



## **Salford Business School**

### **Managerial perspectives of creating a sustainable workplace for employees: A case of the textile industry of Pakistan**

*Thesis submitted in fulfilment of requirements for  
the degree of MPhil Business Management*

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## **Table of Contents**

Dedication-----	9
Acknowledgement-----	10
List of Abbreviations-----	11
List of Tables and Figures-----	12
Abstract-----	13

### **Chapter one: Introduction**

1.1 Introduction-----	14
1.2 Background of the study-----	14
1.2.1. Justification of the study-----	21
1.3 Research aims and objectives-----	23
1.4 Research Questions-----	24
24	
1.5 Research contribution-----	24
1.6 Thesis Structure-----	27

### **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

2.1 Introduction-----	29
2.2 Sustainability and Sustainable development: An overview-----	29
2.3 Policy and practice of sustainable development-----	33
2.4 Sustainability-----	34
2.5 Business and Sustainable development-----	36

2.6 Sustainable workplace: Sustainability to Corporate Social Responsibility-----	37
2.7 Benefits of CSR-----	44
2.7.1 Operative Benefits-----	45
2.7.2 Financial Benefits-----	45
2.7.3 Social Benefits-----	46
2.8 Standardisation of CSR-----	46
2.9 ISO 26000 Standard-----	47
2.10 Principles of ISO 26000-----	52
2.10.1 Operational Principles-----	54
2.11 Quality of Work Life-----	54
2.12 Concept of QWL-----	56
2.13 Importance of QWL-----	60
2.14 Link between Corporate Social responsibility and Quality of work life-----	61
2.15 QWL issues in Textile industry-----	63
2.16 Summary-----	65

### **Chapter Three: Contextual framework of Textile sector of Pakistan**

3.1 Pakistan: An overview-----	69
3.2 Economy-----	70
3.3 Concept of sustainability and CSR in Pakistan-----	71
3.4 Overview of the textile sector of Pakistan-----	74
3.5 Summary-----	78

## **Chapter Four: Research Methodology**

4.1 Introduction	79
4.2 What is research?	80
4.3 What is Methodology?	80
4.4 Research Philosophy	81
4.4.1 Positivism	82
4.4.2 Social Constructionism	83
4.4.3 Interpretivism	83
4.5 Research Methodology	84
4.6.1 Qualitative Research	86
4.6.2 Quantitative Research	89
4.7 Research design	91
4.8 Research Strategy	93
4.8 Epistemological framework	89
4.9 Literature review method	95
4.10 Focus group method	95
4.11 Data collection	96
4.12 Data analysis	97
4. 13 Qualitative Method	98
4.14 Participatory action research method	99
4.15 Research questions	100
4.16 Data collection instruments	102
4.16.1 Qualitative Interviews	103
4.16.2 Unstructured Interviews	104

4.16.3 Semi Structured Interviews-----	104
4.16.4 Structured Interviews-----	104
4.17 Sampling Approach-----	105
4.18 Sampling considerations-----	106
4.19 Research journey-----	109
4.20 Focus Group method-----	111
4.21 Qualitative interviews-----	111
4.22 Semi Structured Interviews-----	112
4.23 Participatory action research-----	114
4.24 Case Study Approach-----	114
4.25 The Data Analysis Process-----	117
4.26 Transcribing, Coding and Analysis of the data-----	118
4.27 Coding Process-----	119
4.27.1 How the categories/themes were established-----	119
4.27.2 How the subthemes were created-----	120
4.28 Quality in qualitative research-----	121
4.29 Ethical Considerations-----	123
4.30 Summary-----	124

## **Chapter Five: Research Findings and Analysis**

5.1 Introduction-----	126
5.2 Key research findings-----	126
5.3 Sustainable Development: A need for businesses-----	128

5.4 Understanding of the current practices of Sustainable development and CSR in Pakistan -----	130
5.5 Manager's perspective about workers role on the issue of sustainability -	133
5.6 Power and energy crisis-----	134
5.7 Capacity building and training needs in Pakistan-----	135
5.8 Increase in production cost-----	136
5.9 Lack of research and development-----	136
5.10 Employees' engagement-----	136
5.11 Sustainable development implementation-----	136
5.12 Business Reputation-----	138
5.13 Customer's requirements-----	140
5.14 Legislation and legal requirements-----	142
5.15 Ethical and moral obligation-----	143
5.16 Health & Safety courses-----	143
5.17 Promoting education and training-----	143
5.18 Housing and medical insurance-----	144
5.19 Promoting employment opportunities-----	144
5.20 Role of Government of Pakistan and international bodies-----	145
5.21 Barriers in implementing SD policies and QWL-----	147
5.22 Unfavourable conditions in the global business market-----	147
5.23 Lack of willingness to adopt SD policies-----	148
5.24 Quality standards and certification implementation-----	150
5.25 Government support-----	151
5.26 Documents Analysis-----	151
5.27 Summary-----	152

## **Chapter Six: Discussion**

6.1 Introduction-----	156
6.16 Summary-----	163

## **Chapter Seven: Conclusion**

7.1 Introduction-----	164
7.2 A review of the research-----	155
7.3 Research contribution-----	168
7.4 Recommendations-----	172
7.5 Recommendations for employers-----	173
7.6 Recommendations for Government-----	174
7.7 Recommendations for future study-----	175
7.8 Limitations of the study-----	175
7.9 Areas for future research-----	176
7.10 Personal reflection-----	176

<b>References</b> -----	<b>178</b>
<b>Appendices</b> -----	<b>194</b>



## **Dedication**

I am dedicating this thesis to my beloved late Father (May his soul rest in peace) who passed away during the course of my doctoral work. I wish he had lived to share and celebrate the success with me, which was a direct result of his continuous love and support.

## **Acknowledgement**

### **“In the name of Allah, Gracious, the most Merciful”**

I would like to express my profound gratitude to my supervisors Dr. Suzanne Kane and Dr. Morven McEachern for their countless support and advise throughout my MPhil journey. Without their continuous guidance and encouragement this research was not possible. I would also like to thank all the members of staff at the research office of the Salford Business school and Library at the University of Salford, for their support.

I would like to say special thanks to my beloved parents Liaqat Ali Khan and Shahida for all their love and support. I am also very thankful to my brothers Kashif, Ahsan and Ali for always being there for me and my sisters Sobia, Amna and Rabia for their encouragement and support to complete my degree successfully.

I would also like to thank my entire family and a huge thanks to “Rana Shahbaz” for his continuous support, love, care and numerous prayers and also a massive thanks for reminding and believing on me that I can complete this MPhil journey. Last but not the least thanks to “Fajar Khan” my little princess for being my strength and meaning of my entire life.

Above all, I am very much grateful to Allah Almighty for His Goodness and Mercy He abounded to me from the beginning to the end of this degree. Without Him and His blessings, it would have been impossible for me to successfully complete this MPhil.

## List of Abbreviations

- QWL:** Quality of work life
- SD:** Sustainable development
- CSR:** Corporate social responsibility
- GNP:** Gross national product
- GDP:** Gross domestic product
- UN:** United Nations

## **List of Figures and Tables**

### **List of Figures**

### **Page numbers**

Figure 2.1 Pillars of sustainable growth	32
Figure 2.2 Sustainable workplace	43
Figure 2.3 Principles of ISO 26000	50
Figure 2.4 Components of QWL	54
Figure 4.1 Data collection activities	110
Figure 4.2 Data collection step by step process	118
Figure 5.1 Factors encourage firms to adopt SD	138
Figure 5.2 Firms level of understanding about SD	155

### **List of Tables**

Table 2.1 Definitions of QWL	55
Table 2.2 QWL issues	65
Table 4.1 Research approaches	87
Table 4.3 Qualitative and Quantitative research	91
Table 4.4 Textile firms	108
Table 5.1 Key themes	127

## Abstract

At the beginning of the twenty first century, there was an ongoing debate concerning the role of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in achieving QWL and sustainable competitive advantage (SCA). While external stakeholders required corporations to balance economic, social and environmental dimensions, research indicated a considerable gap about lack of research in the textile sector of Pakistan. The specific problem that was addressed in this study is how CSR initiatives can be used to contribute to make textile firms of Pakistan sustainable workplace and gain competitive advantage.

The researcher fulfilled the gap by employing four research methods. Researcher used two focus groups with six participants, 18 qualitative semi structured interviews and action research by working with the textile firms to get deeper insight about the research issue.

The study findings clearly indicated that the strategic approach to CSR and offering QWL to make workplace sustainable can help textile firms to gain competitive advantage. These findings can help future researchers to investigate the issues of CSR deeper. This research also helps business organisation to structure and implement sustainable goals better.

**Keywords:** Sustainable development, Sustainability, Quality of work life, international standards.

# Chapter One

## Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides background to the research and the rationale for this study. It will also highlight the research aims and objectives in line with the research questions. Furthermore, it highlights the potential benefits of this research and presents the structure of the thesis.

### 1.2 Background of the study

At present, we are running out of energy sources, facing fears of climate change and its consequences, combined with increasing human anxiety; all these issues represent key drivers to the adoption of sustainable development or sustainability concepts (The Economist, 2009, McCullough and Kellison, 2016). The last thirty years have borne witness to a radical change in the global business market. Companies have been increasingly called upon to adopt strategies beyond the financial aspects of their operations and consider the social and environmental impact of their business activities. In this context, the idea of sustainable development (SD) has become well known and is recognised at all social levels.

The classic definition of sustainable development was published by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) in 1987 as:

"Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (WCED, 1987 pp.46)

This definition gave a focus to SD by attracting equality between generations and refers to the agreement of social justice, ecological integrity and the wellbeing of all living systems on the planet (Moore, 2005). The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) believes that well known business firms of 2020 will be those that provide goods and services and reach new customers in ways that take the world's major issues - including poverty, climate change, resource degradation, globalisation and demographic shifts seriously (WBCSD, 2006). In other words, a firm's market position will be determined by its performance against SD criteria. Clearly, positive attitude towards sustainable development would offer companies not only authority, but also offer new opportunities for learning and developing strategy (Zadek, 2007, p.246). Furthermore, due to the growing interest of SD within the global business communities, it is crucial for businesses to adopt SD business strategies (Fernando, 2007). There is a strong desire amongst both employees and business managers to apply the SD policies and in some instances to develop their workplaces in a more sustainable manner. Large numbers of employees have strong expectations of workplace safety and heightened environmental awareness, and are searching for more meaningful work, particularly for work that makes a sustainable social and ecological contribution as well as providing an income (Zhang, 2009).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) highlight, how much the attention of policy maker, the public, and business has moved towards sustainability considerations (Economist, 2015; Lagarde, 2018). Among the many reasons identified to persuade companies to implement the concept of sustainable development and corporate social responsibility are popularity (Fernando, 2007) business strategy (Dentchev, 2004) and stakeholder pressures (McWilliams and Siegel, 2001).

Nonetheless, the practice of SD has been dominated by developments in Western countries such as the United States of America (USA) and the United Kingdom (UK) (Chambers et al., 2013) and unlike developed countries it is unclear whether it prevails in developing and non-Western countries (Dartey-Baah and Amponsah-Tawiah, 2011).

Recently, organisations are facing challenges in economic and occupational health because of enormous business market pressure for attaining the highest level of work productivity and sustainable product quality. Organisations can only succeed if they are genuinely adopting a holistic approach to tackle the issues of sustainability (Bruner and Urenje, 2012). A massive change has occurred due to the increasing societal and customer demands for economic, environmental and social responsibility. The business notion today demands that organisations adapt to sustainable business procedures to be able to survive for a longer period of time (Sabarirajan and Geethanjali, 2011).

According to the Brundtland Report (1987), economic, social and environmental components are interlinked with each other and their interconnectedness is very important in proceeding towards a sustainable future. The report also defines sustainability as a development that satisfies the demands of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to satisfy their own needs (Brundtland, 1987, p. 17). This has since become an often-quoted definition (Moldan et al. 2012). However, sustainable development is about integration: expanding in a way that helps the widest possible range of sectors, across borders and even between generations.



In the corporate world, it is the responsibility of organisations to contribute to society, which ultimately helps organisations attain sustainable development (Baumgartner and Winter 2014). In this context, a significant question arises as to how a business firm could develop a link between responsibilities and opportunities to achieve a high level of sustainable development. Previous research (Baumgartner, 2014) revealed that opportunities are based on responsibilities; organisations can obtain benefits for a certain period if they only focus on responsibilities. In this context, sustainable development is an important source to enhance value creation for the organisation and society (McWilliams and Siegel, 2011). The phenomenon of corporate social responsibility (CSR) is to integrate environmental, social and economic aspects into corporate activities (Svensson et al., 2018). In general, we can differentiate among several important CSR positions, such as corporate philanthropy (Von Schnurbein et al., 2016) and stakeholder aspects (Alt et al., 2015). However, in broader terms CSR also includes environmental aspects (Chauvey et al., 2015; De Oliveira et al., 2016). Furthermore, the sustainability is the mixture of 'corporate social responsibility', 'corporate social performance', 'environmental responsibility', and the 'triple bottom line' all referring to organisations having benefits on economic, social effect and environmental performance in the long-term (Galpin et al., 2015).

The core of the organisational sustainability concept lies in the understanding of the fact that multiple stakeholders share different objectives of sustainability as it is directly related to needs and the extent to which these needs are fulfilled. Furthermore, it is a continuous process where the relative needs of different stakeholders might change with the passage of time. It is also interesting to note that the effects of organisational work arrangements on the physical and psychological well-being have been discussed

in the literature; however, the human side of sustainability remains in the background (Pfeffer, 2010).

Furthermore, business organisations, governments and communities are aspiring to achieve sustainable development goals such as the reduction of pollution, community development and economic stability (Birtwistle and Moore, 2007). Unproductive workforces are not sustainable in the long term. They can have a destructive impact on the physical and mental health of staff, which has serious effects on the productivity, quality, innovation and customer service, which many companies do not seem to understand.

To enhance our understanding of SD influence on companies, research must focus on the specific policies and initiatives through which managers try to implement a theoretical commitment to social, environmental and economic goals (Godfrey and Hatch, 2007; Wood, 2010). At the moment, there is a recognised shortage of dedicated studies on this subject (Lindgreen and Swaen, 2010). Organisational sustainability which is often called corporate social responsibility (CSR) can be achieved by offering a safe, friendly, productive and healthy working environment for employees. If business firms want to progress towards success, then they must focus on sustaining their workforce. The sustainability of business organisations typically looks at impact on the local and worldwide community, but sustainability starts with the people behind the scenes (employees). It helps them to create a better work culture and work-life balance as well as building good customer relations globally (Jamali and Mirshak, 2007).

Better quality of work life for employees is a significant factor in the success of the sustainable workplace (Basheer, 2000). According to Johnson et. al (1978), business

firms which offer a better QWL to its employees are more likely to both retain employees and attract more customers from all over the world. Consequently, improving the quality of work life of employees is very important. If an organisation pays attention to the quality of work life for its employees, motivation between the workers increase. This may increase production, resulting in the achievement of organisational objectives (Natarnanjan & Anamalai, 2011). Thus, it is necessary that businesses treat quality of work life for their work force as a critical predictor of the firm's success. In recent years, Quality of Work Life (QWL) has been a cause for concern and has caught the attention of employees and employers. Employers have applied QWL as a tool for attracting and retaining employees.

If a company has good sustainable business policy and provides long-term values to both the company and society and the sustainability is embedded into the company's employee strategy, that complements the company's goals and overall mission. Therefore, it would be an effective link between the strategy and company performance (Epstein, 2008). Furthermore, empirical evidence shows that a combination of an organisation's strategy and performance is significant when achieving social responsibility (Galbreath, 2010).

Additionally, Porter and Kramer (2006) noted that a company should identify relevant societal issues to suggest a best approach and support competitive benefit at the same time. Embedding sustainability in organisational strategy may have multiple cascading benefits throughout the organisation. Not only distinguishing the firm from competitors, but also reaping a dual benefit of providing value to society. This is likely to be provided by firms that incorporate sustainability in their strategies (Castello and Lozano, 2009).

In order to achieve productivity and quality objectives, business firms have to offer and maintain risk-free working environments where employees feel safe, creative, valued and empowered. Sustainable work environments result in better product quality, better work productivity, and a more productive work environment, that create a sense of belonging, safety, satisfaction and being taken care of in the business organisation (Eklund, 1995; Vink et al., 2006). Lewis (2003), defines sustainable business policies as taking care of the environment, providing community services and donations, ensuring worker's wellbeing and to increase the company's profitability.

Organisations implement CSR and offer QWL to employees because they are always described as the most valuable stakeholder in a company (Mishra and Suar, 2010) especially for service industry (Arasli et al. 2014). This is because the success of service firms depends on employees as their wellbeing determines the job performance (Bowling, 2007) and quality of products and services offered to customers (Lee et al. 2012).

The contextual focus of this research is the textile sector and prior to the industrial revolution, the textile industry experienced slow progress (D'Souza et al. 2006). However, with the onset of the industrial revolution various technologies made textile manufacturing processes quicker, more proficient and less time consuming, thus more profitable (Barker, 2007). The textile sector plays a significant role in fulfilling people's basic needs as well as creating fashion. The demand for textile products has been growing throughout the world, following both population increases and economic success (Fletcher, 2012, Chiu and Yong, 2004). Consequently, the textile industry employs about thirty million people worldwide, mainly in Asia (Obregon, 2012, Allwood et al. 2006). Regardless, of its extensive contribution to the world's economy and

trade, the textile industry has been classified as one of the major environmentally and socially damaging industries (Sahni, 2010).

### **1.2.1 Justification of the study**

A major global player in the textile industry is Pakistan, which is recognised as the 4th biggest producer of cotton with a leading spinning capacity after China and India providing a contribution of 5% to the global spinning capacity (Business Magnate, 2013 p.18). The textile industry is considered to be the backbone of the country's economy. Pakistan's textile industry contributed 53% to national exports during the fiscal year 2012 (Siddique et al. 2012). In addition, to serving as the main source of foreign exchange earnings, this sector has also created job opportunities (Abbasi, 2012). According to Zaidi et al. 2019 developing countries like Pakistan still lack proper implementation of sustainability and CSR. Additionally, the textile industry knowledge of sustainability and QWL is still limited and due to the lack of resources, education, global business competition, and recognition of international standards, many textile firms are facing difficulties and losses (Abbasi, 2012, Zaidi et al, 2019., Khan et al. 2020). Additionally, according to the employment trends report for Pakistan (2017-2018), 55% of employed people in Pakistan were considered to be vulnerable or lacking decent work opportunities. Every year in Pakistan's textile industry, many people lose their lives due to QWL issues and poor health and safety conditions. There has been no previous study on the quality of work life and sustainable workplace in Pakistan's textile industry and how internal standardisation can play a significant role in implementing QWL in the workplace. Therefore, this study will assist businesses to compete with the neighbouring nations and other competitors all over the world by introducing sustainable workplace and quality of work life for its employees. In September 2012, Pakistan faced one of the most horrific incidents in its history when

250 textile factory workers were burnt alive in the Karachi Baldia town factory fire. There were padlocks on exit doors and windows where chemicals were stored in basement areas. After many years, justice has still not been dispensed. Many factories such as Ali enterprises of Baldia town used indirect franchises to get certifications. The same factory was awarded ISO 26000 certification just one week before this incident happened and such bitter realities highlight the appalling situation and the poor human rights and unsafe workplaces causing many people to risk their lives for money (Shams, 2017). Memon et al 2014, claimed that the concept of SD and corporate social responsibility is still a newly establishing field which needs to be developed academically in the context of Pakistan. There are no educational programs related to sustainability and CSR in higher educational institutions and limited research in the context of Pakistan. A review of the literature focussing on CSR and the sustainable workplace highlights that there is very little prior research conducted that focuses on developing countries like Pakistan. According to Tilt, 2018 despite awareness of CSR practices, most of the research is investigated in developed countries. CSR practices are different in developed and developing countries, so there is still gap in CSR research in developing economies (Shahzad et al. 2020).

Furthermore, multiple studies have been done on CSR in the context of developing economies, revealing that there is lack of sustainability and CSR education and institutional support, therefore CSR still needs to be explored in developing economies (Ali and Frynas, 2018., Javeed and Lefen, 2019).

To date, the majority of research on CSR in Pakistan, like that in most developing countries, has used a quantitative lens to understand the motivation for disclosure (Khan et al. 2020). Research exploring the institutional environment is extraordinarily rare. Hence, future research should build on the contribution here to gain an even

better understanding of sustainability CSR in various industrial contexts examining the power of government and the evidence of international influences. Overall, there is a lack of empirical evidence on the business case for sustainability on a more organisational level (Shahzad et al. 2020).

Most of the research related to CSR and its role to make business firms sustainable is either quantitative or there is no clear link explained between CSR and quality of work life. This study explores how various factors (regulative, normative & mimetic) influence the practice of CSR in the textile industry of Pakistan. This dynamic institutional environment provides an ideal setting through which to learn the impact of institutional mechanisms on what, how, and why of CSR from a variety of respondents' perspectives. Moreover, the recent history of political and economic turmoil in Pakistan represent unique challenges for business. Western societies do not share such religious, cultural and, political preferences, at least not to the same extent thus making Pakistan a particularly interesting context within which to study CSR.

### **1.3 Research aims and objectives**

The aim of this study is to explore how Pakistan's textile industry is embedding sustainable workplace strategies and CSR to enhance competitive advantage. To fulfil this aim, this research concentrates on the following objectives:

- Define the textile industry in Pakistan through a review of academic, business, and practice literature
- Explore if sustainable workplace strategies are embedded in the organisations and key factors to implement sustainability and CSR detailed in this research by collecting and analysing primary data from managers in the sector

- Where sustainable workplace strategies are considered to be embedded, explore whether they do enhance competitive advantage, QWL and recognise the associated challenges
- Identify government regulations which support sustainable workplace policies to provide recommendations

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

- What is the status of the Pakistan textile industry?
- What does sustainability and CSR mean to Pakistan's textile firms?
- What are the key business drivers which encouraged employers to adopt and implement the sustainable workplace strategies and QWL into their business?
- What are the main organisational barriers that impede business firms in the adoption and implementation of sustainability and CSR?
- What positive impact does sustainability initiatives have on competitiveness?
- What consideration is currently given by government and business firms to promote sustainability and CSR in terms of employees in the textile industry of Pakistan.

#### **1.5 Research contribution**

Overall, there is a lack of empirical evidence on the business case for sustainability on a more organisational level (Shahzad et al. 2020). which leaves a gap in the literature where there is little or no honest confrontation of limits and barriers, and thus no suggestions of how such issues might be overcome in order to advance sustainable development in business (Burritt and Schaltegger, 2010). This research aims to add to the literature which explores the barriers preventing textile firms from doing more and considers the nature of the limits of their involvement in offering good QWL and



sustainable workplace to employees (Barter and Bebbington, 2010; Spence and Gray, 2007; Banarjee and Duflo, 2003).

This research will not only enrich the literature on the relationship between CSR practices, environmentally sustainable development and QWL (Shahzad et al. 2020), but also provide valuable insights to professionals and top managers to implement CSR into firm's policies for long term benefits.

The concept of CSR in Pakistan is fraught with an array of both conceptions and misconceptions, most of the employers have a very narrow interpretation of what is sustainable business and CSR (Khan, 2020).

The study makes noticeable contributions to several areas of sustainability research. By conceptualising CSR as a business-process oriented construct, the study makes an important step towards taking the research in a more practical direction. This research elaborates the knowledge base in this field by focusing on operations management and the practices firms employ to manage its employees by offering sustainable workplace. The results of this study will enable researchers to create a stronger theoretical and empirical basis on which future research on the topic of SD and sustainable workplace strategies can build.

This research will provide an in-depth information about the textile industry of Pakistan and will also help business firms to approach sustainability by considering their work force as an asset and provide good QWL. According to Guest (2017), very little is known in the literature about the role of business organisations in sustaining their workplace and providing quality of work life to achieve the goal of sustainability in developing economies such as Pakistan.

As mentioned earlier, there is a very limited research on QWL and value of sustainable workplace strategies in the context of Pakistan (Shahzad et al. 2020), this research will significantly add more knowledge related to CSR practices in Pakistan. The outcomes of this research will help in learning about the quality of work life and significance of sustainable business in the textile sector of developing economies like Pakistan. The researcher will also identify the challenges businesses are facing when attempting to be socially responsible and in creating sustainable workplace for employees. The findings from this research will help employees and management to understand factors that can improve the performance of firms and how they might gain competitive advantage in the global business market.

Furthermore, the research outcomes provide practical evidence to disclaim existing conventional CSR and sustainability assumptions that CSR and SD concepts were primarily developed in and for large businesses (Thompson & Smith, 1991; Curran, 1999; & Jenkins, 2004). The findings in this study evidence that business firms of all sizes in developing economies are interested in the practice of sustainable business development strategies, and therefore could contribute to creating a sustainable workplace. Additionally, this research will help to improve understanding of the concept of sustainable development at the organisational level. The study also contributes to the sustainability and CSR literature by analysing firms' motives for adopting sustainable development practices in the context of a developing country: Pakistan. Finally, this thesis contributes to the sustainability literature by providing evidence in reference to the government role in implementation of sustainable practices. If governments do not succeed in monitoring the successful implementation of CSR policies, they leave space for companies to behave opportunistically. The research reported in this study is largely exploratory in nature. This is because of the

inductive nature of the methodology adopted. The goal of this research is to answer the research questions rather than testing hypothesis.

## **1.6 Thesis Structure**

The following section describes the layout of the thesis with a brief description of each chapter.

### **Chapter one: Introduction**

This chapter presents a general overview of the research. In particular, it provides the research background, overview, aim and objectives. The chapter then highlights the research questions, motivations, importance and the rationale for undertaking this research, and finally the structure of the thesis is presented.

### **Chapter Two: Literature review**

This chapter includes detailed literature on sustainable development, CSR, Business and sustainable development, QWL and its importance, ISO 26000 as well as QWL issues in the sector. This chapter notes all the topics covered in this research.

### **Chapter Three: Country context**

This chapter highlights the country context, its economy and brief description of the textile industry in Pakistan.

### **Chapter Four: Research methodology**

This chapter describes and discusses the research methodology adopted in this research. Starting with a discussion of the epistemological framework and methodological approach, followed by a description and discussion of the adopted research methods including the data collection instruments and sampling strategy. Ethical considerations of the research are discussed before ending the chapter with conclusions.

## **Chapter Five: Findings and analysis**

This chapter includes the research findings and analysis. This chapter also presents the main findings from the interviews undertaken for this research. The main focus of analysis is on understanding and representing the meaning of the views expressed by interviewees and linking them together with the use of a thematic analysis process.

## **Chapter Six: Discussion**

This chapter presents the detailed analysis and discussion of the qualitative data collected in this study. It begins with the background to the research and relates the details from the semi-structured interviews.

## **Chapter Seven: Conclusion and recommendations**

This chapter presents a summary of the results from the research, the study limitations and future research opportunities. It also draws together the final conclusions of this research and the final comments.

# Chapter Two

## Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the relevant previous research which includes elements of theory and practice. Furthermore, this chapter aims to justify the choice of research questions and establish the importance of the topic. Sustainability is a term with multiple meanings, so this chapter starts by explaining the concepts of sustainability and provides definitions alongside the evolution of the topic. Sustainability in business and how sustainability initiatives can be adopted to create a sustainable workplace for employees is of importance here. More than adopting sustainability initiatives in business and operations, organisations need to implement sustainability in their business processes. Corporate social responsibility is also discussed in detail and how it is relevant to sustainability. Finally, this chapter also discusses the particular problems and challenges related to the current ways of implement sustainability initiatives in the textile sector and how quality of work life is important to make the firm a sustainable workplace.

### 2.2. Sustainability and Sustainable development: An overview

The etymological source of the word 'sustainability' is the Latin word 'sus-tenere' (to sustain) with the suffix 'able' states to have ability (Ehnert, 2009). In general, the term sustainability is often used in the sense of long term, durable and systematic (Filho, 2000). It is very difficult to trace the historical origin of sustainability, but the idea of sustainability and sustainable development is surely very old (Filho, 2000)

Sustainability presumes that resources are finite and should be used very conservatively and wisely with a view to long-term priorities and consequences of the ways in which resources are used (sustainability, 2019). In simplest terms, sustainability is about our children and our grandchildren, and the world we will leave them.

