

---

***Workplace Sustainability in Emerging Economies: A Comprehensive Evidence from Malaysia***  
***Muhammad Zahid<sup>1</sup> Haseeb Ur Rahman<sup>2</sup> Muhammad Zeeshan Mirza<sup>3</sup> Mumtaz Ali Memon<sup>4</sup>***

---

ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Corporate Sustainability,  
Workplace Sustainability,  
GRI,  
Malaysian Public Listed Companies  
(PLCs).

*Corporate sustainability in business practices expected to improve several strategic issues. Besides other, it has an important role in improving workplace sustainability. The current study investigated the level of workplace sustainability practices in Malaysian Public Listed Companies (PLCs). An index of 16 workplace sustainability practices developed on the basis of global reporting initiatives (GRI) framework. Based on the index, a content analysis of the annual reports of PLCs carried out for three years from 2011-2013. The findings revealed that most of the sample firms are not properly practicing workplace sustainability and thus its level is thin in the country. Among others, this low level increases the probability of workplace related conflicts, dissatisfaction, poor productivity and accidents at the workplace. The findings have important insights for the various stakeholders of the country. The study not only contributes to the literature but also provides guidance for regulators and policy makers to make the Malaysian workplaces more sustainable.*

---

**INTRODUCTION**

In the last two decades, the inclusion of corporate sustainability practices (CSP) has tremendously increased in business organizations. At present, the trend is shifting towards the integrated role of CSP in business operations and strategic decisions. CSP deals with the three dimensions i.e. social, environmental and economic sustainability of the business organizations. The social dimension includes efforts to satisfy the demands of internal and external stakeholders of a business organization. The internal stakeholders account for workers and employees of an organization while the external stakeholders deal with the broad spectrum of external society and their demands. The previous extant literature mostly focused on the external stakeholders and overlooked the role of a business organization for their internal stakeholders including workers and employees which denotes as workplace

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor, Director City University Centre for Sustainability Studies (CUCSS), City University of Science & Information Technology, KP, Pakistan\*Corresponding Author [zahid@cusit.edu.pk](mailto:zahid@cusit.edu.pk)

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, Institute of Management Sciences, University of Science and Technology, Bannu, KP, Pakistan

<sup>3</sup>Department of Engineering Management, National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) Islamabad, Pakistan

<sup>4</sup>Air University School of Management, Air University Islamabad

sustainability.

Workplace sustainability means work and work-related issues for the internal stakeholders (employees) particularly during the introduction of CSP related policies within the organization. Workplace sustainability practices have the consideration for employees' human rights; health and safety issues; employment relations; workers bargaining power; work conditions and social issues; employment surveys; training and development (GRI, 2013). The organization can avail many benefits by adopting workplace sustainability practices. The workplace sustainability focuses on workplace-related issues and on the relationship between organization and its employees (Delai & Takahashi, 2011). The essence of workplace sustainability is related to the importance of sustainable working environment which has a direct and positive impact on employees' motivation, productivity and performance (Neely, Gregory, & Platts, 2005). While the inappropriate working conditions can result in legal actions, negative impacts on the license to operate and reputation of an organization (GRI, 2002). Turban and Greening (1997) report that signaling high level of social (both internal and external) performance enable firms to recruit more innovative and motivated employees who can positively impact firms' financial performance. CSP of an organization particularly on workplace indicate about employees' behaviors as an advertisement that leads to high reputation and performance of the company (Wagner, 2010).

From practical perspective and findings of the academic research, CSP is more matured in developed countries while still needs attention in developing and emerging economies around the world (Dissanayake, Tilt, & Xydias-Lobo, 2016). Moreover, it has also been reported that business organizations in developing and emerging economies are only focusing on some of the philanthropic activities related to external stakeholders and ignoring the internal stakeholders. It has also been reported that Malaysian PLCs are not performing well in relation with CSP, particularly for workplace sustainability practices. Subsequently, the CSP reporting and workplace sustainability practices are very low in Malaysian PLCs which increased workplace-related accidents. The Department of Occupation Safety and Health (DOSH) Malaysia also reports that the trend of workplace accidents is increasing in all the industrial sectors of Malaysia as exhibited in Table 1.

