

UNLEASHING CORPORATE POTENTIAL: HOW CSR DRIVES CORPORATE SOCIAL PERFORMANCE THROUGH GREEN INNOVATION

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Investigation into the impact of CSR dimensions on corporate social performance mainly relied on resource-based views theory. The purpose of this research, is to examine the association between CSR dimensions and corporate social performance, particularly how green innovation mediates that relationship.

Design/methodology/approach: This study's data was gathered from 340 individuals who were working in private organization in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The data were collected utilized a survey technique, while data analysis was performed using regression analysis and mediation analysis conducted the SPSS V23 program.

Findings: CSR dimension has significant and positive association with corporate social performance. Green innovation serves as partial mediator between CSR dimension and corporate social performance.

Originality/value: This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge in the field and establishes the groundwork for future research by offering original empirical insights into the mediating role of green innovation between dimension of CSR and corporate social performance through the utilization of resource-based view theory.

Keywords: CSR dimension, social performance, green innovation, private organizations.

INTRODUCTION

In the twenty-first century, corporate sustainability is essential and corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a key factor in both societal progress and company performance. Corporations have an economic role in the development of an organization or society. In general terms, this function is considered to include the financial, legal, moral, and charitable duties (Wirba, 2024; Ahmad et al., 2022). How corporations achieve a balance between raising moral standards,

achieving financial success, and meeting social and environmental requirements that satisfy their stakeholders is determined by their corporate sustainability. In response to rising stakeholder demand and environmental challenges, corporations are using cutting-edge corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategies to minimize pollution and environmental harm in production and maintenance operations while enhancing internal management effectiveness. CSR is

described as the responsibility of an organization to pursue desirable policies, make decision-making, and operate in a way that corresponds with the norms, values, and objectives of society (Ma et al., 2023; Dincer et al., 2023). Since, the interaction between companies and the community has been essential to the philosophy of social responsibility. According to Wołowiec et al. (2023), corporate social responsibility (CSR) is an approach to management that addresses stakeholders' concerns about ethical, social, and environmental issues as well as responsible and irresponsible behavior in order to benefit the company's shareholders. Furthermore, considering the concept's advantages for businesses, society, and the environment, managers, academics, and governments are paying it more attention. In real terms, business operations have an impact on stakeholders, the environment, and society (Ghani et al., 2022; Jayaraman et al., 2023).

International companies are consequently growing more aware of the strategic value of CSR in their business's growth (Le, 2023). Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is often seen as a calculated approach to reduce negative environmental effects and enhance corporation social responsibility (Manzoor et al., 2023; Lu, Kuo, & Tran, 2023). The influence or accomplishments of socially conscious activities is highlighted by corporate social performance (Zampone, Sannino, & García Sánchez, 2023). Performance is specifically the result of CSR initiatives and deliberate attention to societal or environmental challenges. Performance could be considered financial, social, environmental, or economic, as defined by Ellili & Nobanee, (2023). This study's focus on social performance reveals how CSR affects the expectations of society. Therefore, how can CSR are implemented to enhance the social performance of corporations? Thus, there is a wide range in how CSR affects an organization's performance. After studying US businesses, Akhter & Hassan, (2024) concluded that corporate social responsibility (CSR) either mediates or enhances the relationship between marketing strategies and corporate performance (Manzoor et al., 2024; Lanet al., 2021). Furthermore, Silva, Moreira, & Mota, (2023) showed that CSR, with or without mediators, could enhance customer satisfaction and confidence. This means that most of the results

of the research that was previously conducted are conflicting and inconclusive.

In the end, the conversation above shows that, depending on an organization's environment, research setting, approach style, and position within the conceptual model, CSR may provide a range of results (Khan et al., 2022; Fatima & Elbanna, 2023). Although the results of earlier research were not widely accepted, further study on the ideas using novel strategies and situations is needed.

