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Impact of Manager's Social Commitment on Organization's Social Performance Influenced by Socially Sustainable Supply Chain Practices and Sustainability Culture

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Abstract: The social dimension of sustainability in supply chain management is significant but less prominent. This study investigates the role of a manager's social commitment in achieving an organization's social performance. A model with four constructs was developed to study the impact of the manager's social commitment on social outcomes. Research was carried out on Pakistani firms through a survey-based questionnaire. From a total of 360 respondents (managers of Pakistani organizations) identified initially, 158 sent their responses after repeated follow-ups. Structural Equation Modeling was used for data analysis. The results show that socially committed managers play a significant role in achieving organization's social performance. Furthermore, implementing social sustainable supply chain practices mediates the relationship between manager's social commitment and organization's social performance. This study shows that an organization's culture promotes the implementation of social practices and helps managers adopt social responsive activities and achieve social outcomes. Additionally, this study along with theoretical support to understand the manager's role in changing the business environment to resolve emerging social issues and improve the firm's reputation, also provides empirical evidence from a developing country's perspective, supported by the significant results.

Keywords: manager's social commitment, organization's social performance, socially sustainable supply chain practices, survey, sustainability culture.

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INTRODUCTION

Bentahar & Benzidia (2018) define Sustainable Supply Chain Management (SSCM) as "the integration of economic, environmental and social dimensions into the management of intra- and inter-organizational flows, through innovative and collaborative approaches, with the objective of creating sustainable value". Managing supply chains involve a large number of resources, manpower, transportation, warehouses and products that should be sustainable (Lan & Zhong, 2018). Hence, there is a mandatory requirement of not only internal integration of an organization but also the external with the network of suppliers in the upstream and the customers in the downstream. One out of the three components is integration of the social dimension. Socially sustainable supply chain management (SSCM), the main focus of which is to explore the social problems and

social practices across the supply chains, has been paid inadequate attention in the past by the researchers (Rajeev et al., 2017). Managing the social issues in supply chains is becoming inevitable, consequently, organizations involve in number of activities related to employees direct involvement (Walker et al., 2014), organizations of today need to deal with workers' well-being and safety issues while approaching sustainable growth (Pagell & Gobeli, 2009).

Organizations with successful social sustainability policies and practices can bring significant benefits to their stakeholders and society, in general (Bubicz et al., 2019). Moving from organizational level to an inter-organizational level and motivated by a variety of factors, including internal and external stakeholder's pressure, firms are now embracing the concept of socially responsible supply chains (Shafiq et al., 2020). Literature available on the social part of sustainability in SCM stated that few studies considered the whole chain (Mani et al., 2018; Clevenger & MacGregor, 2019). Scarce literature is available on the adaptation of social sustainable supply chain practices (SSCP) and its impact on a firm's performance (Croom et al., 2018). A study reveals that there is a lack of literature regarding socially sustainable supply chain practices (SSSCP) impacts on logistics or supply chain management (Yawar & Seuring, 2017). Morali & Searcy (2013) find out that focus on social dimension of supply chain is less as compared to environmental and economic dimensions. Furthermore, similar results are witnessed e.g. managing social sustainable practices impact the supply chain performance (Ashby et al., 2012). On the other side, civil societies, government regulation authorities, NGOs and media are actively highlighting the social issues, for instance, unethical resources, behavior in firms and forcing the organizations to implement social sustainable practices in their operations (Yawar & Seuring, 2017).

Insufficient literature is available on the role of supply chain managers in social dimension of sustainability that makes it difficult to understand, what helps in adaptation and how it impacts SP (Marshall et al., 2019). The social dimension of sustainability in SCM have significant importance but acquires less prominence (Hussain et al., 2018). Another research states that there is a lack of empirical evidence supporting the social aspect of sustainability in SCM (Eizenberg & Jabareen, 2017). Organizations may improve their SP by internal and external management to mitigate the adverse effect of logistics and supply chain activities on society and the surrounding environment (Wang & Dai, 2018). Hence, there is a need to study the outcomes of social SSCP in emerging economies, the available literature is not sufficient to generalize the theory (Yawar & Seuring, 2017).