According to Ambec and Lanoie (2008), sustainability also enables greater innovation by encouraging and motivating employee's, providing access to alternative markets and opportunities to differentiate products while reducing risk management and agency costs and offering access to cost effective capital and improved labour costs.

The role of business firms is to maximise profit by selling products and services and multiple stakeholders are involved in the whole process (Werther and Chandler, 2005)

According to Jaillon and Poon (2008), SD has emerged as a new paradigm and a guiding principle for the business firms to adopt sustainability all over the world. In this sense, sustainable development can be defined as the ability of a society, an organisation or an individual to maintain, strengthen and to improve itself (its resources, capital etc.) from within. SD is defined as a concept that encompasses both social responsibility and environmentalism (Paulins and Hillery, 2009). Academicians and practitioners always discuss the implications of sustainability and sustainable development as well as wide ranging issues such as environmental concerns, social justice, economic growth and development, international trade and social practices (Vachon and Mao, 2008). The World Commission on Environment and Development published its report (WCED, 1987), "Our common future" that links between the social, ecological and economic dimensions.

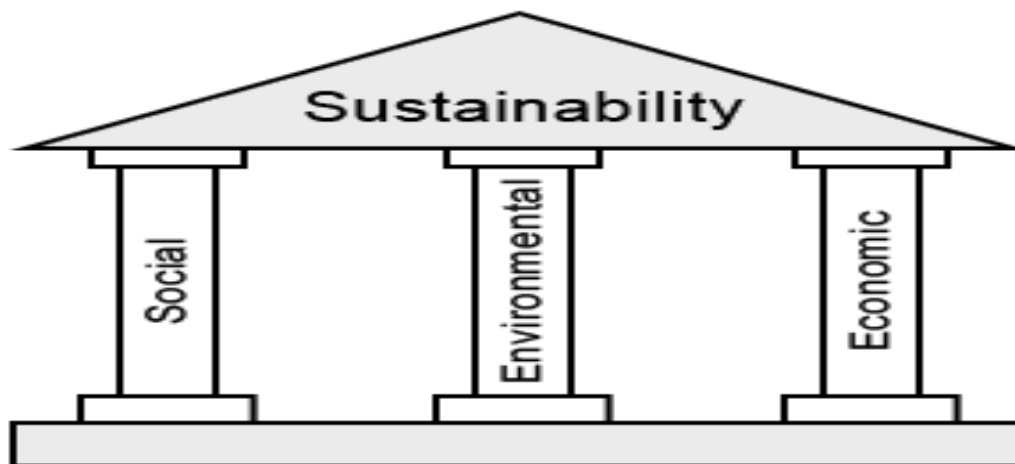
Despite the vagueness and uncertainty over SD meaning, the concept of SD is extremely popular and during the last two decades, the concept has established itself

as a prominent idea on both the local and global scale (Mahmood, 2015). initial critical point, which must be made before the operationalisation of sustainable development is embarked upon, is that sustainable development and sustainability should be considered as separate but related ideas. It is normal in the discourse of sustainable development to use sustainability synonymously with sustainable development. As such, the terms are used interchangeably, conveying one and the same meaning. However, researchers and academics such as Reeve and Tseng, 2011; Porritt, 2007 have distinguished between the concepts, by indicating that sustainability is an objective, while sustainable development should be considered a procedure. Korhonen (2004 pp.810) supports this differentiation when he notes that

“sustainable development is a continuous process, and only the general direction toward sustainability or the direction away from un-sustainability can be known”.

Sustainable development has three dimensions; environmental, social and economic (See Figure 2.1):

- The social: this relates to human values and traditions, relationships and institutions.
- The economic: this is related to the provision and distribution of limited resources.
- The environmental: this involves the contribution of the economic and the social as well as their impacts on the natural environment and its resources (Ekins, 2000).



(**Figure 2.1.** Pillars of sustainable growth. (IUCN Renowned Thinker report, 2006). Keeping the equilibrium between these three pillars is imperative for the sustainable development. Understanding the complex links and interrelation of the three pillars depend upon some effort, and the effort has to be stable. Even if we are talking about the length of political cycles or the time span the media focuses on a specific issue, the question of our combined attention span is an important one for sustainable development (Strange and Bayley, 2011). Sustainable development is a tool which helps people and governments to recognise their roles, responsibilities and activities as well as encourage them to consider human development as a primary concern (Dvorakova and Zborkova, 2014). The principal focus of sustainable development is on society, and its objective is to consider environmental issues as well as the economy (Baker, 2006)

Therefore, sustainable development is:

- A conceptual framework: a way of changing the world view to one which is more unbiased and holistic;
- An objective: to identify and resolve the problems such as poverty, inequality, resource depletion, unemployment, health care, etc. (Strange and Bayley, 2011).



There is, nevertheless, a growing acceptance of the view that SD may usefully be seen as being comprised of a number of different elements which, when taken together, provide a more complete picture of the sustainable business community as a whole. The common principles of sustainable development highlighted by Muthu (2016) are detailed as:

- Conservation of biodiversity and ecological integrity
- Stable natural capital and sustainable income
- Ensuring intragenerational and intergenerational fair play
- Recognizing the global aspects
- Dealing continuously with risk, uncertainty and irreversibility
- Ensuring appropriate valuation of environmental assets
- Incorporation of environmental and economic objectives in policies and activities
- Social equity and community participation

(Source: Muthu, 2016 pp.26)

### **2.3 Policy and practice of sustainable development**

Sustainable development is an effective concept which requires a proactive and flexible approach in policy formulation. Additionally, integration of social, economic and environmental policy objectives in SD is crucial. (Bartle and Vass, 2007; DEFRA, 2005). According to Brandon and Lombardi (2011), SD factors are complex and multidimensional. There are several issues that need to be addressed and formulate a practical set of sustainable development criteria to attain the harmonization of their objectives (Ugwu and Haupt, 2007). The core principles of the sustainable

development agenda have been emphasised in Agenda 21 which called on international, regional and national governments to formulate processes that can offer practical solutions and set out policies for decision-making. This agenda offers a comprehensive policy and action plan to guide business firms to achieve sustainable development (Lacy et. al, 2010). Brandon and Lombardi (2011) stated that a range of research on sustainable development was weak in structure and still at experimental stages due to the lack of policy systems and continuous monitoring with poor implementation and access to data. The United Nations report also highlighted that despite making some progress after Rio in 1992 and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg in 2002, there still remains a major gap in terms of policy implementation and commitment in attaining the sustainable development goals especially in developing economies (United Nations, 2011). Sustainable development is in the need of a long-term perspective and broad approach for policy formulation, with a well-structured and defined set of objectives (Tippett et al., 2007., SDC, 2003). In his address, the Secretary General of the UN said that it is time to take revolutionary actions to achieve SD goals (2011). He also emphasised that it is crucial to make comprehensive models and policies that are responsive to the developmental needs of present and future generations. To introduce sustainability policies into practice, clear understanding and appreciation of sustainable development policies are required (Carter and Fortune, 2007).

## **2.4 Sustainability**

Sustainability concerns are increasingly incorporated into both the agendas of policymakers and the strategies of companies. The term sustainability itself originates in the French verb *soutenir*, “to hold up or support” (Brown et al., 1987). Johnston et

al. (2007) estimated that there are around 300 definitions of sustainability. To cite but a few, sustainability can be defined as a situation in which human activity is conducted in a way that conserves the functions of the earth's ecosystems (ISO 15392, 2008), a transformation of human lifestyle that optimises the likelihood that living conditions will continuously support security, well-being, and health, particularly by maintaining the supply of non-replaceable goods and services (McMichael et al., 2003), or an indefinite perpetuation of all life forms (Ehrenfeld, 2005).

DEFRA in (2005), highlighted that sustainability policies that favours social and economic sustainability benefits also tend to offer long-term environmental sustainability advantages. Atkinson (2008) said that a good number of sustainable development programmes still revolves around ineffective and really weak sustainability policies and weak sustainability policies can never help companies to achieve firm goals. Carter and Fortune (2007) identified gaps between sustainability policy and its practice, they highlighted that there is a lack of structured framework to help business firms to introduce SD. According to Van Bueren and De Jong (2007), it is very difficult to put the concept of sustainability into practice without proper knowledge and support from the government bodies. They also presented that it is very important to formulate. Instead of merely setting common goals, sustainability opens up the scope for multiple expectations about, for example, what should be developed and what is to be sustained, for how long, and for the benefit of whom (Acero and Savaget, 2014). It has encouraged reflexivity on how to expand intragenerational prosperity while simultaneously preserving life-support systems needed to meet intergenerational needs (Geissdoerfer, 2019).

Sustainability is a complex phenomenon and through times there have been many different definitions and explanations for what sustainability is. For a couple of decades, sustainability has also been researched more from a corporation's point of view. This has led to the usage of the term corporate social responsibility. Corporate social responsibility (onwards CSR) is a phenomenon that is becoming increasingly present in more and more organizations' strategies. This is mostly because of increasing demands from stakeholders, but also because of regulations and their own interest to invest in CSR (Lindgreen & Swaen, 2009; Bhattacharya & Sen 2004; Schwartz & Carroll 2003). Nowadays, as CSR has become a rising trend and a quite important part of any corporation's strategy, many different guidelines and standards has also been published (Grafström, Göthberg & Windell, 2008; 2015).

## **2.5 Business and Sustainability**

Szewczyk (2016), suggests that a business organisation which has an influence on different societies and groups of interest from different parts of the world should follow a method of management which will take into consideration the needs of stakeholders at every level of the firm's activity. Sustainable businesses aim to offer balanced and integrated performances in the three sustainability dimensions: Environment, Economic and Social (Beatie, 2019). According to Slack et al. (2013), sustainable business generates an acceptable profit for its owners, but minimises the damage to the environment and improves the existence of the people with whom it has contact. In other words, it balances economic, environmental and societal interests.

It is crucial for business firms to consider the needs of internal and external stakeholders to run the business successfully (Gill, 2009). Business organisations have relationships with the society and the environment in which they operate, and it

is an important factor in their ability to continue to operate sustainably (Gill, 2009). Sustainable development of business involves conservation and improvement of the existing stock of resources (financial, ecological, societal, human, physical and others) which business depends on qualitatively and quantitatively and in the short and long run (Sriram et al. 2013). How much an organisation contributes to sustainable development and its impacts on society and the environment is known as “social responsibility” and is becoming a critical measure of performance (ISO, 2010).

## **2.6 Sustainable workplace: Sustainability to Corporate Social Responsibility**

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is not a new phenomenon: the discussion of CSR issues started during 1950s (Moura and Padgett, 2011). According to Zhang (2009), along with the movement towards sustainability, many researchers claimed that work or the work systems should be made sustainable. In 2002 Hvid and Lund defined sustainable work as a conscious, goal oriented and corporate activity, which involves both the workers and external stakeholders: in the fulfilment of social and environmental needs for those who are working, the society they are a part of, and the natural environment.

In order to accommodate sustainability into the work system, the concept of a sustainable workplace emerged. While many regarded sustainable workplaces as the same as environmentally friendly places, some interpret the concept with more focus on human issues (Zhang, 2009).

Visser (2003) argues that the manifestation of CSR in developing countries is different from the Western world because of differences in culture and norms. Developed economies commonly use benchmarks such as CSR codes, standards and reports,

while CSR practices in developing economies tend to be less formalised (Visser, 2003). Visser further argues that CSR in the developing economies is associated with social investment, such as in education, health, sports and the environment. In Indonesia, for example, Tanaya (2012) found that CSR practices are influenced by various social, political, economic and environmental aspects of the country.

Kvam (2005, p. 2) described a sustainable workplace as

“a place you go to with joy, where people remain in good health and work into old age, and where colleagues participate in developing processes”

Similarly, according to Gomes et al. (2001) a sustainable workplace takes into account the environmental and social consequences of operations, as well as economic ones. Creating sustainable workplaces perhaps calls for a holistic business philosophy which, by embedding sustainable development principles into all aspects of workplace development, aims to deliver environmental, social and economic benefits over the long term, and facilitates the creation of a positive and sustainable society.

In order to make a workplace sustainable, businesses have begun to look for new ways of management. One of them is the concept that includes corporate social responsibility (CSR). Due to the growing awareness of society, the role of business in environmental issues and solving social problems is another factor adding to the dynamic progress of social responsibility into business (Matiolańska, 2014).

A business approach to focus on sustainable development, also recognised as corporate sustainability / corporate social responsibility, has gained considerable attention in the management literature over the past 25 years (Johnson and Schaltegger, 2015). Business in accordance with the principles of sustainable

development means that the company is on its way towards sustainable development. Therefore, the concept of sustainable development can be promoted within the firm on the basis of many voluntarily instruments such as: environment management system, total quality management system, health and safety at work, eco-labelling, social auditing, cleaner production, etc (Coombs and Holladay, 2013). However, Bebbington and Gray (1996) highlighted that definitions of SD are far too general to be practicable.

The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) defined corporate social responsibility as

“Firms’ commitment to contribute to sustainable economic development, working with employees, their families, the local community and society at large to improve their quality of life” (WBCSD, 1998).

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is based on the idea that management can and should go beyond the regulatory framework. It is a strategy not focused on maximising the profit, which has been a traditional task of management to date. Recently, CSR has emerged as a sustainable business development concept (Hussain et al., 2017). CSR includes social, ethical and environmental aspects of running a business and making it sustainable for customers as well as society (Szewczyk, 2016). Lee et al. (2012), refers to CSR as the obligation of a company to make decisions, comply with policies or perform actions that conform to the objectives and values of the society.

There are different perspectives on CSR (Weyzig, 2009). Some perspectives argue that corporate leaders should take a proactive approach to contributing to social goals by aligning the corporation goals with the goals of the community in which it operates (Chavez, 2011). Other perspectives reject the concept of social responsibility of the

corporation beyond legal compliance (Weyzig, 2009). These different perspectives suggest that identifying major forces and trends presents challenges for corporations' competitiveness and that major forces and trends may influence corporate decision-makers when integrating strategic CSR initiatives into the corporate strategy (Chavez, 2011).

Carroll and Shabana (2010) suggest that early debates on the role of business in society often centred on the ideas of "corporate social responsibility (CSR)". While the concept evades precise definition, for the purposes of this study we will say that CSR broadly refers to the responsibility of business organisations for some of the wider societal good (Matten & Moon, 2008). Social responsibility and sustainability are issues that have attracted attention in most countries around the world (ValMohammadi, 2014). CSR and "sustainability" are two of many terms used to highlight the social and environmental contributions and consequences of business activity (Bernhart and Mahir, 2011). Sustainability relates to the ultimate objective of indefinitely maintaining the viability of our economies, the societies in which they exist and the physical environment on which they all depend.

There are a number of concepts which are included in the CSR general category, such as corporate social performance, corporate social responsiveness, corporate citizenship, corporate governance, corporate accountability, sustainability, and corporate social entrepreneurship (Kim et al., 2016). In its purest form, social responsibility is supported for its own sake because that is the noble way for corporations to behave. However, while this pure form of CSR dominated early discussion of the concept, in the 1970s an enlightened self-interest view of CSR, which contends that doing the right thing pays off, began to enter the discourse (Carroll and Shabana, 2010).



Early research on CSR inspired the concept of social accounting (Mathews, 1997), whereby it was suggested that, alongside their financial accountability to shareholders, organisations should also be held accountable to society for their behaviour towards it (Gray et al, 1988). The main objective of CSR is to go beyond profit maximisation to include the responsibility of a company toward multiple stakeholders – investors, customers, community, employees and environment (Gill, 2008; Dan and Robert, 2007). Business firms with good CSR policies and sustainable development systems not only promote ethics, transparency and accountability but also keep generating profits (Jannipa et al., 2014).

Mandurah et al. (2012) argued that nowadays more emphasis is placed on the implementation of CSR programmes and their impact. Blowfield and Murray (2015) argued that the perception of CSR among companies has changed over time; unlike the traditional view of CSR as a growing idea of voluntarily giving back to the community, it is now viewed as mandatory for market success. It has been argued that when companies engage themselves in CSR, they make a significant contribution to the financial well-being of their firms (Armstrong and Green, 2013; Falck and Heblich, 2007; Lantos, 2001; Roper and Parker, 2013). According to Waddock, (2013) CSR is the continuing commitment by businesses to undertake actions, beyond philanthropy, to mitigate the negative externalities of their operations and ensure production/provision of qualitative and safe products or services. Furthermore, Thalang et al., (2010) argued that CSR is an important tool for the sustainability of an organisation. According to Holme and Watts (2000) CSR is a continuing commitment by businesses to behave ethically, contribute in economic development as well as improving the quality of life of the workforce, local community and society.

Sustainable business development and CSR is becoming an increasingly prominent theme in business (Ashraf, 2017). Indeed, a wide variety of sustainable business strategies have been formulated to help ensure both the long-term sustainability and prosperity of businesses (Karam and Jamali, 2017). Despite of this tremendous growth, research on sustainability and CSR focused mainly on developed countries with very little research available in developing countries (Belal and Owen, 2007; Islam and Deegan, 2008; Sawani et al, 2010; Amran and Haniffa, 2011, Islam, 2016). For example, most of the CSR studies conducted so far have been in the context of developed countries such as Western Europe, the USA and Australia and we still know too little about practices in ex-colonial, smaller and emerging countries (ValMohammadi, 2014)

Moreover, majority of the studies on CSR and sustainability in the context of developing countries, more specifically Pakistan, are very descriptive and do not provide an in-depth investigation of firm's SD practices in the context of the textile sector (Belal and Owen, 2007; Islam and Deegan, 2008; Amran and Haniffa, 2011; Beddewela and Herzig, 2013; Momin and Parker, 2013). The notion of CSR in the developing world context requires a relatively broader interpretation, different from the way it has been described, perceived, or practiced in the developed world (Sajjad and Gabriel, 2014).

Organisations around the world, and their stakeholders, are becoming increasingly aware of the need for, and benefits of, socially responsible behaviour. The objective of social responsibility is to contribute to sustainable development (ISO, 2014). A business firm's commitment to the welfare of society and the environment has become a central criterion in its ability to continue operating effectively. Businesses and

organisations do not exist in a vacuum. Their relationship to their social and natural environment is critical to the way they conduct their activities. With today's organisations coming under greater scrutiny by stakeholders, it is also increasingly being used as a measure of their overall performance.

According to the research carried out by Ernst and Young (2010), the research participants described a three-stage journey that firms go through when they make a decision to embed sustainability in their corporate cultures. The three stages are as follows:

- ensuring they are in compliance with regulations
- focusing on and reporting on economic benefits
- integrating sustainability into the core strategy and culture

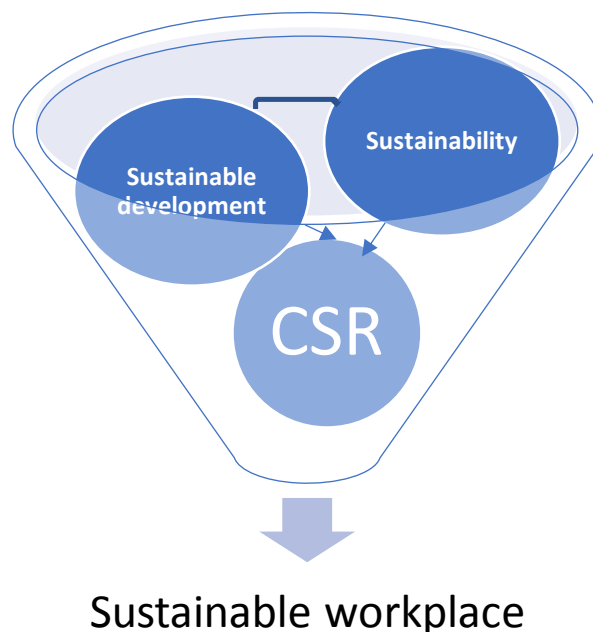


Figure 2.2 highlights the importance of all three concepts which makes a firm into a sustainable workplace. The core principles of sustainability can only be achieved

through sustainable development process which includes all 3Ps (people, planet, profit). Furthermore, implementation of sustainable development goals within the firm is achieved through CSR, which is also described as a business contribution to sustainable development (Ernst and Yong, 2010). Although, all three concepts are different, the main aim is the same, and they are interconnected to help business organisations become sustainable workplaces.

Many organisations are committed to transforming their business processes and have taken sustainability initiatives. However, they have still failed to achieve the anticipated goal (Ahmed & Sundaram 2012). Every sustainability project involves changes in the organisation, from the most basic ones (like replacing disposal plastic cups for individual ceramic mugs) up to changes in the company operations (Frandsen, 2013). Stewart et al. (2016) categorises the barriers in (1) internal barriers, such as financial and other resource constraints, managerial and employee attitudes, poor communication and past practices and (2) external barriers, such as capital costs, competitive pressures, industry regulation, technical information, green market opportunities and technical solutions.

## **2.7 Benefits of CSR**

Benefits of CSR are quite many and CSR activities can be implemented into a company for many different reasons. Many companies do believe that their engagement in CSR and sustainability does plenty of good in the society and it is a part of being a good citizen, and this is the reason why they invest in CSR (Sprinkle & Maines, 2010). However, this is usually not the only reason why companies decide to engage in CSR. Usually, companies invest in CSR because of the benefits that CSR might possibly yield. Some of these benefits are for example increased brand value,

improved reputation, goodwill and brand image, opportunities for new markets, improved relationships with stakeholders and fair competition (Weber 2008; Orlitzky, Schmidt & Rynes 2003; McWilliams & Siegel 2001). Also, when a company has good reputation, consumers usually see the company as more reliable and honest.

### **2.7.1 Operative benefits**

Operative benefits include for example increased loyalty and efficiency among employees. When a company is engaging in CSR activities through investing in employees' wellbeing it motivates employees and they feel more loyal to their employer. This can be done for example by offering employees health care, possibility to volunteer work and recreational days. Employees can also feel that their work is more meaningful if the company they are working for is investing in CSR (Chong & Tan, 2010). CSR has also been noticed to improve recruiting practices and the chances to recruit top candidates and performers (Sprinkle & Maines 2010). Operative benefits also include customer loyalty. Customer loyalty can increase for example when customers want to act as sustainable as possible, and to do this, they choose to use companies that invest in CSR. Investing in CSR also prevents and minimizes the chances of future risks for disasters and other scandals within sustainability (Weber 2008). Investing in CSR can therefore contribute to better risk management (Sprinkle & Maines 2010).

### **2.7.2 Financial benefits**

As in operative benefits, when the risk for future disasters and other scandals within sustainability is reduced, the future cost for these risks is also reduced. Disasters and scandals within sustainability, for example environmental or social disasters, can be

very expensive and can even include losses in market shares, brand image and customer loyalty. These factors also decrease incomes and increase costs. Investing in CSR might also result in cost savings for other reasons. Cost savings could also be a result from better relations to stakeholders or even because of tax savings (Weber, 2008). When investing in CSR, the future revenue may be increased due to many different reasons, for example because of the reduced risks, gained market shares and employee and customer loyalty (Sprinkle & Maines, 2010). Increased revenue may also arise from increased sales or price increases and a more stable development and risk management. Improved access to capital can also be a result of better relationships with stakeholders. As the company acts more sustainably, several new stakeholders may be interested in the company (Weber, 2008).

### **2.7.3 Social benefits**

Social benefits are for example increased social awareness and better abilities to solve societal problems. These can include for example education of social responsibilities, transparency regarding information and social activities in the community. Also, governments usually support companies in their socially responsible activities for example through policy instruments and subsidies. These support activities usually aim to increase international competitiveness and simultaneously support sustainable development (Porter & Van der Linde, 1995; Matten & Moon, 2008). All these benefits can lead to competitiveness and economic success (Weber, 2008).

## **2.8 Standardisation of CSR**

Standards are becoming increasingly common in many different fields. One of these fields is sustainability. The amount of sustainability standards has been rapidly

increasing since the 1990's (Grafström et al., 2015), some call this increase of guidelines and regulations even an "explosion of regulations" (Ahrne & Brunsson 2004). According to Jutterström (2006), in the beginning of the 1990's there were barely 20 guidelines and voluntary regulations regarding CSR, when ten years later the amount had risen to 80 (Grafström et al., 2015). Due to the large number of CSR guidelines and voluntary regulations, companies have more difficulties navigating their way through this jungle (Grafström et al., 2015).

Instead of creating obligatory regulations for CSR, most of the regulations existing are voluntary. Many companies prefer to regulate their CSR engagement themselves, rather than having an obligatory regulation. This is also why when creating the ISO 26000 sustainability standard, ISO invited many member organizations from all over the world to discuss what the standard should include (Tamm Hallström, 2005). According to Lindberg (2005) this cooperative way of creating regulations is a way to avoid legislative nature or other obligatory regulations within the field.

According to Grafström et al. (2015) it is important for companies to act proactive regarding CSR instead of only reacting when criticism appears. This is why standards are a good way of practicing sustainability within a company. The ISO 26000 standard for example helps the company to first identify its key stakeholders, and then it guides the company on what they should do regarding sustainability, taking into consideration all its key stakeholders. This is a proactive way of taking CSR into consideration, instead of only reacting to negative feedback.

## **2.9 ISO 26000 Standard**

A quality management system helps business firms to classify and manage their business operations by clarifying any uncertainties, documenting their processes as

well as by clearly defining the duties among various divisions and employees within the business organisation (Dubey, 2015).

Globally a number of standards have been developed in order to help companies address various aspects of sustainable business development and CSR as well as helping them to become sustainable workplaces. There are many frameworks and tools for auditing sustainability work in organisations. Mullins (2005) describes management as, the process through which efforts of members of the organisation are coordinated, directed and guided towards the achievement of organisational goals. The clarification of objectives: planning, organising, directing and controlling other people's work is essential for the success of the organisation.

To assist business firms in pursuing sustainable development, International standardisation (ISO) have developed various standards (Ejdys and Matuszak-Flejszman, 2010). ISO develop standards which add value to all types of business operations, they also protect employers, employees and customers. It has a membership of 163 national standard institutes from all over the world including many developing countries (ISO, 2010). ISO's collection of more than 19,500 standards and related documents provide guidelines and certifications on all three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, environmental and social (ISO Report, 2014). ISO has three well known standards which provide guidelines to business firms on all three pillars of sustainability: ISO 9000 which deals with quality management; ISO 14000 which deals with environmental management; and ISO 26000 which deals with social responsibility (Qi et al. 2013).

According to Marx (2011), voluntary sustainability standards represent a way for firms to demonstrate that they engage in CSR in a credible way. CSR standards not only have a function in disciplining firm behaviour, but also function as a signalling device



(Rasche et al. 2011). As a prominent example of a voluntary corporate sustainability standard, the ISO 26000 standard for social responsibility covers subjects across the entire CSR domain, providing guidance instead of being a certifiable management systems standard that contains requirements and propagates a dominantly moral rather than strategic perspective on CSR (Idowu et al. 2018)

In 2010, ISO published ISO 26000 - new international guidance standards on social responsibility. This standard consists of more than 100 pages, which aims to provide guidance as well as various useful ways to integrate socially responsible behavior into business organisations and help business firms to achieve sustainable development (ISO, 2010).

ISO 26000 defines social responsibility as

“the responsibility of an organization for the impacts of its decisions and activities on society and the environment, through transparent and ethical behavior that contributes to sustainable development” (Johnston,2012 pp. 114).

However, one unique feature of ISO 26000 in comparison to previous standards is that it is not a management system for social responsibility and sustainability (as ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 are for quality management system and environment management systems) (Hahn and Kuhnen, 2013). In contrast, it provides guidance on how an organisation can regulate the importance of issues related to social responsibility, how it can build social responsibility into its systems and processes, how to raise awareness on social responsibility and how to communicate and report on social responsibility (Ward, 2012). ISO 26000 offers guidance on how businesses and organisations can operate in an ethical and transparent way that contributes to

sustainable development while taking into account the expectations of stakeholders, applicable laws and international norms of behaviour (ISO, 2010).

