

# GREEN RECRUITMENT AS A FACILITATOR FOR ADOPTION OF GREEN SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT: CASE STUDIES FROM A DEVELOPING COUNTRY

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## ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this study is to explore the role of adopting green recruitment in facilitating the adoption of Green Supply Chain Management (GSCM) practices. To achieve the objectives of this study, a qualitative approach was used, 12 in-depth semi-structured interviews across four case companies considered as exemplars regarding their adoption of GSCM practices within the context of Jordan, along with a variety of secondary data sources to ensure triangulation was achieved. Data was coded using NVIVO 12 and then analysed both within case and across case. The results suggest that green recruitment might be considered as a facilitator for the adoption of GSCM practices. However, companies that operate in countries with low environmental awareness might not be successful in finding and attracting environmentally-aware employees and thus they tend to focus on green training to develop the environmental skills and capabilities of their personnel.*

**Keywords:** Green Recruitment, GSCM Practices, Facilitators

## INTRODUCTION

GSCM has gained noticeable attention over the years from both academics and practitioners. GSCM practices have been widely adopted by numerous organizations across many industries and countries. The field of GSCM research is broad and research has investigated different issues such as; definition of GSCM, GSCM practices, drivers and antecedents for the adoption of GSCM practices, different approaches towards GSCM and the relationship between the adoption of GSCM practices and performance. Investigating 'why', 'when', and 'how' questions advance our understanding of a phenomenon. In the context of GSCM, various studies have tackled 'when' and 'why' questions as researchers have investigated the various reasons that drive companies to adopt GSCM practices. Companies adopt these practices due to various stakeholder and institutional pressures. Significant research attention has also been directed towards the link between GSCM practice-performance to answer the question of why companies adopt GSCM practices. Further, recent studies in GSCM practice-performance reveal that this relationship is not unconditional and might depend on various factors (Zhu et al., 2013; Yu et al., 2020). Therefore, GSCM research is moving towards trying to understand factors that might facilitate or complement the adoption of GSCM practices and thus improve performance. Recent studies have emphasized the role of many facilitators also known as Critical Success Factors (CSF) on the adoption of GSCM practices such as training, Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices including green recruitment, quality management and others (Luthra et al., 2016; Nejati et al., 2017; Kumar et al., 2019).

These facilitators can be classified into two categories namely soft dimension and hard dimension (Dubey et al., 2017). Soft dimension refers to Human Resource (HR) related factors such as, top management commitment, environmental training, employee involvement, organizational culture, team work and others. While hard dimension refers to factors related to strategy, technology and policy that are adopted by a company such as, lean production, quality management and collaboration with partners. Recently, the soft

dimension has received more attention and the term GRHM has emerged to describe a wide range of human-related factors and behavioral aspects that facilitate the adoption of GSCM practices (Renwick et al., 2013; Jabbour & de Sousa Jabbour, 2016; Yu et al., 2020). GHRM is defined as “the systemic, planned alignment of typical human resource management practices with the organizations environmental goals” (Jabbour, 2013).

HR related factors have a significant role in implementing various environmental practices (Gupta, 2018; Yu et al., 2020). Integrating the environmental dimensions into the traditional Human Resource Management (HRM) functions means that recruitment, training, rewards, performance evaluation, empowerment, teamwork, engagement and culture should be aligned with environmental thinking and organizational goals (Renwick et al., 2016). Researchers argue that GRHM plays a strategic role in managing human and behavioral aspects which facilitate the adoption of GSCM practices (Jabbour & de Sousa Jabbour, 2016; Yu et al., 2020). However, there are debates on the most significant GHRM factors (O’Donohue & Torugsa, 2016). For instance, Daily and Huang (2001) argue that top management support, environmental training, employee empowerment, teamwork and rewards are the most influential GRHM factors. Renwick, et al., (2016); Masri & Jaaron (2017) suggest additional factors such as recruitment, engagement and culture.

Green recruitment is one of the GHRM practices that have been widely cited by many researchers as a key practice for greening companies. It refers to attracting and hiring environmentally committed employees who demonstrate a level of environmental awareness, knowledge and interest (Jabbour & de Sousa Jabbour, 2016; Tang et al., 2017). Scholars argue that green recruitment is among the GHRM functions that facilitate the environmental efforts of a company (Renwick et al., 2013; Nejati et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2019). Researchers identified a variety of methods to achieve green recruitment; first, recruitment messages should emphasize environmental criteria. Second, job description should include some environmental aspects. Third, conducting an induction program for new personnel that focus on a company’s environmental goals and policy. Fourth, incorporating environmental-related questions when interviewing potential candidates. Finally, selecting candidates who were previously involved in environmental initiatives. Moreover, green reputation and image can be considered as a catalyst for attracting high-quality candidates (Tang et al., 2017; Gupta, 2018). Many researchers argue that job seekers are attracted to organizations with good green credentials. Additionally, Chiappetta Jabbour, et al., (2017); Siyambalapitiya, et al., (2018) argue that environmentally proactive companies are more likely to cultivate a greener workforce not only through environmental training but also through green recruitment and have the advantage of attracting environmentally-aware and qualified candidates. Moreover, researchers argue that green recruitment could help companies to overcome challenges in implementing GSCM practices (Jabbour et al., 2019).