**Table 1 Occupational Accidents Statistics by Sector for 2014 and 2015**

Sectors	Death Cases			NPD			PD		
	2015	2014	2013	2015	2014	2013	2015	2014	2013
Manufacturing	46	45	58	1906	1510	14	89	112	69
Mining and Quarrying	04	15	0	32	43	30	03	4	0
Construction	88	72	69	138	94	83	11	6	12
Agriculture, Forestry, Logging and Fishery	31	42	33	440	441	488	09	9	14

Utility	06	0	0	86	69	100	04	1	0
Transport, Storage and Communication	22	15	0	107	84	84	02	3	1
Wholesale and Retail Trade	03	6	0	102	74	66	03	3	7
Hotel and Restaurant	0	0	0	62	56	19	0	0	1
Financial, Real Estate and Business Services	14	0	0	105	65	70	0	5	0
Public Services and Statutory Bodies	0	0	0	31	20	67	1	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>3009</b>	<b>2456</b>	<b>1021</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>104</b>

**NPD = Non-Permanent Disability; PD = Permanent Disability**

Amongst one of the mitigating strategies, these accidents and hazardous acts can be controlled by adopting workplace sustainability practices. However, the research on CSP with a particular focus on workplace sustainability is scant and a lot of work still needed to be done in developing and emerging economies. Therefore, the current study selects Malaysian public listed companies (PLCs) as a sample for exploring workplace sustainability practices by answering the following research questions.

- What are the most frequently followed workplace sustainability practices in Malaysian PLCs)?
- What is the level of these disclosures in 12 industry sectors of Malaysian PLCs?
- What is the level of these disclosures for three years from 2011- 2013 (all inclusive)?

By answering the above research questions, this study will make several contributions to the body of knowledge. First, the study will identify the true level of workplace sustainability practices by utilizing GRI reporting framework that is already under the consideration of Bursa Malaysia in Malaysian PLCs. Second, being a descriptive study in nature, it will provide rich empirical evidence. This, in turn, will enable the stakeholders to understand and focus on the workplace sustainability practices in Malaysian PLCs in order to maintain their legitimacy, good reputation, and stakeholders' acceptance. The remaining sections of the study are organized as the next section deals with the literature review followed by the research methods, results and discussions. The last section compiles conclusions and recommendations of the study.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### *Workplace Sustainability*

The concept of corporate sustainability has been derived from the word sustainable development (SD). The concept of SD is coined by the Brundtland report in 1987 with a view of balancing the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the human civilization (WCED, 1987). The concept of SD is then adopted by the business organizations with the same three dimensions including economic, social and environmental in their operations which is known as corporate sustainability practices (CSP).

Afterward, business organizations and their managements realized to report CSP to the broader spectrum of stakeholders that initiated the concept of CS reporting. In 1997, the United Nations introduced a Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) framework for business organizations to report CSP (GRI, 2013). The business organizations use GRI reporting framework to convey their CSP to the broader array of stakeholders. The GRI reporting framework consists of the same three dimensions - economic, social and environmental sustainability for reporting. The social dimension deals with internal and external stakeholders. The external stakeholders consist of society and community while the internal stakeholders deal with workers, employees, and workplace-related issues of the organization. The stakeholder theory treats employees as internal stakeholders of the organization and ensures their fair treatment (Freeman, 1984).

According to resourced-based view (RBV) theory workers and employees are considered as tangible assets of the firms who have a prominent role in their success. Workplace sustainability also focuses on workplace-related issues and on the relationship between the firm and its employees (Delai & Takahashi, 2011; Zahid et al., 2019). It directs the attention of the firms towards the basic needs of their employees. Also, it changes the harmful behaviors of organizations towards their employees (Vallance, Perkins, & Dixon, 2011). Good quality of working environment and health and safety related issues are also considered essential for workplace sustainability. Likewise, the GRI reporting initiatives also focus on employees' welfare and care of the workplace, employees' education, training and development. These are considered as the human capital of the knowledge economy (abilities, education, attitudes and intellectual agility) and thus key factors for flourishing a workplace (Delai & Takahashi, 2011). In addition, workplace sustainability also ensures workforce diversity and equal opportunities which mean equal remuneration, growth and employment opportunities for all the employees regardless of their gender, age or ethnicity. These are the most important aspects of workplace sustainability which not only retain the employees but also enhance firms' reputation and performance (GRI, 2002).

Besides these, employees' occupational health and safety are also the core parts of workplace sustainability. Safe and healthy workers are instrumental for their own as well as organizational productivity (Drew, 2014). Workplace sustainability also allows the employees for their freedom of association and collective bargaining. The absence of free workers union or collective bargaining power can lead to strikes and pose a threat to 'workplace industrial relations' (Chan & Hui, 2012). Moreover, it also ensures the elimination of child labor, forced and compulsory labor, disciplinary practices, and protection of indigenous rights (Auger & Eckhardt, 2006). The establishment of these practices has an effect on the outlook of an organization for being socially responsible. As this perception is believed to

be good for buying behavior of customers, thus highly valued by the stakeholders (Finch, 2005). Workplace sustainability also accounts for how much an organization is ethical (Appelbaum, Deguire, & Lay, 2005). Organizations which develop a culture where good ethical practices are followed improve their productivity and economic performance (Joyner & Payne, 2002). Similarly, decent labor practices, protections of human rights and shelters for employees are also considered crucial for workplace sustainability (Carroll & Shabana, 2010). These practices allow the organizations to achieve long-term economic and financial benefits. It is found that long-term workplace sustainability not only ensures a sustainable workplace but also an organization with superior levels of financial gains. However, in practice, organizations narrow down their approach by trying to avoid the implementation of these practices, particularly for an immediate cut in costs (Finch, 2005).

