
Do students view environmental sustainability as important in their job search? Differences and similarities across culture

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Abstract: Organisations are increasingly concerned about environmental sustainability; yet, there is little international research on how ecological values influence job-seekers' attraction to organisations and intentions to pursue a job. This study examines the influence of environmental sustainability in recruiting by exploring variances in perceptions between students from the USA, India, and China. This study identifies overall differences in respondents from these countries. A distinct difference in how students view environmental values and where responsibility for the environment is placed is noted across different cultures. Despite the differences, findings support a consistent relationship among respondents from all three countries: Students who perceive ecological values as being important also view organisations with environmental sustainability values as more attractive and as someplace they would be more likely to pursue employment. Therefore, organisations with environmental sustainability values may have more ability to hire individuals who will help support their organisational efforts.

Keywords: environmental sustainability; values: job search; culture; China; India; USA; recruiting; job pursuit; job attractiveness; employment.

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1 Introduction

The condition of the environment is far from a local concern. Around the globe individuals, businesses, and governments have looked at ways to both curb the harm being done to the environment and to engage in sustainable practices. The 21st century brought increased attention to issues like global warming and corporate social responsibility (CSR). Businesses valuing environmental sustainability look to expand their use of renewable energy, limit their carbon footprint, and work toward carbon neutrality. Along with potential energy cost savings, organisations showing concern for the environment have been associated with increased financial performance, innovation, and improved stakeholder relationships (Kassinis and Vafeas, 2006). Thus, organisations often seek environmental sustainability as one way to create a competitive advantage.

Creating and maintaining a competitive advantage requires businesses to place great importance on the recruitment of top employees. Displaying a pro-environmental image within the recruitment section of the company's website is one way to attract recruits (Behrend et al., 2009). The image positively represents the company to job seekers (Bauer and Aiman-Smith, 1996). Companies who identify and promote their CSR values are more likely to interest millennials and more likely to attract the most qualified employees (Smith and Alexander, 2013). Research supports that when an employee's values, in this case concern for the environment, match those of their employer, job performance may increase and workers may become more engaged (Carmeli et al., 2007). Employee values also contribute to the sustainability of the organisation (Florea et al., 2013). Thus, firms committed to ecological values and sustainability should work to attract employees sharing their commitment.

Globally, organisations are increasingly concerned about environmental sustainability; however, research has paid little attention to how sustainability influences job-seekers' attraction to organisations and intentions to pursue a job. As businesses seek a competitive global advantage, they must understand how to attract top employees committed to environmental sustainability and holding ecological values. This study, therefore, examines the influence of environmental sustainability in recruiting on a global scale by collecting data from business students in the USA, China, and India. This study then:

- 1 explores variances across countries in overall perceptions of environmental sustainability's value and who is responsible for environmental sustainability
- 2 examines consistency across countries in relationships between these perceptions and their perceived influence on job seekers' views and intentions.

2 Literature review

2.1 Cultural values and their impact on sustainability

Although environmental sustainability is important to countries throughout the world, this paper focuses on the USA, China, and India – three countries often referred to as the 'super-powers' due to their considerable global influence. These three countries are large in land mass and population and are closely connected through international business and

trade. China is currently listed as the USA's second largest trade partner and India its 11th largest trade partner (US Census, 2014). China is currently India's largest trade partner and the USA is the second largest (PTI, 2014). These three countries also have the largest ecological footprint, meaning they use substantial natural resources (Global Footprint Network, 2008). Additionally, they are listed as having the highest water pollution and consumption (Joshi, 2012). Thus, students in these countries may be especially attentive to the environmental sustainability values and practices of their future employers.

Because environmental sustainability is value-based and those values change (Whitford and Wong, 2009), differences in perspectives of sustainability may exist due to each country's cultural influences. The American culture tends to emphasise capitalism and individualism, which can at times make it more difficult to practice environmentally friendly behaviour (Dunlap et al., 1992). Americans live in a culture where some people view environmental sustainability as difficult and as making sacrifices (Thapa, 1999). According to some, "the willingness to sacrifice is what defines environmentally responsible behaviour" (Kaplan, 2000). In a country where making sacrifices is not always viewed favourably, instilling the importance of environmental sustainability may be more difficult.

In China, there may be more of a tendency for individuals to expect the government to implement solutions to environmental issues (Wong, 2010). Additionally, teaching methods sometimes use frightening examples of environmental problems, making students feel unsafe and hopeless (Duan and Fortner, 2005). However, a 2014 report (Bo, 2014) found that concerns in China for the environment are increasing, and public support for sustainability may be stronger in China than in the USA. The report also indicates that many people in China believe technology can provide solutions for the environment (Bo, 2014).