The objective of ISO 26000 social responsibility standard is to maximise its contribution to sustainable development (ISO, 2010). The seven principles of ISO 26000 are presented in figure 2.3 below:



(Figure 2.3 The Principles of ISO 26000 Adopted from: ISO 26000, 2010)

Additionally, ISO 26000 standard also provides guidance on seven core subjects: Organisational governance, Labour practices, the environment, fair operating practices, consumer issues and community involvement and development (ISO, 2010; Henriques, 2012). Organisations must observe seven principles as well as seven core subjects of ISO 26000 and integrate them into their firm's decision-making policy. However, there are difficulties in utilizing such broad social responsibility and sustainable development statements to provide meaningful guidance to firms especially small firms (Johnston, 2012).

ISO 26000 is a complete standard which includes various practices of social responsibility in organisations. ISO 26000 standard helps business firms to review

their awareness and knowledge regarding issues like corporate ethics, stakeholders approaches to their organisations, leadership and governance, accounting, labour, legislative and environmental issues, human values and cultures (Valmohammadi, 2013). The standard covers so many areas it looks like a textbook that summarises various aspects of social responsibility instead of a tool that can assist business firms to contribute towards sustainable development and social responsibility (because it is not a management standard). It is essential to achieve a balance between environmental, economic and social subsystems within the global system, in order to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. This concept of the 'three pillars' of sustainability has been adopted by ISO to achieve the goals of sustainable development (Boiral, 2011). ISO place equal importance and focus on social aspects of sustainability within the business firms. They provide guidelines related to labour practices, human rights and increasing the efficiency of workers to improve the firm's performance through three well known standards; ISO 9001, 14001 and 26000. Still, there are only a few articles in literature that discuss the value of these standards in terms of the work force, employee's performance, and how firms can implement these standards to improve the quality of work life for their workers (Brenner et al. 2004; Conti et al. 2006; Naveh et al. 2007; Levine, 2010). Additionally, the focus of all of the above ISO standards, is to provide guidelines to organisations to improve their quality, environmental management performance, and social responsibility as a whole. But detailed guidelines related to employee's performance and the role of firms in providing their workers quality of work life still requires detailed considered. According to Poksinska (2007), sometimes, in order to get certification and competitive advantage, business firms have forced employees to obey procedures and instructions without any

explanation about the aim of the assigned work. This results in job dissatisfaction and poor performance. Below is the ISO explanation related to the quality of work life. This supports understanding of the importance of QWL in business operations and the value of a sustainable work force to achieve social responsibility goals.

## **2.10 Principles of ISO 26000**

The draft principles of ISO 26000 include three different types of principles:

### **General principles:**

- Organisations shall respect internationally recognised conventions and declarations and widely recognised instruments derived from them; respect the rule of law; and recognise the right of stakeholders to be heard and of the organisation to respond.

### **Substantive principles:**

- **Environment:** organisations should ensure that their activities respect, promote and advance internationally recognised environmental principles and commitments. For example: precautionary approach to environmental challenges; initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; the development of environmentally friendly technologies; and accept the polluter pays principle;

- **Human rights:** organisations should ensure that their activities respect, promote and advance internationally recognised human rights. For example: respect and promote internationally recognised human rights, and ensure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses; and that all relevant staff are provided with appropriate cultural and human rights training and guidance;

- **Labour practices:** organisations should ensure that work performed on their behalf, either directly or indirectly, is performed within the appropriate legal and institutional framework, and that their activities respect, promote and advance internationally

recognised standards and fundamental human rights at work. For example: respect the principle of freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining; no employment of children nor practice any form of forced labour; no discrimination, whether based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status; the duty to provide decent conditions of work for their workers, to invest in skills development and to encourage good industrial relations; and that work done is performed in a healthy and safe working environment;

- **Organisational governance:** organisations should ensure that their activities respect, promote and advance internationally recognised principles for organisational governance. For example: comply with all laws, regulations, standards and international conventions which apply to them and to their relationships with their stakeholders; disclose information about the organisation to appropriate regulators, their stakeholders and the public; no corruption, including extortion and bribery;

- **Fair business practices:** organisations should ensure that their activities respect, promote and advance international principles for fair business practice;

- **Community involvement:** organisations should ensure that their activities respect, promote and advance internationally recognised principles for community involvement. For example: a positive impact on the people and communities in which they operate, and be respectful of local and indigenous people, their values, traditions and culture; and to contribute to the sustainable economic development of host communities through procurement of goods and services from local vendors where appropriate;

- **Consumer issues:** organisations should ensure that their activities respect, promote and advance internationally recognised principles for consumer rights and obligations.

For example: responsibility for the direct and indirect impacts of the goods and services companies distribute.

### **2.10.1 Operational principles:**

- **Accountability:** the organisation should be held accountable to its stakeholders for its actions and omissions and should respond – whether positively or negatively – to their legitimate claims;
- **Boundaries:** the organisation should identify, understand and take responsibility for its direct and indirect impacts;
- **Management integration:** the organisation should integrate social responsibility issues within its core management systems and decision-making processes;
- **Materiality:** the organisation should identify and understand its material issues, and respond to these issues;
- **Multi-stakeholder approach:** the organisation should make provision for the interests and needs of all its stakeholders;
- **Transparency:** the organisation should be transparent about its actions and communicate progress made with regards to their social responsibility performances on a regular basis;
- **Life cycle approach:** the organisation should consider the environmental and social impacts of its services and products throughout their life cycles (ISO, 2016).

Hence, to create a sustainable workplace for its employees and to achieve the SD goals, it is crucial to find ways to implement core principles of ISO 26000 as well as find ways to create sustainable and safe workplace.

### **2.11 Quality of Work Life**

Work has become a necessary part of the everyday life of a person, whether the person is in service or the business field (Ahmad, 2013). According to Shoaib (2013)

on average, an individual spends approximately one third of his or her life at the workplace. Quality of Work Life is actually a generic word that protects the thoughts of the personnel regarding each dimension of labour as well as monetary rewards and advantages, security, working conditions, composition and social associations (Fredric, 1995). It focuses strongly on providing a work environment conducive to satisfying individual needs. Sirgy (2001) suggests that employees are the assets of an organisation, because they are directly involved in the development of a particular technology that would benefit the communities and clients, and the organisation itself.

Recently, the emphasis on the social dimension of sustainability has become increasingly significant (Dyllick and Hockerts 2002). The role of effective management and human resources in achieving organisational objectives cannot be denied. The following table (2.1) highlights the definitions of QWL from a range of literature and presents how this concept has evolved over the years.

<b>Robert, 1973</b>	QWL is defined as an approach or a process in which specific techniques and approaches are used to improve work.
<b>Carlson 1980</b>	QWL is both an aim and an ongoing procedure for achieving that aim. As an aim the QWL is an obligation of any organisation to work improvement: the creation of more involving, satisfying, and offering jobs and work environments for people at all levels of the business organisation.
<b>Nadler and Lawler 1983</b>	QWL is a way of thinking about the people, work, and organisations.
<b>Rice et al. 1985</b>	The perceived quality of life is a set of beliefs pointed toward the totality of one's life or toward specific domains of life
<b>Kiernan and Knutson 1990: 102</b>	The quality of work life means different things to different people and there is a possibility that it varies according to the individual age, career stage, and/or position in the business.
<b>Sirgy et al. 2001</b>	QWL is the employee satisfaction and fulfilling their needs.
<b>Martel and Dupuis 2006</b>	They define QWL as: "Quality of work life, at a given time, corresponds to the condition of an individual within work domains where the reduction of the gap separating the individual from these goals is reflected by a positive impact on the individual's general quality of life, organizational performance, and consequently to the overall functioning of society".
<b>Korunka et al, 2008</b>	QWL to reduce employee's absenteeism, thereby, enhance and retain the employees and move the firm towards sustainable development.

<b>Bohdanowic and Zientara, 2009</b>	QWL is the firm's CSR activities that provide concrete care for its employees (e.g., fair remuneration diversity, supporting families, fair compensation, job security, etc.) It is utilized to make a desirable employment situation for its employees, thereby increasing employees' QWL.
<b>Reddy et al., 2010</b>	Quality of Work Life (QWL) is an inclusive concept that includes an individual's job-related wellbeing as well as reducing stress and other negative personal consequences.
<b>Jayan, 2012</b>	QWL offers opportunity for growth and development by facilitating training to the employees which consequently increases job satisfaction.
<b>Sadri and Goeas, 2013</b>	The quality of work life (QWL) is related to a favourable or unfavourable work environment in keeping employees motivated so as to enable high per capita productivity.
<b>Ajala, 2013</b>	QWL is mainly linked to employee wellbeing, happiness, satisfaction, and positive experiences with the workplace.
<b>Bora et al., 2015</b>	Quality of Work Life (QWL) can be used to the maximum extent and it ensures greater participation and involvement of workers, which make work easier, and improves quality and efficiency at work.
<b>Bora, 2017</b>	Quality of Work Life practices trigger positive workplace experiences in employees.
<b>Almarshad et al., 2019</b>	Quality of Work Life (QWL) is a multidimensional concept that has a number of definitions related to the connections between work satisfaction and individual happiness, employee health and well-being, as well as employee's response to workplace conditions.

Employees are considered to be as the primary stakeholders who directly play their role in the success of a company, because they not only play an important role in determining the quality of product/service, but also employee's wellbeing is directly associated to job performance (Lee et al. 2012). Working Life is a procedure of work organisations which leads its workers to enthusiastically contribute in modelling the organisation environment, systems and outcomes (Sandrick, 2003). When a business firm offers quality of work life, the result is that employees will experience positive feelings and this sense of satisfaction and positivity is carried to their family and the wider society. Therefore, since today's life is quite stressful, quality of work life is significant as it contributes to fulfilling the individual's responsibilities (Bagtasos, 2011).

## **2.12 Concept of QWL**

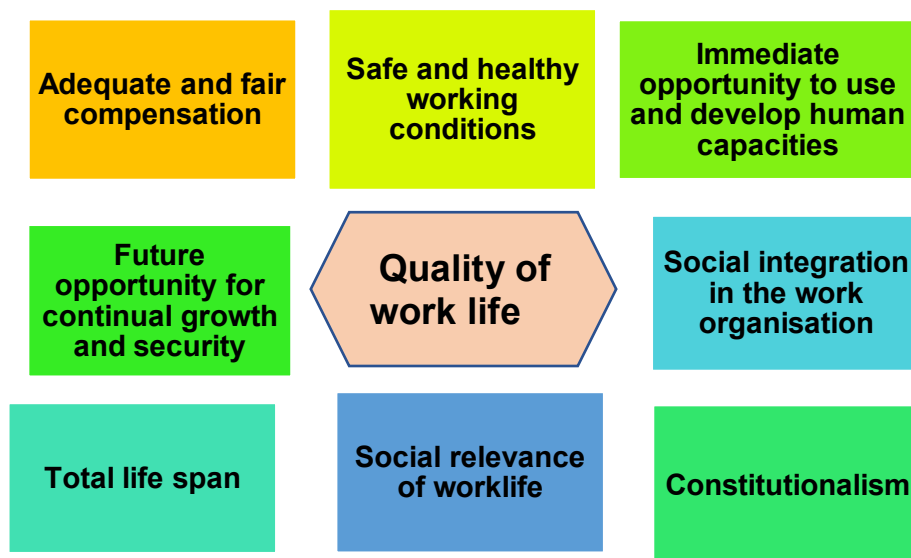
Quality of work life is a broad concept and there are various opinions about it. Therefore, it is very difficult to define. Many researchers, psychologists and



management advisors have decided that it is challenging to give a clear definition of the phrase quality of work life (QWL), other than that it is about the wellbeing of employees (Davis and Cherns, 1975; Lawler, 1975 & Sirgy et.al 2001).

QWL, quality of work life refers to the thing an employer does that adds to the lives of employees. Those things are some combination of benefits explicit and implied, tangible and intangible, that make somewhere a good place to work (Saraji and Dargahi, 2012). The quality of work life (QWL) concept was introduced into the workplace in the late 1950s, at the start the emphasis was on the strategic work and progress. However, by the beginning of the 1980s, QWL in addition to work strategy and improvement also included other features that affect employees' job satisfaction and efficiency. For instance; reward systems, physical work environment, employee participation, rights and esteem needs (Cummings, 2005). QWL is an idea and a set of philosophies, which considers that people/workers are the most vital resource, to be treated in considerate and respectful ways in the organization, liable and proficient in making valued contributions (Kubendran, 2013). In the past few years, QWL has been viewed differently as: "1 a variable; 2) an approach; 3) a series of methods; 4) a movement; 5) everything; and 6) an ethical subject" (Mirkamali & Thani, 2011 pp. 2). Rethinam and Ismail (2008) describe QWL as the efficiency of the work environment that transfers to meaningful organisation to support and stimulate better health and wellbeing; job safety, job satisfaction, skills development, and balance between the work and personal life of employees. QWL is considered to be one of the most important issues in every business organization (Noor and Abdullah, 2012). According to Rathi (2010), QWL is a multidimensional expression which offers a good work life stability and provides a boost to the total work environment of any business organisation.

Quality of work life (QWL) is generally linked with a series of objective organisational conditions and practices that helps employees of an organisation to assure that they are virtually safe, satisfied and have better chances of growth and development as individual human beings (Ahmad, 2013). When an organisation offers quality of work life to its employees, it helps to attract and retain employees. It also indicates firms are able to offer suitable working environments to employees, and employees will have a high commitment towards their work that finally reduces operational costs (Noor and Abdullah, 2012). In a business organisation quality of working life allows staff members at all levels to be enthusiastically involved in shaping the organisation environment, procedures and results (Mogaddam and Azad, 2015). Quality of work life states the quality of relationships between employees and their total working environment (Kaushik and Tonk, 2008). Srivastava and Kanpur (2014), defines the term ‘quality of work life’ as the level of satisfaction, motivation, involvement and commitment individuals experience with respect to their lives at work (pp. 54).



(Figure 2.4. Inspired from: Kanten and Sadullah, 2012 pp. 362; Jayakumar and Kalaisel, 2012 pp. 142)

Figure 2.4 illustrates eight conceptual categories for analysing the features of QWL and

their importance at the workplace. Firms which aim to make their organisation sustainable can adopt and implement the above eight core elements as part of their sustainable workplace plan. These core principles are also similar to the ISO 26000 goals for sustainable development. According to Rahmani and Eghbali (2018), implementing QWL principles within the organisation significantly improves employee's performance. Furthermore, organisations should consider the concept of QWL as an opportunity which offers an option for sustainable and greater growth. The following measures should be taken to improve QWL: Special attention should be paid to the balanced role of work and provision of the means to meet the basic needs of employees' families. Efforts should be made to reform the stress factors in the workplace and improve the physical conditions of the workplace. Pay and salaries should be adequate and fair. An employees' job should be designed in such a way that it does not prevent completion of duties and family responsibilities. Job design in the company should be shaped to fit everyone's conditions. Also, healthy and safe environmental conditions should be provided for employees (Anthony and Hong, 2014).

According to Martzler and Renzl (2007), compensation aspects such as wage increment, bonuses and allowances, pension, suitable health and safety conditions as well as medical benefits, are considered to be the major aspects of work life that help in improving the performance of workers in the work place, but also very important for a business organisation to gain competitive advantage and customer recognition.

Quality of work life places an emphasis on the regeneration and development of human and social resources (Docherty et al. 2002a). Employees should be allowed to grow, to learn, and to use their intelligence and creativity for their work and participation in decision-making processes (Docherty and Kira, 2002b). QWL is also

considered by senior managers as one of the techniques to achieve sustainable development goals (Pouravaz and Sehat, 2010).

### **2.13 Importance of QWL**

The major aim of QWL is to build a work environment where employees work together in cooperation with each other and contribute to fulfil the organisation's goals. Any initiative towards improving QWL in an organisation depends to a great extent on the leadership or top management of the organisation because they are the ones who shape the destiny of the organisation. A comprehensive concept of the interrelationship between the various facets of QWL offers the opportunity for improved analysis of cause and effect in the workplace and thus can help employers to create a sustainable workplace for employees (Ahmad, 2013).

QWL concerns employee's health and wellbeing, i.e., issues related to employee work and life satisfaction. A great body of research focuses on the human components of QWL that affect workers' emotional, physical, and spiritual needs and demands, based on the premise that work demand and requirements have great effects on the health and wellbeing of employees (Sirgy et al. 2008, Ajala 2013, Khodadadi 2014). QWL is mainly linked to employee wellbeing, happiness, satisfaction, and positive experiences within the workplace (Ajala 2013). Furthermore, QWL has also been linked to the psychological health of employees and the working conditions that promote enthusiasm and willingness of working individuals to utilise their potential for personal and organisational growth (Hart 1994, Rathi 2010, Ajala 2013). Psychological factors and morale are also considered essential determinants of employee QWL (Rathi 2009, Srivastava and Kanpur 2014, Carlson 1980, Almarshad 2015b).

People start working in order to fulfil their economic, social and psychological needs. In any business organisation an employee must comply with the given quality of work life and work according to the stated instructions and standard procedures offered by the company (Teryima et al, 2016). Therefore, within any organisation, a good quality of work life plays an important role in improving an employee's working situations, their skills, attitudes and performance. As such, this supports business firms in establishing a good reputation in the local and global business markets (Lau et al., 2008). Some organisations which have been successful, account for their success by highlighting the provision of a good quality of work life (Teryima et al., 2016).

Saad et al., (2008) argued that QWL may have advantages for both the organisation and the employees. Some of those potential advantages are suggested as:

- QWL may allow for a comprehensive approach to work design-task design, job participative consultation and adequate personnel policies
- QWL may enhance employees' motivation
- QWL may increase job interest
- QWL may provide realistic work-related learning opportunities
- QWL may improve attitudes towards labour flexibility
- QWL is likely to become embedded in the organisational culture
- QWL is likely to make pay and conditions move together with job changes

#### **2.14 Link between Corporate Social responsibility and Quality of work life**

One of the requirements of SD goals is the QWL in terms of labour practices and human rights (Thalang et al., 2010).

“QWL is consists of: 1) Safe and Healthy Environment during work, 2) Growth and Security of Work, 3) Human Rights,4) Total Life Space, work organization and work life balance, 5) Adequate and fair compensation, 6) Development of Human Capacities - concern intrinsic job quality, and 7) Social Integration support employees for equality work” (Royuela et al., 2007, pp6-10)

Within an organisation, an important measure of corporate sustainability is the Quality of Work Life (QWL) of employees (Cooke et al, 2013). Bohdanowicz and Zientara (2009) highlighted that a firm’s CSR efforts and active role in achieving sustainability that demonstrate tangible care for its employees, with respect to not only physical but also psychological and spiritual well-being, may increase its employees’ Quality of work life (QWL). Employees are important stakeholders, and CSR activities could positively affect employees’ perceptions of a firm (Lee et al., 2013). These employee’s perceptions are more likely to influence job performance factors such as job satisfaction and customer orientation. Chiang (2010) stated that CSR is an important strategy for efficiently managing workforces by increasing job satisfaction, customer orientation and organizational trust. Hospitality firms benefit more from CSR than do non- hospitality firms because employees are a crucial asset as a connection between the customers and company (Dawson and Abbott, 2009; Sinha et al., 2002)

The firm’s CSR activities that provide tangible care for its employees (e.g.,fair remuneration, diversity, supporting families, fair compensation, job security, etc.) make safe and sustainable employment situations for its employees by increasing employees’ QWL( Bohdanowicz & Zientara, 2009). Jakubczak and Gotowska (2015), highlighted that both a firm’s sustainability policies and CSR aim to shape the QWL for employees. It has also been witnessed in literature that CSR can be consider a strategic way of gaining sustainable competitive advantage and increased financial

performance with internal and external benefits (Mandhachitara & Poolthong, 2011). According to Albdour and Altarawneh (2012), a firms' CSR affects employee engagement, job engagement and organisational engagement positively and significantly. Keraita, et al. (2013) stated that all the elements of CSR and sustainable business practices have a positive relationship with employee commitment.

### **2.15 QWL issues in the textile industry**

The textile manufacturing process involves a number of social impacts which, if not sustainably controlled, could result in serious damage. The textile industry impacts on people and society in numerous ways, from the labourers involved in collection of raw materials, to factory workers, to those affected by disposal and end-of-life garments (Uniform Reuse, 2015). Textile products sold in developed countries are mostly manufactured in developing countries like India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Vietnam etc. And this global trade has no doubt improved the global business cycle and strengthened the economies of different countries but still this process is not perfect as it involves various social issues such as low wages, poor working conditions in the factories, poor worker's rights, no work hours' contracts, gender inequality, health and safety risks and most importantly child labour issues (Claudio, 2007).

Unstable employment: use of constant temporary contracts or the nonexistence of any employment contracts combined with late payments and the lack of employment benefits, is common practice in developing countries. Furthermore, in many countries young women are the main work force in textile industries and are mostly unskilled. Such workers are in the most vulnerable conditions with no workplace rights, equality or justice. Sexual harassment is another common social issue in most developing countries (Allwood et al., 2006a). According to the Fair-Trade Foundation (2005), poor working conditions within the textile sector and forced child labour are considered to

be the major social issues in developing countries. The use of chemicals and dyes in textile manufacturing cause serious health issues in workers and it can cause diseases like asthma and allergies as well as some fertility disorders associated with the textile manufacturing process (Eryuruk, 2012b). Hazardous chemicals particularly in cotton production, wet treatment, dyeing process and finishing processes seriously affect the workers' health. Additionally, during the processing of cotton fibre dust is produced which results in several respiratory diseases among factory workers such as; byssinosis, respiratory infection, etc. Tedious repetitive processes during sewing, also leads to injuries among the sewing machinists (Allwood et al., 2006b). The noise level due to the machines used in the textile industry, especially from the dry processes, may violate the rules and regulations related to acceptable noise levels which cause hearing disorders. Also, winding machines, looms, the sewing machines operate at high speed, thus go beyond the permissible level of noise (90 decibels) and cause hearing problems (Shaikh, 2009). Some of these aspects are referred to as part of the International Standards Organisation's attempt to improve businesses social and environmental impact. In the more industrial production systems, painful and tiring positions, ambient conditions (dust, noise), as well as stress and workload are causes for concern. An Estonian study supports this picture, but is far from being representative (Michalski, 2006). In sharp contrast is the bottom end of the value chain: In sweatshops in Eastern EU, working conditions (not so much health issues) tend to be even worse, with long and unfavourable working hours and occurrences of human rights issues (Barendt et al., 2005).

Many aspects of literature in this area of research present elements of the most prominent QWL issues in the textile sector.



<b>Work quality issues in textile sector</b>	<b>Source &amp; year</b>
Long working hours, Fatigue	Metzner and Fisher, 2010
Freedom of association, mistreatment of women	Welford and Frost, 2006
Women's rights, work hours, child labour, forced labour, harassment and abuse, freedom of association, health and safety, wage levels, labours regularity	Kaufman et. al, 2004
Child labour, worker abuse, harassment and discrimination, workers' rights of freedom of association and collective bargaining, adequate wage, working hours, safe and healthy job site environment.	Emmelhainz and Adams, 1999
Wages	Barendt, 2005; Goos and Manning, 2007; Low Pay Commission, 2010
Skills development and training	Eurofound, 2002
Human rights	Barendt et al. 2005; Dickson and Eckman, 2006
Flexibility and security, Health and working conditions Intrinsic job quality, Social dialogue and Work life balance	Barendt et al., 2005; Koçer and Fransen, 2009; Michalski, 2006; Dhondt, Benders, 1998; Valarmathi and Hema, 2013
Low Income and experience	Gupta, 2015
Lack of job security, zero hours contract, low wage,	Suresh, 2019

(Table 2.2 Adopted from: Martinuzii et al. 2011 pp. 14., Valarmathi and Hema, 2013).

Phuyal (2016) makes the important point that an assured good quality of work life is crucial in attracting a talented workforce and also in retaining the existing experienced talent. He further notes that if quality of life at work could be improved, it would result in all holistic improvement by benefitting the individual worker, the company, its customers and society as a whole.

## **2.16 Summary**

This study aims to benefit future researchers by extending the knowledge in the area of sustainable business development as well as corporate social responsibility and how firms can be sustainable by offering quality of work life (QWL) to its employees in the context of a developing economy. Developing countries present a distinctive set

of sustainability challenges which are collectively quite different to those faced in the developed world (Crane et al., 2008). Sustainable development initiatives have the potential to increase transparency and the accountability of an organisation towards sustainability. It is important to increase our understanding of why there is still lack of studies related to sustainable development and QWL in emerging and developing economies (Belal et al. 2013; Correa and Larrinaga, 2015).

According to Correa and Larrinaga (2015) business firms working in emerging and developing economies are likely to have a crucial role, both positive and negative in sustainable development literature, which amplifies the need for research within the developing country context (Pakistan). SD, CSR, and QWL can make a firm more sustainable and it is profoundly under-researched in developing countries, therefore a tremendous opportunity exists for improving our knowledge and understanding while contributing to the literature in this area. There is need for research which highlights the importance of sustainable workforce and how QWL can help business firms to be sustainable in the context of the textile sector in Pakistan.

Pakistan has been selected as the case for this research because of the insufficient research in emerging and developing economies in general, and Pakistan in particular (Zahidi et al, 2019, Ehsan et al. 2018, Hayat, 2020). Also, the practice of CSR in Pakistan is still in its infancy and is largely unregulated as compared with other countries in the region (e.g. India, China, and Malaysia). It is therefore considered that by carrying out comprehensive research on processes for the emergence of SD and CSR in terms of QWL in Pakistan, an important contribution can be made to enrich the literature. In addition, suggestions can be made to enhance practice. Lastly,

because of the origin of the researcher, it was possible for her to obtain access to important actors and organisations in Pakistan which is crucial in this type of research.

Pakistan represents a developing economy, and managers and structure operations may be different from those in developed countries. The Pakistani economy has been suffering from low economic growth for the many years. Stakeholder attention to CSR activities as a substitute growth model may enhance firm growth (Javeed and Lefen, 2019). Pakistan offers fascinating circumstances for the examination of CSR actions encouraged by international and national organisations for a number of important reasons. Pakistan is a country that has variety of problems, such as unstable economic and political situations, terrorist acts, poor education and health development, and energy and industrial crises, in addition to communal conflict, widespread corruption, and an insufficient controlling agenda. On a larger scale, altogether these problems have implications for the industrial sector. In addition, organisations operate in an environment regarded to have low-quality product manufacturing, human rights violations, insufficient living environments, labor wage problems that do not allow a rational living standard, and, more noticeable, a high rate of child labor. A further threat is growing water and environmental pollution, because most of the companies mishandle their waste materials (Ehsan et al. 2018). Furthermore, Pakistan is one of the developing countries where a lack of awareness about CSR activities exists. In Pakistan, large firms participate more in CSR activities as compared to small firms (Waheed, 2005).

From the Pakistani context, investigations into the environment and the extent of CSR are associated with growth, and the present condition of CSR implementation by Pakistani businesses is somewhat immature (Gamershlag, 2011), particularly related to CSR execution. Consequently, there is a need to look into CSR from the Pakistani

perspective to increase the requirements, significance, and awareness of CSR for both local societies and governing authorities (Ehsan et al. 2018). There is a gap in the knowledge related to CSR and its link with QWL to make textile firms sustainable. There is a need for an in-depth investigation to explore the CSR. Hence, after the review of literature research questions mentioned in the first chapter formulated.

According to Yin (2009), new researchers mistakenly assume that the reason for a literature review is to find out the answers about what is known on a topic. Experienced investigators, review previous research to develop sharper and more understanding of questions about the topic. Here, the researcher has given particular attention to this wise advice and has used the literature review to assist in establishing the questions that will direct the research.

# Chapter Three

## Contextual framework of Textile sector of Pakistan

There are several factors and characteristics that make Pakistan a distinct country. These factors include religion, economy, politics and the interaction among them. The aim of this chapter is to provide general background on Pakistan, and to describe and discuss a number of key aspects of the textile sector in Pakistan. This is done in order to provide a context for understanding the practice and implementation of sustainable strategies.