Workplace sustainability also includes a corruption free workplace which is related to the provision of employment opportunities for the workforce. Both these practices are closely related to each other. While discussing the situation of Ukrainian workplace, it is revealed that corruption at workplace violates merit by not allowing equal employment opportunities to the deserving candidates. The recruitment of employees through bribes exploit other employees, their wage levels and job security, among others (Round, Williams, & Rodgers, 2008). Tomsic, Bojnec, and Simcic (2015) reported that the economic performance of those small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) was superior, which were adhering to the good workplace sustainability practices. It explains that organizations with a positive image of having high levels of workplace sustainability practices outperform organizations which do not implement these practices fully. However, the recent review of the literature (Siew, 2015) suggests that companies try to complicate the overall CSP and its reporting with an aim to hide the discrepancies between what they are actually doing and what they are reporting. In today's business world it is imperative for an organization to implement and report workplace sustainability practices in letter and spirit on regular basis for its stakeholders (Andrews, 2002). The motivation to implement and follow these practices derives from long-term economic performance, profit maximization, and competitive advantage etc. (Finch, 2005).

### *Corporate Sustainability Practices in Malaysia*

Malaysia is one of the fast-growing developing economies in the Asian region and committed to being a developed nation by the year 2020. In this regard, the government of Malaysia has pronounced policies and incentives to encourage the industry for further development, among others. As reported by the Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM), Malaysia is ranked as the third best-performing economy in the region after

Singapore and Thailand with the estimated GDP of USD 312.4 billion and a real GDP growth of 4.7% and 5% industrial growth by the end of 2013 (BNM, 2014). Also, it is witnessed by the emissions of greenhouse gasses (GHG) that has tremendously been increased in the recent decades. Apart from the environmental issues, many social and economic problems have also been raised such as violation of basic human rights, breaching of labor laws and the failure of gigantic corporations in Malaysia. Though since its independence, Malaysia is striving towards CSP by promulgating several strategic initiatives for their economic growth and development in order to make it more sustainable and contribute to the broad agenda of sustainable development. During the budget presentation of ninth Malaysian Plan (2005-2010), the importance of CSP was highlighted for the very first time in the country (Ameer & Othman, 2011; Zahid & Ghazali, 2015). In the budget speech Minister of Finance, Yab Dato Seri Abdullah Bin Hj. Ahmad Badawi announced that all the PLCs are required to disclose their corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities in their annual reports by the end and onward of the financial year 2007. Accordingly, Malaysia opts to attempt the implementation of CSP and its related policies in Malaysian PLCs after announcing the Ninth Plan (Ameer & Othman, 2011; Zahid & Ghazali, 2015). However, the contents of disclosures still remained voluntary. In the same year, the Bursa Malaysia (the Malaysian stock exchange), established a CSP framework with four dimensions namely community (targeting social external stakeholders) workplace (addressing social internal stakeholders), environment and marketplace (dealing with economic contributions of a company). This framework was helpful to them to implement CSP in their business activities.

The Bursa Malaysia defines CSP as “open and transparent business practices based on ethical values and respect for the community, employees, environment, shareholders and other stakeholders. It is designed to deliver sustainable value to society at large” (BURSA Malaysia, 2006). As the focus of the study is on workplace sustainability which has been defined by the Bursa Malaysia that “we draw our employees from society and so everything we do with our staff needs to be socially responsible, whether we are dealing with basic human rights or gender issues. Good working environment and health and safety are obvious considerations, as is the way in which, if we believe in CSR [i.e. CSP]” (Bursa Malaysia, 2006). Here companies are required to be socially responsible in regard to their employees, social welfare, human and labor rights, health and safety, quality working environment and gender issues etc. Preferably, the companies are required to consider all the four dimensions during crafting their business strategies and vision (Rahman, Zain, & Al-Haj, 2011).