The primary objective of our research is to examine the relationship between CSR dimensions and corporate social performance in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Compared with conventional innovation, green innovation provides advantage for the financial system, society, and environment. Research has shown how green innovations can solve environmental concerns of consumers and provide value to goods and processes (Ha et al., 2024). The majority of corporate social responsibility initiatives focus on green innovation in advanced countries, with countries that are developing occasionally left behind due to inadequate regulations regarding the environment (Wang, Rani, & Razzaq, 2023). Despite the study of CSR's influence on competitive advantages and financial performance more study needed regarding the mediating role of green innovation from non-financial perspectives, particularly corporate social performance in developing nations (Sarfraz et al., 2023; Islam et al., 2023).

Thus, our research addressed this gap by examining the mediating role of green innovation between dimension of CSR and corporate social performance, given that CSR-focused green innovations are increasingly recognized as an approach to social and environmental issues and a catalyst for sustainability. Previous studies have shown that the aforementioned mediators serve as strategic intangible assets for organizations to enhance their performance; however, no research has examined these four components within an integrated model linking CSR and social performance. Thus, this research offered important literature on the relationship of CSR, green innovation, and corporate social performance.

Literature Review

Dimension of CSR on corporate social performance

Economic CSR refers to a company's commitment to generating economic value while considering its impact on society. Several studies indicate a positive relationship between economic CSR and CSP. For instance, Coelho, Jayantilal, & Ferreira, (2023) suggest that companies engaging in responsible economic practices often see enhanced financial performance, leading to improved social performance. Similarly, Tiep Le, (2023) highlight that firms with strong economic responsibility not only boost their profitability but also enhance their reputation, which can lead to better stakeholder relations and increased trust. Legal CSR encompasses adherence to laws and regulations governing business operations. It is widely acknowledged that compliance with legal standards positively influences CSP. Studies, such as those by Jitmaneroj, (2023), demonstrate that companies prioritizing legal compliance tend to achieve higher CSP scores. Legal CSR creates a foundational layer of trust, as stakeholders feel secure knowing that the firm operates within established legal frameworks. Furthermore, the proactive management of legal risks often results in fewer sanctions and improved corporate image, contributing positively to overall performance.

Ethical CSR focuses on the moral obligations of a corporation beyond legal compliance, emphasizing fairness, integrity, and transparency. Research consistently indicates a positive relationship between ethical CSR and CSP. For example, Fosu & Asiedu, (2024) found that ethical CSR practices enhance corporate reputation, which is closely tied to CSP. Furthermore, companies that demonstrate ethical behavior often foster employee satisfaction and loyalty, which can enhance operational efficiency and, consequently, social performance. This aligns with the stakeholder theory, suggesting that ethical practices cultivate better relationships with various stakeholder groups, ultimately benefiting the firm's social standing. Philanthropic CSR involves voluntary activities that benefit society, such as charitable donations and community engagement. The literature supports a positive relationship between philanthropic CSR and CSP, with studies indicating that philanthropic efforts can significantly enhance a company's image and stakeholder relations. For instance,

Chen, Wang, & Li, (2023) argue that effective philanthropy can create shared value, benefiting both the community and the business. Companies recognized for their philanthropic efforts often experience increased customer loyalty and brand differentiation, further successful their overall CSP. The above argument leads to hypotheses:

H1. There is positive relationship between economic CSR and corporate social performance.

H2. There is positive relationship legal CSR and corporate social performance.

H3. There is positive relationship between ethical CSR and corporate social performance.

H4. There is positive relationship between philanthropic CSR and corporate social performance.

Mediating role of Green innovation

Over the past few decades, the world has experienced extreme environmental degradation. The massive industrial development has caused severe environmental pollution and ecological community destruction, severely affecting people's lives. Businesses are generally considered the main contributors to environmental problems and are under tremendous ecological pressure from various stakeholders to protect the environment (Xie, Abbass, & Li, 2024). Pressure from the media, consumers and other stakeholder's forces companies to take innovative green steps to improve their environmental and social performance. It is now widely recognized that companies must act environmentally responsibly to contribute to society and achieve high levels of competitiveness and economic success (Wang et al., 2023). With the increasing popularization of environmental protection or sustainable development, CSR through green innovation has become an essential direction of corporate social development. Green innovation includes technological enhancements that save energy, prevent pollution, support waste recycling, and include green product design and operational environmental management.

