

Green Corporate Identity: Employee Awareness in a Manufacturing Company

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ABSTRACT

With the introduction of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, Greening has become the ethos of the business world, particularly in manufacturing companies. However, a very few manufacturing companies meticulously exhibit their environmental commitments. Accordingly, Green Corporate Identity (GCI) is the strategically designed unique identity of a company that communicates its environmental commitments to its stakeholders. The paper intends to understand the employee awareness of GCI in manufacturing companies. The study is exploratory in nature, employing quantitative analysis with primary data gathered using survey questionnaire from employees of a leading manufacturing company with a Green policy. One sample t test was performed to understand the employee awareness of GCI, and Multi-Dimensional Scaling Techniques (ALSCAL) was used to understand the level of awareness of each component of GCI among employees across the selected departments. The study reveals that employees are aware of their company's GCI but do not have a comprehensive understanding of all aspects of GCI. As the previous research studies on the field of GCI in India are scarce, the paper presents the emerging concept of Green Corporate Identity in the Indian context to address the relevance of creating a Green identity to achieve environmental objectives of companies with the support of all its stakeholders.

Keywords: Green Corporate Identity, Green Corporate Communication, Green Corporate Behaviour, Green Corporate Culture, Green Corporate Drives and Forces, Green Products and Services Quality

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Introduction

Business organisations across the globe have been grappling with revamping business strategies as the focus has been shifted from traditional profit-making strategies to corporate sustainability strategies, particularly after the introduction of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, 2015. Hence, the recent challenge in the business world is to achieve competitive advantage by finding innovative ways to conduct business with energy-efficient and environment-friendly processes, products, technologies, and waste management. This integration of environmental commitments with strategic management brings on environmental sustainability.

With the increasing awareness of the need for sustainability, stakeholders of any company, including customers, expect corporations to contribute to Greening. A previous study established that companies with Green policies acquire competitive advantage

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and customer loyalty (Chan & Fong, 2010). Hence, companies have started designing unique corporate identities exhibiting their Green or environmental commitments to be distinguished among their competitors, which becomes their Green Corporate Identity (GCI). Green Corporate Identity (GCI) is the strategically designed unique identity of a company that communicates its environmental commitments