By focusing on the previous studies related to CSP in the Malaysian context, it is unveiled that most of the Malaysian PLC's followed community and environmental disclosures at large while ignoring workplace sustainability practices in their reporting (Anas, Abdul Rashid, & Annuar, 2015). Most of the studies showing that overall level of CSP including workplace sustainability is very low since a decade of the promulgation of Bursa Malaysia steps for CSP as discussed above. However, in some recent studies, it is found that the level of workplace sustainability and its reporting is now improving. A study based on 85 Malaysian PLCs investigating social dimensions (including community and workplace sustainability) of CSP for the years 2006 and 2009 found that the extent and quality of the disclosures have improved over the study period (Haji, 2013). Another study based on 113 reports from Malaysian property and real estate sectors documented that the overall reporting is low but having an upward trend over the time from 2011 to 2013 both-inclusive (Zahid & Ghazali, 2015). In a nutshell, most of the previous studies documented that CSP in Malaysian context is still low and inconsistent over the time (Harun, Rashid, & Alrazi, 2013; Nazli, Ahmad, Salat, & Haraf, 2013; Zahid, Rehman, & Khan, 2018).

## Research Methods

The current study uses Malaysian PLCs as a unit of analysis. To explore workplace sustainability practices in Malaysian PLCs, the current study uses 300 reports of the companies registered in 12 sectors for three years from 2011 to 2013. From each sector, the study randomly selects ten (10) reports of the top companies. Moreover, all the companies/reports are included from the sectors having a small population i.e. less than 10. The details of the sample used in the study are reported in Table 2.

**Table 2: Sector-wise Sample Companies**

	<b>Sectors</b>	<b>No. of Sample Companies</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1.	Consumer	30	10
2.	Trading	51	17
3.	Industrial	48	16
4.	Plantation	24	8
5.	Hotels	6	2
6.	Real Estate	15	5
7.	Infrastructure	9	3
8.	Properties	30	10
9.	Technology	33	11
10.	Finance	9	3
11.	Construction	42	14
12.	Mining	3	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

To explore workplace sustainability practices, the current study uses a content analysis procedure for data collection from annual reports. The content analysis procedure is the most widely used method in

research, particularly in the collection of a quantitative data from annual reports (Amran & Haniffa, 2011; Zahid & Ghazali, 2015). The content analysis and data collection based on Table 3, highlights some of the most followed workplace sustainability practices and disclosures as per the recommendation of GRI sustainability reporting framework. GRI sustainability reporting framework is the most widely used reporting framework under the recommendation of the United National Global Compact (UNGC) and Bursa Malaysia for promoting CSP (Bursa Malaysia, 2015; GRI, 2013; Isaksson & Steimle, 2009). To record each of the contents mentioned in Table 3, the study utilizes the binary coding of 0 and 1 that assigns 1 if the company reports the content, and 0 otherwise (Gao & Bansal, 2013; Ioannou & Serafeim, 2014). Simply, the highest score on the contents will mean high performance of a company and vice versa (Lee, Singal, & Kang, 2013).

**Table 3: Workplace Sustainability Practices/Disclosures of Malaysian PLCs**

<b>Decent Labor Practices</b>	“Project Safety and Health Plans are implemented for each and every project we undertake in line with the Occupational Safety and Health Act 1994 monitored by experienced and qualified safety officers”. (Annual Report -AR: Zelan Sdn Bhd, 2011)
<b>Minimum Wages for employees</b>	“02 April 2013 The Human Resource Department delivered the happy news of wage adjustment to six BAC staff. In line with the minimum wage (starting from January 2013) announced by the government, their basic pay were duly adjusted to RM900”. (AR: Brahims Sdn Bhd, 2013)
<b>Workplace Ethical Values</b>	“In addition, our Code of Business Practice, which applies to all employees, specifies our expectations and standards for data protection and confidentiality. We have a structured ranking system for data confidentiality, reflecting the care that must be taken with sensitive information. Within this system, all customers’ and employees’ information is strictly private and confidential”. (AR: Maxis Sdn Bhd, 2011)
<b>Employment Opportunities</b>	“MMC and its subsidiary companies participated in several career fairs such as USM Career Fair, UM Career Path and Annual Malaysian Student Leaders Summit to offer undergraduates an opportunity to understand MMC’s business as well as explore job opportunities within the Group. Senai Airport Terminal Services Sdn. Bhd. (SATSSB) participated in a career talk session at SMK Semenchu, Kota Tinggi. The talk was given by the Head of Safety and Security and attended by 60 students from 10 various schools around the area. The program provided students with information on career opportunities in the aviation sector as well as at the airport”. (AR: MMCCorp. Sdn Bhd, 2011)
<b>Occupational Health and Safety</b>	“We continue to strive to adhere to stringent occupational health and safety practices, providing a safer working environment for our workforce. As a result of our rigorously enforced policies, the Company has achieved 30,045,078 Manhours Without Loss Time Injury as at 28 February 2013”. (AR: Dayang Sdn Bhd, 2013)
<b>Training and Development</b>	“In 2012, the Group allocated approximately RM4.31 million for employee training and development activities to drive continuous learning and enhance employees’ skills and expertise. Of this amount, RM1.48 million was spent on technical training and RM1.96 million on soft skills and leadership training. Close to 80% or RM3.44 million of 2012’s budget was invested in these areas.