Looking at the micro side, at an individual level, manager's commitment represented by leadership style helps to adopt the socio-environmental changes (Fernández et al., 2003). Also, it has been observed that socially responsible managers contribute more towards the development of a social dimension of sustainability (Tata & Prasad, 2015). Moreover, manager's individual capabilities facilitate sustainability development and help in value creation (Buil-Fabregà et al., 2017). Factors that contribute to the adaptation of social practices in SCM, studied by the scholars, include internal enablers of an organization (Gimenez & Tachizawa, 2012), as well as external customer's pressure, financial benefits and increasing social pressure are main factors that drive the social sustainability (Sodhi & Tang, 2018). Firm's existing environment shapes the company vision and involvement of the employee's in improving environmental issues (Russo & Fouts, 1997). Organizational sustainable culture plays a significant role in employee's motivation that consequently results in improvement in firm sustainability performance (Kitazawa & Sarkis, 2000).

Firm's reputation lies in resolving the social issues that help in building stakeholder's legitimacy resulting in a firm's performance (Deephouse & Carter, 2005). Reputation is at risk because of the emerging social issues in supply chain, sustainable risks will be mitigated by managing social needs (Klassen & Vereecke, 2012). Reputation, as well as social performance (SP) of the organizations is also impacted by social issues (Sancha et

al., 2016). For instance, by improving the working conditions, employee's safety and employees related social issues, firm reputation will enhance resulting in improvement of SP (Mani & Gunasekaran, 2018).

Hence, the current study aims to answer the following research questions: RQ1. Does the manager's social commitment impact organization's social performance through basic social sustainable supply chain practices? RQ2. Does sustainability culture impact the relationships between social commitment, basic social sustainable supply chain practices and organization's social performance?

METHODS

Data were collected using survey method. Survey questionnaire was pre-tested on 20 respondents prior to its administration. In the pilot test phase, we elicited responses on the survey items to be administered later and also asked if the survey questions were easily understandable (Etchegaray & Fischer, 2011). Quantitative responses at this stage were limited to estimation of Cronbach's reliability coefficients. All the constructs demonstrated suitable reliability and no items were significantly modified at this stage. We then administered the finalized questionnaire to the target respondents.

There was no established frame for identifying population of interest. This problem was not unique to this research. Previous research has identified data collection problems in developing countries especially in South Asian region e.g. Dubey & Gunasekaran (2016); Aslam et al. (2018). We identified suitable respondents from social media outlets such as Whatsapp and Linkedin. Targeted respondents were contacted through emails containing a cover letter explaining the research purpose and a link to online survey. Where available, respondents were also called on their phones to increase the response rate. Of the total 360 potential respondents initially identified, we received responses from 158 respondents after repeated emails and calls. Table 1 describes the industries, firms, and respondents represented in the sample.

Table 1 Organization and Respondent Profile

	Frequency	(%)
Industry		
Pharmaceutical	48	30
FMCGs	23	15
Services	19	12
Footwear & Apparel	19	12
Steel & Construction	17	10
Others	32	21
Sales (Pak Rupees)		
751 Million & Above	74	47
451 Million to 750 Million	17	11
301 Million to 450 Million	16	10
151 Million to 300 Million	21	13
Less than 150 Million	30	19
Management Level		
Top Management	46	25
Middle Management	71	45
Lower Management	39	29
Not Provided	2	1
Total	158	100

We used existing measures for the constructs used in this study. As mentioned before constructs of this study i.e. social commitment, socially sustainable supply chain management practices, sustainability culture, and organization's social performance could not be obtained from annual reports of firms. Therefore, we used perceptual measures for these scales. This section provides the details of scales and measurements adopted in this study.

Social commitment is the degree of responsibility employees feel towards their society. We adopted the scale developed by Buil-Fabregà et al. (2017) to measure this construct. Social performance is reflected by the opportunity enhancement, reducing inequity, educational improvement of the community (Zhu et al., 2016). We measured organization's social performance based on the scale developed by Gimenez et al. (2012) also used in Das (2018). Both scales were measured on a seven-point scale, with 1 representing "strongly disagree" and 7 representing "strongly agree".

Scale for socially sustainable supply chain management practices was developed on the basis of McCarthy, et al. (2015). Basic items of this scale were related to employee safety, growth, and compliance with ethical code of conduct. We adopted the scale for sustainability culture from Marshall et al. (2015). It related to the elements of organizational culture promoting social sustainability such as policy statements, employee understanding, priority and value given to sustainability goals etc. Both these scales were measured on a five-point scale, with 1 representing "strongly disagree" and 5 representing "strongly agree".

