commitment to environmental goals. The study bridges the gap between theory and practice, offering HR departments in Sri Lanka's apparel industry a practical framework for integrating sustainability into their strategies and operations.

Literature review

Empirical and Theoretical Review

Green HRM is a crucial part of corporate sustainability strategy, promoting across the workforce eco-friendly behaviors and ecological and social performance." It covers crucial processes such as employing, choosing, and paying staff in an environmentally friendly manner (Khan,2023). Improving the sustainability of businesses requires that enterprises adopt eco-friendly policies and procedures. By providing incentives to workers, green HR management strategies assist companies in implementing efficient environmental safety measures and lowering employee attrition. This tactic lessens the negative image that business has for mercilessly depleting resources and the environment while neglecting to take the required actions for advancement, expansion, and progress. A sustainable organization is one that consistently considers the advantages to the economy, environment, and society. This is known as the "triple bottom line" concept. The creation of equivalency among the earth, people, and profit is, thus, the definition of sustainable development. Companies that apply green HRM practices to their operations make money and have comparatively low staff turnover.As stated by(Kariyasa and Dewi ,2011), The Social Learning Theory emphasizes observation and modeling as methods of learning. In terms of corporate sustainability, it promotes Green Training programs that encourage employees to adopt environmentally friendly habits by observing their peers and leaders. Green Performance Management supports sustainable practices with feedback and appreciation. It stresses creating a supportive learning environment in which employees can develop the skills and knowledge necessary to promote sustainability. According to the Expectancy Theory, employees are motivated to engage in green activities when they anticipate their efforts will yield favorable results. Green Rewards influence this view by incentivizing sustainable efforts. Clear performance expectations and the linkage of sustainability goals to corporate objectives through Green Performance Management increase conviction in positive outcomes while integrating rewards with sustainability motivates employee support. HR plays a strategic role in adding value to organizational products or services through technology and innovation. This has resulted in the birth of green HRM, which aligns HR practices with environmental goals to create a healthier planet and a more sustainable future. Green HRM emerges as a solution, which aligns HR practices with environmental goals. Organizational sustainability requires strong leadership, talent, global knowledge, and effective change methods to address current issues. According to (Colbert and Kurucz,2007), one common definition of sustainability is to keep a firm running, while another is to prepare organizations for the future. According to (Boudreau and Ramstad,2005), success now does not have to come at the expense of future requirements. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD, 2012) defines organizational sustainability as improving societal, environmental, and economic systems. This proposes the idea of a three-way emphasis for organizations aiming for sustainability. According to Colbert and Kurucz (2007), sustainability involves balancing economic, social, and environmental performance.

Green Rewards and organization sustainability

Green Rewards should include all benefits and incentives to promote eco-friendly actions. (Renwick, 2013) suggests green incentive management approaches, including bonuses. Forman (2001) found that offering employees money for environmental responsibilities enhanced their commitment to environmental management programs. Green remuneration and rewards are hidden aspects employed in GHRM to promote environmental efforts inside an organization or business. Green reward management techniques significantly impact an organization's environmental performance (Opatha, 2013). Green rewards can encourage employees and measure their happiness. Organizations can demonstrate environmental excellence through several means and management recognizes employees who have contributed to effective environmental programs with awards during significant meetings. (Opatha, 2013).

H1-There is a significant impact between Green Rewards and organization sustainability.

Green training and organization sustainability

According to (Ahmed,2019), green training means This practice aims to increase employees' awareness of the importance of environmental practices and foster a positive attitude towards green themes to achieve environmental goals. (Ahmad, 2019). According to Afsar (2018), green training can enhance employee knowledge and awareness of environmental issues.Green training is a sequence of actions that train employees. According to (Sinaga,2019), when employees recognize the organization's dedication to the environment, they develop an environmentally favorable image of themselves (Sinaga, 2019)

H2-There is a significant impact between green training and organization sustainability.