---

As at end December 2012, we recorded an average of six man-days training per employee, which was above the target of an average of five man-days per employee”. (AR: Faber Sdn Bhd, 2011)

**Diversity and Equal Opportunities**

“Making progress in diversity is a business priority for Maybank. We seek employees who are committed to preserving and enhancing our core values and business practices. There are no barriers in employment or development at Maybank because of an individual’s gender, race, religion and age”. (AR: Maybank Sdn Bhd, 2011)

**Supplier’s Labor Assessment**

“Supplier management Suppliers play an essential role in delivering world-class services our clients expect. We seek to build long-term relationships with reliable and capable suppliers, who join us in our commitment to conduct business responsibly. Our Code of Procurement Ethics (COPE) sets out expectations of our suppliers. We are in the process of revising COPE to specify required and desired behavior of our suppliers on legal, safety, environmental and human rights aspects”. (AR: Armada Sdn Bhd, 2012)

**Protection of Human Rights**

“As an advocate of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and a signatory to the United Nations Global Compact, we support 10 principles within four important areas: human rights, labor rights, environment and anti-corruption”. (AR: Calsberg Sdn Bhd, 2011)

**Collective Bargaining Power**

“Malaysia Airlines acknowledges the role of trade unions in representing employees, in order to cultivate a healthy working relationship and industrial harmony. Decisions made through the process of collective bargaining and negotiation between employer and unions are today more objective and amicable. Trade unions play an important role in supporting the Company’s Business Plan and act as a conduit to harness members’ commitment to deliver on the business objectives. Today, Malaysia Airlines recognizes eight (8) unions and associations, representing a diverse group of employees ranging from general workers to pilots”. (AR: MAS Sdn Bhd, 2012)

**Prevent Child and Compulsory Labor**

“UMW does not use child labor or forced labor of any form and it does not tolerate such abuses within the Group. UMW’s operations also do not infringe on the rights of indigenous people and there have been no violations of this kind during the review period”. (AR: UMW Sdn Bhd, 2011)

**Employees Satisfaction Survey**

“As part of the initiatives towards promoting employee engagement, a company-wide employee survey was conducted to understand how individual employee perceives their working conditions, job satisfaction, career opportunities and other qualitative aspects of the workplace. The survey showed that the employees were generally positive and satisfied with their job prospect, access to resources, training and development and working environment. There are other areas such as compensation and benefits that HR will continually improve to meet the needs of its employees premised on the company’s values and business goals”. (AR: Haio Sdn Bhd, 2012)

**Shelters for Employees and their Family**

“One of the Roundtable Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) certification criteria is to ensure workers have proper living quarters and access to medical services”. (AR: HapSeng Sdn Bhd, 2013)

**Anti-Corruption**

“Brahim’s Airline Catering Sdn Bhd (BAC) the Malaysian in-flight catering company has become the country’s first Halal food supplier to sign the Corporate Integrity Pledge (CIP) to improve its governance and integrity among its workforce. CIP implementation helps the company to educate its workers on the corruption crime, as well as workers’ integrity”. (AR: Brahims Sdn Bhd, 2013)

<b>Sports and Work-life Balance</b>	“Promoting a balanced healthy work-life with the formation of a sports club to promote sports and social activities”. (AR: TRIPLC Sdn Bhd, 2011)
<b>Workplace Related Awards</b>	“We have been awarded the Most Popular Graduate Employer in Broadcasting/Media at Malaysia’s 100 Leading Graduate Employers Award for two consecutive years, 2011 and 2012”. (AR: Sdn Bhd, 2011)

Company Annual Reports (AR) is available on <http://www.bursamalaysia.com/market/listed-companies/list-of-companies/main-market> with their respective names mentioned above. The above data is based on company annual reports (original wordings).

## Results and Discussion

Table 4 exhibits descriptive statistics for workplace sustainability practices in the sample companies from 12 different sectors. The descriptive statistics report means, maximum, minimum, median and standard deviation for workplace sustainability practices. The workplace sustainability practices range from 1 to 11 (i.e. denoting by minimum, maximum and mean values) both industry and year wise. The highest mean 6.83 reported by the hotel industry, followed by the consumer and finance sectors. Table 4 reports that there is a big difference in mean values in all the 12 sectors.