Green innovation contributes to companies' sustainability by positively impacting economic, social and environmental outcomes (González, 2023). Du, Gou, & Tang, (2024) state that innovative firms choose to develop a strategy based on their productive resources to achieve a monopoly by producing a new green product at a

reasonable cost. A green innovation strategy aims to improve a company's environmental performance from different perspectives and provides the company with social performance and a green image advantage. In this sense, green innovation is considered one of the main drivers of economic growth, environmental sustainability and social performance (Aftab et al., 2023). Thus, this creates a positive synergy between business and environmental goals. Theoretical and empirical studies acknowledged that CSR and green innovation are necessary for companies to create value. Cheah, Leong, & Fernando, (2023) found that a company's innovation performance positively impacts its social performance. Furthermore, Ha et al. (2024) revealed that there is a positive correlation between green innovation and environmental performance, which is an important dimension of economic and social performance (Bocquet et al., 2017). In addition, companies that engage in green activities can easily obtain funding that allows them to translate innovative ideas into improved products, services, and even organizational processes. A company with well-planned CSR orientations can improve its green innovation capabilities (Fosu, Yi, & Asiedu, 2024). The value of green innovation is possibly the opportunity to improve social

performance while achieving protection obligations. Hence, green innovation is regarded not solely as a response to environmental pressures but as an opportunity to improve long-term economic growth (Razzaq, Fatima, & Murshed, 2023). Green Innovation creates value for companies, it must increase productivity, resulting in higher profits, more value for stakeholders, improved market share, improved environmental performance, legitimate attainment or a composite of those as mentioned earlier, leading to social performance (Sarfraz et al., 2023). We assume that the greater the intensity of green innovation in a company, the greater its positive influence on the relationship between CSR activities and social performance. Based on above we hypothesize that **H2:** Green innovation as a mediating mechanism between economic corporate social responsibility and corporate social performance. **H3:** Green innovation as a mediating mechanism between legal corporate social responsibility and corporate social performance. **H4:** Green innovation as a mediating mechanism between ethical corporate social responsibility and corporate social performance. **H5:** Green innovation as a mediating mechanism between philanthropic corporate social responsibility and corporate social performance.