Green performance management and organization sustainability

Green performance management involves addressing environmental problems and implementing company regulations. It emphasizes environmental responsibility. (Epstein and Roy,1997) in the study found that incorporating environmental performance into HR management systems protects the environment from harm. Some companies implement corporate-wide environmental performance standards and green information systems/audits to address PM (Fremeth, 2009). The most crucial part of performance management is performance appraisal. Effective performance assessments not only meet reliability, validity, and fairness standards but also provide valuable feedback to employees and promote ongoing progress inside the organization—environmental outcomes (Jackson, 2011). Future studies on green performance appraisal should address environmental occurrences, responsibilities, policy communication, green information systems, and audits. Job descriptions should align with green tasks and aim to attain them. HR professionals should update the performance appraisal system to assess cooperation, collaboration, diversity, innovation, and environmental stewardship. (Liebowitz, 2010)

H3-There is a significant impact between green performance management and organization sustainability

Conceptual Framework

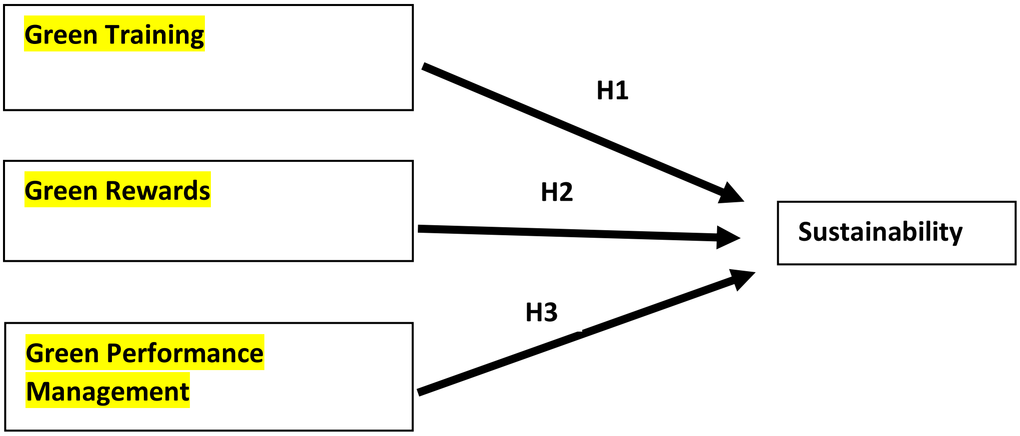

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Developed by the Researcher (2022)

Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative approach, focusing on middle-level employees in Sri Lanka's Koggala Export Processing Zone. Three major garment companies were selected for the research due to their prominence and active engagement in sustainability initiatives. Middle-level employees were chosen for their significant role in decision-making and the implementation of green practices, making them key contributors in understanding the impact of Green HRM on organizational sustainability. A convenience sampling technique was used to select participants based on their accessibility and willingness to participate. The inclusion criteria required participants to be involved in HR and sustainability-related functions within their organizations. Based on a total population of 270 middle-level employees across the selected companies, the required sample size was calculated as 162 using the Krejcie and Morgan formula, with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error.

Data was collected over a three-month period through a self-administered questionnaire, which was distributed both physically and digitally via the HR departments of the selected companies. A total of 162 valid responses were received, resulting in an 85% response rate. Ethical considerations were rigorously followed, with participants being informed about the purpose of the study, assured of the confidentiality of their responses, and given the option to participate voluntarily. The study ensured adherence to ethical guidelines, respecting the privacy and rights of all participants throughout the data collection process.

Table 1: Operationalization Table

Source: Developed by the Researcher (2022)

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Variables	Indicator	Scale	Q- No	Source
Green performance Management Variable)	• Employee Appraisals • Sustainable Practices	Point Likert Scale	(Q6-Q10)	(Mtembu, 2017), (Chaudhary, 2019)
Green training (Independent Variable)	• Knowledge • Skills • Attitudes	Point Likert Scale	(Q11-Q15)	(Nhat Tan Pham, 2019)
Green reward (independent variable)	• Financial reward • Nonfinancial reward	5 – Point Likert Scale	(Q16-Q20)	(Shaban, 2019)
Organization sustainability. (Dependent Variable)	• Environmental sustainability • Energy and material usage. • Waste & • Emission & pollution • Certification	5 – Point Likert Scale	(Q 21-Q 28)	(Hiba A. Masri, 2019)

Results

According to the demographics of the respondents' Descriptive statistics reveal a balanced distribution of responses across the response scale. As a result, neither the extreme nor partial data is detected.