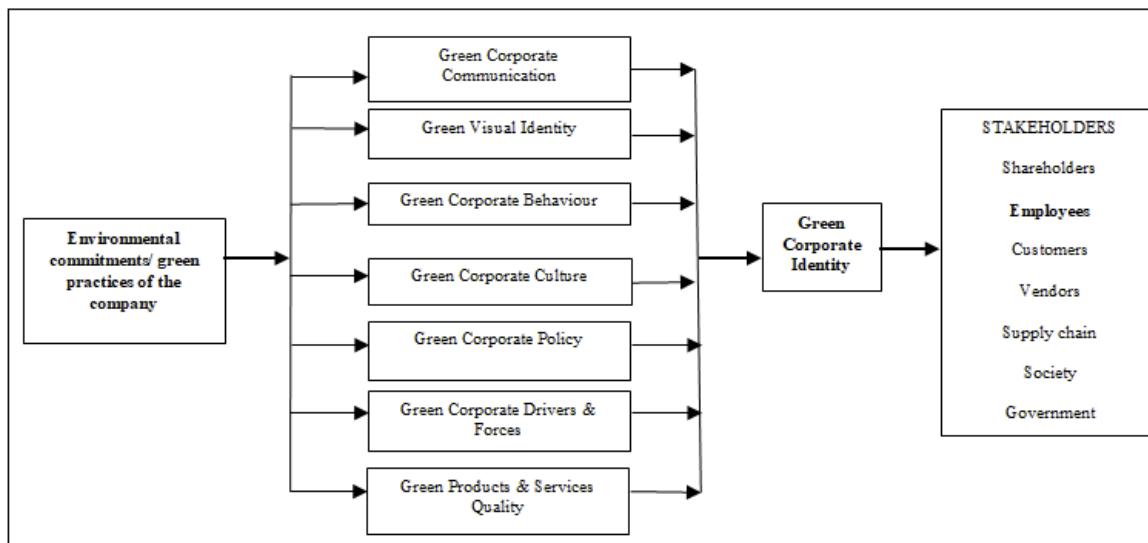


Figure:1: Conceptual diagram

to its stakeholders, including shareholders, employees, customers, and the community (Shrivastava, 1994; Green et al., 2000; Harris & Crane, 2002). Accordingly, this starts with the incorporation of environmental concerns or green commitments of a company in their vision, mission, goals, visual messages, corporate communications, policies, processes, organisational structure, culture, employee motivation, leadership management, technological upgrades, organisational resource management, and business strategy (Boiral, 2008; Simpson et al 2007; Garrod, & Chadwick, 1996; Robertson, & Barling, 2012).

Employees play a vital role in the efficient functioning of any company and its achievement of organisational objectives and sustainable development (Wolf, 2012). Thus, to achieve the environmental objectives of a company, there should be an integration of Green concepts into Human Resources Management. Consequently, every employee becomes aware of environmental commitments—green vision, green mission, green policies, green methods, green products/services, and green goals of their company. Therefore, an employee with adequate knowledge of her/his company's Green Corporate Identity can efficiently contribute to their environmental commitments. Furthermore, the level of awareness of GCI among employees determines their contribution to the company's Green efforts and efficiency in Green practices.

India plans to increase the contribution of the manufacturing sector to the GDP from 17 percent to 25 percent by 2025. Moreover, India has pledged a

45% or more reduction in the "carbon intensity" of its economy by 2030 and to achieve the Net Zero emissions goal by 2070. Hence the relevance of green practices in manufacturing industries in India. Furthermore, India's commitment to the UN SDGs has driven the majority of Indian companies to design sustainable development management strategies. However, all these are still in the nascent stage. Even though the government has come up with different measures to improve and regulate the environmental management of companies, it still has not gained full momentum. As GCI is a relatively new concept in the Indian context, this study aims to understand the employee awareness of GCI, which is characterised by eco-friendly, energy-efficient, unique values embedded throughout the organisation that are communicated to its stakeholders through its mission, vision, goals, structure, symbols, culture, policies, processes, products, and services in the Indian manufacturing sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Green Corporate Identity (GCI)

Balmer (2017) affirmed that key traits of any company's brand identity embody their goals, values, organisational type, employee behaviour, quality of products or services, location, market conditions, and customers. Hence, corporate identity exhibits the ideal social image of a company, which they want to project to the public. Consequently, this would influence the public perception of that company. Alessandri (2001) defined corporate identity as 'a firm's strategically

planned and purposeful presentation of itself to gain a positive corporate image in the minds of the public.' Correspondingly, the Green Corporate Identity (GCI) is a concept drawn on the Corporate Identity by focussing on managing the company's identity to represent the environmental commitments. Subsequently eliciting stakeholder engagement, customer loyalty, Green corporate image and Green corporate reputation, competitive advantage, and firm value (Bingöl et al., 2013; Norman et al., 2010; Onputtha et al., 2020; Puusa & Tolvanen, 2006; Whetten & Mackey, 2002; Zollo et al., 2018). Moreover, it is the way in which an organisation attempts to communicate its green initiatives in the form of corporate communications, directly and indirectly, to both internal and external stakeholders (Balmer, 2017; Foroudi, 2015). Chen (2011) asserted that the Green Corporate Identity can be a reflection of a company's history, strategy, culture, and management of its environmental concerns by the employees across all levels. Furthermore, studies found that the Green Corporate identity itself can generate green corporate reputation, a green shared vision, Green organisational citizenship behaviour, Green product development, and green performance (Chang et al., 2019; Whetten & Mackey, 2002). Besides, it enhances in-role and extra-role Green work behaviour of employees (Yang et al., 2019). However, Green Corporate Identity has been found to be used mostly while explaining corporate social responsibility and sustainable business activities related to the environment and society (Kim et al., 2010).