**Table 4 Descriptive Statistics Industry and Year wise**

<b>Industry-wise</b>					
<b>Sectors</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Med</b>	<b>S.D</b>
Consumer	6.73	9.00	3.00	7.00	1.80
Trading	4.49	8.00	1.00	4.00	1.74
Industrial	4.58	8.00	3.00	4.00	1.20
Plantation	6.46	9.00	3.00	6.00	1.59
Hotels	6.83	8.00	6.00	6.50	.98
REITs	2.73	6.00	1.00	3.00	1.58
Infrastructure	4.33	5.00	3.00	4.00	.71
Properties	4.60	7.00	2.00	4.00	1.48
Technology	5.45	8.00	4.00	5.00	1.18
Finance	6.33	11.00	3.00	7.00	2.40
Construction	6.02	8.00	4.00	6.00	1.20
Mining	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00
<b>Year-wise</b>					
2011	4.85	9.00	1.00	5.00	1.77
2012	5.20	9.00	1.00	5.00	1.76
2013	5.53	11.00	1.00	5.50	1.91

The overall practices are very low and no sector of the economy has reached to the highest level of disclosures i.e. 16 as explained in Table 3. The findings clearly indicate that workplace sustainability practices are very low in all the Malaysian PLCs. However, year wise statistics representing by mean, are showing a slight upward trend which is relatively a good sign towards the workplace sustainability

practices. But the slight improvement or upward trend, will never strongly push the overall workplace sustainability practices and their disclosure in Malaysia which is very low.

Table 5 indicates workplace sustainability practices in all 12 sectors. The results indicate that the overall level of disclosure for workplace sustainability is very low in the Malaysian PLCs. Most of the companies' reports only have 3 to 6 workplace sustainability practices as indicated by the percentage of 10.7%, 20.0%, 21.7% and 16.3% respectively. Out of the sample, only one company's workplace sustainability practices have reached to the maximum level of 11 disclosures in the finance sector. Hence, the results are very alarming regarding workplace sustainability practices. This low level of workplace sustainability practices may be considered as one of the potential reasons for unsustainable workplace practices in the Malaysian PLCs.

**Table 5 Level of Workplace Sustainability Disclosures**

<b>Sectors/No. of Disclosures</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>
Consumer	0	0	3	1	2	5	8	6	5	0
Trading	2	3	12	9	10	9	3	3	0	0
Industrial	0	0	9	16	13	7	2	1	0	0
Plantation	0	0	1	2	3	7	2	8	1	0
Hotels	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	2	0	0
REITs	4	3	5	0	2	1	0	0	0	0
Infrastructure	0	0	1	4	4	0	0	0	0	0
Properties	0	3	0	16	4	1	6	0	0	0
Technology	0	0	0	5	18	3	4	3	0	0
Finance	0	0	1	2	0	0	5	0	0	1
Construction	0	0	0	5	9	13	10	5	0	0
Mining	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>% to total Sample</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>10.7</b>	<b>20.0</b>	<b>21.7</b>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>13.7</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>0.3</b>

Table 6 exhibits the results of individual workplace sustainability practices in all the sample companies. The results are disappointing for most of the workplace sustainability practices. For example, the highest percentage of total sample companies which are not reporting for preventing child and compulsory labor on workplace is 99.0%.

**Table 6 Percentage of Workplace Sustainability Disclosures**

<b>WPS Disclosures</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>%</b>
Minimum Wage for Workers	261	87.0	39	13.0
Ethics on workplace	-	-	300	100.0
Decent Labor Practices	243	81.0	57	19.0

Employment Opportunities	77	25.7	223	74.3
Occupational Health and Safety	70	23.3	230	76.7
Training and Development	38	12.7	262	87.3
Workplace Diversity	140	46.7	160	53.3
Supplier Labor Assessment	266	88.7	34	11.3
Human Rights Protection	289	96.3	11	3.7
Bargaining Power	295	98.3	5	1.7
Prevent Child and Compulsory Labor	297	99.0	3	1.0
Employees Satisfaction Survey	294	98.0	6	2.0
Shelter for Employees	231	77.0	69	23.0
Workplace Related Awards	292	97.3	8	2.7
Anti-Corruption on workplace	271	90.3	29	9.7
Sports Activities for Workers	178	59.3	122	40.7

Similarly, 98.3% of the companies do not account for collective and bargaining power of workers; 98.0% for employees' satisfaction survey, 96.3% for human protections; 97.3% for workplace-related awards; 93.3% for anti-corruption on workplace and 81.0% for decent labor practices on workplace. However, ethics at the workplace is one among the highest disclosures in the sample companies. Overall, the findings endorse that the level of workplace sustainability practices is very low in Malaysian PLCs.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