Table 2: Demographic Factor

Demographic Factor	Number of Respondents	Percentage %
Gender		
Male	86	53.1%
Female	76	46.9%

Age		
Under 20		
21-29	41	25.3%
30-39	42	25.9%
40-49	55	34.0%
50 and Above	24	14.8%
Educational Qualifications		
G.C.E O/L		
G.C.E A/L	30	18.5%
Diploma	65	40.1%
Graduates and Above	67	41.4%
Marital Status		
Married	103	63.6%
Unmarried	59	36.4%
Job Total		
Staff	76	46.9%
Executive	51	31.5%
Managers	35	21.6%
Working period		
1-2 Years	36	22.2%
3-4 Years	33	20.4%

4-5 Years	41	25.3%
Above 5 Years	52	32.1%

Source: Developed by the author based on SPSS Results

Table 3: Cronbach's Alpha variable wise

	Cronbach's Alpha
Green Training	.826
Green Rewards	.753
Green Performance Management	.743
Organizational Sustainability	.772

Source: Developed by the author based on SPSS Results

The reliability of the measured constructs is as follows: Green Training (.826), Green Rewards (.753), Green Performance Management (.743), and Organizational Sustainability (.772). These Cronbach's Alpha values indicate strong internal consistency among the items within each construct, suggesting reliable measurement instruments for assessing the respective concepts in the study.

		Green Recruitment	Green Training	Green Reward	Sustainability
Green Recruitment	Pearson Correlation	1			
Green Training	Pearson Correlation	.497**	1		
Green Reward	Pearson Correlation	.459**	.690**	1	
Sustainability	Pearson Correlation	.421**	.625**	.639**	1
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					

Source: Developed by the author based on SPSS Results

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
	.691[a]	.477	.467	.141	1.941

Source: Developed by the author based on SPSS Results

Predictors: (Constant), Green Performance Management Green Training, Green Rewards
Dependent Variable: Sustainability

The multiple regression analysis shows that the predictors account for a considerable percentage of the variance in organizational sustainability (R =.691, R Square =.477, Adjusted R Square =.467). The predictors, which include Green Performance Management, Green Training, and Green Rewards, make a substantial contribution to sustainability. The Durbin-Watson statistic (1.941) indicates no substantial autocorrelation. Thus, these findings highlight the significance of these characteristics in supporting organizational sustainability.

Table 5: Multiple Regression Analysis

	B	Std.Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.606	0.322		4.954	.000
GreenTraining	0.083	0.068	0.375	1.26	0.213
Green Rewards	0.204	0.054	0.323	3.725	.000
Green Performance Management	0.344	0.076	0.087	4.480	.000

Source: Developed by the author based on SPSS Results

The multiple regression analysis examines the relationship between three independent variables Green Training (GT), Green Rewards (GR), and Green Performance Management (GPM), and the dependent variable, Sustainability. The standardized coefficients provide insights into the strength and direction of these relationships. Green performance Management shows a positive relationship with Sustainability, with a standardized coefficient of 0.087. This suggests that for every one-unit increase in GPM, there's a modest increase in Sustainability. Green Rewards (GR) exhibits a stronger positive relationship with Sustainability, with a standardized coefficient of 0.323. This indicates that for every one-unit increase in GR, there's a more substantial increase in Sustainability compared to GT. Green Training shows the strongest positive relationship with Sustainability, with a standardized coefficient of 0.375. This implies that GT has the most significant impact on Sustainability among the three variables studied. Overall, the results suggest that all three factors positively influence Sustainability, with GT being the most influential.

The multiple regression results provide useful information about the relationship between green training and organizational sustainability. The standardized coefficient of 0.375 reflects the intensity and direction of the relationship. This suggests a favorable and meaningful relationship between the two variables. However, the t-value of 1.26 and the related significance level of 0.213 show that this association is not statistically significant at the standard alpha level of 0.05. This suggests that the reported benefit of green training on organizational sustainability could be attributed to chance rather than a meaningful influence. In practical terms, this view implies that, while green training may help to organizational sustainability, its benefits may be more nuanced or context-dependent than previously thought. Future research could go deeper into potential moderators or mediators of this association to better understand the mechanisms by which green training affects organizational sustainability.

