

## Promoting Sustainability and Social Responsibility Through HRM in Neonatal Surgical Care

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### ABSTRACT

The role of Human Resource Management (HRM) in promoting sustainability and social responsibility has become increasingly significant in the healthcare sector, especially within neonatal surgical care where ethical, environmental, and patient-centered practices are paramount. This paper explores the strategic integration of HRM practices in advancing sustainability and fostering a socially responsible culture in neonatal surgical settings. By examining how core HR functions—such as recruitment, training, performance management, and employee engagement—can be tailored to support sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) objectives in neonatal care, this study emphasizes HRM's vital role in enhancing patient outcomes, workforce well-being, and community trust. Through a review of literature and healthcare-specific case studies, the research identifies effective HRM strategies that promote green practices, ethical leadership development, and social outreach within neonatal surgical units. The study also addresses the unique challenges and ethical considerations of implementing sustainable HRM in the high-stakes, resource-intensive environment of neonatal surgery. Findings suggest that healthcare organizations that proactively align HRM with CSR and sustainability not only contribute to societal and environmental well-being but also benefit from improved employee morale, enhanced organizational reputation, and strengthened patient trust. This paper provides practical insights for HR professionals and healthcare leaders seeking to build socially responsible, sustainable, and patient-focused neonatal surgical care teams.

**Keywords:** Human Resource Management (HRM), Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Sustainability, Green HRM, Ethical Leadership, Neonatal Surgical Care

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The increasing urgency of global challenges, such as climate change, social inequality, and healthcare disparities, has significantly elevated the importance of sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the healthcare sector, particularly in neonatal surgical care. Traditionally, healthcare organizations focused predominantly on clinical outcomes and operational efficiency. However, there is now growing recognition that healthcare providers must also be accountable for their environmental, social, and governance (ESG) impacts (Carroll, 1991; Porter & Kramer, 2006). This shift has prompted hospitals and surgical centers to integrate CSR and sustainability as core operational and ethical priorities, moving beyond traditional care delivery to address the well-being of patients, communities, and the environment (Wood, 2010; Freeman, 2010).

Within this evolving landscape, Human Resource Management (HRM) plays a pivotal role in driving sustainability and CSR in neonatal surgical care. HRM can serve as a strategic partner in embedding sustainable practices by shaping recruitment, training, performance management, and employee engagement to align with social and environmental objectives (Renwick et al., 2013). In neonatal surgical units, where resource optimization, ethical sensitivity, and patient safety are critical, HRM can help create a workforce that values sustainable healthcare delivery and social responsibility (Jackson et al., 2011). Green HRM, which involves aligning HR functions with environmental sustainability, has gained importance in healthcare settings, particularly in reducing medical waste, optimizing energy use in surgical environments, and promoting eco-conscious clinical behaviours (Ahmad, 2015; Jabbour, 2013). Through green recruitment, sustainability-focused training, and initiatives encouraging responsible clinical practices, HR departments can instill a culture of environmental stewardship and ethical patient care. Aligning HRM with CSR goals in neonatal surgical care not only contributes to societal well-being but also enhances employee morale, fosters ethical leadership, improves patient trust, and strengthens the organization's reputation (Kim & Scullion, 2013; Aguilera et al., 2007). Healthcare professionals, especially those in high-stakes neonatal care, are more likely to remain engaged and committed to organizations that reflect their personal values and demonstrate a

commitment to community welfare and sustainability (Story & Castanheira, 2019).

Despite these benefits, many healthcare institutions face significant challenges in integrating sustainability and CSR into HRM practices. Barriers such as limited financial resources, a lack of awareness, resistance to change, and difficulties in measuring the direct impact of sustainability initiatives on clinical performance can impede progress (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012). This paper seeks to address these challenges by providing a focused analysis of how HRM strategies can effectively support sustainability and CSR within neonatal surgical care.