Green Corporate Identity can be referred to as the strategically formulated unique identity or status of a company to be perceived by its stakeholders on the basis of its green initiatives or environmental commitments. It can be communicated to all stakeholders through products, location, vehicle, print, and other media with their specific graphic design, colour, symbol, logo, and typography (Dowling, 1994; Baker & Balmer, 1997; Melewar & Jenkins, 2002; Tourky, 2013). However, companies with environmental commitments often present their Green Corporate identity (Balmer & Stotvig, 1997; Chidchob & Pianthong, 2020; Melewar & Wooldridge, 2001; Rashid, 2019). Consequently, this would enhance their green image on account of their efforts in providing environmentally friendly products or services in creating a healthy, safe, and sustainable environment. This would in turn add to customer loyalty and ultimately lead to competitive advantages. Moreover, the aim of designing a green corporate identity is to make a company distinctive by clearly differentiating itself from its competitors in terms of

its environmental commitments or green practices (Onputtha et al., 2020).

Components of GCI

As studies established that the Corporate Identity Mix elaborates that corporate identity can be studied by focussing on its components, GCI follows suit (Maurya et al., 2015; Melewar & Jenkins, 2002; Onputtha et al., 2020). Onputtha et al. (2020) explained that Green Corporate Identity comprises seven components: Green corporate communication, Green corporate visual identity, Green corporate culture, Green employee behaviour, Green policy, Green forces and drivers, and Green products and service quality.

Green corporate communication refers to the way in which a company communicates its environmental concerns and commitments to its stakeholders (Melewar & Jenkins, 2002). Various studies report the GCI is the positive corporate communication about the management of green practices of a company to the entire stakeholders (Alessandri, 2001; Balmer & Grey 2000; Balmer, 2017). Besides, the level of clarity in this communication can determine the level of understanding on the part of its stakeholders. GCI can be depicted through clearly presented vision statements, mission statements, company websites, company apps, news bulletins, and press releases.

Green Visual Identity can be referred to as the visual representation of a company's environmental commitments to its stakeholders (Melewar & Jenkins, 2002). GCI can be visualised on products, locations, vehicles, print, and other media for all stakeholders (Baker & Balmer, 1997; Dowling, 1994; Melewar, 2003; Tourky, 2013). Green Visual corporate identity elements include: naming (exclusive company name), logo, colour palette, corporate font, business card, letterhead, envelope, colour, infographics, symbols, graphic designs, architecture, office layout, and typography. Maurya et al. (2015) elaborated that the symbolism and visual must represent the business strategy, mission, and values, which must be well articulated, specific, and identifiable for the stakeholders.

Green Corporate Culture implies the corporate values, beliefs, ethics, and attitude of a company in terms of its environmental commitments, and Green Corporate Behaviour refers to the way in which the organisation manages corporate behaviour in terms of its environmental commitments and goals (Melewar & Jenkins, 2002). Here, the level of employee understanding of green concepts and green practices dictates their in-role and extra-role Green behaviour



(Melewar & Akel, 2005; Norton et al., 2014; Yang et al., 2019).