In India, where Hindu is the most dominant religion, nature is sacred. Many traditional Indian companies follow Gandhian philosophy, which incorporates environmental protection (Rudolph, 1971). In fact, Mahatma Gandhi was known to have a clear understanding of the balance between man and nature, emphasising protection and preservation to the point of being considered a "champion of environmental protection" [Pathak, (2004), p.371] and an "environmentalist par excellence" [Jha, (2016), p.1]. In their developing and emerging economy, people in India recognise the importance of the environment but still often prioritise industrial investment (Rahul, 2011). The problems of polluted water, air, and land combined with rapid population growth and poverty are difficult ones, and the industrialisation intended to alleviate the poverty presents more problems for the environment (Pathak, 2004). The ecological footprint is growing in India as a result of the pressures of population growth (Global Footprint Network, 2008). CSR is not a new concept in India, but its entry into business as a competitive advantage is. Today, caring for the environment is seen as an aspect of CSR and can play a role in building loyalty and dedication. However, CSR in India must be built into the culture of the organisation or it could be viewed as an extra burden among the workers (Rishi and Moghe, 2013).

Besides the more general cultural values, news events and current economic activities in the different countries may determine what facets of environmental sustainability are most important at any given point in time. News services highlight air pollution, water pollution, and desertification/erosion as pressing concerns in both China and India (Lallanilla, 2013; Wakefield, 2013). Yet, the factors reported as the most important in the

USA are quite different and include concern over the keystone pipeline, natural gas/fracking, severe weather, and regulating carbon emissions (Ruley and Kirk, 2014). This study begins by exploring the overall cultural differences in perceptions and assignment of responsibility for environmental sustainability.

2.2 How environmental perspectives may influence the job search

Although differences between countries may exist, some basic relationships between perceptions of the importance of environmental responsibility and the perceived influence on job seekers' intentions are still believed to hold across countries. Specifically, this study explores the perceived importance of environmental sustainability and its relationship with job attractiveness and perceived intentions to pursue a job by students in the USA, China, and India. Job attractiveness and job pursuit are two different constructs (Bauer and Aiman-Smith, 1996). Hypotheses are developed separately for each construct because of their uniqueness (Bauer and Aiman-Smith, 1996).

2.2.1 Attractiveness

Boswell et al. (2001) find that organisational reputation positively influences job attractiveness for potential employees. This attractiveness occurs because of the role of organisational values (Judge and Bretz, 1992; Turban and Greening, 1996). Organisations focusing on environmental sustainability may, therefore, be able to influence how attractively a job is viewed (Bauer and Aiman-Smith, 1996; Brokaw, 2007; Montgomery and Rasmus, 2011). Publicising sustainable practices and values may cause potential applicants who hold ecological values to become more committed to that organisation (Brokaw, 2007), as firms with a positive environmental sustainability reputation are often viewed as being more attractive to job seekers (Aiman-Smith et al., 2001; Turban and Greening, 1996; Montgomery and Rasmus, 2011).

2.2.2 Intent to pursue

Corporate social performance plays an important role in influencing applicants' decisions to pursue a job with a company, depending on applicants' values (Turban and Greening, 1996). Aiman-Smith et al. (2001) also find environmental reputation ranks high (fourth) in the intent to pursue a job with the company. Recruiters often emphasise a fit between candidates and their company (Butler et al., 2000). Higher job satisfaction rates result when a person's values match the values of an organisation, creating a fit (Chapman et al., 2005; Chatman, 1991). This perceived fit between business values and individual values also increases identification with the organisation (Carmeli et al., 2007). Looking at the recruiting and socialisation literature, this perceived fit may actually begin in the job seeking process (Cable and Judge, 1996). Fit with the organisation's values based on environmental sustainability may then also influence job attractiveness and whether a prospective employee would pursue the job opportunity. Thus, we first look at the basic assumption that if someone identifies multiple environmental sustainability initiatives as highly important, then the value organisations place on environmental sustainability will have a greater influence on their job search attitudes and behaviours.

- Hypothesis 1 Students in the USA, China, and India who rate sustainability as highly important will be more likely to indicate:
- a Higher job attractiveness toward an organisation that they view as valuing environmental sustainability.
 - b Higher likelihood to pursue a job with an organisation that they view as valuing environmental sustainability.