In this study we collected data for dependent and independent variables from the same respondent. According to Podsakoff et al. (2003), common method bias (CMB) can become an issue in such a scenario. We used preemptive measures to avoid the possibility of CMB. We used remedies provided by Conway & Lance (2010) for this purpose. To ensure the readability of the survey, a pilot test was conducted and expert opinions were used to refine the survey instrument. We ensured the respondent's anonymity by providing them choice to omit their and their organization's name. Finally, variables were measured by two different Likert-type scales (one to seven and one to five).

We also employed statistical means to test CMB. We used common latent factor to account for CMB in our confirmatory factor analysis (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Our results showed that after adding the common latent factor, our factor model was not adversely effected since no deterioration was observed in the model fit or regression weights. Based on this evidence, we concluded that CMB is not a problem in this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Prior to hypotheses testing, we subjected the measurement model to confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The results of the CFA are provided in Table 2 and Table 3. A total of 22 items representing the dependent and independent variables were added in the CFA. Five items were dropped in the analysis to achieve suitable levels of convergent validity. Final factor model ($x^2/df = 1.363$, $p > 0.05$, CFI = 0.975, and RMSEA = 0.048) showed an adequate fit. Convergent validity was established on the basis of factor loadings and average variance extracted (AVE). As shown in Table 2, factor loadings for all constructs averaged to about 0.7 with AVE above 0.5. Combined with the significant factor loadings, this provided the evidence of convergent validity.

We assessed discriminant validity by comparing bi-variate correlations with the square root of AVE. As evident in Table 3, correlations in each pair of constructs was less than the associated AVEs, indicating suitable levels of discriminant validity. Table 3 also provides means and standard deviations (SD) for the constructs of this study. Reliability was established based on Cronbach's alpha coefficient. As shown in Table 2, all the constructs demonstrated acceptable level of reliability i.e. alpha values above 0.7.

Table 2 Measurement Model Validation - Convergent Validity and Reliability

Indicators (Cronbach's α, Average variance extracted)	Standardized Coefficients
Socially Sustainable Supply Chain Practices (α = 0.733, AVE=0.548)	
SSCP1	0.673
SSCP2	0.764
SSCP3	0.924
SSCP4	0.434
Sustainability Culture (α = 0.843, AVE = 0.574)	
SCr3	0.783
SCr4	0.720
SCr5	0.763
SCr6	0.690
Manager's Social Commitment (α = 0.907, AVE = 0.523)	
SC1	0.636
SC2	0.659
SC3	0.842
Social Performance (α = 0.818, AVE = 0.627)	
SP1	0.527
SP2	0.704
SP3	0.694
SP4	0.863
SP5	0.925
SP6	0.884

Table 3 Correlations, Means and Standard Deviations

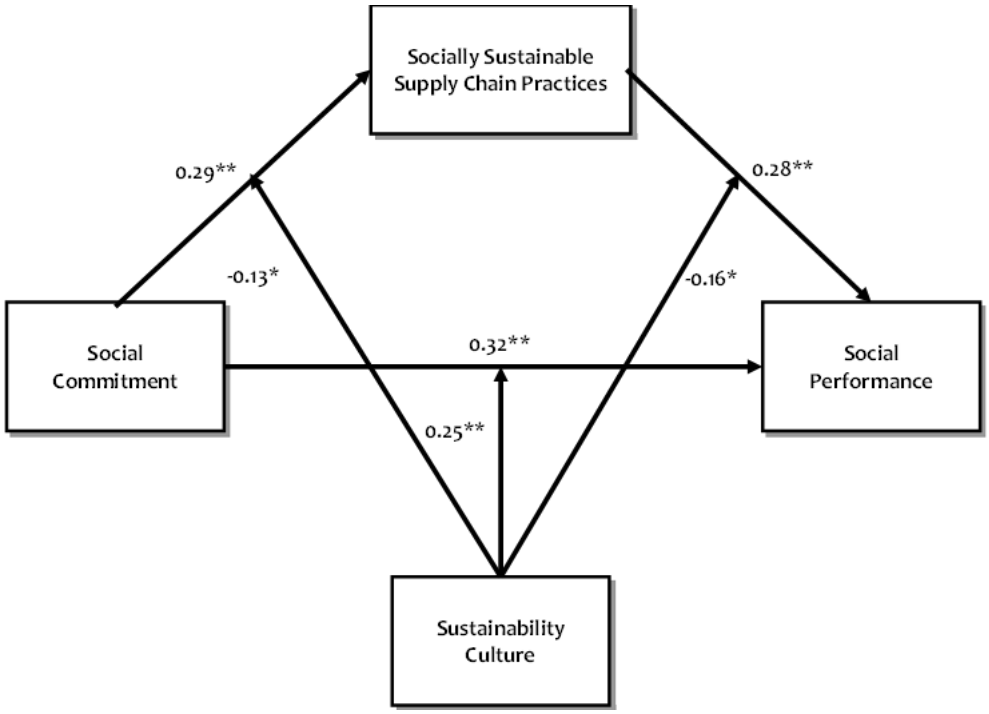
	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
Socially sustainable supply chain practices	2.37	0.60	0.74			
Social performance	4.32	0.86	0.39	0.79		
Sustainability culture	3.56	0.74	0.58	0.55	0.76	
Manager's social commitment	4.08	0.72	0.29	0.42	0.33	0.72