Conceptual Framework

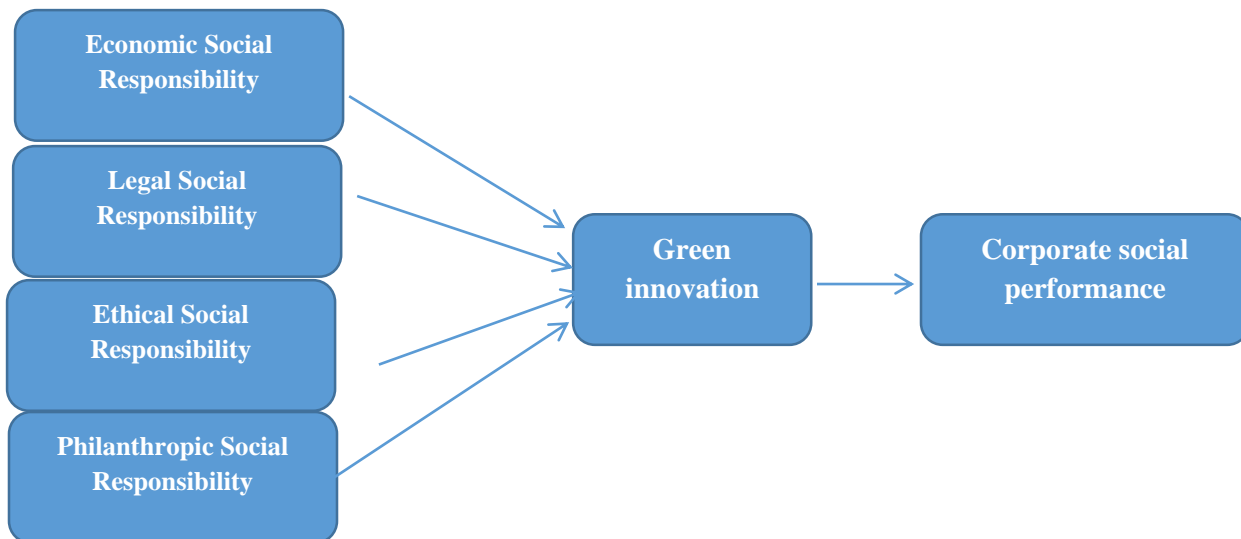


Figure 1: Research model

Methodology

Methods

Research population and Sample

Data for this research was collected using survey, which involved distributing questionnaires to all middle-level employees working in private sector industries in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province. Questionnaires are distributed utilizing a purposive sampling technique. A total of 410 employees participated in this study by completing

questionnaires that were developed based on the specified criteria. A response rate of 82.92% was received from the 340 employees who accurately completed their survey questionnaires.

Among the participants, 263 were male, representing 77.4% of the total. A significant portion of the employees, specifically 40.6%, fall within the age range of 39-46 years, while 39.1% possessed above 15 years of work experience. (Table 1)

Table 1 Demographic

Attribute	Description	Frequencies	Percentage
Gender	Male	263	77.4%
	Female	77	22.6%
Age	22-30	42	12.4%
	31-38	119	35.0%
	39-46	138	40.6%
	Above 46	41	12.1%
work experience	5-10	42	12.4%
	11-15	165	48.5%
	Above 15	133	39.1%
Company type	Pharmaceutical industries	139	40.9%
	Hospitality industries	114	33.5%
	Textile industries	87	25.6%

Instruments

The participants' responses were scored on a five-point Likert scale, 1 indicated strongly disagree and 5 indicated strongly agree.

CSR dimension

The dimension of CSR consisted of 16 questions that were derived from past research (Carroll, 1991). Economic CSR (four statements), legal CSR (four statements), ethical CSR (four statements), and philanthropic CSR (four

statements) are the four categories that are used to assess CSR.

Corporate social performance

This study used a scale developed by Steg and Vlek (2009), that we took four elements and used them to evaluate corporate social performance.

Green innovation

In order to measure the mediating variable green innovation, we used four items from a scale developed by (Aldieri et al., 2019).

Table 2 Reliability statistic

Variable Nature	Constructs	Scale items	Alpha values
Independent variables	Economic CSR	04	.902
	Legal CSR	04	.847
	Ethical CSR	04	.793
	Philanthropic CSR	04	.834
Mediating variable	Green innovation	04	.881
Dependent variable	Corporate social performance	04	.825

Table 3 KMO & BTS statistics

	Independent variables				Dependent variable	Mediating variable
	Economic CSR	Legal CSR	Ethical CSR	Philanthropic CSR	Corporate social performance	Green innovation
<i>KMO</i>	.795	.773	.751	.649	.816	.857
<i>BTS</i>	378.963	288.547	601.343	503.188	489.921	655.167
<i>Df & (sig)</i>	6 (.000)	6.000	21 (.000)	21 (.000)	10 (.000)	15 (.000)

In the above table the sample meets the criteria for (SAMPLE adequacy) based on the previously stated recommendations, given that the study's variables have KMO values greater than .50.

Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is accepted, the study's variables' BTS values are significant. (See Tables 3)

Table 4 Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses	Paths	beta	t	p	Decision
H1	Economic CSR → CSP	.695	14.82	.000	Accepted
H2	Legal CSR → CSP	.171	2.65	.009	Accepted
H3	Ethical CSR → CSP	.214	3.36	.001	Accepted
H4	Philanthropic CSR → CSP	.166	2.47	.014	Accepted

Regression analysis was performed on the dataset using SPSS v23.0 in order to assess the suggested hypotheses. Based on results, economic CSR has positive and significant effect on corporate social performance (B = .695, T = 14.82, p < .000), Legal CSR on corporate social performance (B = .171, T

= 2.65, p < .009), ethical CSR on corporate social performance (B = .214, T = 3.36, p < .001), and philanthropic CSR on corporate social performance (B = .166, T = 2.47, p < .014), which is support of H1, H2, H3, and H4. (See table 4)

Mediation Analysis

Table 5 Mediation test-1 (Economic CSR-> GI ->CSP)

Pathways	estimates	p	LLCI	ULCI
Economic CSR → GI	.8831	.000	.7945	.9717
GI → CSP	.4389	.000	.2742	.6037
Total Effect	.7049	.000	.6056	.8042
Direct Effect	.3173	.000	.1453	.4892
Indirect Effect	.3876		.2133	.5373
Sobel test (z)		4.48		

Table 6 Mediation test-2 (Legal CSR-> GI ->CSP)

Pathways	estimates	p	LLCI	ULCI
Legal CSR → GI	.8177	.000	.7217	.9138
GI → CSP	.4333	.000	.2882	.5785
Total Effect	.6862	.000	.5895	.7829
Direct Effect	.3319	.000	.1844	.4794
Indirect Effect	.3543		.2100	.4983
Sobel test (z)		8.16		

Table 7 Mediation test-3 (Ethical CSR-> GI ->CSP)

Pathways	estimates	p	LLCI	ULCI
Ethical CSR → GI	.6695	.000	.5872	.7718
GI → CSP	.4621	.000	.2807	.6434
Total Effect	.7425	.000	.6517	.8333
Direct Effect	.5764	.000	.4279	.7249
Indirect Effect	.1661		.0387	.3025
Sobel test (z)		2.72		

Table 8 Mediation test-4 (Philanthropic CSR-> GI ->CSP)

Pathways	estimates	p	LLCI	ULCI
Philanthropic CSR → GI	.7154	.000	.6165	.8153
GI → CSP	.4525	.000	.2785	.6266
Total Effect	.9084	.000	.7034	.8817
Direct Effect	.8547	.000	.4337	.7357
Indirect Effect	.3237		.1802	.4643
Sobel test		4.85		

The study examined green innovation serves as a mediator between economic CSR, legal CSR, ethical CSR, philanthropic CSR, and corporate social performance. H5, H6, H7, and H8 are assumed in this study in order to help the empirical investigation.

Based on table 5, Green innovation was investigated as a mediator between economic CSR and corporate social performance. The findings of mediation test 1 (Z=4.48, P=.000) suggest the green innovation serves as a partial mediator in the relationship between economic CSR and corporate social performance. Therefore, the H5 hypothesis of this study is confirmed. (See mediation test 1)

Similarly, the findings of table 6 (Z=8.16, P=.000) suggest the green innovation mediates the relationship between legal CSR and corporate social performance. Therefore, the H6 hypothesis of this study is accepted. (See mediation test 2)

The findings of table 7 (Z=2.72, P=.000) suggest the green innovation mediates the relationship between ethical CSR and corporate social performance. Therefore, we identified support for H7. (See mediation test 3)

Finally, the findings of table 8 (Z=4.85, P=.000) suggest the green innovation mediates the relationship between philanthropic CSR and corporate social performance. Therefore, the H8

hypothesis of this study is confirmed. (See mediation test 4)