Despite the increased attention and recent studies on the relationship between GHRM practices and adoption of GSCM practices (Renwick et al., 2013; O’Donohue & Torugsa, 2016; Jabbour et al., 2019), research in this stream is still at a nascent stage and there have been calls for more studies to investigate the effect of different factors on the adoption of GSCM practices and performance (Zhu et al., 2013; Luthra et al., 2016). There are still persistent research gaps in the literature (Nejati et al., 2017). One of the most substantial gaps regards to: what is the role of green recruitment in the adoption of GSCM practices? Consequently, the objective of this research is to explore the linkage between green recruitment and the adoption of GSCM practices.

Within the extant literature, the state-of-the-art research on the linkage between GHRM and GSCM is either conceptual/ theoretical or is based on evidence collected from developed countries (Nejati et al., 2017). There is a dearth of studies in developing countries and even a void in the Middle East region. To fill this gap, this study was conducted in Jordan, a developing country. Jordan is among the few countries who managed to survive and stay stable throughout the conflicts in the region. However, Jordan did not escape the consequences of these conflicts. These conflicts have triggered a flood of refugees from

Palestine, Iraq and Syria across Jordan causing a sharp population increase, and exerting huge pressures on the Jordanians political, economic, and social infrastructure and natural resources which are already poor and limited especially water sources (Al Adem et al., 2018). Jordan is facing an increasing environmental pressures, therefore, Jordanian government has taken some positive steps towards managing waste, controlling pollution and promoting green practices by introducing some environmental regulations such as; the Environmental Protection Law No. 52 of 2006 (Al-Sharari, 2014).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was based on a multiple case study with four Jordanian companies that are considered exemplars and leaders in terms of their environmental commitment and adoption of GSCM practices in light of the Pagell & Wu (2009) study. These companies were selected based on their environmental reputation. All of the selected case study companies have been praised as leading green companies. Each has been awarded with many environmental certifications. Table 1 outlines key information about the case study companies. Case study in operations management research has a long history, and are very useful to go deep into a research phenomenon in its real-life context and address research questions by using various data sources both primary and secondary (Saunders et al., 2016). Further, the use of case study is highly valuable during the early phases of a research phenomenon which is not supported by a strong theoretical base (Eisenhardt, 1989). Furthermore, case study is valuable for capturing practitioner's knowledge and gaining insight into how theories and concepts are applied in reality. Considering this argument, in the context that the linkage between green recruitment and adoption of GSCM practices is theoretically and conceptually light, the rationale for using case study strategy in this research becomes more manifest. Data was collected through 12 semi-structured interviews, 4 interviews in each case company (Interviews were carried out with the general manager of each company, environmental & quality manager and HR manager) along with 18 documentation. Data collection took place during January to June 2017 and involved a number of visits to each case company. All interviews were recorded and conducted by the same researcher. The interviews lasted between 60 – 90 minutes each. Data was coded using NVIVO 12 and then analysed both within-case and cross-cases as suggested by Eisenhardt (1989).

<b>Case</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Certifications and awards</b>
Case A	- Privately owned - SME (96 employees). Established in 1994.	- ISO14001 certification (since 2009) - ECO Smart label - TUV SUD label
	- Manufacturer of environmentally friendly paint and decorating products.	
	- Environmental focus has existed since company started in 1994. Extension to supply chain level since 2010.	
	- Beneficiary of 'enhancing industrial SMEs programme run by governmental institution 'JEDCO' to help SMEs meet certifications and requirements for international trade.	- CE marks (EN-12004, 13888 and 13300)
Case B	- Public shareholding	- ISO14001 certification (since 2014) - ISO2200 certification (food safety standard) - Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP). - Occupational Health and Safety
	- Large – 2 sites in Palestine and Jordan (475 employees at Jordan site/factory in Jordan was established in 1992).	
	- Processed meat producer (chilled frozen and canned).	