Notes: Square root of AVE for each construct is shown on the diagonal; all correlations are significant at 0.05 level

Prior to performing the hypotheses tests, we tested the regression assumptions of normality, linearity, constant variance, multicollinearity, and existence of outliers. Normality of items was tested through coefficients of skewness and kurtosis. These coefficients ranged between -1.60 to 2.27 which was well within the acceptable limits. Normality of residuals was assessed through probability plots. The plots provided no evidence of significant deviation from normality. Linearity was assessed based on scatter plots and correlation coefficients. Scatter plots provided strong evidence of linear relationships and correlation coefficients showed the significance of these linear relationship between and independent variables (Table 3). In order to assess constant variance assumption we developed plots of standardized residuals and predicted standardized residuals. These plots showed no pattern indicative of heteroscedasticity. We assessed multicollinearity based on variance inflation factors (VIF). Highest VIF was 1.86 which was well below the stringent limit of three identified for multicollinearity. Finally, Mahalanobis distances were estimated to detect multivariate outliers. We performed chi-square significant test for the outliers. The test indicated no significant outliers. After testing the assumptions we proceeded towards hypotheses testing.

We tested the hypothesized model using structural equation modelling (SEM). The results of the SEM model are provided in Figure 1. Our first hypothesis suggested a direct relationship between social commitment and sustainability performance. Results showed that this relationship was significant ($\beta = 0.32$, $p < 0.01$). Hence

H1 was supported. Next, we tested for the relationship between social commitment and socially sustainable supply chain practices (H2). This relationship was significant (β = 0.29, p < 0.01), in support of H2. In hypothesis 3 we suggested a positive relationship between socially sustainable supply chain management practices and social performance. Results showed this relationship to be significant (β = 0.28, p < 0.01).



Note: * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.01

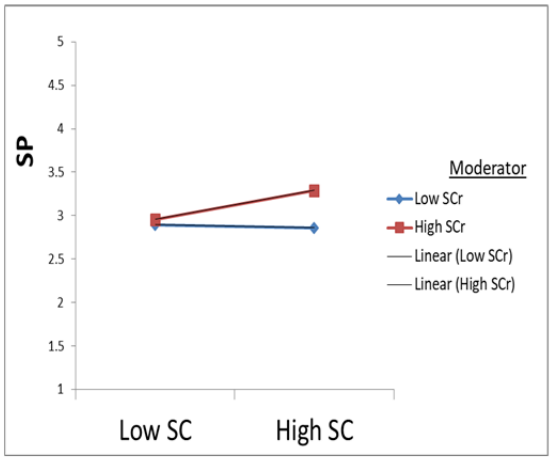
Figure 1 Hypotheses Results

We used bootstrapping technique with 5000 samples to estimate the moderating relationships in our hypothesized model. Process macro (model 59) for SPSS was used for this purpose. Our results showed that sustainability culture significantly moderated the relationship between social commitment and social performance (β = 0.32, p < 0.01), hence H4 was supported. Figure 2 provides the interaction plot for this relationship. Results further showed that even though sustainability culture moderated the social commitment – socially sustainable supply chain practices (β = -0.13, p < 0. 10) and socially sustainable supply chain practices – social performance relationship (β = -0.16, p < 0. 10) the beta coefficients were not in expected direction. Hence H5 and H6 were not supported. Hypotheses results are summarized in Table 4.