Discussion

This study results enhances the resource-based view theory by analyzing the relationship between economic CSR, legal CSR, ethical CSR, philanthropic CSR, and corporate social performance in private organizations located in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The study originated by developing a conceptual framework based on previous studies on CSR dimensions, green innovation, and corporate social performance, particularly emphasizing private organizations when applicable. The study findings indicated that corporate social performance in private organizations is positively influenced by the dimensions of CSR i.e., economic CSR, legal CSR, ethical CSR, and philanthropic CSR.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) significantly affects business organizations by improving their brand and financial outcomes. Economic CSR emphasizes profitability while meeting societal requirements; with Li et al. (2023) observing that relating company strategy with social objectives may provide a competitive edge and enhance consumer loyalty. Legal CSR encourages regulatory compliance, which not only

reduces risks but also promotes trust among stakeholders. This is shown by Tyler et al. (2024), showed that proactive legal adherence, distinguishes organizations in competitive marketplaces. Ethical CSR beyond basic compliance integrating corporate processes with ethical standards. Pham et al. (2023) emphasizes that ethical organizations frequently observe enhanced employee satisfaction and retention, whilst Li & Rabeuu, (2024) observes that customers are progressively inclined to choose brands with powerful ethical values. Philanthropic corporate social responsibility, though voluntary, may improve a company's reputation and foster employee involvement (Vuong & Bui, 2023). Ultimately, effective Corporate Social Performance (CSP) is associated with improved financial results and efficient risk management (Sultan et al., 2024). As stakeholders need responsible behaviors, the incorporation of CSR into fundamental corporate strategy is vital for sustained success.

Furthermore, green innovation significantly mediates the relationship between dimension of CSR and corporate social performance. With the adoption of green technologies, organizations boost their environmental impact and improve economic performance by attracting to eco-conscious customers and fostering brand loyalty. Moreover, these developments facilitate organizations' compliance with regulations, therefore reducing risks and enhancing their reputations. Ethical issues influence employee engagement, since people are attracted to firms that emphasize sustainability, leading to enhanced morale and retention rates. Moreover, charitable endeavors that campaign for environmental issues improve company reputation and community engagement. The integration of dimension of CSR with green innovation has become important for enhancing corporate social performance and addressing the increasing expectations of stakeholders for responsible business practices.

Practical implications

This research provides significant insights that may affect organization performance. Organizations can gain cost reductions and market uniqueness via sustainable practices, appealing to environmentally aware customers and socially responsible investors. Furthermore, environmental activities

assist firms in adhering to rules, reducing risks, and improving their reputations, therefore increasing their attractiveness to consumers and partners. Ethical commitments generate trust and loyalty among stakeholders, while charitable initiatives in sustainability enhance community welfare, reinforcing brand loyalty. The mediating effect of green innovation serves as crucial for the successful implementation of corporate social responsibility (CSR). It allows organizations to evaluate their ecological footprint, enhancing transparency and accountability in their environmental disclosures. By cultivating a culture of sustainability, green innovation synchronizes internal practices with external objectives, providing organizations with a competitive edge and creating new commercial prospects. Incorporating sustainability into corporate strategy through green innovation provides lasting benefits for both companies and society.

Future study and limitations

The research was carried in private organization. There are a number of limitations to taking green ideas into CSR. Considering sustainable practices frequently need considerable financial and human resources, smaller firms may find it challenging to adequately implement them due to resource restrictions. It is also difficult to quantify environmental benefits and there are reporting gaps because of the difficulty in properly monitoring the effect of green technology. Another factor that might hinder the effective adoption of these efforts is stakeholder opposition, which can be caused by either a lack of knowledge or a perception of inconvenience. Furthermore, companies may undermine the efficacy of green initiatives if they are just concerned with short term profits and perceive CSR as an expense rather than an investment.

The best way forward for addressing these issues is for corporations, governments, and NGOs to work together more closely in the future to exchange information and resources about environmentally friendly solutions. To increase responsibility and promote broader adoption of sustainable practices, it is necessary to establish common measures for evaluating the effects of these programs. One way to encourage a culture of sustainability and lessen stakeholder opposition to green technologies is to raise awareness and educate people about their

advantages. Last but not least, businesses should not see sustainability as an afterthought, but as an integral part of their overall strategy. They can only promote innovation by taking action, which ultimately benefits both society and the company.

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