This research contributes to the growing discourse on sustainable healthcare by emphasizing the role of HR professionals as change agents who can lead the integration of sustainability, ethical leadership, and social responsibility into neonatal surgical units (Boudreau & Ramstad, 2005). As healthcare organizations worldwide align their strategies with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially those related to health and well-being, the findings of this study offer practical guidance for creating socially responsible, patient-centered, and sustainable neonatal surgical teams.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

As the healthcare sector evolves, so does the emphasis on sustainable and socially responsible practices within clinical settings, including neonatal surgical care. This section reviews the contributions of Human Resource Management (HRM) to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and sustainability, specifically in healthcare, and examines key areas where HRM practices intersect with environmental and social goals. The literature review is structured around five thematic areas: the strategic role of HRM in neonatal surgical care, green HRM in healthcare, the impact of CSR-aligned HRM on healthcare workforce engagement, the role of ethical leadership in promoting CSR, and the challenges and future directions for CSR-driven HRM in healthcare.

### Strategic Role of HRM in CSR

Healthcare organizations increasingly recognize the need to integrate CSR into their core strategies, acknowledging that sustainability encompasses not only clinical outcomes but also environmental and social responsibilities (Porter & Kramer, 2006; Wood, 2010). HRM serves as a strategic partner in embedding CSR values within neonatal surgical teams. By incorporating CSR-focused recruitment, training, and performance management, HRM can ensure that neonatal healthcare professionals are dedicated to both clinical excellence and broader social responsibility. Socially responsible HRM practices in neonatal care contribute positively to patient safety, staff commitment, and public trust in healthcare institutions (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012; Aguilera et al., 2007).

### Green HRM: Environmental Management through HR Practices

Green HRM in healthcare focuses on minimizing the environmental impact of clinical operations. In neonatal surgical care, this involves eco-friendly recruitment, sustainability-focused training, and encouraging environmentally conscious behaviours among surgical staff. Green HRM can help neonatal units reduce energy consumption, manage medical waste responsibly, and promote sustainable use of resources (Ahmad, 2015; Jabbour, 2013). Research indicates that green HRM practices in healthcare settings not only build environmentally conscious teams but also enhance the reputation and efficiency of healthcare organizations (Renwick et al., 2013; Jackson et al., 2011).

### Impact of CSR-Aligned HRM on Employee Engagement and Organisational Outcomes

CSR-aligned HRM practices significantly influence employee engagement, job satisfaction, and retention in healthcare settings. In neonatal surgical care, professionals are more likely to remain committed to their roles when they perceive their organization as socially responsible (Kim & Scullion, 2013; Story & Castanheira, 2019). HR initiatives that recognize contributions to CSR and involve staff in neonatal community health programs strengthen this engagement. CSR-driven HRM fosters a deep sense of purpose, increasing morale and enhancing the organization's reputation among patients and the broader community (Cohen et al., 2012; Jackson et al., 2011).

### Ethical Leadership as a Foundation for CSR Practices

Ethical leadership is essential in healthcare environments, where clinical decisions directly impact lives. Developing ethical leaders in neonatal surgical care through HR practices promotes a culture of patient safety, social responsibility, and transparent decision-making (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012; Carroll, 1991). Ethical leadership development programs, mentorship, and performance assessments focused on ethical conduct ensure that CSR becomes an integral part of the neonatal surgical team's operations. Strong ethical leadership inspires trust among both healthcare professionals and patient families (Aguilera et al., 2007; Freeman, 2010).