### 3.1 Pakistan: An overview

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan, finally becoming a sovereign state (and eventually recognised as an official mark on the map of the world) on August 14, 1947. Pakistan is known for having deep roots in the Islamic religion (Yasmin, 2006). The country's capital is Islamabad, and features four different provinces: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, Balochistan, and Punjab (Yasminb, 2006). Today, the estimated Pakistan population is approximately 216.57 million, making it the 5th most populous country in the world (Pakistan Bureau of statistics, 2017)

The most popular language in Pakistan is Punjabi, the language of which 88 percent of the population speak. Second is the language Saraiki, which is spoken by 10 percent of the population; and third is the language Pashto, spoken by 15 percent of the population. English is widely spoken throughout the government of Pakistan, mainly because it is actually the official language of the government of the country. Many government officials, civil servants, and members of the military speak English in their daily conversations and their meetings.

Despite being one of the largest and most populous countries in South Asia and the world (Worldometer, 2016), the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility and sustainability is still in its infant stages in Pakistan (Ashraf, 2018). Additionally, at present Pakistan's economy is facing the worst crisis in its history (Sajjad and Gabriel, 2014). There is consumption-led economic growth with falling investments, ineffective economic governance, rising inflation and unemployment rates, energy deficit, persistent conflicts in the border areas, poor political situation, corruption and critical law and order situations. These have created circumstances where it becomes very difficult for the nation to achieve macro-economic stability and desired development outcomes (Asian Development Bank, 2013).

### **3.2 Economy**

The economy of Pakistan is the 24<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world in terms of purchasing power parity (PPP), and 42<sup>nd</sup> largest in terms of nominal Gross domestic products (Irfan, 2012). Pakistan is a developing country; the economy is semi-industrialised. Primary export commodities include; textiles, leather goods, sports goods, chemicals, carpets/rugs and medical instruments (Hassan, 2015). In 2016, BMI research reports named Pakistan as one of the ten emerging economies with a particular focus on its manufacturing hub. In October 2016, the IMF chief, Christine Lagarde, confirmed her economic assessment in Islamabad that Pakistan's economy was out of crisis. The World Bank predicted in 2016 that by 2018, Pakistan's economic growth would increase to a robust of 5.4% due to greater inflow of foreign investment, mainly from the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Pakistan's industrial sector accounts for approximately 18.17% of GDP of the country. In 2018, it recorded a growth of 5.80% as compared with the growth of 5.43% in 2017. Major industries include; textiles, fertilisers, cement, oil refineries, dairy products, food processing,

beverages, construction materials, clothing, paper products and shrimps (Yasmeen, 2006).

Moreover, a sharp rise in international oil prices, acute power shortages, inadequate fiscal reforms, huge expenditures on the war against terror, security hazards, and repetitive natural disasters such as floods in 2010 and 2011 had overwhelming impacts on Pakistan's economy (Economic survey of Pakistan, 2012). For example, the estimated damage caused by the floods was over \$8 billion (Hasan and Zaidi, 2012). International Labor Organization (ILO) (2011) estimated that about 5.3 million jobs were lost or affected by 2010 floods. In addition, according to official estimates, the economy of Pakistan suffered approximately US\$68 billion losses in the war against terror (Economic Survey of Pakistan, 2011).

### **3.3 Concept of Sustainability and CSR in Pakistan**

The concept of CSR and sustainable business development is a relatively new phenomenon in Pakistan, nonetheless the interest in and awareness of CSR is steadily growing in the country (Sajjad & Gabriel, 2014b). In the developed world, CSR has become a key element for corporate legitimacy and trust in society, which determines the long-term survival of business. However, in Pakistan's business environments, the notion of CSR is still a buzzword for many companies and individuals often misunderstand its true spirit or ignore it (Waheed, 2005).

Naeem and Welford (2009) conducted a comparative CSR study in Bangladeshi and Pakistani companies. The study reveals that CSR is relatively underdeveloped in both countries and many companies were seen to be failing to engage in many aspects of CSR. In terms of health and safety in the workplace, thousands of workers in Pakistan

are regularly exposed to hazardous employment and poor working conditions. According to Rehman et al., (2012) a factory caught fire and killed more than 200 people. The primary reasons for this terrible incident was insufficient safety instruments such as fire alarms and sprinklers in the factories, inadequate safety measures in building design, lack of fire exits, and the inhumane behavior of factory owners/management. In particular, the factory exits were closed by the management. As workers were unable to escape the factory premises many of them died due to suffocation and jumping from the roof (Sajjad and Gabriel, 2014c). These incidents raise serious questions about the performance of Pakistani companies in implementing sustainable labour practices and the condition of QWL in such workplaces.

Workplace safety awareness is very limited in the textile sector in Pakistan (Malik, 2010; Saif et al., 2011). Employees are not trained in the use of technical facilities and are unaware of procedures to be followed in case of an emergency. On-site medical and health and safety monitoring mechanisms are inadequate in the textile factories. Workers are largely unaware of their legal rights and privileges regarding workplace safety. There are only a few companies in Pakistan which have sustainable development policies and CSR implementation within their business (Fatima, 2017).

Recently, companies are concerned about increasing the wealth without paying much attention to their major stakeholders – employees (Yunis et al., 2017). This is an alarming situation for the economy of the country as it seems that not much has been learnt from prior major incidents which cost businesses millions of dollars in Pakistan (Waheed, 2005b). It can be said that major theoretical concepts related to CSR are driven by western authors and the concept itself has originated from



developed 'Western' economies such as United States and Western European countries. As a result, most empirical and theoretical research has also been conducted in these countries with very little attention given to developing countries in recent times (Wayner, 2008).

Current CSR studies do not truly reflect the ground realities, especially in many Asian countries (Samreen, 2018). It is been noted that

“there has been relatively little work on how corporate responsibilities may change when firms operate under the different circumstances that tend to typify developing countries” (Reed 2002, p. 166).

This provides a useful opportunity to study the phenomenon and to help to improve the understanding of the concept in these countries (Samreen, 2018). Only a few companies in Pakistan have an existing CSR strategy (Fatima, 2017) and mostly these are multinationals following their own CSR policies and standards. Unfortunately, the local industry is either unaware of the benefits brought by CSR, or they feel that even if they do not adopt such policies, they are not in any state of danger. Labour exploitation, inadequate employee benefits and unsuitable working environments are the most common practices. Not much attention has been given to the concept of sustainability in terms of employee's safety and wellbeing in Pakistan (Samreen, 2018).

Pakistan, being a developing country, is trying hard to improve its economy through exploration of new international markets to increase exports. In doing so it has to fulfil all the legal requirements where compliance to sustainable development implementation is one of the key factors (Yunis et al, 2017). Contrary to developed countries, the CSR paradigm in Pakistan is different due to the violation of various

social norms i.e. discrimination, child labour, lack of a proper education system etc (Safi and Ramay, 2013). There is a lack of research related to QWL initiatives which can enhance a firm's CSR reputation and show how firms can achieve sustainability goals by making the workplace sustainable for its employees (Hussain, et al, 2017).

The instances of human rights violations are very noticeable not only at the national level but also at the micro level of business organisations (Pakistan human rights report, 2012). There is limited respect for worker's rights. Workers are denied minimum wages, lack decent working conditions, minimum working hours and no right to form trade unions are the biggest concerns in the Pakistan business market (Human rights report, 2012). Despite the presence of national sustainability policy and regulation, violations of such laws and regulations results in incidents like the Baldia town Karachi incident (2012), in which more than 300 workers were killed due to the lack of health and safety measures and negligent authorities (Sama, 2015). Another incident which found international media attention was a well-known local brand "Khadi" violated worker's rights and dismissed workers unlawfully without paying them their wage. There were also reports of abuse and long working hours (Farooq, 2017).

### **3.4 Overview of the textile sector of Pakistan**

The textile sector in Pakistan has an overwhelming impact on the economy, contributing 60% to the country's exports. In today's highly competitive global environment, the textile sector needs to upgrade its supply chain, improve productivity, and maximise value-addition to survive. The objectives of the Textile Industry Division are to formulate strategies and programme to enable the textile sector to meet these challenges and attain global competitiveness (APTMA, 2018). The textile sector is one of the most important sectors in Pakistan. The textile industry contributes

approximately 46 percent to the total output or 8.5 percent of the country GDP (Din and Khan, 2010). In Asia, Pakistan is the 8th largest exporter of textile products providing employment to 38 percent of the workforce in the country. However, the textile industry currently faces massive challenges. The All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA) needs to enhance the quality of its products. However, APTMA argues other factors such as high interest rates and cost of inputs, non-conducive government policies, and non-guaranteed energy supplies hinder their competitiveness. The textile sector enjoys a pivotal position in the exports of Pakistan. More than 60% of the total export earnings are contributed by this sector (Malik, 2002). This sector plays an important role in the industrial development of Pakistan. Besides serving as the major source of foreign exchange earnings, it creates the majority of jobs in the manufacturing sector (Anjum et. al 2009).

Textile industry of Pakistan is comprised of Ginning, Spinning, Weaving, Knitting, Printing, Processing, Dyeing, Hosiery, Made-ups and Garments. There are also some fully integrated composite units which, are the combination of all the process and production under one roof. In Pakistan these sectors are mainly situated in Karachi, Lahore, Faisalabad, Hyderabad, Kotri and Nooriabad (Pakistan Textile report, 2016). With the recent changes in the shape of globalisation resulting in lowering of tariff barriers and phase wise elimination of quantitative restrictions, the textile sector in Pakistan also needs to realign itself to maintain its position in the global textile markets. The most effected segment in the textile value chain is the processing industry which generates high volumes of wastewater and uses hazardous processing chemicals (Faheem, 2006).

The textile sector is considered to be the biggest sector in Pakistan and makes up the backbone of the country's economy. Even though it is the most important branch of the manufacturing industry, working conditions in this sector remain challenging. They are marked by poor workplace safety, low wages and a lack of dialogue between employers and the workforce (Samreen, 2018). Pakistan has been granted access to the European market under the European Union's preferential trade scheme, the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) Plus, which offers full removal of tariffs to countries exporting goods to the EU. This is a special arrangement intended to support sustainable development and good governance in the least developed countries. To be eligible for GSP Plus status, countries must establish and implement core labour rights and other sustainable development and good governance conventions. Pakistan has ratified the conventions but is still not doing enough to enforce them within the country.

Pakistan has faced a number of crises over the past few years which have severely and negatively affected its economic and social stability (Samreen, 2008). Since 2008 Pakistan's economy has faced macroeconomic instability, fiscal retrenchment and external account weaknesses. The major reason of decline of textile export of Pakistan is the Government policies and detrimental resources of energy generation, bad security situation and lower compliance rate with labour laws and international labour standards (Roundtable report, 2014).

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout fund helped to stabilise the external account however other recommended measures that have compelled the Government to phase out subsidies and tighten monetary and fiscal policies have contributed to increased inflation, and especially food and fuel inflation. The overall working condition

of the sector is not satisfactory due to the lack of proper resources and strict implementation of regulations related to labor and workers' rights (Labor force survey, 2008-2009). Pakistan's crude labor force participation rate is estimated at 52.7 per cent (LFS, 2020), up from 52.6 per cent in 2019. In 2020, Unemployment increased to 5.5 per cent, up from 4.5 per cent in 2019 (Trading economics, 2020). Males constitute 78.83 per cent of the employed, and females 21.17 per cent, with a higher proportion of women being unemployed (65.34%) as compared to men (34.66%), and even more in urban than rural areas. These figures however mask the issues of underemployment and the poor quality of work and remuneration that many Pakistanis face.

According to Jahanzeb, (2017b)

“Exploiting factory workers and fabricating certificates has long been the norm in the textile sector of Pakistan”.

He also added that the process of certification that every textile industry uses to show obedience to labour laws and employee's safety management is riddled with corruption in the textile sector of Pakistan. In April 2020, International trade union confederation (ITUC) report, Pakistan was awarded the rating of 5+ which is the worst rating and it means no work rights are guaranteed, and due to the lack of poor legislation and policies implementation, employees do not have access to their basic workplace rights and no voice over unfair labour practices.

## **Summary**

This chapter presented some historical and more recent general information about Pakistan. As part of the general information noted here, a number of factors discussed are currently very important for the country's economy, reputation, and society. The textile sector in Pakistan has also been discussed and how it affects the country's economy. Furthermore, the researcher highlighted some of the barriers and other factors which are affecting the country's current business reputation.

# Chapter Four

## Research Methodology

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the methodological aspects of the research and the manner it was conducted, it begins by highlighting the methodological foundations for this research. An overview of the research paradigms and a rationale for the approach adopted in this study will also be provided. Discussion of the adopted research methods including the data collection instruments and sampling methodology is also highlighted. Furthermore, specific details are provided about the characteristics of the research and approaches implemented to enhance methodological quality. The selected participants for this study were managers, decision makers, and compliance officers directly responsible for implementing business strategies/policies. As the researcher was attempting to gather a range of information from these participants, it was appropriate to use qualitative interviews to collect not only quality data, but also provide an opportunity for participants to include their own personal perspectives. These might include perspectives on SD goals, knowledge, meaning, expectations and any concerns they might have on the implementation of SD and CSR initiatives within the context of the textile industry in Pakistan.

A discussion is provided of the thematic analytical framework chosen to enable findings to be established in order for this research to achieve its aims. Finally, information regarding ethical and research governance approval and the identification

of study sites will also be outlined. Ethical considerations of the research are discussed followed by a general reflexivity section before ending the chapter with conclusions.

#### **4.2 What is research?**

Research is a rigorous and focused search for knowledge and understanding of social and physical phenomena (Creswell, 2006). Research is important both in scientific and non-scientific fields. Research is the way to answer questions and develop knowledge. Research can also be defined as “an activity that comprises of finding out, in a more or less systematic way, things you did not know” (Walliman, 2010, p.7). The research is based on different steps: started with defining a research problem, gathering, organising and evaluating data and making conclusions on the basis of findings (Kothari, 2004).

#### **4.3 What is Methodology?**

According to Brown and Fraser (2006), “Methodology is the philosophical framework within which the research is conducted or the foundation upon which the research is based”. Methodology is the framework which is related to a particular set of definitive assumptions that researchers use to conduct their research (O’Leary, 2004). Glatthorn & Joyner (2005) claimed that when conducting a research methodology, it should meet the following two principles:

- Firstly, the methodology should be the most appropriate to attain objectives of the research
- Secondly, it should be made possible to repeat the methodology used in other researches of the same nature



#### **4.4 Research Philosophy**

Creswell (1996) explained his views about research philosophy as a belief regarding the way in which data about the phenomenon should be collected, analyzed and used. Research philosophy also helps to aid researchers in research design and how it should be used for investigation in their study (Easterby-Smith et al. 2002). According to Burke (2007), by understanding philosophical assumptions of a research area, it offers the necessary knowledge for the researcher to locate the research strategy within an appropriate research paradigm in relation to the researcher's belief systems.

Malhotra and Bricks (2006) note that there are two types of research paradigms which market researchers use in their research: Positivism and Interpretivism. On the other hand, Saunders et al. 2007 further introduced the phenomenological approach. For the analysis of social phenomena, researchers suggested a framework consisting of four paradigms, functionalism, Interpretivism, radical humanism and radical structuralism (Burrell and Morgan, 2005). Similarly, Easterby-Smith et al. (2002) defined positivism and social constructionism as two major philosophical traditions common in management research. According to Carter and Little (2007), a careful selection of the research philosophy, methodology and method will assist researchers to provide answers to their questions and also meet their research objectives successfully.

Positivism is reality-orientated and highlights that everything exists independent of consciousness. These assumptions underpin the positivist perspective which is often regarded as a 'scientific method' involving knowledge being gathered in ways that are not subjective and which are replicable involving logically deduced hypotheses and confirmed evidence (Charmaz, 2008). Positivists test causal explanations through the

testing of theories and hypotheses, using variables quantified through methods that yield numbers and statistics such as questionnaires or surveys. Whereas, Interpretivists believe that reality exists and can be measured, but recognise that the interpretation of information cannot be wholly objective: rather we need to control or limit the biases present when collecting data (Patton, 2012). Interpretivism aims firstly to understand the context and then to make an interpretation that is shaped by experience. Qualitative methods are frequently used when little is known about a research phenomenon and where a researcher aims to collect information rich cases (Patton, 2002). Data is collected by qualitative means through interviews, focus groups or observations and analysis involves examining the words that are recorded during these interactions.

#### **4.4.1 Positivism**

Concept of positivism is directly linked with objectivism (Tichapondwa. 2013). Research conducted within a positivist paradigm has dominated the social sciences (Rossman and Rallis 2003). According to Esterby-Smith et al. (2002). Positivism philosophical emphasis on the need to find out the factual explanations and primary laws. Positivism approach is associated with quantitative data collection methods and statistical analysis (Tichapondwa 2013).

Principles of positivism depends on quantifiable observations that lend themselves to statistical analysis. It has been distinguished that “as a philosophy, positivism is in accordance with the researcher view that knowledge stems from human experience. It has an atomistic, ontological view of the world as comprising discrete, observable elements and events that interact in an observable, determined and regular manner” (Collins, 2010, p. 38).

Crowther and Lancaster (2008), explain that as a general rule, positivist studies usually adopt a deductive approach. Additionally, positivism has the viewpoint that a researcher needs to concentrate on facts. Studies with a positivist standard are based purely on evidences and consider the world to be external and unbiased (Dudovskiy, 2011).

“To the positivists, the purpose of science is to derive knowledge through observation and measurement. The positivist view of human nature is deterministic, meaning that it regards humans and their activities as determined by the environment. Finally, the positivist approach takes a nomothetic approach to social science, which relies on experimental or quantitative methods such as surveys to test and verify hypothesis” (Ramanathan, 2009 p. 41).

#### **4.4.2 Social Constructionism**

The concept of Social constructionism arose in reaction to positivism. According to Crotty (1998), social constructionism depends upon human practices, developed and transmitted within a social context. Unlike positivism, social constructionism makes a close bond between values and facts in order to understand social reality (Gephart, 1999). Social constructionism accepts that there is an impartial reality. It is concerned with how knowledge is constructed and understood (Johnston, 2012). It has consequently an epistemological not an ontological viewpoint. Social constructionism places great emphasis on everyday collaborations between people and how they use language to create their reality (Young and Collin, 2004).

#### **4.4.3 Interpretivism**

Interpretivists argue the opposite of the positivists. The data are in the form of words, not numerical as in positivism. Interpretivism is designed to study cultures, societies or institutions as a whole (Tichapondwa 2013)

“This approach may see respondents as peers seeking the right content and means of observing and questioning to suit individual respondents. The Interpretivist recognizes that their own values affect how they question, probe, and interpret” (Shah, 2010, p. 26).

As a theoretical perspective, the goal of interpretivism is to develop socially derived and historically situated interpretations of the social world (Crotty, 2005). Moreover, Interpretivist studies usually places emphasis on meaning and may employ multiple methods in order to reflect different aspects of the issue. Interviews and observations are the most popular primary data collection methods in interpretivism studies. Secondary data research is also popular within interpretivism philosophy. Thanks to the adoption of qualitative research areas, such as; cross-cultural differences in organisations, issues of ethics, leadership and analysis of factors impacting leadership etc, can be studied in detail. Primary data generated via interpretivist studies might be associated with a high level of validity because data in such studies tends to be trustworthy and honest (Saunders et al. 2009).

#### **4.5 Research Methodology**

There are two approaches used for research purpose, qualitative and quantitative. A quantitative approach is more numbers based while, qualitative research is text or words based (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Qualitative research aims to answer questions like; what, how or why, of a phenomenon, rather than how many and how much which, are answered by the quantitative approach. Qualitative research is more subjective and describes a problem or condition from the point of view of those watching it. Whereas, quantitative research is more objective and provides observed effects (interpreted by researchers) of a course of study on a problem or situation (Patton and Cochran, 2002).

As discussed in the introduction and concluded in chapter two of this work, the aim of this research is to explore how the textile sector in Pakistan is embedding sustainable workplace strategies to enhance competitive advantage. There is currently very limited research available in this area and in the context of Pakistan (Zahidi et al. 2019). This study did not necessarily require a qualitative approach, however, quantitative approach with just a tick box questionnaire would not have provided the opportunity to sufficiently examine the manager's perspectives. Qualitative methods are often employed when little is known about a topic which was seemingly the case for current and potential future practices of SD and CSR in Pakistan.

For most researchers there is a decision to be made regarding which methodology to use in order to obtain the appropriate and most relevant data to help fulfil their aims and objectives. It has been suggested that research design is largely influenced by three questions: what knowledge claims the researcher is making? what are the plans for inquiry? and what are the intended methods of data collection and analysis? (Creswell, 2003). Ultimately a researcher has to decide which paradigm (quantitative, qualitative or mixed) to employ in order to achieve results. A brief explanation of these approaches is crucial in order to explain why this study has selected a qualitative approach.

Quantitative and qualitative research approaches have their own strengths and weaknesses, depending on the research questions under study. For instance, a key strength of quantitative research is that it gathers numerical data which is easy to analyse (Punch, 2014 b). Conversely, according to Vaus (2002 p. 5) qualitative methods are often considered as providing rich data about people and situations, and have greater potential for making sense of behaviour and understanding behaviour

within its wider framework. However, qualitative research is frequently criticized for lacking generalisability, being too dependent on the subjective explanations of researchers, and for being difficult to replicate by subsequent researchers. Methodological assumptions, in turn, guide the researcher's choice of research strategy, a decision often positioned as a choice between quantitative and qualitative research (Bryman, 2008).

#### **4.6.1 Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research methods are explanatory, and its objective is to provide a depth of understanding. Qualitative methods are based on words, observations, feelings etc. rather than numbers and they include experiments, interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires with open-ended questions (Monette et al. 2005). This method adopts an open-ended data collection approach (Bryman, 2006).

In 2012 Petty et al, explained that the major advantages linked with the qualitative research approach include its ability to produce comprehensive explanations of human phenomena as well as in-depth analysis of complex human and cultural dynamics which is not possible to explain properly with a numerical measurement approach. Furthermore, Harrison and Reilly (2011) highlighted the depth of knowledge and understanding a researcher obtains through the exploration of such experiences from participants through qualitative research. Additionally, they suggested that such understanding and meaning attached to such human experiences are regarded as the hallmark of qualitative studies.

According to Eldabi et al. (2002), application of qualitative approach helps researcher to view a phenomenon in its real social context and it offers in-depth understanding about an issue. As already mentioned, collection techniques include; interviews, participant observation, review of the reports, and focus group. There are five types of

qualitative research approaches which can be used by researchers on the basis of their research objectives. Creswell (2006), provided characteristics and major differences of all five approaches, table 4.1 provides a summary of the five approaches.

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Narrative Research</b>	<b>Phenomenology</b>	<b>Grounded Theory</b>	<b>Ethnography</b>	<b>Case Study</b>
Focus	Exploring the life of an individual.	Understanding the essence of the experience.	Developing a theory	Describing a culture sharing group	Developing an in depth. Description and analysis of a case(s).
Discipline Background	Drawing from the humanities, including anthropology, history and sociology.	Drawing from philosophy, education and psychology.	Drawing from sociology.	Drawing from anthropology and sociology.	Drawing from law, Psychology and medicine.
Unit of Analysis	Studying one or more individuals.	Studying several individuals that have shared the experience.	Studying a process or action involving many individuals.	Studying a group that shares the same culture.	Studying an event, a programme , more than one individual.
Data collection Forms	Interviews and documents.	Interviews, documents, observations and art may also be considered.	Interviews with 20-60 individuals.	Observations and interviews.	Use multiple sources such as interviews, documents and artefacts.
Data analysis strategies	Analysing data for stories, developing themes, often using a chronology.	Analysing data for significant statements, meaning units and structural description,	Analysing data through open, axial and selective coding.	Analysing data through description of the culture sharing group, themes about the group.	Analysing data through description of the case and themes of the case as well as cross case.
Written report	Developing a narrative about the stories about individual's life.	Describing the essence of the experience.	Generating a theory illustrated in a figure.	Describing how a culture sharing group works.	Developing A detailed analysis of one or more cases.

(Table 4.2 five types of qualitative research. Creswell 2006, p. 78-79).

Qualitative research places the emphasis on words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data (Bryman, 2008). Reality is socially constructed, and epistemology is interpretivist, with an emphasis often on language. Illustration of these points is offered by a substantial body of work (e.g. Prasad and Elmes, 2005; & Newton and Harte, 1997). Authors have explored the nuances of discourse around business and the environment. For instance, Livesey (2001), with regard to the oil industry company – Shell, examined Shell’s role in the broad struggle around what the proper relationship among companies, communities, and nature should be. For Livesey, reality is socially constructed; sustainable development is a complex notion which “allows for the play of contradictory, fragmentary, and ambiguous meanings” (2001:82). Epistemologically, the focus is on how and why Shell and other actors use the language they do, within the broader social context. These underlying assumptions lead to a qualitative discourse analysis of the public statements of Shell and its critics, with conclusions contextualised through existing theory. There are of course myriad ontological, epistemological and methodological positions between Shell and Livesey. Here, the purpose of drawing attention to these contrasting studies is to illustrate how a researcher’s philosophical assumptions can lead to entirely different research strategies in the same topic area i.e. business and sustainable development; and provide very different insight on a research problem.

This research takes a lead from the ontological and epistemological understandings of Dryzek (2005), Hajer (1995) and Gray (2010). In the first example, the view is that the complications of sustainable development, such as; poverty or climate change, are real in an objective sense (Dryzek, 2005); they are truths which we can know in a traditional positivist sense (Gray, 2010).



However, we have seen that sustainable development is a complex, ill-defined concept (Dresner, 2008); the term encompasses a range of discourses constructed and influenced by political actors (Dryzek, 2005; Hajer, 1995). In particular, business organisations have constructed a self-serving discourse of win-win eco-modernism which increasingly dominates political discussion on sustainable development (Levy and Egan, 2003; Banarjee, 2003). It is suggested that through this research, social actors e.g. individuals in organisations, seek to construct their understandings, their “realities” of sustainable development (Gray, 2010). Accounts of sustainability, both written and spoken about by organisations, both communicate and construct reality (Gray, 2010). Thus, studying these accounts can provide insight into the relationship between business organisations and sustainable development.

Remembering Burrell and Morgan’s (1979) framework, the leaning towards the sociology of radical change implied by an interest in sustainable development, and the concern hegemony of the business case, are suggestive of an engagement with critical theory. However, a sense of the reality of the exigencies of sustainability, as discussed above, leads to the belief that the topic must be studied, and engagement with practice, in some sense or other, encouraged (Welford, 1998; Gray, 2002).

Such an approach requires an acute awareness of the subjectivity of the researcher, and consideration of the multiple levels of interpretation involved in the development of knowledge (Bryman, 2008). The study thus proceeds on this basis; during the empirical work the motivations of the creator of the source data, the possibility of multiple interpretations of the data, the relationship of text to practice and language to meaning, are all carefully considered (Krippendorff, 2004; Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000). Overall, the aim is that careful attention is paid to the way different kinds of

linguistic, social, political and theoretical elements are woven together in the knowledge development process (Alvesson and Skollberg, 2000b).

Finally, key to reflexivity is an acknowledgement of the researcher's background theory and values (Wetherell, 2001). This research is motivated by concerns around social injustice and the role of business organisations therein (e.g. Bakan, 2004; Beder, 2002); and also inspired by the alternative visions of authors such as Schumacher (1973) and Daly (1996). As the researcher mentioned in Chapter One, it is imperative that business organisations engage with and support sustainable development. Therefore, investigations should continue with regard to the role of sustainable business development in helping firms to create sustainable workplaces for employees, and the understanding of barriers to the implementation of sustainable business strategies.

#### **4.6.2 Quantitative Research**

Quantitative research methods describe and measure the level of occurrences on the basis of numbers and calculations. Moreover, the questions of "how many?" and "how often?" are often asked in quantitative studies. The quantitative view is described as being 'realist' or sometimes 'positivist', while the world view underlying qualitative research is viewed as being 'subjectivist' (Balnaves and Caputi, 2001). The most popular research methods from this category are closed-ended questionnaires, experiments, correlation and regression analysis methods.