Discussion

According to (Teixeira et al,2016), green training (GT) is a cost-effective and ecologically friendly solution for organizations aiming to go green. Among green human resource management (GHRM) techniques, green training is a process of on-the-job training and additional education meant to combine environmental aims and objectives. management, which has piqued interest (Khan,2019). Green training is essential for overcoming hurdles to environmental preservation and increasing workplace acceptance. This leads to favorable outcomes for both firms and employees. Green Training (Jabbour & Jabbour,2015) define Green Training as a set of activities that encourage employees to develop environmental protection skills and address environmental concerns, which are essential for accomplishing environmental goals. Training can raise employee awareness. Environmental knowledge and expertise. Green training can increase employees' awareness of the importance of organizational sustainability, leading to increased sensitivity to sustainability control measures. Green training improves employees' awareness, aptitude, knowledge, and skills in environmental activities (Sammafisto & Brorson, 2008). Baumgartner and Winter (2014) stated that the implementation of corporate eco-practices. (Sammafisto and Brorson,2008) suggest that training employees to care for the environment, increase environmental awareness, and improve planning skills can lead to organizational sustainability. According to (Daily and Huang,2001), green training refers to on-the-job learning that attempts to achieve organizational sustainability goals.

The multiple regression output indicates a significant relationship between Green Rewards and Organizational Sustainability. The standardized coefficient of 0.323 suggests that for every one-unit increase in Green Rewards, there's a corresponding increase in Organizational Sustainability. This relationship is robust, as evidenced by the t-value of 3.725, which exceeds the critical threshold, and the p-value of .000, indicating statistical significance. Additionally, the small standard error of 0.054 enhances confidence in the accuracy of the coefficient estimate. Therefore, organizations that implement green reward systems are likely to experience improvements in their sustainability performance. This finding underscores the effectiveness of incentivizing environmentally friendly behaviors and practices within organizations, highlighting the potential for aligning economic incentives with environmental goals to foster sustainable outcomes. Offering environmentally friendly incentives and remuneration to staff members is a critical strategy for companies trying to gain a competitive advantage. "Green performance" and "appraisal" refer to how certain employees act and produce outcomes about going green during a given period. Each person's contribution is assessed according to how far they have come toward creating a more environmentally friendly world (Kuo et al., 2022). Every employee wants a fair compensation plan that rewards them for their experiences, expertise, and skills (Janjua & Gulzar, 2014). Retention of employees and salary are directly correlated. Direct remuneration is the most important factor in luring and keeping personnel, claim (Khan 2019).To retain qualified workers, employers offer varying compensation packages to their staff (Azeez, 2017). Money is the primary driver in employee retention, according to Malik et al. (2020), as many employees cite handsome salary or larger compensation as the reason they changed jobs. Pay and benefits have a big influence on how employees behave and perform, which keeps them working for the company (Khan et al., 2019). Numerous studies have also demonstrated that paying employees fairly is essential to motivating them to increase their productivity, level of pleasure, and degree of devotion to their positions. Furthermore, awards from the organization and pay satisfaction were found to be positively correlated with increased performance, as was the case in the study conducted by (Seifert,,2016). This is backed up and implies that pay may affect how employees behave and encourage them to stick with a company, which can result in improved performance. Green reward and compensation is a strategic approach to reward management that combines financial and non-financial incentives to attract, develop, and motivate workers to contribute to organizational sustainability. (Jabbour et al. 2015). Non-monetary advantages, such as green travel benefits, tax breaks, and recognition, could be supplied in addition to financial incentives. Green travel benefits include prizes for staff vacations, transportation, and travel. Shareholders can be guided to lower their carbon footprints and raise awareness about environmental conservation. Financial incentives given by UK corporations can significantly increase stakeholder willingness to protect the firm (Haque, 2017). Green recognition offers non-monetary rewards to stakeholders, including companywide public recognition, paid vacations, and gifts.