As an organisation is in constant interaction with its external environment—suppliers, distributors, regulators, and customers—which can act as drivers or motivators in the corporate decision-making process (Green et al., 2000). The Green Corporate Drivers include public opinion, shareholder value, cost reduction, joining industry leaders, and environmental management legislation. Green corporate motivating factors constitute regulatory mandates, economic advantages, waste management, conservation of resources, recycling, supply chain requirements, corporate image, and employee satisfaction. Other studies also suggest that external forces like industrial involvement, internationalisation, technology innovation, and society are some other influencing factors (Chidcho & Pianthong, 2020; Rashid, 2019). The adoption of Green supply chain practices depends on organisational factors as well as spatial or geographical factors (Toke & Kalpande, 2019). Green product and service quality are essential, as these can create customer satisfaction and loyalty (Balmer & Stotvig, 1997; Melewar & Wooldridge, 2001). Meeting customer needs, environmental trade-offs, reuse, recycling, disposal, green design, etc. should be given importance. Toke and Kalpande (2019) explained that factors like green practices, organisational resources, organisational innovations, and organisational monitoring systems play key roles in environmental innovations. Studies also identified other factors such as environmental benchmarking, measurement, effective groundwork, cross-functional coordination, environmental data base, supplier involvement, environmental policy, environmental legislation, top management support and involvement, and product experimentations (Pujari et al., 2003; Toke & Kalpande, 2019).

Studies clarified the role of employees in Green management, where they must be inspired, empowered, and educated in environment management (Malik et al., 2021; Zaid et al., 2018). Further, the GCI can encourage employee work behaviour towards meaningful ways to achieve the environmental goals of the company (Onputtha et al., 2020). Subsequently, an employee with effective understanding of GCI means an employee who shares the environmental commitment with the company. An extensive review of literature indicates that GCI has not been adequately explored in the Indian context, and this paper adds to the academic literature. As employees are one of the major stakeholders of a company, their level of understanding of GCI is very

relevant. In view of the review of literature, the following hypothesis is postulated:

H_0 : There is no significant evidence that the employees are aware of Green Corporate Identity

H_1 : There is significant evidence that the employees are aware of Green Corporate Identity

METHODOLOGY

GCI remains a relatively underexplored area in India, with companies yet to strategically formulate its implementation. Therefore, this exploratory study is limited to a single company, one that has a green policy and is a leader in its industry, which can serve as a representative sample. The study was descriptive and analytical in nature and focused on a public sector manufacturing undertaking that has a Green Management policy. Primary data was collected through a well-structured questionnaire after an extensive review of literature and discussions with experts in the field. The questionnaire was finalised after the pilot study, and the Cronbach's Alpha test was performed to prove the internal consistency of statements used with a seven-point scale.

Sample Distribution

Even though the company consists of nine departments, four major departments critical to production and marketing were selected for research: the Production department with its six subunits, the Materials department together with the Maintenance department (as they work together), the Research & Development department, and the Marketing department. A total of 284 employees work in the selected departments (excluding casual workers, night shift workers, and employees on leave). Cochran's sample calculation formula was used to find the required sample size. $n = z^2 pq / e^2$

$$p = 0.5 \text{ and hence } q = 1 - 0.5 = 0.5; e = 0.05; z = 1.96 \\ = ((1.96)^2 (0.5(1-0.5)) / (0.05)^2 = 384$$

Where, n_0 = sample size, z = critical value of desired confidence level, p = estimated proportion of an attribute that is present in the population, $q = 1 - p$, e = desired level of precision.

Sample Size Calculation of Factors

Minimum Sample size according to Cochran's sampling calculation method = 384

Required sample size from total population (284)

$RS = (SS \times P) / (SS + P - 1)$, RS = Required Sample Size, SS = Sample Size (Minimum) = 384, P = population (284)

$$RS = (384 \times 284) / (384 + 284 - 1) = RS = 164$$

Table 1: Sample Distribution of the Study

SL. No.	Departments	TP	P	SS
1	Manufacturing Centre	97	0.34	56
2	Materials and Maintenance	79	0.28	46
3	Research and Development	52	0.18	30
4	Marketing	56	0.20	32
	Total	284	1.00	164

TP= Total Population, P=Proportion, SS= Sample Size

Hence, the sample size is 164. The population was proportionally distributed among selected departments, and a simple random sampling method was used to select the respondents. The sample distribution is as shown in Table 1.