All research, whether quantitative or qualitative, must involve an explicit (i.e. auditable), disciplined, systematic approach to finding things out, using the method most suitable to the question being asked. Consideration should be given to these common goals, while the differences between qualitative and quantitative research

have often been overstated in the past. The table 4.2 below summarizes some of the ways in which qualitative and quantitative research differ:

<b>Qualitative research</b>	<b>Quantitative research</b>
tends to focus on how people or groups of people can have (somewhat) different ways of looking at reality (usually social or psychological reality)	tends to focus on ways of describing and understanding reality by the discovery of general "laws"
takes account of complexity by incorporating the real-world context – can take different perspectives on board	takes account of complexity by precise definition of the focus of interest and techniques that mean that external "noise" can be discounted
studies behavior in natural settings or uses people's accounts as data; usually no manipulation of variables	involves manipulation of some variables (independent variables) while other variables (which would be considered to be extraneous and confounding variables) are held constant
focuses on reports of experience or on data which cannot be expressed numerically	uses statistical techniques that allow us to talk about how it is that something is "true" for a given population in an objective or measurable sense
focuses on description and interpretation and might lead to development of new concepts or theory, or to an evaluation of an organizational process	focuses on cause & effect - e.g. uses experiment to test (try to disprove) a hypothesis
employs a flexible, emergent but systematic research process	requires the research process to be defined in advance

(Adopted from: Hancock et al. 2009 p. 6)

Using qualitative methods in research means that the researcher will be generating data that is in the form of words, not numbers. The main methods of collecting data in a qualitative research approach are: Individual Interviews, group interviews, observations, action research, and audio-visual material (Creswell 2003).

#### **4.7 Research design:**

As illustrated in, the research employed a combination of different methods to address the research questions. Following the recommendations of Easterby-Smith et al. (2015) and Edmondson and McManus (2007), mainly qualitative methods are used

because of the exploratory nature of the required data. This is due to the richness and open-ended nature of the described phenomena, which requires interviews and observations to explore and describe CSR and QWL in the textile industry of Pakistan. (Creswell, 2014; Platts, 1993). The research is based on the grounded theory concept. Grounded theory aims to develop theory by comparing the same event, or in this case process, in different settings to gain insights and extend theoretical knowledge; this is done by interviewing representatives from different organisations or organisational units for triangulation (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007; Easterby-Smith et al., 2015; Glaser and Strauss, 2017; Locke, 2003). Easterby-Smith et al. (2015) have identified three distinctive schools of thought for grounded theory: by (1) Glaser (1978, 1992), (2) Corbin and Strauss (2015), and (3) Charmaz (2000).

Organisational systems like the ones investigated in this study blur the lines between ontological and epistemological schools because the investigated instances of phenomena are too complex, short-lived, and context dependent to lend themselves to strictly positivist and realist modes of enquiry. This is even more true in a grounded theory approach, since it does not aim at a descriptive investigation of individual instances, but conceptual abstraction through comparison of multiple ones. To the triangulation of interviews in different organisations proposed by grounded theory, this research adds an additional layer of comparative inquiry by not only triangulating different cases but also different research methods.

The methods are employed within the framework of case studies, as defined by Yin (2014). Case studies are a research strategy that employs empirical descriptions of one or more instances of a phenomenon to derive propositions, models, or theories from empirical evidence, based on a variety of data sources (Eisenhardt, 1989;

Ketokivi et al., 2014; Yin, 2014). As illustrated in Table 4, the case study is the most indicated initial method for this research because (1) it essentially answers “How” research questions, (2) because of its lack of control of behavioural events within the investigated organisations, and (3) because of its focus on contemporary events in present or not long passed events (Yin, 2014).

Based on the presented methodological considerations and following the recommendations of Easterby-Smith et al. (2015) and Creswell (2014), one theoretical and three empirical research methods were selected: (1) literature review; (2) focus groups, (3) qualitative interviews, and (4) participatory action research. The literature review is the theoretical method used to build the conceptual framework from the literature. Focus groups are then employed as the first empirical method to gather data and to pilot the conceptual framework and identify any gaps and differences between academic and practitioner terminology and understanding for the next method. Qualitative interviews are the second empirical method and the main data collection step for this research. Therefore, is considerably more comprehensive than the other two research methods. As the third empirical method, participatory action research is employed gain richer insights and triangulate previous results with the participants’ perspective. Furthermore, all the findings from the different research method then analysed and results are compared to get better understanding.

#### **4.8 Research strategy**

Qualitative researchers turn the world into a series of representations, through which they come to know something about the research topic (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). Qualitative research proceeds in an inductive manner, moving from research questions to data collection to interpretation and theory development (Bryman, 2008).

A key advantage of qualitative research is that it allows the researcher to see through the eyes of the people studied (Bryman, 2008). Denzin and Lincoln (2000) suggested that this immersion enables qualitative researchers to confront and come up against the constraints of the everyday social world. Qualitative research also facilitates the gathering of rich, descriptive data and encourages a reflexive engagement with the research process (Bryman, 2008).

However, a major concern for qualitative researchers relates to evaluating the quality of the research. The primary criteria used to evaluate quantitative research are reliability and validity. Reliability can be most simply explained as the extent to which another researcher can replicate a study and come up with similar findings (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008). Validity refers broadly to the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research (Bryman, 2008). Quantitative researchers suggest that qualitative research often fails to satisfy these criteria, lacking in replicability and generalisability (Bryman, 2008). Qualitative researchers have claimed, though, that their research would be more appropriately assessed using alternative criteria. Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed the concept of trustworthiness, comprising credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Suggested techniques to enhance these criteria include transparency in explaining method, grounding the findings in the literature, seeking relevant peer review and adopting a reflexive stance (Bryman, 2008; Krippendorff, 2009; Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008). In addition, researchers are advised to consider triangulation, the technique of using more than one method or source of data in the study of social phenomena (Bryman, 2008).

#### **4.9 Literature review method**

First, a bibliometric research was conducted, an established form of meta-analytical research of literature (Kim and McMillan, 2008). This is a method that analyses published data, measuring texts and information such as authorship, affiliation, citations, and keywords (Bellis, 2009), unveiling articles and illustrating linkages between and among articles about a certain research topic (Fetscherin and Usunier, 2012). It can be used to describe, evaluate and monitor the state of a particular field over time, evaluating meta-analytically the development of a given research area to identify its key components and underlying theoretical frameworks (Fetscherin and Heinrich, 2015). The bibliometric review was therefore conducted to identify the articles that describe the business model field, while also revealing the most cited authors, keywords mentioned, and the journals in which they were published (Geissdoerfer et al. 2017).

These steps offer a better understanding of the coverage of the research topic and contributed to identifying the sample of articles that should be investigated in depth through an extensive review of the literature. For this structured literature review, the recommendations of Creswell (2014), Easterby-Smith et al. (2015), Tranfield et al. (2003), and Wohlin (2014) were followed. A systematic database search was conducted, followed by cross-reference snowballing. Findings of this method integrated, synthesised and compiled into Literature review chapter.

#### **4.10 Focus group method**

Focus groups originated in the 1940's and were developed by the research group of Paul Lazarsfeld and Robert Merton at Columbia University (Bloor et al., 2001). They

initially focused on market research but were since used in a wide range of fields (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015; Silverman, 2013). Focus group research is based on “loosely structured, guided conversations among a group of individuals” (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015, p. 136). It is a group interview in which each participant can express his experience and perspective on the topics discussed.

According to Silverman (2013) and Easterby-Smith et al. (2015), the focus group method can be used as (1) a standalone way of gathering qualitative data or as (2) an exploratory tool to identify and clarify conceptual issues for subsequent interviews. Therefore, the method is particularly appropriate for this research to identify and address potential conceptual and communication issues with the employed conceptual framework, while already providing rich qualitative data to advance the conceptual framework.

#### **4.11 Data collection**

While the focus group should leave room for the participants to express their perspective and unforeseen areas to emerge, it should still have a clear structure (Stokes and Bergin, 2006). This structure is provided by a topic guide that broadly defines the discussed topics for the focus group moderator (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015).

Researcher travelled to Pakistan before conducting interviews and met a group of managers from the textile firm and arranged focus group to get initial understanding about the CSR in the textile sector of Pakistan and how it helps firms to offer QWL to its employees.

The process followed the rules outlined by Stringer (2014):



- Each person can express their opinions and perspectives
- There is a respectful and non-judgmental atmosphere
- The procedures were explained clearly and in advance to all

participants and room for questions was provided, this specifically

includes audio recording and timeframes

- The focus questions and frameworks were explained clearly and in advance to all participants and room for questions was provided
- It was ensured that all participants have equal chance to contribute
- It was ensured that the discussion stays focused on the focus questions and the group was supported in summarising and synergising their discussions.

#### **4.12 Data analysis**

The recorded focus group data is analysed using conventional techniques for qualitative data, in this case content and thematic analysis (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015; Robson and McCartan, 2015; Silverman, 2013). Content analysis is, “an approach that aims at drawing systematic inferences from qualitative data that have been structured by a set of ideas or concepts” (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015, p. 188). Content analysis can be used for both qualitative and quantitative studies and can aim at both hypothesis testing and theory building (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015) This is mainly done from documents or other forms of texts (Robson and McCartan, 2015). The qualitative data gathered with this and the two following methods is dense and rich, and therefore, not all of it can be used. Consequently, some of the data has to be disregarded. The inclusion and exclusion is guided by themes. (Creswell, 2014; Guest et al., 2012).

#### **4.13 Qualitative method**

Qualitative interviews are guided conversations based on a range of more or less stringently guided questions that range from a set sequence of prepared questions to more or less casual chats (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015; Jones, 1985; Lofland et al., 2005; Silverman, 2013). Qualitative interviews are a more exploratory form of enquiry than strict questionnaire-based methods that allow for space to expand on answers and follow up on topics emerging in the process (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015).

Qualitative interviews aim to access subjective information about hard to observe phenomena in context (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015; Tracy, 2013). Similar to a semi-structured questionnaire in its most stringent form, a structured but open-ended questionnaire allows to get in-depth data into phenomena and flexibly explore emerging aspects (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015; King, 2004; Kvale and Brinkmann, 2014). Depending on the skill and expertise of the researcher and the quality and flexibility of the topic guide, interviews can not only investigate a phenomenon but also gain insights on its interpretation from the interviewees point of view (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015; Kvale and Brinkmann, 2014).

This section highlights the use of interviews as an instrument to collect primary data for this research (Saunders et al., 2007). An evaluation of different forms of interviews is presented with a description of the form selected for this research. A discussion of the sampling strategy, profiles of the interviewees, types of questions and topics for discussion and conduct of the interviews are also included. According to Petty et al., (2012), the major advantage of using qualitative research is its ability to produce more detailed information about human phenomenon with the help of interviews as the main data collection method. As compared to most standardised methods such as

questionnaire surveys, interviews provide a meaningful discovery of knowledge and information related to a specific research topic in a more open way (Qu and Duamy, 2011). Consequently, the interview approach was carried out to collect qualitative data for this research in order to get in-depth view of the industry as well as to achieve the research objectives. There is currently very limited research available in this area, therefore the research problem is to discover the perspective of managers in creating a sustainable workplace for employees. It is unlikely that a quantitative approach would have captured meaning in this context, as a tick box questionnaire would not provide the opportunity to sufficiently examine manager's perspective. Qualitative methods are often employed when little is known about a topic (Stauss and Corbin, 1990); which was seemingly the case for current and potential future practices of CSR in the textile sector of Pakistan.

#### **4.14 Participatory action research method**

Action research was employed for this study for two reasons: (1) because it enabled the researcher to access richer data compared to the other methods (Stringer, 2014) and (2) to triangulate with a method that is adequate to give results.

Participatory action research was seen as particularly suited for this research because its focus on the researcher participating in organisational processes (Chevalier and Buckles, 2013; Kindon et al., 2010). Researcher spend significant amount of time at two of sites and collected data and notes.

The aim of this study is to explore how Pakistan's textile industry is embedding sustainable workplace strategies and CSR to enhance competitive advantage. To fulfil this aim, this research concentrates on the following objectives:

- Define the textile industry in Pakistan through a review of academic, business, and practice literature
- Explore if sustainable workplace strategies are embedded in the organisations and key factors to implement sustainability and CSR detailed in this research by collecting and analysing primary data from managers in the sector
- Where sustainable workplace strategies are considered to be embedded, explore whether they do enhance competitive advantage, QWL and recognise the associated challenges
- Identify government regulations which support sustainable workplace policies to provide recommendations

#### **4.15 Research Questions**

- What is the status of the Pakistan textile industry?
- What does sustainability and CSR mean to Pakistan's textile firms?
- What are the key business drivers which encouraged employers to adopt and implement the sustainable workplace strategies and QWL into their business?
- What are the main organisational barriers that impede business firms in the adoption and implementation of sustainability and CSR?
- What positive impact does sustainability initiatives have on competitiveness?
- What consideration is currently given by government and business firms to promote sustainability and CSR in terms of employees in the textile industry of Pakistan.

The pragmatic orientation of the current study encourages a degree of engagement with practice. Much of the research on sustainable business development is of a practical nature, taking a case study approach to understand the issues faced by

organisations (e.g. Young and Tilley, 2006; Kearins et al, 2010). Interview research has also provided insight on the conflicts and constraints of applying sustainability at an organisational level (e.g. O'Dwyer, 2003; Crane, 2000; Barter and Bebbington, 2010).

Prior literature thus points towards document analysis, case study, and interviews as appropriate research methods. Epistemological and ontological inclinations support the suitability of a focus on the construction of discourse and a reflexive engagement with practice. The evaluative criteria discussed above suggest that triangulation – using more than one method – could enhance trustworthiness (Kanten and Sadullah, 2012) of the research findings. Therefore, this study will focus on qualitative research; this is also due to practical implications of time and access to the business firms in Pakistan. Additionally, the flexibility of the qualitative method will also help in considering alternative explanations. The framework for this research is based on a case study approach for an in-depth investigation of a bounded system explored through detailed, intensive data collection from multiple resources (Creswell 1998). According to Stake (1995), if the purpose of the research is to provide explanation, propositional knowledge, and law, the case study will often be at a disadvantage but when the aims are understanding, ~extension of the experience, and increase in conviction in that which is known, the disadvantage disappears (p. 21). Additionally, after the initial screening, the textile sector in Pakistan is selected as the case study to illustrate and understand the issue of sustainability within a single research site: Pakistan and this research are bounded by the limited time and place (Yin 2003).

This case study research will be able to provide an insight into how different textile mills are considering sustainable business development. It will also suggest what role they are playing in making their companies socially responsible by creating

sustainable workplaces for their employees, and how this can be improved in the future. The researcher collected initial data from in-depth semi-structured telephone and face to face interviews. Additional relevant data was also recovered from; annual reports, selected cases and other published reports. While selecting samples for data collection and to collect in-depth information from the textile sector, the researcher considered some factors on the basis of research aims and objectives.

- company size in terms of sales
- reputation of the company locally and globally
- organisation vision and policies related to sustainable development
- initiatives related to sustainability

The researcher used non-probability, purposive sampling technique on the basis of set criteria and also on the basis of the research aims and objectives (Meriam 1998).

#### **4.16 Data collection instruments**

##### **4.16.1 Qualitative Interviews**

Interviews are an integral and primary way of collecting information in the qualitative method (Esterby-Smith et al. 2002). According to Loftland et al (2006), interviews should be recorded to allow for an in-depth analysis of the collected data. Recording the interviews additionally allows the researcher to be more responsive during the analysis process, especially when sensitive issues are discussed. Field notes are also an important addition to enable the researcher to reflect upon any issues that may have impacted upon the way the interview was conducted.

These are the methods of collecting data in which selected participants are asked questions in order to find out the ways they think, the process, and intent of the objective. Although, interviewing is often taken to be the best method of collecting

information, it is considered to be a complex method of data collection (Malhotra et al. 1999).

Interviews are a well-known data collection technique used to collect data for qualitative based research (Bryman, 2001). This data collection method allows for social interaction and helps in establishing flow of communication between interviewer and interviewee (Qu and Dumay, 2011). According to Denzin and Lincon (2008), interviews are considered to be the best data collection option for researchers when the research objective is to get in-depth information to achieve research objectives. Gray (2006), highlighted that the adoption of interviews as a data collection method becomes necessary when:

- There is a real need for the researcher to obtain greater personalised information
- There is a need for appropriate probing of issues
- A good response rate is required

Furthermore, when the research objective is to obtain definite responses from a large sample, interviews are used to collect in-depth information from interviewees within a well-controlled setting (Naoum, 2007). Interviews offer an enormous opportunity for both interviewee and interviewer to engage effectively and talk through the issues freely in greater detail. (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008b; Naoum, 2007b). They also help to provide a platform for researchers to explain the purpose of the study.

However, using interviews has some prominent drawbacks. It is argued that data collected through this approach often lacks “statistical generalisations about the entire population” (Saunders et al., 2009: 327). According to Gray (2006), data collected through interviews may take some time for the researcher to transcribe and in some

cases, difficult to code and analyse, especially when there are large number of interviewees. There are various forms of interview techniques available for conducting social science research. However, the choice of any particular type must be purely based on the nature of the research questions as well as the objectives (Saunders et al., 2009). Additionally, there are three types of research interview in qualitative research method: unstructured, semi-structured and structured Interviews.

#### **4.16.2 Unstructured Interviews**

These are also referred to as in-depth interviews and are mostly informal. The interviewer may just go with the aim of discussing a limited number of topics, sometimes as few as just one or two. The interviewer may structure the interview questions based on the interviewee and his/her previous research. This also allows the discussion to cover areas in great detail (Denscombe 1998a). They are normally conducted in an open and relaxed manner with a very limited script so that interviewee can speak freely (Gray, 2006). However, this type of interview is conducted mostly for a small study because it can be expensive and very time consuming.

#### **4.16.3 Semi Structured Interviews**

The researcher usually covers open-ended questions in semi-structured interviews and the interviewer has a clear list of issues to be addressed and questions he wants to be answered in the interview (Denscombe 1998b). In this approach, the interviewer develops a set of questions, usually referred to as an interview guide, which the interviewer employs to conduct the interview with the interviewee (Gray, 2006).

#### **4.16.4 Structured Interviews**

Structured interviews involve tight control over the format of the questions and responses (Denscombe 1998c). Most of the structured interview questions are close



ended and fixed (2006). Data collected from structured interviews can be quickly and easily quantified as compared to unstructured and semi structured interviews.

The form of interviews selected for this study was semi-structured with the use of an interview schedule, which was included in the interview guide (Patton, 2002a; Bernard, 1988). This ensured that important areas were covered through specific questions, while also providing an opportunity for unplanned open-ended questions resulting from the discussion in order to clarify related points. It has been suggested that semi-structured interviews are suitable when depth of meaning is significantly important (Gillham, 2000; Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). The selection of semi-structured interviews for this research was based on several factors including; an opportunity to generate rich dataset; understanding by participants was essential to gaining insight into their perceptions, values, expectations and knowledge surrounding CSR and sustainable development.

#### **4.17 Sampling Approach**

It is important for the researcher to consider carefully the mode and sources from which information can be obtained for the research. One of the major fears every researcher feels whilst conducting research is how the respondents are going to respond and how many will respond. In addition are concerns that information must be sufficient to achieve the research objectives (Sarantakos, 1998). Hence, the sampling technique is considered to be very resourceful to achieve research objectives. According to Bryman (2001), adopting a sampling technique plays a key role in any research work as it helps researchers to identify and obtain required information from the respondents within a specific population. With a sampling technique, research data can be instantly generated from the entire population within

the shortest period of time (Saunders et al., 2009). However, Naoum (2013) advises researchers that it is very important to choose an appropriate sample size during the research design stage, to ensure that the sample size selected is a true reflection of the whole population. Black (1999), highlighted that carefully selected samples have the ability to enhance the legitimacy and generalization of the research. So, it is important for the researcher to make sure that sampling techniques are holistic and enable the researcher to achieve research goals effectively. According to Saunders et al. (2009), the estimation of the required sample size for any research should consider the following issues: the nature of the research, research questions, characteristics of population as well as time and availability of resources.

#### **4.18 Sampling considerations**

As previously noted, for the purposes of this research, the choice of the sample population was made clearly on the basis of defined factors for data collection and to obtain in-depth information related to the sector.

Initially, 30 different companies of various sizes (in terms of sales) were contacted via email and telephone. Information was provided about the research and invitations to participate in the research. The researcher's aim was to collect data from different textile mills of various sizes to get a true picture of the whole textile sector and how firms of different sizes deal with issues of sustainability. However, only 20 of them responded and when the actual data collection started only 18 firms agreed to participate in the research. A total 18 textile firms agreed to participate in the research, from which 8 were big textile mills, 6 medium sized, and 4 small textile units. Details of each firm according to their size, number of employees and sustainable policies is included in the appendix. It was very difficult for the researcher to approach employers and arrange interviews with the business managers and employers. One of the main

reasons of limited research in this area is the lack of willingness or freedom to talk and offer help to researchers. Fortunately, the researcher managed to get some insight into the sector to contribute to the current literature. Usually, it is very difficult for researchers to approach businesses in Pakistan and to be able to complete research for many reasons including elements of dishonesty towards work. However, the researcher collected data from different textile mills which gave insight of small, medium and large textile mills and gathered perceptions about the research topic. For the purpose of data collection and analysis, the manager of each firm was assigned a code (starts with an alphabet C(company) and then each firm was assigned a number like 1,2,3,4 and so on) to ensure data protection and privacy. As already discussed in the methodology section, unlike quantitative research, qualitative samples do not necessarily represent large populations, but can be used with the aim of representing small, focused samples of participants who can provide significant information within specific contexts and settings (Reid, 1996). Table 4.3 illustrates a detailed overview of the selected textile firms, as mentioned earlier each firm is assigned a number with letter C(company) and all are in size order. Senior managers (who were directly responsible to make decisions within the firm were selected from each firm for data collection purposes:

<b>Company Name</b>	<b>Size (In terms of sale)</b>	<b>Sustainable development goals/policies</b>	<b>Interviewees</b>
C1	Large	Sustainable development goals & ISO certified	CSR Officer
C2	Large	Separate department for sustainable development	Sustainability Manager
C3	Large	SD Policies & ISO certified	Compliance Manager
C4	Large	ISO certified & CSR initiatives	HR Manager
C5	Large	SD policy and aware about sustainability and CSR	Business development Manager
C6	Large	Sustainability policy	Compliance Manager
C7	Large	SD policy and ISO certified	HR Manager
C8	Large	ISO certified	HR Manager
C9	Medium	SD implementation	HR Manager
C10	Medium	Aware about SD & ISO certified	HR Manager
C11	Medium	SD Aware but no implementation	HR Manager
C12	Medium	Aware & ISO certified	HR Manager
C13	Medium	Little knowledge	HR Manager
C14	Medium	ISO certified	HR Manager
C15	Small	Little knowledge	Branch Manager
C16	Small	ISO certified	Branch Manager
C17	Small	No SD implementation, aware about ISO	Branch Manager
C18	Small	Limited knowledge	Branch Manager

The researcher used non-probability, purposive sampling technique on the basis of set criteria and also on the basis of research aims and objectives as well as research questions (Meriam 1998; Bryman, 2008). This was done by reviewing the details of the textile firms online as well as through local newspapers and relevant websites and care was taken to ensure that a range of different organisations were selected.

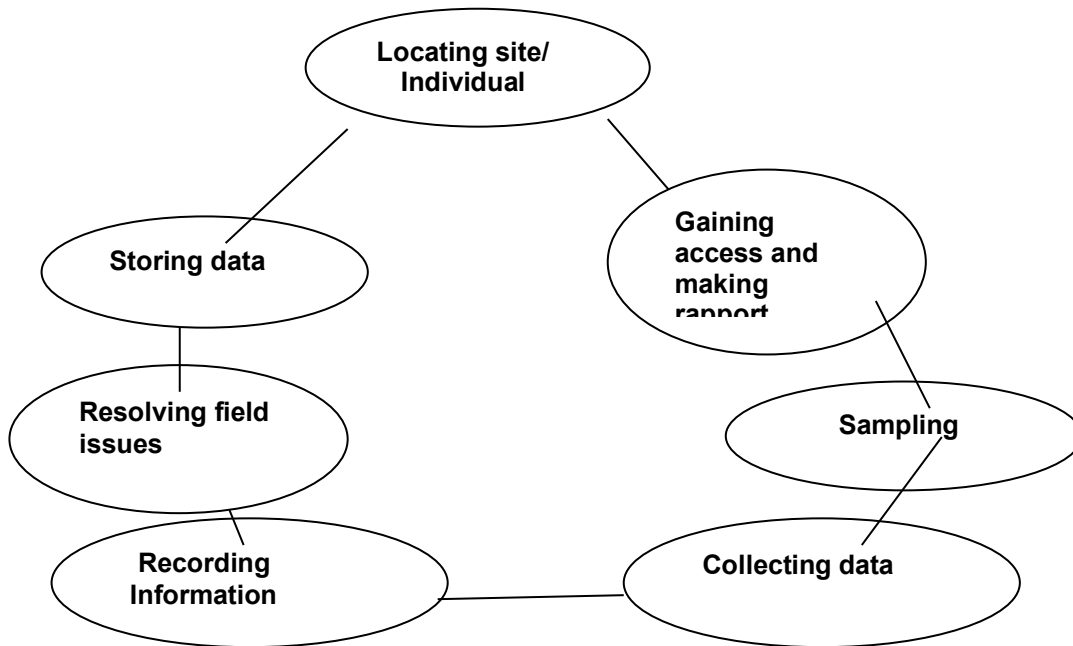
Moreover, there was also an element of theoretical sampling involved in the sample size selection. The close reading analysis was performed with an eye to theoretical saturation, whereby the researcher gradually reaches the point where no new or relevant data seem to be emerging regarding a category (Bryman, 2008). It is important to note that the researcher is not making a claim that the selected sample is representative of the whole sector. The sample is simply a selection of the most appropriate organisations which were available for inclusion in the study at the time of this research. Pakistan, is one of largest producers of textile products in the global business market but available research literature is still very limited. It is hoped that analysis of this research will offer an insight of the condition of the sector and some understanding of practices to create a sustainable workplace. In order, to complete the document review and first stage of data collection annual reports of companies were analysed and data was collected about them.

#### **4.19 Research journey**

As already mentioned in the previous sections, the researcher travelled to Pakistan twice for the data collection. It was initially very difficult to convince the relevant managers that this research is completely confidential, and no name or place would be mentioned in the research. All the interviewees were male and in the male dominant society, it was very difficult for the researcher to conduct the interviews (another common cause of very little research in this sector). The researcher also observed that, managers from the small firms shared their views more openly than those from the large firms. The researcher observed that some firms were not completely honest about their workforce. The researcher saw underage staff working in the textile units, but this was not always confirmed by managers. The researcher is a self-funded

student and did not have enough funds to stay longer and visit the firms more due to limited financial resources and time. Another obstacle faced by the researcher during the data collection phase was the weather, it was extremely hot and some of the managers wanted to finish the interview as soon as possible.

Figure 4.1 presents the data collection activities adopted by the researcher.



This Figure highlights the research journey for data collection. Starting from choosing Pakistan as a research site and then contacting managers of the textile firms for interviews. The researcher contacted the firms which were accessible to her within the limits of available resources and time, these represent firms of different sizes. After the managers agreed to give an interview, the data collection process started by visiting the firms and offering information about the research to the interviewees. Once the researcher completed the interviews, she visited the sites again for note keeping and to obtain further insights into the firms. Once data collection was completed the next phase began (transcribing and analysis). It was very difficult for the researcher to collect data because there was a clear lack of honesty observed by the researcher.

Additionally, it was very challenging for the researcher to gain the confidence of participants because all the firms were worried about their reputation. In countries like Pakistan, the rich are dominant and there is a lack of law and order. There are no penalties for rule breakers. It is very easy to ignore the human factor of business and just focus on profit.

#### **4.20 Focus Group method**

As already discussed above two focus groups were organised and initial data was collected in the form of field notes, recording and discussion to get a clear understanding about the CSR concept and its role in offering quality of work life to its employees. This initial method of data collection helped researcher to get clear understanding of the reviews of the managers of textile firms.