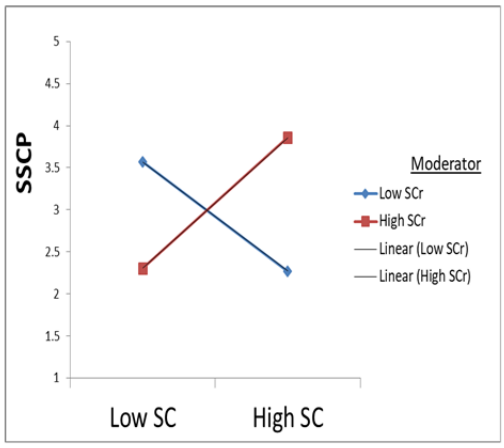
In this study, we ensured the reliability and validity of data through descriptive measures. Construct validity is established by assuring the three types of validity, content-related validity, discriminant and convergent validity. Reliability of the data was assured by measuring Cronbach's alpha. Criterion validity was established by performing bivariate correlations between the dependent variable and independent variables. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to calculate the relevance and factor loading of items. To examine the impact of independent variables on dependent variables SEM (structural equation modeling) was applied.

Table 4 Hypotheses Results

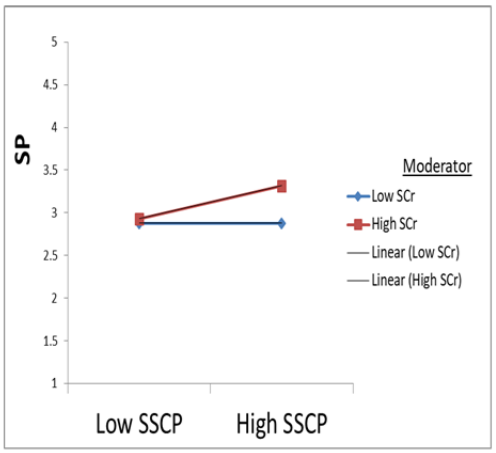
Relationship	β	p-value
Social commitment ➔ Social performance	0.32	< 0.01
Social commitment ➔ Socially sustainable supply chain practices	0.29	< 0.01
Socially sustainable supply chain practices ➔ Social performance	0.28	< 0.01
Social commitment x Sustainability culture ➔ Social performance	0.25	< 0.01
Social commitment x Sustainability culture ➔ Socially sustainable supply chain practices	-0.13	< 0.05
Socially sustainable supply chain practices x Sustainability culture ➔ Social performance	-0.16	< 0.05



SCr Moderation between SC & SP



SCr Moderation between SC & SSCP



SCr Moderation between SP & SSCP

Figure 2 Interaction Plots

In this research, a significant result supports the manager's social commitment and social performance relationship. To answer RQ1, the study supports that basic SSSCP help the socially committed manager's to achieve SP. This research is consistent with Pagell & Gobeli (2009) who also found that adaptation of basic SSSCP may improve the firm's operational performance; and Stiller & Gold (2014) research that states that adaptation of SSSCP results in enhancement of employee's motivation skills that consequently results in organization's social performance. While on a different note, Croom et al. (2018) observe that basic social

sustainable practices do not have a significant impact on the firm's performance, which might be due to the fact that the respondents belonged to the developed country i.e. USA. In developed countries usually the gaps are not big enough to show the real significant impact. According to Klassen & Vereecke (2012) monitoring and managing (basic social sustainable practices) helps in organizing the system that leads to less no. of accidents, improved performance, low employee turnover resulting in better operational performance (Pivato et al., 2008).

In answer to RQ2, our study uncovers the role of the organization's culture in assisting the supply chain managers in working for the benefit of society and considering social issues in their everyday life activities. Figure 2 highlights the significant role played by sustainability culture in the relationship between social commitment, socially sustainable supply chain performance, and organization's social performance. Our results indicate that organization with a greater level of sustainability culture have more socially committed managers which in return show superior organizational social performance. Our findings support the idea that management skills and surrounding culture play the role in innovation and betterment (Könnölä & Unruh, 2007). Nonetheless, our results differ in sense that we find the mediating role of basic social practices in gaining organization's social performance. Our research differentiates from earlier findings due to that fact that we consider the specific practices in developing country's supply chain to attain social targets.

According to Tata & Prasad (2015) social commitment is related to the social progression of organizations and their functions to lessen social imbalances, develop personal satisfaction, protect human rights, advance the benefit of society; hence coinciding with the overall results of this study. Clevenger & MacGregor (2019) include decision making by taking into account ethical values, appropriate relationship with key stakeholders and social commitment considered as an engine of CSR providing support to the study.