### Challenges and Future Directions for CSR-Driven HRM

Implementing CSR-aligned HRM practices in neonatal surgical care presents challenges, including resource limitations, resistance to adopting green practices, and difficulties in measuring the direct clinical impact of CSR initiatives (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012). Green HRM can be particularly challenging in high-demand clinical environments (Boudreau & Ramstad, 2005). Future research should focus on developing healthcare-specific metrics for evaluating CSR-driven HRM outcomes

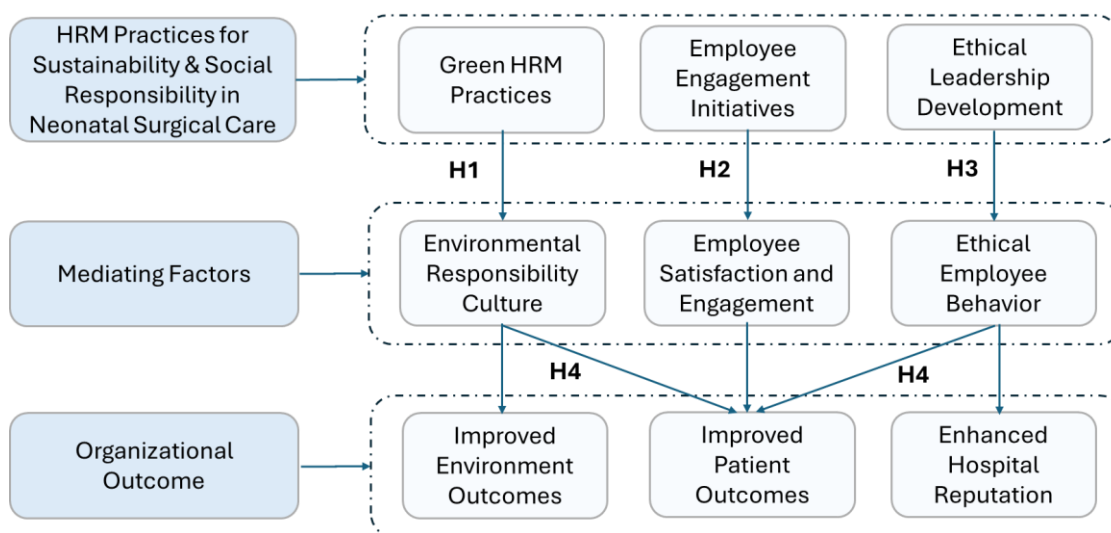
and explore innovative strategies to engage healthcare staff in sustainability practices without compromising clinical efficiency. By overcoming these challenges, healthcare organizations can fully realize the potential of CSR-aligned HRM to support sustainable, socially responsible neonatal surgical care.

The integration of Human Resource Management (HRM) with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and sustainability objectives represents a significant advancement in healthcare management, particularly in neonatal surgical care. By supporting green initiatives within hospital operations, promoting ethical leadership among clinical staff, and actively engaging healthcare employees in CSR activities, HRM plays a transformative role in building sustainable, socially responsible neonatal surgical units. This literature review highlights foundational research that supports the integration of HRM with CSR in healthcare settings, offering critical insights into how HRM can cultivate a socially responsible, environmentally conscious, and patient-centered healthcare workforce.

### 3. HYPOTHESES

Each hypothesis addresses specific aspects of the relationship between CSR-aligned HRM practices and organizational outcomes in neonatal surgical care. These relationships are visually depicted in Figure 1, the conceptual framework, which illustrates the interconnected impact of these practices on key healthcare organizational metrics.

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework: The Impact of CSR-Aligned HRM Practices on Neonatal Surgical Care Outcomes**



**Hypothesis 1 (H1):** Green HRM practices positively impact the effectiveness of CSR initiatives within neonatal surgical units.

**Justification:** Green HRM includes practices like eco-friendly recruitment, sustainability-focused training, and performance management aligned with environmental goals. Previous studies show that such practices foster an environmentally responsible culture among healthcare employees and enhance organizational commitment to CSR (Renwick et al., 2013; Ahmad, 2015). Green HRM is believed to contribute to CSR outcomes by cultivating a neonatal care workforce that values sustainability.