New paradigms regarding the ability of humans and other creatures in the environment to co-exist in a way that is beneficial/protective of scarce environmental resources are evolving alongside environmental sustainability. The new ecological paradigm (NEP) is a model that looks at the need to respect the environment, consume conscientiously, and use natural resources responsibly (Dunlap et al., 2000). The NEP scale measures an individual's perceptions of environmental sustainability's value and its overall role in society. The NEP scale is suitable for identifying environmental values (de Groot and Steg, 2008) as well as indicating generalised beliefs and attitudes (Fielding et al., 2008; Stern, 1995). The expression of values for natural resources and the environment should correspond to an interest in potential employers who promote their environmental sustainability values and/or practices.

- Hypothesis 2 Students in the USA, China, and India with a high NEP score will be more likely to indicate:
- a Higher job attractiveness toward an organisation that they view as valuing environmental sustainability.
 - b Higher likelihood to pursue a job with an organisation that they view as valuing environmental sustainability.

2.3 Responsibility for environmental sustainability

People tend to vary as to who they believe is responsible for protecting the environment. Differences in placement of responsibility may also exist across cultures as discussed earlier in the literature review. The natural placement of responsibility is on individuals, organisations, governments, or some combination of the three. Individuals' perceptions of who is ultimately responsible for environmental sustainability may also influence how important they view working for an organisation focused on sustainability. The basic relationships between perceived responsibility and perceived organisational attractiveness and job pursuit intentions should still hold true across cultures.

2.4 Business responsibility for environmental sustainability

Businesses that focus on environmental sustainability, or incorporate it in their communicated values and business practices, often see themselves as not harming the environment and also working to protect and improve the environment (Turker, 2009). The business case for sustainability is evolving. Stakeholders will place more attention on business practices and place pressure on companies to take positive environmental action (Boston Consulting Group, 2009). Thus, high-performing companies that may be attractive to job candidates may also be closely tied with sustainability, incorporating it into their vision, mission and values (Mirvis et al., 2010). In turn, these high performing companies with environmental sustainability values statements may see a benefit in

recruiting potential employees who value sustainable business practices. Stakeholders such as job candidates often learn of the company's orientation to environmental sustainability through the company website where there is quick access to messages regarding business responsibility (Moreno and Capriotti, 2009). A company webpage that includes pro-environmental messages can improve the perception and attractiveness to prospective employees, as may be viewed as an indicator of how well the company cares for employees (Behrend et. al., 2009).

In past studies, MBA students in the USA indicate that corporations are to be held accountable for environmental sustainability, and less of an obligation is placed on government enforcement (Fukukawa et al., 2007). Businesses often have the ability to put policies and practices into place that help improve environmental sustainability and go beyond what is required by the basic government regulations. The extent to which students assign responsibility for environmental sustainability to businesses is, in turn, believed to influence the extent to which perceived employer environmental sustainability values influence predicted job attractiveness and search intentions.

Hypothesis 3 Students in the USA, China, and India who view businesses as highly responsible for protecting/enhancing the environment will be more likely to indicate:

- a Higher job attractiveness toward an organisation that they view as valuing environmental sustainability.
- b Higher likelihood to pursue a job with an organisation that they view as valuing environmental sustainability.

2.5 Government responsibility for environmental sustainability

Businesses cite government legislation as the biggest driver of environmental sustainability efforts (Boston Consulting Group, 2009). Although government regulation drives or perhaps coerces change in business practices, Adams (2006) argues a change in market behaviour by consumers can make the most impact on obtaining a sustainable economy. Government has the ability to apply fiscal incentives to guide sustainable behaviour, but this policy does not necessarily change attitudes toward environmental sustainability (Dobson, 2007). Additionally, if individuals believe that the government is ultimately responsible for environmental sustainability, and they believe that businesses have little impact, then the importance potential job seekers place on organisations that communicate values or practice sustainability may be diminished.

Hypothesis 4 Students in the USA, China, and India who view government as highly responsible for protecting/enhancing the environment, will be more likely to indicate:

- a No relationship between job attractiveness and an organisation that they view as valuing environmental sustainability.
- b No relationship between likelihood to pursue a job with an organisation that they view as valuing environmental sustainability.

3 Methodology

3.1 Sample and procedures

Surveys were distributed to undergraduate and graduate students at a Midwestern university in the USA, a commerce college in India, and an international business school in China. The survey was distributed via e-mail in an online web survey tool and included quantitative questions on student perceptions of environmental sustainability's importance, who is responsible for it, and its role in their job search. The survey is long and scales have copyright restrictions so it is not included in this manuscript. A total of 755 usable surveys were collected and included in the data analysis.