In this research, we hypothesized the manager's personal values and commitments in an organization for a social cause can be a supporting factor to achieve social targets. This study used a niche way to explore the supply chain social sustainability by exploring the role of a firm's supply chain social dimension and manager's commitment; secondly, by linking the management of social issues with sustainability outcomes; and thirdly, by providing empirical evidences with respect to developing countries. This study contributes to the social sustainability dimension i.e. the least explored dimension of sustainability as compared to environmental and economic ones (Yawar & Seuring, 2017). Lindgreen & Swaen (2010) found the discussion on the social aspect of sustainability more tricky because of discussion on society and human welfare influenced by the firm's operations. Prior research on social sustainability focus either solely on supplier manufacturer relationship (Carter & Jennings, 2002), or firm's purchasing function while our study is consistent with Marshall et al. (2015) which discusses the firm's culture and manager's role in implementing social practices that help in realizing the social outcomes, but we are adding value by recommending the required deliverables of social activities in third world country's perspective.

Our study discusses the manager's dimension of supply chain and finds the positive relationship between the socially committed managers and organization's social performance that shows the change in management style and taking into consideration the social issues in their everyday life activities would be helpful in gaining social targets. This paper also suggests that the implementation of basic social sustainable practices in developing countries will be rewarding in gaining social targets (Croom et al., 2018).

This study corresponds to the gap highlighted by researchers Hussain et al. (2018); Eizenberg & Jabareen (2017) for empirical evidences and conceptual support in emerging country's perspective within the social dimension of the supply chain. This study further adds value to the research by not only focusing on MNCs and their operation in developing countries but further demonstrates the relationship between social issues, supply chain measures, manager's influence, organizational culture and social outcomes in MNCs and local-based

organizations in Pakistan. We find the corporation's role as a evaluation of organizational learning, which helps the managing team to realize suggested deliverables mentioned in Feng et al. (2017). This study also supports the strategic perspective of legitimacy in institutional theory which is related to managerial commitment towards social achievement that also "emphasizes the ways in which organizations instrumentally manipulate and deploy evocative symbols in order to garner societal support". As said by Mani & Gunasekaran (2018), scarce evidence is existing on the role of Institutional legitimacy theory in social practices implementation. This study reinforces the role of legitimacy viewpoint by discovering the considerable impact of surrounding culture and manager's values in supply chain practices adaptation which results in improvement of supply chain social sustainability performance.

Our results will assist the supply chain professionals to understand the social issues and practices that adds value to social sustainability for the reason that managers are not fully conscious of the relationship between social measures, social dimensions and outcomes (Mani et al., 2016). This study also assists the managers to support social aspects in their future actions. In addition to theoretical our research has practical implications as well in the sense that it provides the mediating role of implementing the required social practices and by providing sustainability culture performance outcomes will be enhanced that can be utilized as an instrument by supply chain managers and firms to adopt and accomplish social sustainability. With the ever-increasing social concerns of managing social issues, our study highlights various factors and forces contributing to social sustainability adaptation. Organizational culture found to be radically associated with social sustainability adaptation. That implies the need to integrate the firm's culture with sustainability that may moderate the managers and process to adopt social sustainability.

To gain a competitive advantage in social sustainability, practitioners should build up and promote sustainability culture; moreover, socially committed managers assist in the sustainability development and support in value conception (Buil-Fabregà et al., 2017). Socially committed managers implement changes swiftly as they react to socially changing market demand. Findings show that adaptation of social practices leads to social performance associated to firm's social reputation, generating business opportunities, adding value to health and education (Duarte et al., 2014).

The effect of sustainability culture on the supply chain managers social commitment highlights that these could serve as initial steps in social sustainability endeavor: organizations with a greater degree of sustainability culture begin with basic social SSCP which might support in laying the foundation for working people's socially sustainable activities (Eriksson & Svensson, 2015).

CONCLUSION

Our results lay a starting point for additional research on evaluating the impact of social practices and manager's contribution in gaining the environmental and financial outputs along with organization's social performance. Yet, the relationship between advanced practices and social outcomes would be exciting to find in developing countries and how stakeholder's pressure play a role in adopting the social practices in emerging economies like Pakistan. Identifying the relationship between basic social practices and organizational environmental performance would also be exciting and how it adds value to the financial outcomes. Social sustainability in SCM research due to less fame in past is a promising dimension, a big subject for investigation. With this study we have just hardly started to disclose the practices and knowledge in this field that is a healthy sign. The conceptual model used was as per emerging country conditions. The data of Pakistani organizations used was cross-sectional. Due to less knowledge about social sustainability and less awareness of employees

about the firm's strategy, there could be intuitive distortion in their information provided. In the future triangulated or time-series data could be more supportive to examine the implemented firm's strategy's impact on performance.

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