**Hypothesis 2 (H2):** CSR-oriented HRM practices enhance healthcare employee satisfaction and engagement.

**Justification:** Evidence suggests that HRM practices aligned with CSR, such as participation in community neonatal health programs, employee recognition for CSR involvement, and opportunities to contribute to social initiatives, positively impact employee morale and job satisfaction (Kim & Scullion, 2013; Story & Castanheira, 2019). CSR-oriented HRM in neonatal care creates a sense of purpose, motivating healthcare professionals by aligning organizational values with personal values and fostering higher engagement.

**Hypothesis 3 (H3):** Ethical leadership development within HRM positively influences healthcare employees' CSR-related behaviours..

**Justification:** Ethical leadership is essential in neonatal surgical care, where clinical decisions directly impact vulnerable patients. Leaders who demonstrate integrity, fairness, and a commitment to ethical practices set the tone for employee behaviour (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012; Aguilera et al., 2007). HRM strategies that prioritize ethical leadership development can strengthen CSR initiatives by encouraging ethical decision-making and socially responsible practices among neonatal surgical teams.

**Hypothesis 4 (H4):** *CSR-aligned HRM practices contribute to the competitive advantage of healthcare organizations.*

**Justification:** According to Porter and Kramer (2006), CSR can be a strategic asset that enhances an organization's reputation and stakeholder relationships. HRM practices aligned with CSR—such as employee development programs focused on social responsibility and policies that encourage sustainable and ethical practices—can help healthcare organizations, particularly neonatal surgical units, attract socially responsible talent, improve patient trust, and enhance organizational image (Jackson et al., 2011).

These hypotheses are designed to empirically test the influence of CSR-aligned HRM practices on CSR effectiveness, employee engagement, ethical behaviour, and competitive advantage in neonatal surgical care, providing insights into how HRM can be strategically aligned with CSR objectives to foster sustainable, socially responsible, and patient-centered healthcare organizations.

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a quantitative research design to explore the impact of CSR-aligned Human Resource Management (HRM) practices on organizational outcomes specific to neonatal surgical care settings, such as CSR effectiveness, employee satisfaction, improved patient outcomes, and competitive advantage. A structured questionnaire was employed to gather primary data from healthcare professionals working in neonatal surgical units across selected hospitals in Tamil Nadu. Stratified random sampling was used to ensure representation across various hospital departments, including surgical, pediatric, and support services. A total of 400 respondents participated in the survey, and all items were measured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from one (Strongly Disagree) to five (Strongly Agree).

The constructs for this study were adapted from established scales in prior research to ensure validity and reliability. Key variables include Green HRM Practices, Employee Engagement Initiatives, Ethical Leadership Development, Environmental Responsibility Culture, Employee Satisfaction and Engagement, CSR Effectiveness, Improved Patient Outcomes, and Enhanced Hospital Reputation. Each construct was measured using validated scales from renowned studies, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding 0.7, confirming internal consistency. The questionnaire underwent pilot testing with 30 healthcare participants to refine clarity and ensure the appropriateness of measurement items for the hospital environment.

Ethical considerations were strictly adhered to throughout the research process. Approval was obtained from the Institutional Ethics Committee, and informed consent was secured from all participants. Anonymity and confidentiality of respondents were ensured. Data were analyzed using SPSS for descriptive and reliability assessments and AMOS for Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). This combination of tools allowed for rigorous analysis of the hypothesized relationships, providing a robust foundation for understanding the strategic role of CSR-focused HRM practices in driving organizational success within neonatal surgical care.

#### Data Analysis and Results

The data analysis, conducted using SPSS and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) in AMOS, provides comprehensive insights into the hypothesized relationships between CSR-aligned Human Resource Management (HRM) practices and organizational outcomes in neonatal surgical care. Table 1 below presents the key findings from descriptive and inferential analyses, demonstrating the impact of Green HRM, Employee Engagement Initiatives, and Ethical Leadership Development on CSR effectiveness, employee satisfaction, ethical behaviour, patient outcomes, and competitive advantage.