A pilot study was conducted among 20 employees from each selected department. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was tested, and a sufficient Cronbach's Alpha value of more than 0.80 has been found, as given in Table 2.

Factor analysis shows that all the variables have more than 0.70 factor loading. Besides, each factor has more than 60 percent variance except the second factor, as shown in Table 3. Hence, it can be inferred that these variables will predict the accurate result of employee awareness of Green Corporate Identity.

One- sample t-test was performed to find out the statistical significance of respondents' awareness of Green Corporate Identity. Table 4 indicates that the mean score is higher than the test value of 4.2 and the

p-value is lesser at the 5 percent significant level. Hence, the result is statistically significant on all the factors, and it can be inferred that there is significant evidence that these employees are aware of Green Corporate Identity. Therefore, the null hypothesis H_0 There is no significance evidence that the employees are aware of Green Corporate Identity stands rejected.

Further, Multi-Dimensional Scaling Techniques- ALSCAL (Factors) was used to understand the awareness level of each of the seven components of GCI among employees across the selected departments with a two-dimension perspective. As presented in Table 5, each of the departments was tested with multidimensional scaling techniques. It was observed that the employees in the Manufacturing and Materials departments have a high level of awareness of green Corporate communication (D1=.1434, D2=.3178; D1=.0333, D2=.2094), and Green Corporate Policy (D1=3.0802, D2=.0246; D1=3.0920, D2=.0418). The Research and Development Employees have high level of awareness of Green Corporate Behaviour factor (D1=.4742, D2=.1204), employees of Marketing department have high level of awareness on Green Corporate Communication (D1=.0610, D2=.1430), Visual Identity (D1=.7421, D2=.1005), Green Corporate Culture (D1=1.2838, D2=.0093), and Green Corporate Forces & Drives (D1=.7669, D2=.8259)

MAJOR FINDINGS

Based on the analysis of seven factors of Green Corporate Identity, the study shows that employees are aware of GCI, but their level of understanding of each factor of GCI varies among employees across selected departments. Employees in the Marketing department have a better understanding of GCI, while those of the R&D department show the least comprehension. However, none of the departments has significant awareness of Green Products and Services Quality. Additionally, only the employees of the Marketing department have relevant knowledge on Green Corporate Forces and Drives. Nonetheless, the employees of the Manufacturing and Materials departments have been well informed on Green corporate communication and Green Policy.

LIMITATIONS AND SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The paper focusses on only the generalised concept of Green Corporate Identity, and the scope of the study is limited to only one manufacturing company with a

Table 2 : Internal Consistency of Questionnaire

Sl. No.	Factors	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Green Corporate Communication	8	.874
2	Green Visual Identity	4	.984
3	Green Corporate Behaviour	8	.899
4	Green Corporate Culture	16	.801
5	Green Corporate Policy	14	.869
6	Green Corporate Forces & Drives	9	.881
7	Green Products and Services Quality	16	.901
		75 Items	.884



