


# Chapter 54

## A Real–World Exploration of Green Human Resources and Sustainability Education in Hyper– Connected and Technology– Driven Organizations

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### ABSTRACT

*The early concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR), also frequently described as corporate citizenship or sustainability, grew from the seminal 1987 Brundtland Report, commissioned by the United Nations. CSR has progressed to the standpoint that in organizations necessitates the synchronized fulfillment of the firm's economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibilities in ways that focus strategy, operations, and behaviors towards the promotion of sustainability from a construct where organizational strategy is concerned with the care of the planet, people, and profit. This paper explores the role of green human resources interventions focused on creating organizational cultures that support sustainability in technical and hyper-connected organizations. The paper is not intended to reconstitute theory. The paper is highly theoretical and practical with the intention of influencing the world practice from practical real-world problem approaches and theories from the literature.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Sustainability has taken on many forms and context in today's organizations. As hyper-connectivity and technological advancement intensifies, the pressure on all organizations, especially technical organizations, to respond to the growing global environmental worries concerning the impact of corporate operations on the environment (Gollnow, 2014; Shephard, 2016). "Organizations are a primary instrument by which humans impact their natural environment" (Shrivastava, 1994). Butler (2011) indicated that information technology operations accounted for 2% of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in 2007 and 3% in 2009, but that by 2020 this portion was expected to double to 6%, an alarming increase from 2007 levels. These increases in environmental impacts are the result of technical operations connected to the management, processing, and storage of information in millions of physical servers in hundreds of thousands of data centers (Shephard, 2016; Gollnow, 2014). To keep these centers and servers running, a tremendous amount of energy is required to operate and cool the facilities (Shephard, 2016; Gollnow, 2014). To maintain this growth, more infrastructures in the form of networks, servers, and data centers are needed (Gollnow, 2014). Information technology infrastructures in organizations demand high energy consumption. It is becoming increasingly expensive to run them 24 hours a day as more energy is consumed (Gollnow, 2014; Shephard, 2016).

As a result, developing an organizational culture and understanding strategy development around sustainability has become a critical aspect of technical and hyper-connected organizations around the world. Organizational development sustainability strategic initiatives have often been driven by human resources (Ahmad, 2015). Understanding the complex nature of organizational strategy and strategy making grew from the field of strategic management (Mintzberg, 1988). The traditional domain of strategic management was dominated by normative and rational models (Mintzberg, 1988). Under this thinking, the term strategy (which can be traced back to a connection with warfare) is associated with rational decision making. It is traditionally regarded as a planned action (Mintzberg, 1988), or a deliberate move towards the desired result of organizational cultural change (Ahmad, 2015).

### **The Aim of This Research**

The paper is not intended to reconstitute theory from a quantitative perspective. The paper is highly theoretical and practical with the intention of influencing the world practice from a practical real-world viewpoint. The aim is to understand the complex nuances of changing organizational cultures towards sustainability practices in technical and hyper-connected organizations.

### **The Research Methodology**

This research is based on a content analysis review of literature in the fields of sustainability, human resources, knowledge management, and change management to better understand the approaches and nuances of organizational cultural change towards sustainability initiatives.

### **Method for Reviewing the Literature for the Content Analysis**

The databases and their hosts (shown in parentheses) included ACM Digital Library, ABI Inform Complete (ProQuest), Academic Search Premier (EBSCO), Business Source Premier (EBSCO), ERIC (EBSCO),

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