Focus group also helped in identifying key challenges associated with the implementation of CSR in the business.

#### **4.21 Qualitative Interviews**

In formulating the interview questions, it was recognised that participants: a) did not have the same levels of decision making, b) had different levels of knowledge about sustainability and sustainable development in relation to the size of their business and c) they were influenced by CSR and sustainable development in different ways. In this context, the benefits and value of qualitative interviewing were most relevant. The wide range of starting points required the researcher to be flexible in the use of the interview questions and, whilst the researcher had to adhere to a research protocol, questions presented to each interviewee differed depending upon factors such as context, setting of each interview and decision making power of the interviewee (Yin, 2014). It has been recommended that qualitative interviews should be conducted at a conversational level and explained as a social relationship, where researchers should

let participants speak, express their views and offer interviewees the space to describe their world (Yin, 2014).

The interview process was based on research by Elliot (2000) who identified five types of exploratory questioning for research; definitional, descriptive, interpretive, critical/action and deconstruction. In the case of this study, the research problem is; 'Definitional' – for the nature of sustainability in the textile sector of Pakistan, its defining features, and what it means to employers. 'Descriptive' – as to the level of sustainable development and CSR knowledge in the textile sector of Pakistan. 'Interpretive' – in how the concept develops over time. 'Critical/Action' – in consideration of the problems and hurdles that firms are facing in the textile sector of Pakistan in terms of sustainability and CSR, and how improvements can be made, and what employer's concerns may be. 'Deconstruction' – in considering if the research makes any assumptions. This approach was the most appropriate at the time as the chosen methodology because it allowed business managers to describe and explain the meanings, knowledge, experience and expectations from CSR and sustainable development in the textile sector in Pakistan. This level of in-depth, descriptive meaning refers to personal experiences and may not be collectable in a quantitative research approach where interviewees answer closed questions.

Interview questions designed for the purpose of data collection are listed in the appendix

#### **4.22 Semi structured interviews**

The process for conducting semi-structured interviews took place between May-June 2016 as well as November- December 2017 when the researcher travelled to Pakistan for data collection and interviews. The researcher managed to successfully complete



14 face to face interviews (on site in Pakistan) and 4 telephone interviews (the researcher later visited these textile units). The task was to ensure that sufficient interviews were conducted within the time available by keeping in mind the availability of the managers. The main reason for delayed responses from the executives of the firms was due to the start of the Holy month of Ramadan (Fasting month) in Pakistan. After the completion of the interviews, they were transcribed and reviewed. Interviews were conducted in the local language Urdu, so all the interviews were translated into English and retranslated into Urdu by using the reverse translation technique so that interviews can be properly analysed by the researcher.

The interviews sought to explore large-scale strategic issues relating to the organisations approach to sustainable development and QWL. Therefore, it was judged that the most suitable interviewees would be with the individuals involved in sustainability at a decision-making level. In the smaller organisations the branch managers were selected as the target individual, while in the large organisations, the Head of Sustainability/CSR or compliance team was targeted. The advantage of such elite interviews, as Burnham et al (2008) suggested, is their potential to bring the world of the experts and the academic together in a hopefully productive mutual dialogue (2008). All the interviews were tape recorded and hand-written notes were taken.

The interviews that were conducted over the telephone, were done so because of time and cost advantages, and, in some cases, at the request of the interviewee. It could be argued that telephone interviewing restricts the richness of the data, as it does not allow the researcher to observe the interviewee's body language and other non-verbal cues (Bryman, 2008). Conversely, the same author acknowledged that in his own work he found that telephone interviewees gave expansive, comprehensive replies, going

on to suggest that there is possibly little difference between data gathered via face-to-face and telephone interviews (Bryman, 2008).

The researcher followed the advice of Irvine (2010) and conduct telephone interviews as well as face to face interviews. The style used throughout was what Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) described as gentle, giving the interviewee time to expand if they paused, rather than jumping in with a new question. As a general rule, the interviewees were encouraged to do most of the talking and allowed to divert to potentially interesting angles (Bryman and Bell, 2007).

#### **4.23 Participatory action research**

In addition to the interviews, the researcher (in the process of data collection) also visited and worked at two of the textile mills for few days to observe their business operations and how they work. Documents were also reviewed as well as newspapers, annual reports, correspondence, and minutes of meetings. Researcher was able to get deeper and more clear understanding about the textile industry of Pakistan and their business performance. Researcher also identified that even though it is illegal to hire under 18 but there were so many 13,14 years old workers were working in the firms. Collecting information by studying documents follows the same line of thinking as observing or interviewing. Research questions should be carefully developed in advance and also the development of a system is required to keep things on track.

#### **4.24 Case Study Approach**

A case can be individual, it can be a group- such as family, a class, or a hospital. It can be single case or multiple cases. Case study research as a strategy for methodological exploration. Stake (1995) described case study methodology as a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in-depth; a program, event, activity, process or one or more individuals. Cases are bounded by time and activity,

and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time.

According to Stake (2006), case study research is "the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances" (p.11).

“A case study research method has been acknowledged as a major research approach that offers a medium for the researcher to derive and draw wider conclusions pertaining to societal trends and developments” (May, 2011: 221).

Case study researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time. For this study, the researcher collected data through in-depth interviews, and additionally reviewed documents as well as made notes when personally visiting the textile mills in Pakistan. According to Yin (2009), case study research provides an opportunity for the researcher to gain an insight into societal issues within a certain context. The case study approach is used in situations where the objectives of the study focus on the relationship between a process and the context which is occurring (Gary, 2009).

Yin (2009) named five components of effective case study research design: (1) research questions; (2) propositions or purpose of study; (3) unit analysis; (which in this case are the textile firms), (4) logic that links data to propositions; and (5) criteria for interpreting findings.

The most appropriate questions for this type of qualitative case study research were “how” and “why” forms of questions. Specifically, the researcher asked about the understanding of managers on the issues of sustainability and how they are

implementing sustainable business strategies within their firms. Additionally, the researcher inquired into the ways in which managers used sustainable business strategies to improve QWL. The second component of case study research is to design the purpose of the study. This component is most commonly recognized as the purpose statement.

The purpose of this case study was to explore how the textile sector in Pakistan is embedding sustainable workplace strategies to enhance competitive advantage. The third component of the case study research design is the unit of analysis. Yin (2009) described the unit of analysis as the area of focus that a case study analyses. Yin wrote that an appropriate unit of analysis occurs when primary research is accurately specified. The unit of analysis is directly tied to the research questions developed by the researcher. This study's multiple units of analysis were the textile firms.

The fourth component of case study research design is to connect data to propositions. This connection is made following the data collection phase, as themes emerge. As data is analysed, the researcher attempts to match patterns that appear in the data to the theoretical propositions of the case study. The themes that emerged in this study thus served as answers to the research questions posed in Chapter 1.

The fifth component of case study design is the criteria for interpreting findings. Commonly, the case study researcher codes the data prior to developing themes (Yin, 2009). In this case, following the theme development stage, the researcher carefully reviewed meanings which arose from the findings to determine recommendations for practice and future research.

#### 4.25 The Data Analysis Process

The initial process of the data analysis conducted in this research started with the verbatim transcription of all interviews by the researcher. Despite the fact that this was a lengthy and time-consuming process, it allowed the researcher to re-experience all the interviews and helped in understanding the mode and meaning of each interview. Before the actual data analysis process started the researcher followed recommendations of Streubert-Speziale and Carpenter (2003); and Braun and Clarke (2006), and firstly read and then re-read the transcripts of each interview. This enabled the researcher to be able to get a general sense of every single participant. This preliminary stage helps researchers to look for potential connections of ideas and similarities (Clarke, 2006). In line with the single case study research design, data were analysed into two stages. To ensure the validity of data analysis, the process focused on ascertaining the rigour and reliability in the development of ideas (Shiu et al. 2011). Analysis of the initial primary data was completed over a five-month period. Interview transcripts were analysed following the principles noted by Richie et al (2003). This method was designed to help in the exploration of the qualitative data in a systematic staged approach moving from organising the data to summarising and finally to interpretation within a thematic framework.

1. These principles provide coherence and structure to otherwise cumbersome, qualitative data (i.e. interview transcripts).
2. These principles facilitate systematic analysis, thus allowing the research process to be explicit and replicable.

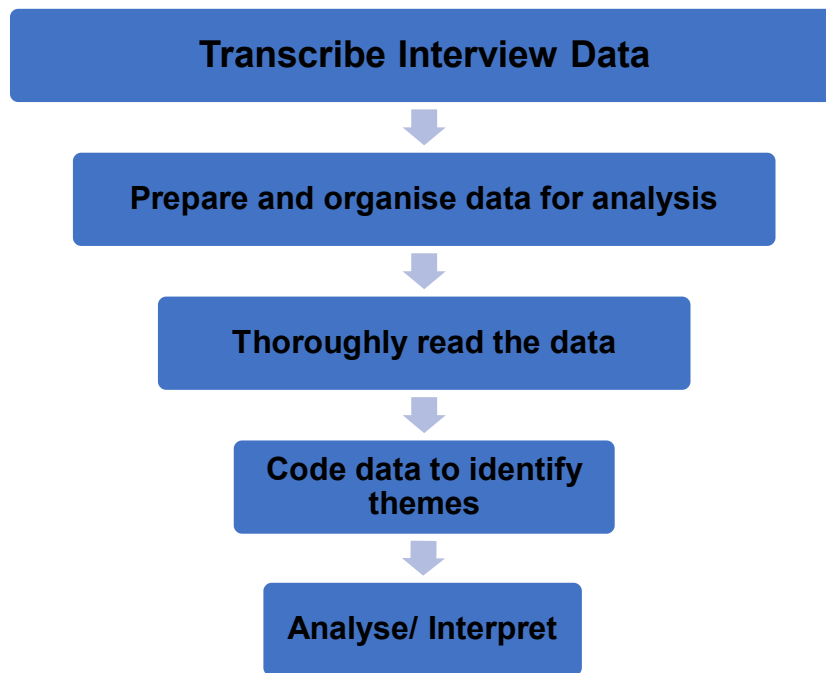
In addition to the recorded interviews, the researcher had a collection of field notes from visiting of the textile mills. Data from the interviews reflected four main themes:

- Understanding of the firms about sustainable development, QWL and quality standards
- Role of the business firms in creating sustainable workplace
- Barriers to involvement and reasons to be socially responsible
- Future opportunities and changes required

#### **4.26 Transcribing, Coding and Analysis of the data**

It is very important to transcribe the interview data into text once it is collected. It is an important procedure of qualitative data analysis which requires a substantial amount of time and care in order to ensure the validity of the transcribed data is not compromised. Sometimes, it is considered to be a distressing task if a large number of interviews are involved. However, transcribing interviews gives researchers an opportunity to have improved and more detailed insights about the research (Cordon and Sainsbury, 2006). Transcribing the collected data in the form of interviews enables researchers to present in a textual form.

The open coding method was used which enabled the interview transcript to be examined sentence-by- sentence. Additionally, the relevant information in the form of text was further manually coded to extract patterns and themes out of the collected data. These processes enabled the collected data to be organized to allow for content analysis and interpretation. The following figure (4.2), shows the step by step process of how the data collected from interviews was transcribed, coded and analysed.



(Adapted from Cresswell, 2009)

#### **4.27 Coding process**

The data from all the sources was read to gain initial first impressions and then reread which provided the sections and subsections for the organisation of the subject matter. The researcher reviewed relevant information that answered the research questions which directed the study. All the repetition of activities, thoughts and expressions were noted, underlined and colour coded by the researcher.

##### **4.27.1 How the categories/themes were established.**

In this research, themes were conceptualised in the recurring statements throughout the interviews, and observations were recorded in the descriptive field notes and other documents. The researcher considered the repetition of themes and the significance of each theme.

#### **4.27.2 How the subthemes were created**

Each major theme consisted of minor themes or sub themes. After the themes were identified, the individual statements reflecting the themes were extracted from the transcripts and grouped under their respective themes. The researcher then closely examined these groups of statements. The repetitive words and phrases revealed the subgroups within each theme. These describe the various facets of each theme. It helped the researcher to further understand the various factors within each theme. This also helped the researcher in understanding the relationship between the themes. The researcher has closely examined these sections of statements and extrapolated words or phrases that repeated often. The similarities which were noted helped produce the different sub-groups.

#### **4.28 Quality in qualitative research**

There is considerable debate on whether the principles of validity, reliability and generalisability, which many consider to be deeply rooted within positivist research, can be applied accurately to studies adopting a qualitative interpretative approach (Stenbacka, 2001; Healy and Perry, 2000). According to Morse (2002) trustworthiness in qualitative research consists of credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability and it was comparable to internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity used in quantitative research; arguing that the criteria had not changed, but strategies for meeting these criteria had altered with time. The concepts of validity, generalisability (external validity) and reliability within qualitative research will be outlined.



Qualitative research aims at sense-making and pattern recognition among words to build or refute theory. It is based on non-numerical information and their interpretation, which involve human senses, subjectivity, emotions, and perspectives from both the researcher and their subjects. While this desirably leads to depth and colour that enriches the findings, it would be considered undesirable bias in quantitative research and there is a lack of consensus for assessing the quality and robustness of qualitative research. (Ali and Yusof, 2011; Easterby-Smith et al., 2015; Leung, 2015). There are a number of ways to ensure that the research remains as truthful to reality as possible. Mays and Pope (2000), highlighted that there are six main ways to improve validity – triangulation of results from different methods of data collection; asking participants to validate the researcher's interpretations; being aware of aspects of the research that may have influenced the way in which the data was collected.

In this instance, the researcher made sure of the credibility by meeting participants, where possible, prior to the start of the interview in order to ensure that they were fully aware of the aims and objectives of the research and that the interview process and details were as clear as possible. This ensured that the data that the researcher received was directly relevant to the aims of the research; a meeting prior to the actual interview helped develop rapport and trust which encouraged participants to offer information, and it also gave an opportunity for the participants to ask questions and to be fully aware of the study aims as well as supporting elements of transparency.

To increase the validity of the research design, a relatively broad sample for the literature review was selected and three different empirical methods were used for triangulation.

Identifying reliability within qualitative studies can be challenging as the data collected is often based on face-to-face situations where interviewees are providing information on real-life experiences. Such methods can be prone to misinterpretation or personal biases. Therefore, in demonstrating and enhancing reliability in qualitative research it is important to carefully describe each of the processes involved in the study. The concept of reliability was addressed throughout the research process to minimise any possible misinterpretation or bias. This involved conducting fieldwork using a consistent approach that allowed participants to readily share their experiences, clarifying any ambiguities with participants during the interview, confirming interpretations of interview data and reporting the findings in a systematic manner.

Reliability addresses the replicability of the research design and findings; in qualitative research this definition of reliability is epistemologically counter-intuitive and difficult to implement in practice (Leung, 2015). Therefore, reliability is mainly focused on consistency for qualitative research (Carcary, 2009; Grosseohme, 2014; Leung, 2015). To improve the reliability of this study, the recommendations by Silverman (2013) were followed.

In qualitative research, the researcher is regarded as the primary data collection instrument and direct personal contact with participants is a vital part of the process. It is assumed that the researcher has the potential to introduce bias and subjectivity to the data collected. In order to ensure that the data collected and explored is a true reflection of the participants' views or opinions, the researcher should make every effort to set aside their own preconceptions or assumptions by reflecting upon how such factors may influence the process.

#### **4.29 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations play a major role in the design and execution of robust research (Creswell, 2009). Collins and Hussey (2009) specified that one of the key principles of ethical research, is that participants should not be forced to take part and that care should be taken where financial or other incentives are used to encourage participation. Furthermore, it is necessary to ensure that privacy is maintained, and participants are informed about the aims and objectives of the proposed research prior to data collection. Other ethical aspects include the appropriate acknowledgement and referencing of the work of other authors. In regard to participants, anonymity provides protection by ensuring that names are not identified in association with the information given, whereas confidentiality guarantees that sensitive information is not revealed and that the research data cannot be traced back to its source. Bryman and Bell (2007), stated that the purpose of ethics in research is to ensure that no one is harmed or suffers reverse consequences from research activities. The researcher explained the nature of this research to the respondents in the invitation letter which was combined with both the interview questions and further information about the research. The researcher stressed that the information provided by the participants would be treated with the highest confidentiality and would only be used for academic purposes. The researcher also confirmed that no personal or enterprise names would be contained in the reporting of the study.

Participants were asked to firstly read the information sheet and then indicate consent by signing the informed consent document. The informed consent explained that participants were not required to complete the interview and could withdraw at any time. The form also asked for confirmation that participants understood what was expected of them during the study and how the data would be used. Prior to the start

of the interview, participants were given the opportunity to ask any questions, and the researcher verbally answered them and explained the purpose of the study. Participants were provided with a code in order to protect their identities and to ensure that all information remained anonymous and confidential.

#### **4.30 Summary**

This chapter described and discussed the research methods adopted in this work. The participants selected to take part in this research were managers of business firms of the textile sector in Pakistan. Therefore, an approach was required which was capable of capturing the meaning of CSR and sustainable development from a broad range of textile firms. Data collected needed to reflect the different standpoints of the case of the textile sector in Pakistan; their realities, knowledge and views about sustainable development and CSR. For this reason, this research used an interpretive approach. The sample included participants from different firms who understood and interpreted SD, in their own ways.

The methodology approach selected for the research is based on doing a literature review to identify the gap and further use focus group, qualitative in-depth interviews, which suits the purposes of the intended research and participatory action research to get final results. Qualitative samples are not meant to represent large populations, but they are used with the aim of representing small, focused samples of respondents who can provide important information within specific contexts and settings. The form of interviews chosen for this study is semi-structured. Qualitative research analysis, in this case interpretivism, needs to be ordered and logical so there is reliability in the study. The inductive approach requires comprehensive reading of raw data to extract concepts, themes and models through the researcher's interpretation. This is an

appropriate approach for the present research and data analysis because it allows a systematic reading and re-reading of the interview transcripts and the identification of recurring themes. The work is based on thematic analysis since it can be used to classify patterns of meaning through a data set, which can offer answers to the research questions being asked.

The ethical considerations of this study are related to the recognition of the concerns and rights of the participants, and to ensure anonymity for those participants whose ideas or opinions may impact upon their professional circumstances. For security reasons; recordings, notes, transcriptions, site details, and personal information was stored in a secure environment. In addition, it was ensured that the research questions did not include personal questions.

# Chapter Five

## Research Findings and Analysis

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter will illustrate the empirical phase of the research. The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate the data collection and analysis process. It will outline the issues and themes that emerged from the research. Additionally, the current chapter presents the main findings from the focus group, interviews and action research undertaken here and serves to understand and represent the meanings of the views expressed, it also link them together with the use of the thematic analysis process. The aim of this thesis relates to the importance of sustainable workplaces and the role of QWL in achieving CSR goals within business in the context of the textile sector in Pakistan.

As mentioned earlier, qualitative case study research methodology was used to collect data by conducting semi-structured interviews with the managers of various textile mills in Pakistan. These research findings are based on 18 interviews from 18 different managers from the textile mills in Pakistan and concentrate on QWL, sustainable workplaces and sustainable development.

### 5.2 Key research findings

Reasons for the lack of research in this field include limited access to research participants and limited findings related to the perceptions of employers. Research findings from the interviews and initial focus group completed for this research are presented and analysed here. Utilising interview questions, participants were

interviewed to investigate their understanding and their knowledge as well as elements of practice. It should be noted that only 9 companies were fully informed about sustainable development and the importance of QWL within their company. However, others suggested that they found it very difficult to understand due to lack of knowledge, support and information.

The aim of this study was to explore how the textile sector of Pakistan is embedding sustainable workplace strategies to enhance competitive advantage, and the role of QWL to support the potential for responsible textile businesses.

Semi structured interviews were conducted with the managers of 18 textile mills in Pakistan. In-depth analysis of annual reports and a review of literature was completed. Within the context of this research, the following key themes and subthemes emerged:

table 5.1:

<b>Key themes</b>	<b>Sub themes</b>
Sustainability: a need for business (Beatie, 2019) , (Slack et al. 2013), (Epstein et al. 2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of awareness</li> <li>• SD is only for big companies</li> <li>• It is expensive to be sustainable</li> <li>• No financial advantage</li> </ul>
Sustainable development: a unique phenomenon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SD is only limited to paperwork</li> <li>• No clear knowledge of the concept of SD and CSR</li> <li>• It is just a formality</li> </ul>
Role of employees in SD (Lee et al. 2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees are mostly uneducated</li> <li>• Lack of training available for employees and employers</li> <li>• Very Limited research</li> </ul>
Power and Energy crisis (Dawn News, 2017)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unstable country economy</li> <li>• Terrorism and investments insecurities</li> </ul>
Capacity building and training needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government support is crucial</li> </ul>
Lack of research and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding is required for training and research</li> <li>• Extensive fieldwork is required</li> </ul>
Employees' engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee's benefits</li> <li>• Involvement in decision making</li> <li>• Long term employment security</li> </ul>

Quality standards and certification implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training is needed to understand ISO 26000 and its benefits to textile firms.</li> <li>• Compliance is very important for proper implementation of international standards.</li> </ul>
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### 5.3 Sustainable Development: A need for businesses

Due to competition in the global market it is timely to improve sustainable business strategies in the textile business. The global textile sector has taken steps to integrate sustainable business practices in order to decrease negative impacts on the environment and society. In the literature review, the researcher reviewed existing literature to understand the concept of sustainability and its importance in business. Based on the literature review, sustainability is noted as the fair allocation of resources without harming nature and humans. In terms of the textile business, the concept of sustainability is:

- products made from sustainable material
- safe for environment and society
- produced in a safe working environment
- minimise waste by using different techniques

The researcher interviewed the representatives of the textile mills in Pakistan to understand their perceptions and approaches towards sustainability, also their key involvement in the delivery of CSR objectives within their company. It is also very important to understand the role of firms in establishing sustainable workplace strategies and how much they are involved in it. Conventionally, the overall performance of business firms in order to move towards sustainability and sustainable workplace depends on their policies and commitment towards SD (Takim, 2009). After the analysis of the semi-structured interviews, it can be seen that from all 18 managers,



only 9 of them were aware of CSR and sustainability concepts, its importance and role in the business, and how implementation of sustainability goals can help in business profits and the turnover rate of labour. Managers from 3 textile firms, which were medium size companies, responded that they are aware about the role of sustainability and CSR but it is not considered to be a main goal of their organisation. According to 2 medium sized textile mills, they are certified with international standards like ISO 26000. But in practice, they are not aware of its role and its importance in making business organisations sustainably responsible. When compared to the large and medium sized textile firms, all the small sized textile units are not even aware about the meaning of SD and how important it is to offer employees better working conditions to support the achievement of sustainability goals. The well-informed CSR Manager at firm C10, (which is a medium sized textile mill) stated.

“We are aware about the importance of CSR in business and how it can benefit us internally and globally, but we also do need to consider customers and what they want, at the same time sometimes it is very difficult to tell employees about their own safety and well-being and how it can help them and benefit firm’s reputation”

Another manager of the large textile firm C2 responded very differently in saying.

“Introducing sustainable business and sustainable workplace strategies into our business policy was one of the best decisions we have made so far because we are aware that offering good quality of work life will result into better work commitment from employees, less strikes and health related sick leave and long-term commitment with the company”

A common response from all the managers related to the achievement of sustainable development and sustainability. They noted that it is very important that all the people associated with business are proactively involved and that this includes; business

managers, employees, customers, NGO's and government itself because there is a lack of support, assistance, knowledge and research.

Large business firms somehow are managing, but it is almost impossible for small textile units. Again, it was said to be very important that all the businesses become actively involved in achieving the goal of sustainable workplace. C9 respondent stated that:

“We do want to incorporate sustainability into our business and we also want to expand our business, so I think it's time that we ask for all the help we need so that no one leave us behind in the race to be globally successful and more profitable”

#### **5.4 Understanding of the current practices of Sustainability and CSR in Pakistan**

In their responses to the questions related to the current state of sustainability understanding in the textile sector in Pakistan, all the participants offered a wide range of views and ideas on topics related to CSR concepts, purpose, practices and beneficiaries. These views reflected the participants' own understanding about the SD concept as well as an evaluation of the way SD and CSR was currently being practiced in the textile sector in Pakistan by various companies.

A clear view emerged that all the textile firms emphasised that the concept of CSR and SD was not agreed upon fully in the textile sector in Pakistan. Participants argued that there is a lack of clear understanding among Pakistani firms in relation to definitions of CSR, SD, and sustainable workplaces. Around half of the participants agreed that “the concept of SD and CSR are not well defined” (Company C1, C4, C5, C9, C15, C12, C16). Some also said that “there is a lack of understanding of CSR and SD” (Company C3, C7, C5, C18).

Participant C2 argued that the concept of CSR varied widely in the textile sector of Pakistan and stated that:

“In reality, sustainable business has many definitions and understanding of the concept varies from company to company. Unfortunately, SD and CSR, for many textile firms, is getting international certificates somehow and label themselves as sustainable business firm”

According to several managers, CSR is an expensive phenomenon and small textile mills cannot afford the costs. According to C18, SD and CSR are only for big companies, not for small companies, because larger enterprises have more financial resources to consider it and offer QWL to employees. According to him:

“We are only a small firm we cannot afford to offer high quality workplace facilities or follow international laws. Our budget is mostly very limited, so we try to make much profit on less expenses”

Some of the small sized firms were not even aware of the true meaning of Sustainable workplace. Interviewee’s views revealed that the concept CSR, in the textile industry in Pakistan, was also often similarly confused with the concepts of public relations and marketing. For example, participants mentioned that CSR was often used as a “marketing tool” (C12), “marketing and PR tool” (CR6) or to “enhance company’s reputation in the business market” (C9).

According to two managers:

“In my view, there is a misunderstanding of the meaning of CSR in the textile sector of Pakistan. Several companies consider CSR and SD as a marketing tool for their products. In fact, the

organisational structures of many textile firms include CSR in the marketing department.” (C2)

“In my own opinion, Pakistani textile firms are not clear about the true meaning of CSR. Some large companies consider CSR as part of its marketing strategy and manage it through its marketing department, which limits the ability of such programmes to achieve sustainable development goals.” (C1)

Another respondent from a large textile mill (C3) explained that:

“Sustainable development and more specifically CSR are a mutually beneficial partnership between business and society and most importantly its employees, where companies have a duty towards offering safe and healthy workplace to employees. Most importantly, textile firms in Pakistan need to understand that [in this partnership of society and employee’s, profit does not have to be quick, but a long-term CSR strategy and SD goals leads to profit.”

Most of the participants from the textile sector in Pakistan made similar comments about the lack of clear understanding of CSR among companies and that the concept of CSR and SD were not very well defined among them. One participant suggested that most of the small and medium textile firms are still not clear about their CSR role (C8). A broader understanding about SD and CSR was expressed by C1, and stated that:

“Sustainable development and CSR are an ethical commitment of textile firms towards their employees, society and customers and it is a broader concept than just a tool to gain competitive advantage”

After analysis, a subtheme emerged that SD purposes for textile firms is different. One Manager (C6) stated that SD and CSR are part of a company’s social development policy. But other participants thought that it supported business in gaining global attention and a good reputation. According to the manager of C9:

“The concept of sustainable development and sustainable workplace is not widely practiced in the textile sector of Pakistan. CSR initiatives and implementation of sustainable development policies need to be a lot more effective. Currently, in textile sector CSR activities are scattered and not long-term and they are mostly ineffective and not related to social development.”

According to C1, there is a need for a change of mindset in the way firms see SD and CSR, also in the way it has been practiced, adopting a more positive attitude and considering it to be a social contribution instead of just a corporate responsibility.

### **5.5 Manager’s perspective about workers role on the issue of sustainability**

The researcher asked about the role of employees in making firms more sustainable. A manager from a large textile mill (C3) stated that;

“if a firm wants to be successful globally and locally it is very important for them to take care of their employees because they are the heart of the business and by providing good quality working conditions to them will not only improve worker’s performance but it will also make the company more ethical”

However, he also highlighted important individual responsibilities related to the workforce. He explained that management may provide all the appropriate facilities, including health and safety equipment, but due to lack of knowledge and understanding, employees sometimes refused to use safety clothing or equipment. He further added that it is crucial to provide proper knowledge and training to improve employee engagement.