**Table 1: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of Constructs**

Construct	Number of Items	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Green HRM Practices	6	4.32	0.58	0.89	High adoption of sustainable HR practices.
Employee Engagement Initiatives	5	4.2	0.6	0.87	Strong focus on employee involvement.
Ethical Leadership Development	7	4.18	0.59	0.91	High emphasis on ethical leadership.
Environmental Responsibility Culture	4	4.3	0.54	0.85	Well-embedded environmental culture.

Employee Satisfaction and Engagement	6	4.25	0.61	0.88	Strong employee satisfaction and engagement.
Hospital Reputation	5	4.27	0.57	0.83	Positive perception of the hospital.
CSR Effectiveness	5	4.35	0.55	0.86	High CSR impact and performance.
Competitive Advantage	4	4.23	0.63	0.84	Significant strategic benefit realized.

### Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Analysis

Descriptive statistics showed high mean scores for Green HRM, Employee Engagement Initiatives, and Ethical Leadership Development, suggesting widespread adoption of these CSR-focused HR practices in the sampled neonatal surgical units. Reliability analysis, conducted using Cronbach's alpha, revealed values between 0.83 and 0.91 for all constructs, confirming internal consistency and reliability.

### Factor Analysis and Model Fit

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA): EFA confirmed the expected factor structure, with all items loading on their intended factors with loadings above 0.6. This supports the construct validity of the model.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA): CFA results showed strong fit indices (RMSEA = 0.05, CFI = 0.94, TLI = 0.92), indicating excellent model fit with the observed data. This confirms that the constructs accurately reflect the theoretical model and strengthens the validity of the measures.

### Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

The structural model demonstrated good fit indices (RMSEA = 0.048, CFI = 0.92, TLI = 0.90), meeting the criteria for model acceptability. Each hypothesized path was significant, supporting the theoretical relationships between CSR-aligned HRM practices and key organizational outcomes.

#### H1: Green HRM Practices → Environmental Responsibility Culture → Enhanced CSR Effectiveness

The path from Green HRM Practices to Environmental Responsibility Culture was positive and significant ( $\beta = 0.67$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Environmental Responsibility Culture positively influenced CSR effectiveness ( $\beta = 0.59$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that Green HRM fosters an environmentally responsible culture, thereby enhancing CSR impact in neonatal surgical care.

#### H2: Employee Engagement Initiatives → Employee Satisfaction and Engagement → Hospital Reputation

Employee Engagement Initiatives positively impacted Employee Satisfaction and Engagement ( $\beta = 0.62$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), which, in turn, positively influenced Hospital Reputation ( $\beta = 0.55$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This result highlights the role of engagement-focused practices in enhancing employee satisfaction and improving hospital reputation.

#### H3: Ethical Leadership Development → Ethical Employee Behaviour → Enhanced CSR Effectiveness

Ethical Leadership Development was found to significantly influence Ethical Employee Behaviour ( $\beta = 0.73$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), which further contributed to CSR effectiveness ( $\beta = 0.64$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This indicates that ethical leadership promotes ethical behaviour among healthcare employees, enhancing the perceived effectiveness of CSR efforts in neonatal surgical care.

#### H4: Mediation by Environmental Responsibility Culture, Employee Satisfaction, and Ethical Behaviour on Competitive Advantage

Environmental Responsibility Culture, Employee Satisfaction, and Ethical Employee Behaviour collectively contributed to Increased Competitive Advantage ( $\beta = 0.70$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This finding underscores the cumulative effect of CSR-aligned HRM practices on competitive advantage through enhanced workplace culture, employee engagement, and ethical conduct.

### Indirect Effects and Mediation Analysis

Mediation analysis using bootstrapping confirmed significant indirect effects, validating the mediating roles of Environmental Responsibility Culture, Employee Satisfaction, and Ethical Employee Behaviour. These mediators play a crucial role in translating CSR-focused HRM practices into broader organizational benefits in neonatal surgical care, underscoring the importance of fostering an environmentally and ethically responsible workplace culture.