CSP in business firms expected to improve several strategic issues. Among many others, CSP plays an important role in improving workplace sustainability practices. However, most of the previous studies have examined the level of CSP among the Malaysian PLCs in different sectors. Nevertheless, these studies have never shed light, particularly on workplace sustainability practices in the Malaysian context. The purpose of the current study was to explore the level of workplace sustainability practices in the Malaysian PLCs. Since long, Government of Malaysia is striving towards the sustainable industrial growth through promoting CSP in Malaysian PLCs. However, based on findings in this study, the overall level of workplace sustainability practices is very low. The year wise trend of these practices showing slight upward movement but still it is not enough for achieving the desired level of sustainable industrialization both on national and international points. This low level of disclosures indicate that Malaysian PLCs have a low-level commitment for promoting workplace sustainability practices at their workplace. This, in turn, increases workplace related conflicts; dissatisfaction, the poor productivity of workers; increasing number of accidents on workplace which ultimately lead to an unsustainable

industrialization. Hence, it is highly recommended that Malaysian PLCs should adopt good workplace sustainability practices for reducing workplace related negative practices. Besides others, workplace sustainability practices can be improved by the true involvement of regulatory bodies for their proper implementation. Leadership and management commitment towards workplace sustainability is also very important particularly in the companies where the level of workplace sustainability is very low like Malaysian PLCs.

The findings of the study can be helpful and have implications for the practice and policy in several ways. First, the findings of the current study are helpful to assist the Malaysian PLCs in promoting and reporting workplace sustainability practices. Second, the findings serve as a benchmark for the current workplace sustainability practices of Malaysian PLCs. The findings also encourage and motivate the Malaysian PLCs for corrective measures and further improvement in their workplace sustainability practices. Finally, the findings are useful for the relevant authorities to develop workplace sustainability policies and guidelines which will make the Malaysian workplaces as sustainable. The current study also has some limitations as it explored the level of workplace sustainability practices in the Malaysian PLCs only for three years. In future, the studies can investigate the subject for a longer period on the basis of a longitudinal data. Moreover, the studies can also consider a large size of sample representing Malaysian PLCs for getting a clearer picture of the subject in the future.

## REFERENCES

- Ameer, R., & Othman, R. (2011). Sustainability Practices and Corporate Financial Performance: A Study Based on the Top Global Corporations. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 108(1), 61–79. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-011-1063-y>
- Amran, A., & Haniffa, R. (2011). Evidence in development of sustainability reporting: a case of a developing country. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 20(3), 141–156. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.672>
- Anas, A., Abdul Rashid, H. M., & Annuar, H. A. (2015). The effect of award on CSR disclosures in annual reports of Malaysian PLCs. *Social Responsibility Journal*, 11(4), 831–852. <https://doi.org/10.1108/SRJ-02-2013-0014>
- Andrews, O. (2002). Getting Started on Sustainability Reporting. *Environmental Quality Management*, 11(3), 3–11. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tqem.10024>
- Appelbaum, S. H., Deguire, K. J., & Lay, M. (2005). The relationship of ethical climate to deviant workplace behaviour. *Corporate Governance: The International Journal of Business in Society*, 5(4), 43–55.
- Auger, P., & Eckhardt, G. (2006). The Other CSR: Consumer Social Responsibility. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.901863>
- BNM. (2014). *The 2013 Bank Negara Malaysia Annual Report* (Vol. 2012). Retrieved from [http://www.marc.com.my/home/userfiles/file/240314\\_BNM Annual Report 2013.pdf](http://www.marc.com.my/home/userfiles/file/240314_BNM%20Annual%20Report%202013.pdf)
- Bursa Malaysia. (2006). *Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Framework for Malaysian Public*