The manager of a small company (C17) highlighted the struggles and how it is impossible for them to achieve sustainability. He added:

“Small firms like us cannot afford to provide all the facilities to our workers so sometimes we compromise on that due to lack of resources”

Furthermore, managers from large and medium sized companies highlighted that they are aware of the global business market regulations related to workers' rights and their safety, so in order to compete in the international market they do try to be more responsible and to play their role in QWL. However, it was also mentioned that small firms faced struggles because no such policy exists within their business goals and that is one reason why those companies are far behind in the global business market.

All the managers from the large companies highlighted that labour rights, and the health and safety of workers, are their main priorities as part of sustainable workplace policies within the firms. They noted that elements of QWL, such as; money incentives, health insurance, training courses, and staff accommodation are voluntarily offered to staff by large companies. But, ensuring sustainable and safe workplaces for staff is currently limited to large textile firms.

## **5.6 Power and energy crisis**

Power and energy are a crucial part of the textile manufacturing process and all the business firms indicated that one of the major hurdles in the implementation of sustainable practices in the textile sector in Pakistan is the energy crisis. Energy shortfall is the major hurdle for all big and small businesses in Pakistan, especially in the manufacturing sector. Furthermore, 10-12 hour load shedding per day is a major obstacle which not only seriously impacts on the performance of the industry, but also is a major cause of manufacturers shifting their industrial units to other countries like China and Bangladesh. Also highlighted was that firms prefer to invest in the power generation plants so that their business does not stop. But this means that they then

compromise on other aspects of business, such as QWL and sustainable workplace strategies. Such compromises impact on health and safety conditions, lack of satisfaction among workers and low wages, which affect performance in the workplace.

### **5.7 Capacity building and training needs in Pakistan**

Another subtheme which emerged from the interviews is the capacity building and training needs in the textile sector in Pakistan. Almost all the participants expressed clearly that there is a need to offer training to employers about the importance of SD and CSR and how it can help textile firms in achieving long term benefits both socially and financially. The manager from C1 highlighted that, training in business firms for managers directly means trained employees, which will reduce operational costs and work-related accidents as well as promoting safe and well reputed work environments.

### **5.8 Increase in production cost**

Firms within the textile sector in Pakistan are facing another barrier with the rise of the production costs of textile products. This is due to inflation and the declining value of currency in Pakistan, which has seriously affected the country's economy in the last few years. Business organisations are also feeling insecure in the global business environment due to the increase in production costs. They have increased the prices of their products and in turn demand for their products is continuously decreasing day by day. Furthermore, all the managers agreed that the lack of financial support from authorities and the unavailability of easy loan schemes are forcing most of the firms to neglect the workers safety and rights in order to save on costs.

## **5.9 Lack of research and development**

There is another major hurdle on the road to sustainable development. The lack of research and development related to sustainable practices in the textile sector in developing countries is woefully limited. Modern equipment and technological innovation are the major requirements in the global business market, but due to limited research and knowledge and a lack of support from governments, companies are not able to train their workers properly. Such factors seriously affect a firms' performance. C3 highlighted that skills and training are needed to get a clear picture of the current state of SD and CSR in the textile sector in Pakistan. Training, development and research are all part of a larger picture which includes; staff self-discipline, loyalty to the company, fewer accidents, and more improved outcomes.

“The government should offer loans to training institutions to help them offer more training and research opportunities to researchers and should also contribute to the cost of employment and training opportunities for business managers” (C7)

## **5.10 Employees' engagement**

Big firms which are major exporters and have more turnover than small and medium sized firms are engaging their workers more in business. They are offering appropriate training and also engaging with the workforce through proper communication between managers and employees. According to C5, firms are still facing difficulties in engaging their staff members in sustainable activities. This is mainly due to the lack of knowledge among the employees along with negative attitudes towards sustainable development issues, especially health and safety concerns.

## **5.11 Sustainable development implementation**

All the 18 managers from the textile mills in Pakistan, were asked how their company sees sustainability and sustainable development, and the implementation of QWL

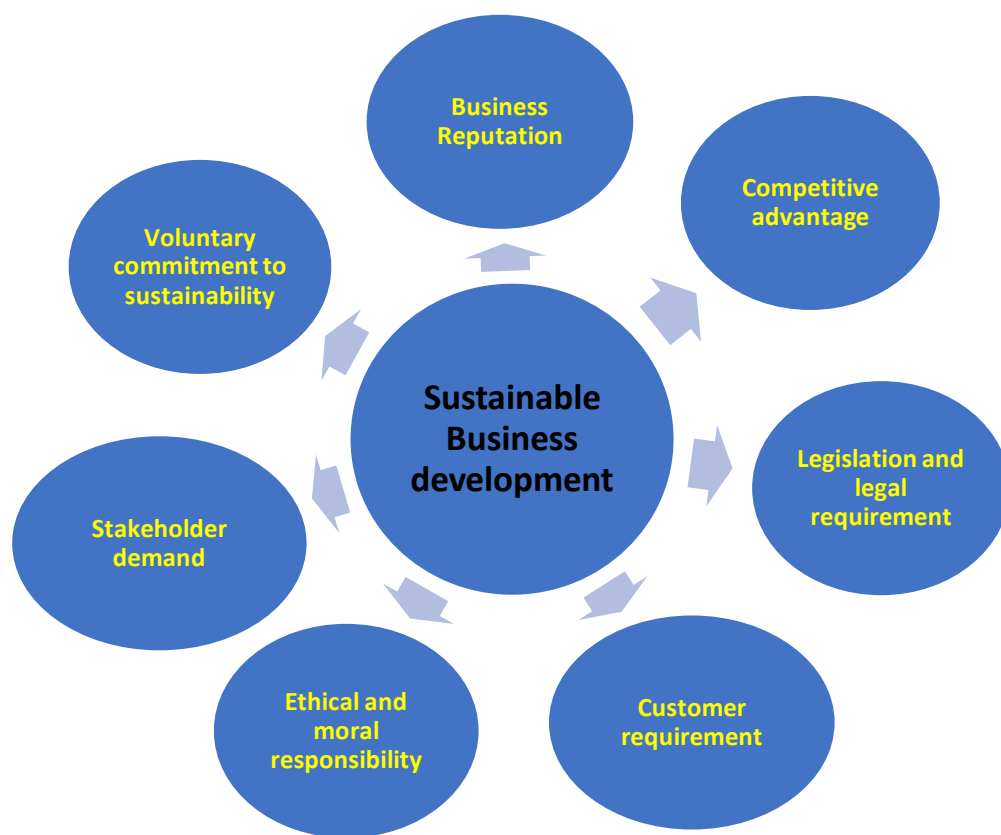


towards sustainable strategies within their organisations. They were asked to consider the requirements of ensuring successful implementation of sustainable development within the organisation. Responses of all the managers highlighted the significance of how big the firm is in terms of its size and overall business performance. Managers of all 8 large textile mills shed light on sustainable development and its implementation in detail and explained how their businesses consider the issue of sustainability very seriously, and offer QWL to employees to ensure improved performance. Conversely, the concept of sustainable development and knowledge about this issue was very limited among the business managers of small textile units and one of the reasons they highlighted was the lack of resources and support within the textile industry as well as from the government. Furthermore, analysis suggests that large firms tend to consider this topic an important tool for supporting success in the business market. However, such opportunities are very limited when it comes to smaller firms because of very small budgets and limited access to additional funds and expert knowledge. According to one manager, many business firms these days are supportive of the ecological factors of sustainable development. But when it comes to social implications, including people within the organisation, knowledge is still very limited, and this factor has been ignored over the years.

Similarly, a CSR manager also highlighted how their company is doing all the sustainable development work voluntarily because of their own business interests and to enable them to compete in the global business market. The majority of the managers suggested that CSR and sustainability should be considered as a national policy and government should help businesses to successfully implement it into companies. It was also stated that small firms should not be left out and that it was important to ensure healthy work environments for workers in small firms.

Following are the major factors mentioned by the majority of the business managers regarding the implementation of SD and sustainability policies in business firms.

It was noted that these points help business organizations to achieve their sustainability goals successfully and that most of the firms are adopting this on an entirely voluntary basis. However, small firms are not able to get very far due to the lack of awareness, support and knowledge. Figure 5.1 below outlines major factors in encouraging business firms to adopt CSR practices:



### 5.12 Business Reputation

Among all the cases here, there are only the large and a few medium sized firms who are successfully managing to implement sustainable development. They are incorporating important support factors which impact upon their employees. These factors are noted in the interviews and stated in annual reports, they are presented

here in the diagram above. These points have encouraged the implementation of sustainable policies into businesses. The majority of employers mentioned customer requirements and reputation of the business. They highlighted these as crucial for business firms to compete in the business market globally, especially when in competition with other countries, such as; India, China and Bangladesh. Moreover, international legislation and strict rules play an important role for these business firms when considering sustainable development. Having a better policy regarding employees' safety and security helps companies to reduce other costs and build up a good reputation among international customers.

According to the manager of a small firm, it is very hard for a business that is not financially stable to consider worker's rights as a priority or spend significant amounts of money to get certified and run their business globally. They do not have spare budgets to use on SD policies and to ensure good working life for employees. A HR manager from a medium sized textile firm (C9) said:

“For us, adopting sustainability helps to improve our reputation as a sustainable organization. It makes us more appealing to future clients. They know that we will be able to fulfil the promises that we make when we tender for work”

Another manager (C4) highlighted that it helps their company to gain competitive advantage:

“Well, as an organisation, taking on sustainability helps us to build our brand and reputation as an organization globally. We are seen as the best company of choice and we get more recognised as the provider of best practice in terms of sustainability and offering good working conditions for our staff and that gives us a real advantage over our competitors”

According to the manager of a small textile unit (C15), due to the lack of knowledge and commitment towards sustainable development, they are not able to reach out to

the international business market. Also, the profit margin of such companies is not very high. However, there are firms which are using false means to build-up a reputation in the business market by using international standards certification from unreliable sources and by offering auditors financial inducements to make them look sustainable. One of the major examples of this is the Baldia town incident which killed approximately 250 people as a result of dishonesty and corruption. Hence, it is very important to closely monitor how such company policies are implemented and the motives for such policies. It is very important that government play their role and make sure that companies are not cutting corners in order to gain competitive advantage and build a good reputation.

### **5.13 Customers' Requirements**

Another major factor highlighted by the majority of the managers is the requirements of customers. This encourages them to consider sustainable development and sustainable workforce policies. It has generally been argued that clients' requirements and needs cannot be ignored and in order to fulfil their needs it is very important to follow all the protocol. Large and medium sized business firms in Pakistan who have an interest in competing in the global business market are considering this as a serious matter, but unfortunately it is not the same for small business units. A further in-depth analysis highlighted that most of the large firms are only following sustainability criteria on the demands of their customers instead of actually realising all the benefits and opportunities. The manager from C2 mentioned the process and how some firms adopt the CSR concept:

“I think it is very important that we introduce sustainable development features including good QWL and sustainable business strategies into our business

as a standard procedure not just to impress our clients because if we will do it as our major responsibility we will enhance our business operations and a satisfied and safe employee will help firm to achieve business goals well and we will get the same customer again”

#### **5.14 Legislation and Legal requirements**

Another factor emphasised by the managers was legal requirements of the businesses. They considered it to be very important for any business to strictly follow the national and international rules whilst competing in business. Unfortunately, according to the majority of managers, the current situation in the country regarding sustainability and labour rights is not strictly implemented. There is no hard and fast rule to promote the following of regulations. This makes things very difficult for the business firms who are genuinely interested in doing business in a good manner to make a profit. Large firms tend to follow international rules in order to do business in the global market, but sometimes it is very hard to access those markets without the support from government or international bodies. International certification and standards fall into this category, but another struggle mentioned by business managers was that international standards like ISO just have a set criterion for all businesses globally. There is no recognition that practical differences in countries like Pakistan make it harder to implement and follow standards when compared with developed countries. According to the manager from C3, if a company follows national and international regulations fully then “it is a win-win kind of thing really because it will help the firm to achieve their company goals and of course make good profit as well”.

## 5.15 Ethical and Moral obligation

Analysis suggests that there are few companies who consider that the implementation of SD goals and ensuring worker's safety is their moral and ethical responsibility. However, one manager did highlight that they are offering affordable housing, hospital facilities and incentives to their employees as part of an employee development programme, which is completely voluntary, but they still feel that government support is crucial to keep up the good work.

“We see SD as part of our commitment to provide services that will benefit the employees as well as community socially and economically. We provide young people with jobs and skills for the future. These are some of the things we always try to do. As a responsible organization, we are very much committed to all our sustainability responsibilities because we think that's the right thing to do”

Textile firms in Pakistan which are running successfully are taking their role as sustainable market leaders very seriously because they are passionate about taking their businesses to the next level.

As part of the research question and the objectives of the research, all the managers of textile firms were asked the question about how sustainable they are and what efforts they are making to be sustainable. Knowledge related to the importance of sustainable development and sustainability was very limited amongst managers of small textile units, few managers highlighted how their companies are promoting sustainable development strategies in their business and what has been done so far to offer their employees improved quality of work life. But it is also worth keeping in mind that these strategies are voluntary and very limited due to a lack of support,

knowledge and funding. Below are the few sustainability initiatives mentioned by managers of large and medium sized firms.

### **5.16 Health and safety courses**

Major textile units of Pakistan with the help of local universities have recently started an initiative to educate their employees about their own health and safety. One of the reasons behind this initiative is the lack of knowledge and basic education among employees. The majority of workers in the textile sector in Pakistan are illiterate and belong to remote areas of Pakistan so, this initiative will help business firms to educate their employees and offer sustainable and safe working conditions to their staff. A manager from C6 added:

“We give very high consideration to health and safety issues in our business operations, and we do that from top level to bottom. We are very mindful about the health and safety of our workforce. We place a massive importance on promoting health and safety issues in every business operation. I think we have the responsibility to ensure that our people are safe and healthy and that’s the reason we have started this health and safety courses initiative”

### **5.17 Promoting education and training**

Another initiative the textile mills have introduced, is offering education and training related to business operations, to all their colleagues. This is so that they can be successfully involved in the decision-making processes of the firm. It was also stated that firms are hiring young employees so that they can be trained fully and represent firms in the global business market as market leaders. While such efforts by textile firms may appear very limited, they are subject to amounts of funding available from within the company. According to C1:

“We offer very high consideration to education and training opportunities. Opportunities for education and training for young guys are something we have always considered as our main priority especially these days when it is very crucial. We know that this is the best way to give these guys employability skills for a better quality of life as well as future. We think that providing education and training to our employees has a lot of social benefits as well as to the industry”

Such practices are not very common in the textile industry in Pakistan due to many reasons including; lack of awareness, commitment, and government support. But there are still a few companies which are making such efforts.

### **5.18 Housing and medical insurance**

Another great initiative by the textile firms is offering incentives to their employees as part of the employees' development programme. This was recently started by All Textile Mills Association Pakistan. This programme is an important step taken by textile firms to promote sustainable development strategies within their organisations. Unfortunately, the role of small firms is still very limited due to the lack of resources and funds. Major exporters from the sector are very keen to make sure that staff are fully trained and have full-time contract as well as facilities such as; housing, hospitals, and medical insurance.

### **5.19 Promoting employment opportunities**

The results obtained from the semi-structured interviews with the business managers, highlighted that one of the keys to implementing sustainable development is to strengthen the workforce and offer them employment opportunities as well as opportunities to step up and be involved in decision-making and business operations.

C10 mentioned that:



“We see employment opportunity as a very important aspect of employees’ development programme, so we try as much as we can to give high consideration to employment issues. My personal view is that to create true sustainable business, people have to be given true sustainable employment opportunities, because everything else would then fall out from there”

## **5.20 Role of Government of Pakistan and international bodies**

One objective of this research was to find out how the government of Pakistan play their role in helping textile firms to adopt sustainability core objectives as well as implement policies which help employees and employers. The current situation in Pakistan does not seem to be favourable for any business industry in Pakistan (Pakistan Gazette, 2016). Lack of interest and policy implementation is one of the biggest issues. During the data collection period for this research, when all the managers were asked about government support and national policies, the answers from everyone were really disappointing. One of the managers from a large textile mill pointed out the negligence shown by government officials over the years. Law and order situations also are not satisfactory, which is making circumstances unfavourable for businesses who want to do business with international firms. According to a HR manager, as per the law of government of Pakistan, business firms are not allowed to hire employees on short term contracts. They are entitled to medical insurance and other basic needs but contrary to this there are many textile units operating without considering this law. Hence, responsible firms, which spend money to offer employees the best workplace, are not receiving any support from the government, no tax incentives or anything which encourages businesses to act appropriately.

It has been identified that there is no enforcement which ensures that business organisations are following certain rules around safety and wellbeing of workers. The

only business firms which are seriously following SD policies and employees' QWL rights, are the ones who are doing it on a voluntary basis, and these are limited in number. The researcher also witnessed that in small textile units there were employees under the age of 18 working for the company and this was not challenged. So, the governments lack of interest in this area does not engender the following of appropriate rules and firms can carry on doing business which results in terrible incidents such as that which was witnessed in Baldia town Karachi.

The managers recognised the important role of international bodies such as ISO, but suggested that, consideration is not given to difficulties which are common in developing countries. Further guidance would be appropriate here because a standard certificate and its principles does not apply equally in developed and developing countries. A manager (C5) gave the example that:

“there are many firms in Pakistan including Ali enterprises which caused that major horrific incident in Karachi because what they did they used a different franchise firm to get certification and then use that to show international customers they are certified”

There are still many textile units working in Pakistan which are using those certificates as a shield and completely ignoring their employees and potential harmful consequences. A manager also mentioned that they are trying their best to be sustainable and to ensure good quality of work life for employees, but some firms are able to offer cut-price products by cutting corners and attracting international clients in completely the wrong way, which is destroying the textile sector in Pakistan.

C6 manager noted that they have their own team of research and development which works directly with employees to ensure the best work environment. They are aware

that a safe work environment and QWL ensures higher productivity, fewer accidents and a good reputation.

### **5.21 Barriers in implementing CSR policies and QWL**

This section will highlight the barriers identified during the analysis of the semi-structured interviews. Despite the numerous potential benefits of adopting sustainable development and its importance in business operations, there are barriers which impede business firms in implementing sustainable business development strategies. In terms of incorporating sustainable business policies into business operations, small business firms are struggling, and the overall textile sector is also facing problems in the global business market. Large firms are trying their best to compete and gain competitive advantage, but small business firms are suffering because there is no help or support available to them.

“From a sustainability point of view, our major barrier is clearly financial especially looking at the economic crisis Pakistan is in at the moment. There is a massive lack of financial support is available out there for us to access. And this is a big barrier for us, which is limiting our progress in the business market in a number of ways” (C11)

Although, lack of financial support can be considered a major barrier, political and economic conditions of the whole country is also a major problem. Moreover, financial barriers are not just a problem for small textile firms, it is a significant issue for large companies too.

### **5.22 Unfavourable conditions in the global business market**

Over the last few years, the global textile business market has not interacted favourably with the textile mills in Pakistan. One of the major reasons behind this is

the current security situation in Pakistan which has stopped international investors considering Pakistan as a safe place to do business. Terrorist activities and news of bomb blasts every other day via media outlets has put off many investors. According to Guardian news (2015), Pakistan's business market is one of the risky business markets right now. A manager of the textile firm further added;

“We are not trusted no more like people used to, our business market considered to be on risk and no one is there to help us into this”

### **5.23 Lack of willingness to adopt CSR and sustainable workplace policies**

Another barrier is the lack of willingness among business firms to adopt sustainable business development strategies. No doubt there are many factors involved but lack of willingness is also very common. Furthermore, small textile units are primarily doing their business locally and local customers are also not very keen on sustainable products. Therefore, companies are not taking it very seriously. In terms of employees, they are not considered to be the backbone of the company, and they are not aware of their rights either. So, small textile firms mostly ignore their safety and rights and just concentrate on profit making. It is also the perception of firms that sustainability initiatives will cost them money, so they tend to ignore it. According to the manager of a large textile mill:

“Cost perception of sustainability is definitely a significant barrier, whether rightly or wrongly, the perception is still out there among companies. Companies who already have very tight budget they ignore the human side of business and just carry on doing business for their own benefit”

Another manager from a medium sized textile mill (C5) confessed that,

“Adopting the social and economic sustainability is a hurdle for us and most of the firms in Pakistan do not

consider it as main priority. For most companies, good profit is the main priority”

According to the manager of (C2), health and safety concerns are real in the textile sector, but most of the firms in Pakistan especially small size mills and factories do not give much attention to it. A major reason behind this ignorance is the lack of policy implementation and regulation. QWL is certainly very important but in Pakistan most of the firms consider it as something which attracts customers and it is still significantly undervalued.

According to the manager of (C1),

“employee’s satisfaction, less workplace accidents and positive reputation of firms we are committed to offer our employees incentives for their hard work and also follow the principles of ISO 26000 to make our firm sustainable as well as sustainable place to work because we are aware of the long term benefits for the company and global business reputation. However, lack of government support and proper training and policy implementation is making it very difficult for most of the firms especially small sized firms. Another major reason is lack of research about the importance of sustainable workplace by keeping in mind other factors like level of knowledge about SD importance, financial support from the authorities, strict policy implementation as well as clients support”

Most of the managers from the larger companies agreed on the importance of CSR to achieve of sustainable and safe workplaces for employees, which would minimise workplace accidents and support competitive advantage. But at the same time research in the Pakistan textile sector regarding QWL and sustainable workplace is immature, therefore more localised research is crucial.

Another major issue around SD and CSR views in developing countries like Pakistan, is corruption. According to (C4),

“Our firm consider our employees as an asset, so we treat them well and provide them bonuses too so that in return we have good employee’s engagement and satisfaction”

According to a manager from (C3),

“Employees are the backbone of any firm and if a firm is interested in achieving the goals of sustainability then employees can play a significant role. Offering QWL to its staff can result into staff satisfaction and commitment towards work as well as more efficient work environment and less errors. He also added we are well aware of the importance of employees’ wellbeing and offering safe and sustainable workplace but at the same time government support is much needed”

#### **5.24 Quality standards and certification implementation**

Textile firms in Pakistan are certified with various ISO standards such as ISO 9000 and ISO14000 as well as other certificates, but knowledge of ISO 26000 and its use in business is limited. The Manager of company A suggested that many of the business firms in Pakistan are certified, but in reality, they are not following those standards or policies. Ultimately the consequences of this are disasters like “Baldiya town Karachi incident” which killed 257 people due to lack of health and safety conditions. He also added that it is not just the fault of individual firms, because it is the duty of government to make sure that rules are properly implemented, and that compliance policies are followed.

One of the important objectives of this research was to find out about the knowledge related to international standards like ISO 26000 and how they are seen as key drivers to achieve sustainability goals. All the managers of the textile mills accepted that they are aware of the international standards and certification, but proper implementation is a completely different story. According to a manager C4:

“We are aware about the role of these certifications and standards. Our company is certified with them and we always make sure we follow its principle and criteria very seriously and with full interest. However, it is not always the case if you talk about small textile units operating in Pakistan. Some of them even have access to international markets because they have used different other companies to get them certification but in reality, they are not complying and in the result of that incidents like Karachi baldia town happened. So, it is not important to have certifications best solution is to make sure it has been implemented properly”

Hence, research findings from various managers highlighted that proper implementation of such certification is very important and not only companies but government and international bodies need to play their role. International certification organisations such ISO and GRI should consider their standards and certifications in relation to developing countries like Pakistan. Most standards are designed with western and developed countries in mind, where legislation is very different to that of developing countries.

### **5. 25 Government support**

Government support is crucial in order to help textile firms in Pakistan to successfully implement SD goals and policies into their business. According to C8, it is very important that the government offer financial aid to businesses so that they can implement national and international SD goals. This would not only improve a firm’s reputation globally, but the country’s financial and economic situation would also be improved. Other managers of the textile firms agreed that financial help is so important as well as proper training opportunities.

### **5.26 Documents Analysis**

As part of the data collection, the researcher also reviewed annual reports of all the selected textile mills in order to get a detailed understanding of the companies, and how their policies related to SD and the sustainable workforce. Annual reports of some

firms clearly indicated discrepancies and even though it is illegal to hire staff under 18 years of age, according to Pakistan Labour laws, the researcher noticed there were many underage workers in some textile mills. This is one of the major reasons that SD and the sustainable workplace concept is still very immature in Pakistan. After documentary analysis of sustainable development goals, it can be seen, that there is an existence of SD policy in Pakistan, but due to poor policy implementation and lack of knowledge, especially among small sized local business, the SD concept is not very clear. Lack of Government involvement in educating businesses about this issue is one of the causes of industry decline over the years. Another major cause of ignorance related to SD and CSR is corruption in the country and an improper income tax system which is causing serious consequences to businesses in the long term, especially small and medium sized firms.

Media outlets have recently played a significant role in highlighting such issues. One recent example is of the “KHADI” case where workers stood up against unfair treatment at work and no salary. After the intervention of media campaigns and social media influencers, workers got their rights. There are only a few institutes in Pakistan who are actively doing research on sustainable development and CSR in the textile sector. Consequently, this relates to the lack of research and development in this field.

### **5.27 Summary**

This chapter reflected the views of all the participants from the textile sector in Pakistan regarding the current state of SD and CSR practices and aspects of sustainable development in the sector. Findings were presented thematically, they focused on the understanding and evaluation of current SD and CSR practice in the textile sector in Pakistan and understanding of the importance of sustainable workplaces.



In relation to the current state of sustainable development understanding in the textile sector in Pakistan, participants provided a wide range of views and ideas on topics related to SD and CSR concepts, purpose, practice. These views reflected each firm's practices and understanding about sustainable development and sustainable business strategies. Interviewees emphasised that the concept of sustainable development was not agreed upon in the textile sector and argued that there was a lack of clear understanding among textile firms about SD and CSR and its importance in making firms successful. They thought that the concept of CSR was often mixed and confused with other practices such as public relations and marketing.

Findings also revealed that there is a lack of government support in offering training facilities as well as financial aid to business firms to support the implementation of sustainable policies. There is clear evidence regarding the lack of research and development. Sustainable development and sustainable workforce practice are poor, and firms often decide not to consider it or make it a priority. Participants expressed very clear views on the types of capacity building and training programmes needed in the textile sector by emphasising that training should be targeted and tailored to the specific needs of the textile business market, with a strong emphasis on training programmes that were linked to specific training and financial support opportunities.

Managers of the small sized textile firms also emphasised that there is a need for novel, creative and sustainable capacity building. Also, training programmes supported by strategy and vision with the support of the government and the large business firms who could offer their support to small firms to make the sector more welcoming to international buyers.

Interviewees also offered a wide range of views and recommendations. On the requirements needed to improve current SD and CSR practices in the textile sector in Pakistan, it was said that the government should do more to encourage firms and support sustainable development work. There are a number of potential areas where improvements could be implemented, including; national and business strategies, legislation of CSR, and types of SD programmes. All these points were highlighted, and it was generally agreed amongst participants that there was no clear overall understanding and implementation of SD in the textile sector in Pakistan. It was also noted that knowledge related to the role of a firm in offering QWL to make a company into a sustainable workplace, and to achieve SD goals, is very limited. Most of the firms also agreed on suggestions for improving sustainable development and CSR practices in the textile sector in Pakistan. This included the idea of legislation and regulation of CSR work, making it much more defined, effective and clear. In this regard, some managers agreed to make sustainable goals a mandatory practice in their business.



(figure 5.2 Level of understanding about CSR and sustainable workplace strategies)

Above figure highlights the understanding of business managers about CSR and sustainable workplace on the basis of data collected from 18 textile firms.

# Chapter Six

## Discussion

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the discussion of the data collected through the qualitative research methods. This work aimed to evaluate the current understanding and practices of SD and CSR, and the role of QWL in achieving sustainable development goals within the business context of the textile sector in Pakistan. In order to do this, the researcher also investigated the potential government role in SD implementation alongside other factors.