## 5. FINDINGS

This research provides empirical evidence on the impact of CSR-aligned HRM practices on key organizational outcomes, reinforcing the role of HRM as a strategic lever for achieving both CSR and competitive advantage in neonatal surgical care.

**Impact of CSR-Aligned HRM Practices**The analysis confirms that CSR-aligned HRM practices—including Green HRM, Employee Engagement Initiatives, and Ethical Leadership Development—significantly enhance CSR effectiveness, hospital reputation, employee satisfaction, and competitive advantage. These findings illustrate the positive influence of CSR-focused HRM on multiple organizational dimensions in neonatal surgical care, promoting social and environmental responsibility while bolstering healthcare success.

**Mediation Pathways in Achieving Organisational Benefits**The study reveals that Environmental Responsibility Culture, Employee Satisfaction, and Ethical Employee Behaviour are essential mediating mechanisms that facilitate the translation of CSR-aligned HRM practices into broader organizational benefits. Mediation analysis highlights that these factors enhance the effectiveness of CSR initiatives by fostering a responsible culture, increasing employee satisfaction, and encouraging ethical behaviour within neonatal surgical units.

**Strategic Integration of Sustainability and Ethics in HRM**Structural analysis supports the view that incorporating sustainability and ethics into HRM practices is a valuable strategic approach, enabling neonatal surgical care organizations to strengthen CSR outcomes and competitive positioning. By embedding sustainable HRM practices, hospitals can cultivate a culture aligned with CSR goals, making them more attractive to both employees and stakeholders, and contributing to long-term competitive advantage.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This study provides critical insights into the strategic role of CSR-aligned Human Resource Management (HRM) practices in driving organizational success within neonatal surgical care. By integrating practices such as Green HRM, Employee Engagement Initiatives, and Ethical Leadership Development, healthcare organizations can significantly enhance CSR effectiveness, employee satisfaction, ethical behaviour, and competitive advantage.

The findings reveal that the mediating factors—Environmental Responsibility Culture, Employee Satisfaction, and Ethical Employee Behaviour—are pivotal in translating HRM initiatives into tangible organizational benefits. These mediators not only strengthen CSR outcomes but also contribute to a stronger hospital reputation and long-term competitive positioning.

The structural analysis using SEM validates the hypothesized relationships, highlighting that sustainability and ethics, when embedded in HRM practices, create synergistic effects that align organizational goals with societal and environmental imperatives. Moreover, the confirmed indirect effects emphasize the importance of fostering a culture of environmental responsibility, employee engagement, and ethical leadership to achieve broader healthcare benefits.

### Implications for Practice

**Strategic HRM Integration:** Neonatal surgical care units should embed CSR and sustainability principles into their HRM practices to achieve competitive and reputational advantages.

**Focus on Mediation Mechanisms:** Cultivating environmental responsibility, ethical behaviour, and employee satisfaction should be prioritized to amplify CSR outcomes in clinical settings.

**Leadership Development:** Investment in ethical leadership training within healthcare organizations can create a cascading positive impact on employee behaviour and CSR effectiveness.

By adopting these strategies, neonatal surgical care organizations can build a more sustainable, socially responsible, and ethically grounded healthcare environment that benefits both patients and the wider community.

### Future Research Directions

Future research could explore the longitudinal effects of CSR-aligned HRM practices on organizational performance within healthcare settings over time, particularly in neonatal surgical care. Examining the cross-cultural applicability of CSR-focused HRM in different hospital environments and geographic locations could provide valuable comparative insights. Additionally, investigating the role of technology and digital HRM tools, such as electronic health record-integrated training systems and sustainability tracking software, in enhancing CSR practices within neonatal surgical care presents a promising area for further exploration.

This study underscores the transformative potential of aligning HRM practices with CSR and sustainability objectives in healthcare. By adopting a strategic, ethical, and sustainability-focused approach, neonatal surgical care organizations can achieve superior patient care outcomes while contributing meaningfully to societal and environmental well-being.

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