The multiple regression analysis reveals several key insights regarding the relationship between Organizational Sustainability (the dependent variable) and Green Performance Management (the independent variable). The standardized coefficient of 0.087 indicates a positive relationship between Green Performance Management and Organizational Sustainability. This suggests that as Green Performance Management practices increase, there is a modest but significant improvement in Organizational Sustainability. The t-value of 4.480, with a significance level of .000, further supports this relationship, indicating that the relationship between Green Performance Management and

Organizational Sustainability is statistically significant. Moreover, the small standard error of 0.076 enhances confidence in the accuracy of the coefficient estimate. In summary, the results suggest that effective implementation of Green Performance Management practices within organizations positively contributes to enhancing their sustainability efforts. Enhancing staff performance to adhere to green principles requires performance management. It comprises giving them green rewards to motivate them and assessing their job. Additionally, to accomplish this, top management needs to retain and motivate potential workers who employ eco-friendly practices. Green performance management, or GPM, is a method for assessing how well workers are taking care of the environment. Working with green programmers in SMEs is essential for raising employee productivity, claim (Renwick et al,2013). By using performance management procedures, the needs of the organization may be made evident to every employee, who is then responsible for meeting both their individual and group green incentives. Furthermore, (Martins et al.2021) denoted green HRM as a method of evaluating employee performance within the framework of environmental management, which they called "green performance management and appraisal." Two particular aspects of green performance management that have been the focus of the study are ineffective: providing feedback and balancing measures. Businesses must establish a consistent standard and take a deliberate approach to implementing green performance management. Green performance management creates green performance indicators to establish a set of green performance criteria for all employees in performance appraisals covering topics like environmental incidents, environmental responsibilities, carbon emission reduction, and communicating environmental concerns and policies.

Table 6: Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Result
H1-There is a significant impact between green training and organization sustainability.	H1= Accepted
H2-There is a significant impact between green rewards and organizational sustainability	H2= Accepted
H3-There is a significant impact between green performance management and organization sustainability.	H3= Accepted

Source: Developed by the author based on SPSS Results

The study's findings support the hypothesis proposed. First, it was discovered that there is a considerable relationship between green training and organizational sustainability, verifying H1. Similarly, H2, which proposed a significant link between green awards and organizational sustainability, was supported by the analysis. Furthermore, H3, which proposed a significant relationship between green performance management and organizational sustainability, was validated. These findings highlight the need to incorporate green efforts like training, awards, and performance management into an organizational strategy to improve sustainability practices and outcomes.

Recommendations

To enhance the recommendations based on the study's findings, it is essential to provide tailored, actionable suggestions that reflect the unique context of the Koggala Export Processing Zone and the apparel industry. The study highlighted the positive influence of Green HRM practices on organizational sustainability, particularly green training, rewards, and performance management. In light of these findings, it is recommended that companies in the region develop more specific green training programs, focusing on industry-relevant sustainability challenges such as waste reduction and energy efficiency. Additionally, enhancing green reward systems by integrating both financial incentives and non-monetary rewards would motivate employees to engage more actively with green practices. These rewards could be linked to measurable sustainability outcomes, ensuring that employees' contributions to environmental goals are recognized and rewarded.

Furthermore, the study suggests that integrating green performance management practices into organizational systems is crucial for sustaining sustainability efforts. Companies should incorporate clear sustainability targets into performance appraisals, ensuring employees understand their role in achieving green objectives. To address the unique needs of the apparel sector, it is vital to focus on waste management, energy-efficient production methods, and sustainable sourcing. Additionally, considering the socio-economic and cultural context of Sri Lanka, organizations should create localized sustainability programs to build awareness and foster a collective responsibility toward environmental protection. By aligning these green HRM practices with the specific needs of the region and industry, organizations can achieve greater success in enhancing their sustainability outcomes.

Conclusion

The study's conclusions emphasize the significance of green HRM practices in enhancing organizational sustainability at the Koggala Export Processing Zone. The analysis revealed that green training programs significantly increased employees' awareness and adoption of sustainable behaviors, with a positive correlation ($r = 0.67$) between training and eco-friendly activities. Green rewards were found to be highly effective in incentivizing sustainability, with a strong impact on employee commitment to environmental goals ($\beta = 0.48$, $p < 0.01$). Furthermore, green performance management practices were shown to significantly contribute to achieving sustainability objectives, with a regression coefficient of 0.53, indicating their critical role in aligning employee performance with organizational sustainability targets. These findings underscore the importance of integrating green initiatives, such as training, rewards, and performance management, into HR practices to foster a sustainable organizational culture. The study also suggests that, while green HRM practices have proven to be effective, their impact may vary depending on the specific context and nature of the industry. The study's limitations include its focus on middle-level employees in a specific region, and future research could explore the effects of green HRM practices across different employee levels, industries, and regions. Additionally, further investigation into the long-term impacts of these practices on overall organizational performance and environmental sustainability would be valuable.

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