As already explained in the literature review chapter, several studies suggested that the understanding and practice of SD and CSR in developed countries was clearly changing and shifting its focus away from the philanthropic and towards basic and strategic CSR and SD (Porter and Kramer, 2011; CSR Global, 2014). It is increasingly recognised that there is a lot more to sustainable development in business than just corporate philanthropy. It is not just about making a contribution towards good causes but more about achieving a mutual benefit for the business and society through the creation of shared values (Tamkeen, 2010; Porter and Kramer, 2011). After examining the current understanding and practices in the textile sector in Pakistan, it was revealed that while some progress is being made (as will be detailed later in this section), most of the current practices in Pakistan's textile sector are very limited and it is mostly just large business firms that are interested in it or aware of its importance, whereas, small sized firms lack the required knowledge in sustainable development and sustainable workplaces. Moreover, as already mentioned in the literature review, the majority of studies on CSR and sustainability, in the context of developing

countries, and more specifically Pakistan, are descriptive and do not provide an in-depth investigation of a firm's SD practices in the context of the textile sector (Belal and Owen, 2007; Islam and Deegan, 2008; Amran and Haniffa, 2011; Beddewela and Herzig, 2013; Momin and Parker, 2013, Islam, 2016, Zahidi et al. 2019). Other studies suggested that the concept and practice of SD and CSR in developing countries were still in their early stages of development, and it was mostly viewed as an additional financial burden on business firms rather than a long-term strategy in favour of business (Tamkeen, 2010; Mandurah et al., 2012; Ali and Al-Ali, 2012). This research has added to the knowledge about the lack of sustainable development practices in developing countries like Pakistan.

The findings of this work also highlight that the concept of CSR and sustainable workplaces in the textile sector in Pakistan, is often confused with the concepts and practices of public relations and marketing, or perhaps intentionally used as a PR or marketing tool to enhance the reputation of the companies involved (Tamkeen, 2007; Mandurah et al., 2012; Ali and Al-Ali, 2012).

As discussed and concluded in chapter two, while sustainability and CSR should not be regarded by businesses as a PR strategy to solely enhance their reputation or worse to fix or cover up a problem (Acero and Savaget, 2014), it is probably acceptable for business organisations who embrace the concepts of CSR in their practices to use PR as a way of sharing with the world the progress they are making, and in the process gain potential business benefits. The findings of this work showed limited appreciation of the difference between these practices and of the understanding that PR should ideally be a vehicle to promote CSR activities, but CSR should not be a PR strategy to help companies deal with problems. Similarly, as already mentioned in chapter two,

there is very limited research related to SD more specifically in the textile sector in developing countries, especially Pakistan. The researcher analysed many reasons which are playing a crucial role in the lack of proper implementation of sustainability goals and CSR activities. Promotion of a sustainable workforce and offering QWL in Pakistan to employees is very limited, and one of the many reasons is the lack of government support, issues of corruption, and the political situation in the country, as well as a lack of resources and knowledge (Ashraf, 2017).

Furthermore, the findings here imply that there are differences both of understanding and practice related to sustainable development and sustainable workplaces when comparisons are made between larger firms such as C1 and C2, and smaller firms, such as C15 and C16. These very different perceptions clearly indicated differing levels of knowledge and support. The cause of this contrast of variant views about SD and CSR is not completely clear (Momin and Parker, 2013), but it could be indicative of poor publicity or communication about the importance of sustainable development for business as well as a lack of training and industrial research. Government incentives for business firms, who are actively implementing sustainable policies in their business, is very low and this is also one of the causes of a lack of knowledge about SD overall in the textile sector in Pakistan. This particular finding is unique to this research and has not been reported by other studies.

On the one hand, government aspirations to expand sustainable development practices in the textile sector in Pakistan appear contradictory, and it is certainly the case that more research and proper implementation is required with regard to CSR and Sustainable business development. It is also very important to make a meaningful contribution to social and economic development in Pakistan. It is also important to

emphasise that while the findings here provide a fairly general description of the current state of sustainable development and the role of QWL in making firms sustainable in the textile sector in Pakistan, there is clear evidence that the situation is not as simple as suggested and that a deeper understanding of SD and CSR is starting to emerge in Pakistan, but there is still a lot of research that needs to be done.

As previously noted, the existing literature does not provide specific information about developing countries such as Pakistan (Zahidi et al. 2019, Ehsan et al. 2018). One important finding here is the absence of training and development of both managers and employees. Furthermore, the country's own economic and political situation plays an important role in their SD strategies and practices, so research based on developed countries is not valid in such developing countries. Hence, this research initiates and highlights the urgency of research in countries like Pakistan, especially as Pakistan is the third largest cotton producer and exports all over the world.

Findings from this research are broadly consistent with (Javed and Lefnen, 2018) who reported that the research on SD in developing countries, including Pakistan, indicated that it was not well-developed. Also, that the emphasis was primarily on building a reputation and that international certifications and standards were only sought to attract customers. It is crucial to do in-depth research in order to gain a greater understanding of the current situation in the country. Findings here also support the feelings of abhorrence with regard to incidents like "Baldi Town Karachi as well as Rana Plaza Dhaka". It is clear that the level of understanding related to SD, the lack of strict regulations, and issues of corruption have played a significant role in such atrocities.

The study confirmed that several Pakistani textile firms were starting to adopt international practices of SD and CSR through the introduction of strategic approaches (ISO 26000). This promotes increasing focus on addressing sustainable workplace policies and offers employees QWL so that they can play a positive role in the firm's performance. The study also indicates that most firms see SD as a tool to enhance competitiveness and attract international customers. Due to a lack of regulations, many firms are just completing the correct paperwork and the reality is rather different. However, there are also a few firms contributing to the future of SD and CSR in Pakistan. Examining the findings of this work in relation to the wider literature provides an opportunity to scrutinise the current state of SD understanding and its practice in the textile sector in Pakistan within the wider context.

As already mentioned in chapter two, CSR is a continuous responsibility for firms to serve and develop the community, its business, and other stakeholders. This should be done through the integration of corporate and social values and cultures in their business strategies with the aim of achieving future corporate and social sustainability. However, this research highlights that this is yet to be achieved in the textile sector in Pakistan, where there is still a lack of long-term SD initiatives and programmes. To summarise, the concept of SD and sustainable workplace policy is not fully developed and there is a need for further detailed research. However, companies in Pakistan are starting to understand and embrace a broader definition and practice of SD and offer QWL to employees in an attempt to be sustainable firms with a strong focus on education and training.

Additionally, several published studies and reports support the notion that governments should play a role in encouraging and promoting sustainable



development in business (Bichta, 2003; Singhal, 2014; Fox et al., 2002; Albareda et al., 2007; Albareda et al., 2008; UN Global Compact, 2010; Steurer, 2010). In this context, the Pakistani government has developed a national sustainable strategy, but the lack of policy implementation and the lack of knowledge and research in this sector has been identified. All the participants in this research mentioned that more government support is needed. Due to the unstable political situation of the country many businesses suffer high tax surcharges, lack of power supply for business purposes, and no incentives or financial help. This is frustrating for firms who are already working their way towards sustainable textile production in Pakistan.

As mentioned in the literature chapter, many researchers highlight that limited research has been done on the topic of sustainable development, CSR and its importance in QWL to make Pakistani textile firms sustainable workplaces (Belal and Owen, 2007; Islam and Deegan, 2008; Amran and Haniffa, 2011; Beddewela and Herzig, 2013; Momin and Parker, 2013). The in-depth analysis here, has identified that the major reasons for the lack of research in this area are; limited policy implementation, employer's commitment, as well as scarce resources available to the textile firms. This research helps to identify a number of factors that directly affect developing countries like Pakistan when making a decisive move towards sustainable development.

Themes that emerged from this research also indicated that there is a need for government to take a stand and enforce strict rules and regulations regarding CSR (Zahidi et al. 2019). The researcher also successfully identified the barriers which are forcing the textile firms in Pakistan to ignore the importance and value of SD and CSR. Furthermore, figure 2.4 illustrated the eight key concepts largely used to analyse the

importance of QWL in a firm. Keeping in mind those factors which generalise the importance of QWL, the researcher asked questions about QWL and its importance to the managers. Data analysis indicated that only the big textile firms in Pakistan understand the true concept of QWL and use it mainly to get competitive advantage. Medium and small sized firms do not priorities it. As already mentioned in the literature review chapter, most of the research related to QWL and sustainable development focuses on developed countries and very little is known about how developing countries implement it and what factors affect its implementation. This research provides in-depth insights into the factors which affect the ability of businesses to move towards sustainable development. It also shows how, within the same business environment, different factors, such as finance and employee's attitude, play a role in successful implementation of sustainable development policies.

Furthermore, this research study provides a detailed insight into policy implementation, which is significant in making firms into sustainable workplaces and supports them in gaining a good reputation among local and global business markets (Svenson, 2018). This research also highlights the role of government and international bodies to make sure that business operations uphold international standards to avoid any future incidents like Rana Plaza and Baldia Town Karachi.

This research aims to add to the literature which explores the barriers preventing textile firms from doing more, and considers the nature of the limits of their involvement in offering good QWL and sustainable workplaces for employees (e.g. Barter and Bebbington, 2010; Spence and Gray, 2007; Banarjee and Duflo, 2003). This research is a starting point to highlight the course of action needed in developing countries, and more specifically Pakistan. The results of this study will enable researchers to create

a stronger theoretical and empirical basis on which future research on the topic of SD and sustainable workplace strategies can build. The researcher was also able to identify the challenges that businesses are facing with regard to socially responsibility and in creating sustainable workplaces for employees, these can be used as starting points for further research.

## **6.2 Summary**

This chapter presented a detailed discussion of the research topic. The researcher discussed the major themes originating from the data collection and discussion of the analysis in relation to the literature review, so that the research contribution is clearly stated. It has emerged that business firms are aware of the SD concept and the importance of employees in the business to achieve sustainable workplaces. However, it is clear that a lack of knowledge, poor policy implementation, issues of corruption, and the political situation in the country have all played a negative role in sustainable development. It has also emerged that most of the research based on developed countries clearly does not consider significant geographical factors and there is a need to do more research while keeping in mind the particular factors relevant to developing countries. This research is of significant importance as it is an in-depth investigation of the current state of the textile sector in Pakistan which is the third largest cotton producer in the world and exports textiles to leading countries like China, the United States of America, Germany, and the United Kingdom.

# Chapter Seven

## Conclusion

### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter will present the final stage of this thesis and conclude the research findings. Furthermore, recommendations are also given by the researcher which will practically help the textile firms in Pakistan towards the achievement of sustainable development goals. This chapter will also highlight the contribution of this research to the existing literature.

### 7.2 A review of the research

This study commenced with a review of literature about sustainable development, QWL and the textile sector in Pakistan. Despite Pakistan being one of the biggest exporters of textile products all over the world, the researcher identified a gap in the lack of knowledge and information about the implementation of sustainable development and sustainable workplaces. This is of particular importance as the textile business is the second biggest industry which supports Pakistan's economy. The aim of this study is to explore how the textile sector of Pakistan is embedding sustainable workplace strategies to enhance competitive advantage.

This study achieved the above aim by using the case of the textile sector in Pakistan. 18 different managers from the sector were interviewed. In order to achieve the aim of the research, the following objectives were set out:

- Define the textile industry in Pakistan through a review of academic, business, and practice literature

- Explore if sustainable workplace strategies are embedded in the organisations and key factors to implement sustainability and CSR detailed in this research by collecting and analysing primary data from managers in the sector
- Where sustainable workplace strategies are considered to be embedded, explore whether they do enhance competitive advantage, QWL and recognise the associated challenges
- Identify government regulations which support sustainable workplace policies to provide recommendations

This study has contributed with quite many different aspects and therefore, the essential findings of this study will be discussed through the research questions presented earlier. These research questions have been the core of the study throughout the process, and therefore discussing the essential findings through these questions is very logical.

### **What is the status of the Pakistan textile industry?**

After an extensive literature review, it has been suggested that Pakistan textile industry contributes 46 % of the GDP of Pakistan. It is also the 8<sup>th</sup> largest exporter of textile products. During the focus study group it was recognised that majority of the textile firms in Pakistan still lack the knowledge of CSR and QWL. Furthermore, it has been identified that 60% of the exports of Pakistan is because of textile products. Policy implementation and development related to CSR is still very limited and there is a need of proper legislation.

### **What does sustainability and CSR mean to Pakistan's textile firms?**

During the interviews and the reflections, all the respondents from large textile firms seemed very concerned about sustainability and CSR, they all showed great interest

in structuring a sustainability strategy for the case company. The company's eagerness in conducting a sustainability strategy will however not be enough if they are not ready to implement the strategy. Even if the respondents showed a great deal of interest towards sustainability, majority of the respondents from medium and small textile firms indicated the concerns about cost of CSR and lack of support. Few managers also added that decision to implement sustainable workplace strategies and CSR was one of the best decisions they made for their business. Additionally, the contradictory opinions about whether to implement the strategy or not will most likely cause some problems during the implementation process. Many small firms due to the lack of knowledge and research assumed that CSR policies costs so much and they do not want to be socially responsible. Few managers were not even aware of the issue or its implications. It was also noted that some firms think CSR and QWL are just for PR and marketing.

**What are the key business drivers which encouraged employers to adopt and implement the sustainable workplace strategies and QWL into their business?**

Motives behind a possible implementation of a sustainability strategy were quite homogeneous among the interviews. All of the interviewees stated that one of the most important motives for engaging in sustainability is personal interest for sustainability and their desire to save the world. In addition to this, other important motives behind implementing a sustainability strategy were the increased demands from stakeholders, for example suppliers and customers, and the possibility to gain a competitive advantage from sustainability work. Even if the firms claim they are aware of CSR and sustainable workplace strategies, due to the lack of research and policy implementation it is almost impossible for all the firms to implement CSR. Majority of

the managers accepted that biggest reason is to implement QWL and CSR is to build reputation in the business market. Therefore, it is essential for more CSR and sustainability research.

### **What are the main organisational barriers that impede business firms in the adoption and implementation of sustainability and CSR?**

This study identified that due to the political and economic situation of Pakistan, firms do not have financial resources to invest in training of their employees or safety plans as well as on internal standards. Energy crisis is also identified as the major player which is the main barrier for firms to implement CSR. Lack of government support or incentives are also playing great role. Lack of research and support is also another negative factor identified by the researcher. Developing economies also need international support to understand CSR and QWL concept.

### **What positive impact does sustainability initiatives have on competitiveness?**

Some of the large textile firms highlighted that CSR implementation and sustainable workplace initiatives helped them to gain competitive advantage in the local and global business market. Long term benefits were also discussed including employee's satisfaction, less workplace incidents, work efficiency and cost reduction such as less absenteeism, products efficiency and positive work environment.

### **What consideration is currently given by government and business firms to promote sustainability and CSR in terms of employees in the textile industry of Pakistan?**

There is currently not enough support available for business firms to implement sustainable business policies, even though Pakistan has its own sustainability goals

but poor implementation and lack of training is not very helpful. Government should also provide incentives support and tax reform for the firms who are willing to move towards sustainable future. There is also a need of sustainable development and CSR courses in universities to promote more research in this field. There is also need of foreign support from developed countries to build a bridge for sustainable policies.

### **7.3 Research contribution**

This thesis has successfully answered the questions set by the researcher at the start. Moreover, the literature review revealed the gap that there is not enough detailed in-depth research conducted on the topic of sustainable development and QWL in developing countries like Pakistan. Theoretically, this study benefits the body of literature by filling the research gap. Most of the prior studies focus on developed countries. There was a lack of in-depth research regarding SD and importance of QWL to make firms sustainable (Lee et al., 2012; Lee et al., 2013; Vlachos et al., 2013; Keraita et al., 2013). Therefore, this study contributed by adding to the knowledge of SD and CSR in the textile sector in Pakistan by examining the current state of the SD and how it is affecting the QWL of employees and what role firms are playing in sustainability.

To date, the majority of research on CSR in Pakistan, like that in most developing countries, has used a quantitative lens to understand the motivation for disclosure. This research will add knowledge to the current qualitative research related to CSR and QWL in developing economies. This research will help future researchers to identify the current situation of textile industry of Pakistan and future need of more indepth research.



Practically, this study may contribute by increasing the awareness of managers in Pakistani textile firms on the interrelatedness of SD, CSR and employees. Organisations may construct and implement policies of compensation and benefit (Sageer, Rafat, & Agarwal, 2012) to ensure fair and equitable rewards (Goel, Sharma, & Sharma, 2012). Organisations can also ensure that the working environment is safe and comfortable to increase employees QWL (Sageer et al., 2012). There is a need for knowledge development and research related to SD in Pakistan for which government support is needed. This research provides an alternative consideration on the issue of SD in the textile sector in Pakistan and reduces the gap in the literature around geographical factors (political and economic issues) which affects firm's sustainable policies and sustainable development goals. Research on developed countries previously used parameters that are not useful in developing countries like Pakistan. There is much cohesive research, and training is required in this area. Hence, this research can be used as a starting point by other researchers to further investigate CSR and the sustainable workforce.

- This research will help broaden knowledge of sustainable development and its role in business which will practically help businesses to understand and implement CSR in their business within the context of the developing country environment
- Barriers investigated by the researcher will help other researchers and policy makers to take some serious actions to strengthen the textile sector and its reputation globally. This research will also support the development of business

models which keep in mind other factors like corruption, political instability, and lack of financial support

- This research has also offered basic guidelines to future researchers in order to investigate this topic in detail.

Findings from this research highlight that there is a great potential available in the textile sector in Pakistan but due to lack of resources, knowledge and proper funding and guidelines from the government, this sector is facing difficulties. Furthermore, large companies are implementing CSR and offering workplace safety and good quality work life to their staff in order to strengthen their workforce, but it is still limited to only large international companies. In contrast, small textile units are not aware of the long-term benefits associated with sustainable development and sustainability. Another issue highlighted by the researcher was the contribution of international bodies like ISO to help businesses to understand the true meaning of certification. There is also a lack of training and education in the sector which is damaging the reputations of textile firms in the international market. This research has successfully contributed to the literature with regard to developing countries, which is crucial for international firms and to avoid incidents like “Rana Plaza and Baldia town” which will only be possible if support is offered to firms moving towards sustainable development. Moreover, future researchers can further investigate the relationship of CSR and QWL in developing countries by taking this research as a starting point. Furthermore, this research also concludes that offering good QWL and CSR results in a firm’s stability and reduces the future cost of industrial disasters like Baldia town.

The critical importance of enhancing the skills of business managers and other employees in order to improve the understanding and importance of SD and CSR has

been emphasised several times here. Additionally, there is a unanimous agreement amongst all participants from the textile sector, that this is a fundamental requirement for the development of the wider sustainable business society. The findings of this research also reveal that the shortage of skilled workforce was one of the key factors in limiting the success of sustainable development programs, which illustrates the point about the wider need for putting in place more effective plans and programs related to training, research and financial support. Therefore, this is a potential area, where more research is required on how proper support can successfully help textile firms to implement SD policies and offer QWL to employees to move towards sustainable workplaces.

It is important to set up a framework for SD policy implementation in the textile sector in Pakistan based on tri-sector partnerships involving government. This would provide textile firms and international customers with a valuable opportunity to discuss and define their mutual goals and priorities related to SD and the sustainable workforce within the context of the textile sector in Pakistan. The findings of this thesis revealed that there were four key requirements needed to enable the above potential framework. Most importantly, there is an immediate need to establish a national agency in Pakistan to coordinate and oversee sustainable development objectives and link them to national sustainable development goals. Secondly, a national sustainable development and CSR strategy needs to be discussed and developed in consultation with key stakeholders. Thirdly, the government should be playing a more substantial role in delivering sustainable development programs. Finally, sustainable development policies need to be discussed and defined in order to help determine the types of SD program required in the sector.

Contrary to the previous studies focusing mostly on developed countries and very few in developing countries, this study is the first piece of academic work related to sustainable development and CSR in the textile sector in Pakistan to adopt an approach that involves making firms into sustainable workplaces. It is anticipated that this study could be used in future related work as well as in other business sectors for sustainable policy development. The study found clear evidence, in agreement with existing literature on SD and CSR in the textile sector in Pakistan, that the SD policies practiced by companies are very limited. However, the current study provides clear evidence that firms are starting to adopt SD goals but due to the specific hurdles mentioned here, it is still difficult for small sized firms.

In addition, this work provides clear evidence that a government role in SD implementation has the potential to improve future practices of CSR and SD in Pakistan's context. Furthermore, this work highlights the use of CSR as a strategy and mechanism to contribute to the development of the textile sector in Pakistan and in particular to its human capital. Although this idea has been explored in an international context, the current study evaluated its implementation within the Pakistan context by proposing a framework connecting government, firms, employees and buyers. The present research is notable and timely to give employers in the textile sector of Pakistan a vision that places emphasis on provision of training and capacity building of Pakistani firms.

#### **7.4 Recommendations**

The researcher suggests some practical recommendations for employers, policy makers and for future researchers in order to introduce sustainable development

strategies into the textile sector. This will not only benefit the business organisations but their employees, government, and future researchers.

More specifically, they could also help in the development and implementation of the framework discussed in the previous section, which aimed at using SD as a tool to create a sustainable work environment with minimal cost.

### **7.5 Recommendations for employers**

After considering the summaries of the findings of the study, some key recommendations can also be suggested to improve future work (practice, policy and study) in relation to sustainable development and the sustainable workforce. These suggested recommendations are based on the overall findings of the present study:

- Employers should consider sustainability as a long-term benefit for the company. It is also very important that employers consider their employees as an asset and make investment to offer them safe work environments, learning opportunities and the right to make decision within their work environment. It is also suggested that this should be done on a regular basis in order to achieve competitive advantage and to maintain a good reputation globally.
- Employers should endeavour to acquire adequate knowledge to enhance their understanding and skills to offer sustainable workplaces to their employees, by organising regular workshops, seminars, sustainability development training programmes and short courses.
- Employers should integrate sustainable development into their business policy in order to ensure its goal has been achieved. Large business firms should also work with small textile units to offer them support and learning

opportunities. It is also very important to consider national laws and regulations seriously regarding sustainable business development and employees.

- Proper implementation of international standards (ISO 9000, 14000, 26000 etc) should be the main priority of companies and they should not try to cut corners.
- Employers should also follow a systematic and well-defined approach towards sustainable development in order to achieve long term benefits.

## **7.6 Recommendations for Government**

After the in-depth analysis of the sector and data collected from the interviews, it has been concluded that there is a lack of government support in the textile sector of Pakistan. Government has made laws and regulations regarding sustainability as well as labour rights, but there is no proper implementation of those laws. There is no government support in terms of finance and tax relief. Hence, the government should offer some financial incentives to business firms who are considering SD and there should be a scheme for companies to get tax relief if they implement sustainability into their business policy. The government of Pakistan should also offer training opportunities to the managers of textile firms to promote understanding of the issues involved in sustainability. There is also a need for the government to organize events to attract international investors and build a bridge between textile firms and international customers because this is the biggest barrier in the sector. The government of Pakistan should also offer low interest rate loans to the textile firms and work closely with international bodies like ISO to ensure that business organizations are successfully getting benefits from those certifications. Such support should be easily accessible to all the textile firms regardless of their size and capacity.

## **7.7 Recommendations for future study**

This research has opened a debate about the importance of sustainable development and QWL in developing countries like Pakistan. Now there is scope to carry out more in-depth study about the importance of SD, CSR and QWL. Furthermore, additional research can be done to explore the perspectives of government bodies and their views about this concept. This study focused on the textile sector in Pakistan, but it can be applied to a different business sector or even in a different country. This research is based on a developing country context it can also be compared with developed countries to get further knowledge about the topic.

## **7.8 Limitations of the study**

It could be suggested that this work takes a top-down perspective as all participants were senior and managerial level. However, the research took a more strategic approach, which attempted to understand those who have been involved in decision making within the firms. Other limitations include lack of repeat interviews over time with the managers, which might have allowed the researcher to capture any possible change in experiences, practices or views, but due to limited resources and personal circumstances of the researcher it was not possible. Additionally, a quantitative approach might have allowed for a greater breadth of participants, and a more sustained review of existing sustainable development practices may have provided a more grounded approach to understand the extent of SD in the textile sector of Pakistan. However, the chosen qualitative methodology allowed the researcher a deeper investigation of the research topic as already discussed in detail in chapter four. Despite all of these limitations, the work has provided valuable findings, including a multi-perspective assessment of the current state of sustainable development

practices and perspectives of managers about sustainable workplaces and QWL. It also stimulated a serious consideration for sustainable development policies to be employed as a tool for capacity building and development, which would support the textile sector and economy of Pakistan.

### **7.9 Areas for future research**

In order to develop the discussed sustainable implementation framework, further research is needed to define the roles of government and employers as well as customers, for the proper implementation of CSR goals. The use of quantitative research methods should be considered to maximise the number of participants and ensure a comprehensive geographical representation throughout the sector. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, this is the first piece of academic work to study SD in depth and examine the role of employers and perceptions about SD in the textile sector in Pakistan. However, more research is required in this area.

### **7.10 Personal reflection**

The fact that the researcher is from Pakistan, an Urdu speaker, and a woman studying in the UK, may have had some influence on this work and the way the research has been conducted. These factors sometimes affect communication with participants, access to individuals (both males or females) and might have, to some extent, influenced the content of the interviews and the type of information obtained. These factors may have had both positive and negative effects on the research. For example, participants might have assumed that the researcher was originally from the UK. This might have encouraged participants to provide more detailed answers but could also have resulted in participants making assumptions about how much information the



researcher already knew. For instance, besides being told and shown, by the administration staff of one of the many firms, that child labour is an offence and that the company follows all the regulations strictly, the researcher witnessed employees under the age of 15 working in the mill. Furthermore, qualitative researchers make every effort not to impose their own meanings on an interview and to establish meaning from what a researcher learns from participants,

“it is recognised that this is a very difficult task to fully achieve as interpretation made by qualitative researchers is often influenced by their own specific history, context, and background and prior understandings” (Creswell, 2009).

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# Appendices

## Information letter

To whom it may concern

My name is Ayesha Khan and I am a PhD student in the Salford Business School, University of Salford. As part of my PhD research, I am conducting research on the Quality of work life in the textile firms of Pakistan and how socially responsible activities help business firms in order to compete in the business market globally and locally.

I would like to reassure you that as a participant in this project you have several definite rights, these include the following:

- Your participation in the research is entirely voluntary.
- You retain the right to refuse to answer any question at any time.
- You are free to withdraw from the research at any time.

I would like to sincerely thank you for your participation in this research project. It is very much appreciated. I can be contacted at [a.khan28@edu.salford.ac.uk](mailto:a.khan28@edu.salford.ac.uk) should you have any questions or concerns regarding this research project.

## **Consent Letter**

I would like to assure you that any data or results from your participation in this research will be kept strictly confidential and will only be made available to me and my supervisory team. While excerpts of the data you provide may form part of published work in the form of conference papers, journal articles and newspaper articles, under no circumstances will your name or any identifying characteristics be included.

I would be grateful if you would sign this form to indicate that you are providing informed consent and that you are aware that participation is on a voluntary basis and that you are also aware of the possibility that excerpts of the information you provide may be used in any publications which arise from this research.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Interview Guide**

- Can you please briefly describe the company profile in terms of size and sale of the company?
- How does your company consider the issue of sustainability and sustainable workplace?
- How important is sustainability to your business?
- What are the hurdles or barriers facing your company and also other textile mills in order to move towards a sustainable future?
- How important is it to involve the company employees in business operations directly and indirectly?
- What do you think about the Quality of Work Life? What is your company vision about it and how important do you think it is for the company?
- Do you think that government support and proper policy can help your textile mill and other mills within the sector to move towards sustainable development and a sustainable work force?
- In your opinion, how bright is the future of sustainable business and development in the textile sector of Pakistan?
- Would you like to give some additional information which can help me further investigate the quality of work life in your workplace?

Thanks for your input,

Ayesha Khan