3.2 Participant description

Upper division business students participated in the study. The surveys and consent forms were written in English. The students attended one of three business colleges.

3.2.1 Midwestern USA public university

This college has approximately 10,900 students with an estimated 2,000 undergraduate business majors and another 200 graduate business students. Admission to this college is described as selective and is based on ACT scores with other factors, such as grade point average, considered. The college does not have a curricular focus on sustainability but students may take an elective sustainability course and they may satisfy liberal arts requirements by taking non-business sustainability courses. The school does have an active 'students for sustainability' organisation which annually measures the campus carbon footprint and advises university operations. Additionally, the university is a member of several environmental sustainability advocacy organisations and has been named a top 'Green College' by the Princeton Review.

In total, 343 (338 complete and usable) responses were received from a sample population of approximately 384 students. Males comprise 59.5% of respondents and females 40.5% (all responding). The average grade point of the group is 3.19 (4.0 scale) and the average age is 22.86 years.

3.2.2 Chinese international business school

The university in China is one of the 'One Hundred Key Universities' in the country and has earned an 'excellent' ranking from the China Ministry of Education. The enrolment at this university in 2014 was over 38,000 students. The specific business school enrolment in 2011 was 3,067 students with another 2,000 MBA students (2014 data not available). Admission to the college is based on 'Chinese proficiency' in key subjects or by examination. This university has an exchange program with the Midwestern United States University and is known for its enrolment of international students as well as sending many students abroad. The school also admits students from Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan. The School of Management is English speaking. The school does not have a focus on environmental sustainability, but the topic is addressed within standard business courses.

In total, 376 (343 complete and usable) responses were received. Males comprise 38% and females 57% of respondents (4.67% not responding). The average grade point is 3.06 (4.0 scale) and the average age of the respondents is 20.21 years.

3.2.3 Indian college of commerce

The Indian college in this study is part of a system of colleges within a large university. The commerce college has 1,200 students, 600 of them being graduate students. It places itself as prestigious among institutions offering commerce and economics education in India and is proud of the large number of students who go on to renowned foreign universities and alumni who contribute toward the globalised economy. Admission to the college is highly selective, based on entrance exam scores. Some dub the college as the 'Harvard of India'. Graduates are recruited by employers from the school in their third or final year. The College of Commerce is an English speaking college. Students in the commerce college do not take courses specifically focused on environmental sustainability but do have speakers on campus that address sustainability challenges and programs.

Ninety-seven (74 complete and usable) responses were received. Males comprise 38% and females 46% of respondents (16% not responding). The entry examination score cut-off is 98.5% and the average age of the students participating is 21.91 years.

3.3 Independent variables

3.3.1 Environmental sustainability

Respondents were first asked to rate the importance they place on each of 11 different environmental sustainability practices. These practices were selected by identifying key sustainability practices previously discussed in research (Bihari, 2010; Chouinard et al., 2011; Stathis, 2011; US Government, 2014). Students identified the importance of each of these environmental sustainability practices: reducing carbon/greenhouse gas emissions, limiting climate change, reducing waste, reducing energy consumption, increasing renewable energy use, improving water quality, reducing water use, maintaining air quality, increasing environmental protection, limiting resource depletion, and reducing noise pollution. The seven-item scale ranges from 1 = 'not at all important' to 7 = 'extremely important'. The 11 items were then combined for the environmental sustainability scale. Cronbach's alpha was 0.90.

3.3.2 New ecological paradigm

Next respondents completed the NEP (Dunlap et al., 2000) scale. This scale assesses the extent to which students focus on or believe in the importance of environmental sustainability overall. This 15-item scale measures the relationship between humans and the environment, asking questions about the right of humans to modify the earth to their own needs, the likelihood of an ecological crisis, and whether or not they believe the earth has limited room and resources. Respondents indicated their level of agreement on a five-item Likert-scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The 15 items were then combined for the NEP scale. Cronbach's alpha was 0.71.

3.3.3 Business responsibility

Respondents assessed the extent to which they believe businesses/organisations should be responsible for environmental sustainability as measured by four items from Fukukawa et al.'s (2007) social and environmental accountability scale (SEA). Items included statements such as "Business executives should be held accountable for the effects of their decisions on the environment". Respondents indicated their level of agreement on a five-item Likert-scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The four items were then combined for the business responsibility scale. Cronbach's alpha was 0.88, indicating a reliable scale.