	- Environmental focus has existed since early 1990s. Extension to supply chain level since 2012.	Assessment (OHSAS 18001)
Case C	- Privately owned	- ISO9001 certification (since 2004) - ISO14001 certification (since 2014)
	- SME (150 employees). Established in 1990.	
	- Manufacturer of fertilizers, micronutrients and organic pesticides.	
	- Environmental focus has existed since company started in 1990. Extension to supply chain level since 2014.	
	- Exports to over 20 countries internationally mainly located in Middle East and Africa.	
	- Beneficiary of 'enhancing industrial SMEs programme run by governmental institution 'JEDCO' to help SMEs meet certifications and requirements for international trade.	
Case D	- Privately owned	- ISO9001 certification (since 1996) - ISO14001 certification (since 1999- among the first in Jordan to achieve this) - Special award for Environmental Excellence from King Abdullah of Jordan (2015) - EU electromagnetic Compatibility Directive (EMC) compliance. - Eurovent standard compliance - Abu Dhabi Quality and Conformity Council AD/QCC – compliance with various health, safety and environmental standards. - CE standards
	- Large (over 2000 employees). Established in 1987.	
	- Manufacturer of heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems.	
	- Environmental focus has existed since company started in 1987. Extension to supply chain level since 2000.	
	- Exports to over 50 countries internationally in the US, Europe and the Middle East. They are number 1 on the golden list issued by the Jordanian customs unit.	
	- Completed a number of projects for large organisations such as NASA, Disney and many other major hotels, universities, hospitals and airports around the world.	

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Evidence from the case company demonstrates that green recruitment might be considered as a facilitator for the adoption of GSCM practices. While Case A and Case B favoured green training over green recruitment as a major facilitator, Case C and Case D have emphasized the significant role of green recruitment as a facilitator for the adoption of GSCM practices. The environmental & quality manager of Case D commented, "Hiring environmentally-aware employees helps us to provide the necessary competencies for work and reduces the environmental training bill". Further, the HR manager of Case C described how recruiting environmentally-aware employees can facilitate the adoption of GSCM practices or any other environmental initiative by directing the company's efforts into greening processes and procedures instead of conducting awareness training to transform non environmentally-aware employees into environmentally-aware ones, "hiring environmental-conscious employees can facilitate all our environmental initiatives and saves us both time and cost of conducting awareness training".

Moreover, different than the other case companies, Case D was successful in implementing green recruitment where they search for environmentally-aware candidates, consider the environmental qualifications of applicants and gives priority to hiring those with the necessary environmental awareness and expertise. The motive for their tendency towards hiring environmentally-aware employees is providing their company with the necessary competencies for work that can also facilitate their environmental efforts while reducing the environmental training expenses. Doing so, the company can direct its efforts more into greening their processes and procedures instead of conducting environmental awareness training to transform non environmentally-aware employees into environmentally-aware ones. Case C is also planning to consider green recruitment. However, their HR manager commented that this particular practice might not be achievable in the near future due to the lack of environmental awareness among the Jordanian society and that most of the company's applicant do not demonstrate any degree of awareness or care to the environment. Therefore, he suggests that environmental education might be the solution. He emphasized how educating students about the environment from early years of school all the way through until the university will improve their environmental awareness. Indeed, Case C has participated in some initiatives with the aim of increasing the environmental awareness such as; the apprenticeship program and the collaboration with Jordanian Agricultural Engineers Association.

This inclination towards green recruitment is in line with many studies in the literature; scholars argue that green recruitment is among the GHRM responsibilities and best practices that improves the environmental performance of companies through attracting and hiring environmentally-aware personnel (Renwick et al., 2013; Nejati et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2019). Further, this particular interest of Case C and Case D in green recruitment can be explained in light of the arguments made by Chiappetta Jabbour, et al., (2017); Siyambalapatiya, et al., (2018) that environmentally proactive companies are more likely to go beyond the environmental training to consider green recruitment and have the advantage of attracting environmentally-aware and qualified candidate.

## CONCLUSION

The results of this research showed that green recruitment can be a facilitator for the adoption of GSCM practices. Hiring environmentally-aware employees can help companies in directing their efforts towards greening their operations and expanding their green efforts instead of conducting green training. However, lack of environmental awareness among the society might be a barrier that could hinder companies' ability to implement this practice. Companies in such societies are relying heavily on green training to equip their employees with the necessary competencies for conducting their jobs and supporting their green initiatives. This research was limited by the number of case study companies and was conducted in a single country context which could affect the generalizability of the results. Therefore, future research might focus on different countries or dig deep to investigate the barriers for implementing green recruitment among green companies.

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