- Listed Companies*. Retrieved from <https://www.scribd.com/document/76636360/Csr-Writeup> (Accessed 23/06/2019)
- Bursa Malaysia. (2015). *Sustainability Reporting Guide*. Retrieved from <http://www.bursamalaysia.com/market/sustainability/sustainabilityreporting/sustainability-reporting-guide-and-toolkits/> (Last access date: 14/06/2016)
- Carroll, A. B., & Shabana, K. M. (2010). The Business Case for Corporate Social Responsibility: A Review of Concepts, Research and Practice. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 12(1), 85–105. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2370.2009.00275.x>
- Chan, C. K.-C., & Hui, E. S.-I. (2012). The Dynamics and Dilemma of Workplace Trade Union Reform in China: The Case of the Honda Workers' Strike. *The Journal of Industrial Relations*, 54(5), 653–668. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0022185612457128>
- Delai, I., & Takahashi, S. (2011). Sustainability measurement system: a reference model proposal. *Social Responsibility Journal*, 7(3), 438–471. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17471111111154563>
- Dissanayake, D., Tilt, C., & Xydias-Lobo, M. (2016). Sustainability reporting by publicly listed companies in Sri Lanka. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 129(2016), 169–182. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2016.04.086>
- Drew, E. N. (2014). Personnel Selection , Safety Performance , and Job Performance : Are Safe Workers Better Workers ? , 1–137.
- Finch, N. (2005). The motivations for adopting sustainability disclosure. *Management*, (August), 22.
- Freeman, R. E. (1984). Stakeholder Theory of the Modern Corporation. *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach*, 03, 38–48. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139192675>
- Gao, J., & Bansal, P. (2013). Instrumental and Integrative Logics in Business Sustainability. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 112(2), 241–255. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-012-1245-2>
- GRI. (2002). Sustainability Reporting Guidelines.
- GRI. (2013). *G4 Global Reporting Initiative Guidelines: Reporting Principles and Standard Disclosures*. Retrieved from <https://www.globalreporting.org/resource/library/GRIG4-Part1-Reporting-Principles-and-Standard-Disclosures.pdf>
- Haji, A. A. (2013). Corporate social responsibility disclosures over time: evidence from Malaysia. *Managerial Auditing Journal*, 28(7), 647–676. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MAJ-07-2012-0729>
- Harun, N. A., Rashid, A. A., & Alrazi, B. (2013). Measuring the Quality of Sustainability Disclosure among the Malaysian Commercial Banks. *World Applied Sciences Journal*, 28, 195–201. <https://doi.org/10.5829/idosi.wasj.2013.28.efmo.27026>
- Ioannou, I., & Serafeim, G. (2014). The Consequences of Mandatory Corporate Sustainability Reporting: Evidence from Four Countries. [Http://Ssrn.Com/Abstract=1799589](http://Ssrn.Com/Abstract=1799589), 1–34.
- Isaksson, R., & Steimle, U. (2009). What does GRI-reporting tell us about corporate sustainability? *The TQM Journal*, 21(2), 168–181. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17542730910938155>
- Joyner, B. E., & Payne, D. (2002). Evolution and implementation: A study of values, business ethics and corporate social responsibility. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 41(4), 297–311.
- Lee, S., Singal, M., & Kang, K. H. (2013). The corporate social responsibility-financial performance link in the U.S. restaurant industry: Do economic conditions matter? *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 32, 2–10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2012.03.007>
- Nazli, N., Ahmad, N., Salat, A., & Haraf, A. (2013). Environmental disclosures of Malaysian property development companies: towards legitimacy or accountability? *Social Responsibility Journal*, 9(2), 241–258. <https://doi.org/10.1108/SRJ-10-2011-0090>
- Neely, A., Gregory, M., & Platts, K. (2005). Performance measurement system design: A literature review and research agenda. *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*, 25(12), 1228–1263. <https://doi.org/10.1108/01443570510633639>
- Rahman, N. H. W. A., Zain, M. M., & Al-Haj, N. H. Y. Y. (2011). CSR disclosures and its

- determinants: evidence from Malaysian government link companies. *Social Responsibility Journal*, 7(2), 181–201. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17471111111141486>
- Round, J., Williams, C. C., & Rodgers, P. (2008). Corruption in the post-Soviet workplace: the experiences of recent graduates in contemporary Ukraine. *Work, Employment & Society*, 22(1), 149–166. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017007087421>
- Siew, R. Y. J. (2015). A review of corporate sustainability reporting tools (SRTs). *Journal of Environmental Management*, 164, 180–195. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvman.2015.09.010>
- Tomsic, N., Bojnec, S., & Simcic, B. (2015). Corporate sustainability and economic performance in small and medium sized enterprises. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 108, 603–612. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2015.08.106>
- Vallance, S., Perkins, H. C., & Dixon, J. E. (2011). What is social sustainability? A clarification of concepts. *Geoforum*, 42(3), 342–348. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2011.01.002>
- Wagner, M. (2010). The role of corporate sustainability performance for economic performance: A firm-level analysis of moderation effects. *Ecological Economics*, 69(7), 1553–1560. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2010.02.017>
- WCED. (1987). *World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future*. Oxford University Press. Retrieved from <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5987our-common-future.pdf>
- Zahid, M., & Ghazali, Z. (2015). Corporate sustainability practices among Malaysian REITs and property listed companies. *World Journal of Science, Technology and Sustainable Development*, 12(2), 100–118. <https://doi.org/10.1108/WJSTSD-02-2015-0008>
- Zahid, M., Rahman, H. U., Muneer, S., Butt, B. Z., Isah-Chikaji, A., & Memon, M. A. (2019). Nexus Between Government Initiatives, Integrated Strategies, Internal Factors and Corporate Sustainability Practices in Malaysia. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2019.118329>
- Zahid, M., Rehman, H. U., & Khan, M. A. (2018). ESG in Focus: The Malaysian Evidence. *City University Research Journal*, 09(01), 72–84.