3.3.4 Government responsibility

The extent to which respondents believe that government is responsible for environmental sustainability was assessed with two items from Fukukawa et al.'s (2007) SEA. A sample statement is, "The government should adopt standards for CSR and make companies publish what they are doing to meet the standards so their stakeholders can judge whether the company is socially responsible". Respondents indicated their level of agreement on a five-item Likert-scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The two items were then combined for the government responsibility scale. Cronbach's alpha was 0.86.

3.4 Dependent variables

3.4.1 Job attractiveness

Respondents indicated how likely a company's environmental sustainability values and/or communicated practices were to have an impact on their perspective of a job's attractiveness. The four-item scale was developed and based on Williams and Bauer's (1994) scale and included questions such as, "Environmental sustainability would determine how good I believe a company would be to work for". Respondents indicated their level of agreement on a five-item Likert-scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). These items were combined for the job attractiveness scale. Cronbach's alpha was 0.79, indicating a reliable scale.

3.4.2 Likelihood to pursue

Respondents also indicated how likely a company's environmental sustainability values and/or communicated practices were to have an impact on whether or not they would pursue a job with that company. This four-item scale was developed based on Judge and Bretz's (1992) scale and included questions such as, "I would be more likely to attempt to gain an interview with an environmentally sustainable company". Respondents indicated their level of agreement on a five-item Likert-scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). These four items were combined for the likelihood to pursue scale. Cronbach's alpha was 0.88, indicating a reliable scale.

3.5 Demographic variables

The demographic variables measured include: university, gender, year in school, and grade point average or percentage.

4 Analysis

The means and correlations for each of the scales are examined across countries. ANOVAs are then used to examine basic differences from respondents for each of the scales that existed across the three cultures. Hierarchical regression is used to test the hypotheses.

5 Results

5.1 Correlations, descriptive statistics, reliabilities

Correlations, descriptive statistics and coefficient alphas for each of the scales are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Means, standard deviations, and correlations between student perceptions of environmental sustainability

Variable	Country	Mean	N	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Importance of env. sustainability	USA	5.29	337	0.99	(.90)					
	China	5.66	339	1.00						
	India	5.97	68	0.75						
2 NEP	USA	3.32	336	0.52	0.50**	(0.71)				
	China	3.39	328	0.41	0.39**					
	India	3.63	67	0.37	0.38**					
3 Bus. responsibility	USA	4.12	334	0.78	0.48**	0.47**	(0.88)			
	China	3.96	326	0.77	0.65**	0.54**				
	India	4.08	66	0.74	0.40**	0.41**				
4 Gov. responsibility	USA	4.02	334	1.00	0.49**	0.52**	0.64**	(0.86)		
	China	4.02	325	0.79	0.57**	0.44**	0.65**			
	India	4.31	66	0.75	0.44**	0.30*	0.69**			
5 Job attractiveness	USA	3.29	336	0.81	0.54**	0.39**	0.47**	0.44**	(0.79)	
	China	3.58	329	0.68	0.47**	0.21**	0.50**	0.50**		
	India	3.40	66	0.67	0.38**	0.09	0.36**	0.25*		
6 Likeliness to pursue	USA	3.24	336	1.01	0.58**	0.44**	0.47**	0.43**	0.78**	(0.88)
	China	3.72	328	0.67	0.50**	0.21**	0.53**	0.46**	0.64**	
	India	3.47	65	0.74	0.34**	0.00	0.31*	0.31**	0.64**	

Notes: Coefficient alpha of the three scales are on the diagonal.

*Indicates correlations with a p-value < 0.05.

**Indicates correlations with a p-value < 0.01.

5.2 Overall cultural differences

The basic differences across countries in mean responses for each scale are shown in Table 2. An ANOVA comparison indicates a difference in mean responses between the three countries on all of the scales. Responses from India are highest on the importance of environmental sustainability, the NEP scale, and the importance placed on government responsibility for sustainability. The student subjects from the USA score highest on their perceptions of business responsibility for sustainability, and the students from China are the highest on their ratings of how likely sustainability factors are to influence job attractiveness and the likeliness to pursue a job.