Table 3 : Communalities from Factor Analysis

Q. Code	FL	Q. Code	FL	Q. Code	FL	Q. Code	FL
GCI.2.1	.831	GCI.5.1	.801	GCI.6.5	.853	GCI.8.2	.733
GCI.2.2	.932	GCI.5.2	.955	GCI.6.6	.868	GCI.8.3	.800
GCI.2.3	.923	GCI.5.3	.955	GCI.6.7	.822	GCI.8.4	.982
GCI.2.4	.894	GCI.5.4	.955	GCI.6.8	.711	GCI.8.5	.820
GCI.2.5	.794	GCI.5.5	.955	GCI.6.9	.834	GCI.8.6	.963
GCI.2.6	.869	GCI.5.6	.955	GCI.6.10	.889	GCI.8.7	.907
GCI.2.7	.833	GCI.5.7	.987	GCI.6.11	.777	GCI.8.8	.978
GCI.2.8	.785	GCI.5.8	.987	GCI.6.12	.990	GCI.8.9	.965
GCI.3.1	.952	GCI.5.9	.987	GCI.6.13	.769	GCI.8.10	.978
GCI.3.2	.958	GCI.5.10	.987	GCI.6.14	.821	GCI.8.11	.970
GCI.3.3	.957	GCI.5.11	.987	GCI.7.1	.959	GCI.8.12	.979
GCI.3.4	.721	GCI.5.12	.987	GCI.7.2	.883	GCI.8.13	.973
GCI.4.1	.813	GCI.5.13	.987	GCI.7.3	.883	GCI.8.14	.978
GCI.4.2	.976	GCI.5.14	.987	GCI.7.4	.906	GCI.8.15	.976
GCI.4.3	.976	GCI.5.15	.987	GCI.7.5	.818	GCI.8.16	.977
GCI.4.4	.767	GCI.5.16	.987	GCI.7.6	.914	Factor one 78%	
GCI.4.5	.984	GCI.6.1	.793	GCI.7.7	.816	Factor Two 58%	
GCI.4.6	.984	GCI.6.2	.832	GCI.7.8	.816	Factor Three 82%	
GCI.4.7	.984	GCI.6.3	.902	GCI.7.9	.816	Factor Four 76%	
GCI.4.8	.984	GCI.6.4	.877	GCI.8.1	.719	Factor Five 72%	
						Factor Six 82%	
						Factor Seven 68%	

Table 4 : Significance Evidence of Employees' Awareness of Green Corporate Identity

Factors	Mean	SD	T	p-value
Green Corporate Communication	6.6189	.68812	11.518	.000
Green Visual Identity	4.5838	1.13683	6.577	.000
Green Corporate Behaviour	5.1860	.63820	3.732	.000
Green Corporate Culture	5.5941	1.35167	5.629	.000
Green Corporate Policy	5.1855	1.74759	3.360	.000
Green Corporate Forces & Drives	6.1104	.88927	15.991	.000
Green Products and Services Quality	4.8829	1.01636	6.084	.000

Table 5: Multi-Dimensional Scaling Techniques -ALSCAL (Factors)

<i>Green Corporate Identity Factors</i>	<i>Manufacturing</i>		<i>Materials</i>		<i>R&D</i>		<i>Marketing</i>	
	<i>D1</i>	<i>D2</i>	<i>D1</i>	<i>D2</i>	<i>D1</i>	<i>D2</i>	<i>D1</i>	<i>D2</i>
Communication	.1434	.3178	.0333	.2094			.0610	.1430
Visual Identity							.7421	.1005
Behaviour					.4742	.1204		
Culture							1.2838	.0093
Policy	3.0802	.0246	3.0920	.0418				
Forces & Drives							.7669	.8259
Quality								

Two dimensions positive coefficient values are shown in the table, negative values were excluded

green policy, as the concept is not much popular in the Indian context. Even though this study is exploratory in nature, the awareness of entire employees and in different companies could not be investigated. There is a lot of scope for further studies, as various aspects and relevance of GCI across different industries are unexplored.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATION AND CONCLUSION

Strategically developed Green Corporate Identity helps to create value, promote competitive advantages, enhance corporate reputation, and achieve sustainability. As employees are one of the major stakeholders of a company, their level of understanding of GCI is very relevant. Even though the study shows that employees are aware of the Green Corporate Identity of their company, it is not comprehensive or uniform across departments. The managerial implication of this study is to urge policymakers to formulate strategies to improve the GCI understanding among their employees to effectively achieve their green goals. Moreover, an employee with effective understanding of GCI means an employee sharing environmental commitment with the company. Apart from providing green guidelines, companies should provide tailor-made awareness and training programs to their employees across the hierarchy to disseminate the relevant information on GCI to effectuate it. Employee involvement in the design of GCI is also a decisive factor. Furthermore, companies with effective GCI might easily adopt UN SDGs and contribute to sustainable development.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

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