Table 2 One-way ANOVA of environmental sustainability perspectives by country

	Country	Mean	Std. dev.	df	Mean sq.	F	Sig.
Importance of env. sustainability	USA	5.29	0.99	2	18.85	19.92	0.000
	China	5.66	1.00	2			
	India	5.97	0.75	2			
NEP	USA	3.32	0.52	2	2.71	12.69	0.000
	China	3.39	0.41	2			
	India	3.63	0.37	2			
Bus. responsibility	USA	4.12	0.78	2	2.08	3.46	0.032
	China	3.96	0.77	2			
	India	4.08	0.74	2			
Gov. responsibility	USA	4.02	1.00	2	2.50	3.15	0.043
	China	4.02	0.79	2			
	India	4.31	0.75	2			
Job attractiveness	USA	3.29	0.81	2	6.90	12.44	0.000
	China	3.58	0.68	2			
	India	3.40	0.67	2			
Likeliness to pursue	USA	3.24	1.01	2	19.26	26.69	0.000
	China	3.72	0.67	2			
	India	3.47	0.74	2			

5.3 Environmental sustainability practices

Hypothesis 1a is supported. Students who rate sustainable values as highly important also indicate higher job attractiveness toward an organisation that they view as valuing environmental sustainability ($\beta = 0.37$, $p < 0.001$; $\beta = 0.22$, $p < 0.001$; $\beta = 0.34$, $p < 0.01$ for the USA, China, and India respondents respectively; see Table 3). Hypothesis 1b is also supported. Students who rate sustainable values as highly important also indicate they would pursue a job with an organisation that they viewed as valuing environmental sustainability ($\beta = 0.40$, $p < 0.001$; $\beta = 0.24$, $p < 0.001$; $\beta = 0.30$, $p < 0.01$ for the USA, China, and India, respectively; see Table 4). Thus, Hypothesis 1 is fully supported.

Table 3 Regression of job attractiveness

<i>Variable</i>	β	R^2 (shrunk R^2)	R (shrunk R)	<i>Sig</i>	ΔR^2	<i>Sig. F</i>
USA						
Importance of env. sustainability	0.37	0.36 (0.35)	0.60 (0.59)	0.00	0.36	0.00
NEP	0.06			0.26		
Bus. responsibility	0.21			0.00		
Gov. responsibility	0.09			0.13		
China						
Importance of env. sustainability	0.22	0.34 (0.33)	0.58 (0.57)	0.00	0.34	0.00
NEP	-0.14			0.01		
Bus. responsibility	0.25			0.00		
Gov. responsibility	0.27			0.00		
India						
Importance of env. sustainability	0.34	0.22 (0.17)	0.47 (0.41)	0.01	0.22	0.00
NEP	-0.16			0.23		
Bus. responsibility	0.37			0.03		
Gov. responsibility	-0.10			0.55		

Table 4 Regression of likeliness to pursue

<i>Variable</i>	β	R^2 (shrunk R^2)	R (shrunk R)	<i>Sig</i>	ΔR^2	<i>Sig. F</i>
USA						
Importance of env. sustainability	0.40	0.40 (0.39)	0.63 (0.63)	0.00	0.40	0.00
NEP	0.12			0.02		
Bus. responsibility	0.19			0.00		
Gov. responsibility	0.05			0.40		
China						
Importance of env. sustainability	0.24	0.34 (0.33)	0.58 (0.57)	0.00	0.34	0.00
NEP	-0.15			0.01		
Bus. responsibility	0.34			0.00		
Gov. responsibility	0.17			0.01		
India						
Importance of env. sustainability	0.30	0.21 (0.16)	0.46 (0.40)	0.03	0.21	0.01
NEP	-0.24			0.07		
Bus. responsibility	0.25			0.15		
Gov. responsibility	0.10			0.57		

5.4 *New ecological paradigm*

Hypothesis 2a is not supported. The NEP score shows no relationship with job attractiveness for the respondents from the USA and India, and a negative relationship for respondents from China ($\beta = -0.14$, $p < 0.01$; see Table 3). Hypothesis 2b is not supported. The NEP score shows a positive relationship with likeliness to pursue a job for the USA respondents ($\beta = 0.12$, $p < 0.02$), a negative relationship for respondents from China ($\beta = -0.19$, $p < 0.01$), and no relationship for respondents from India ($\beta = -0.24$, $p < 0.07$; see Table 4).

5.5 *Business responsibility for environmental sustainability*

Hypothesis 3a is supported. There is a positive relationship between beliefs in business responsibility for environmental sustainability and perceived job attractiveness for all three countries ($\beta = 0.21$, $p < 0.001$, $\beta = 0.25$, $p < 0.001$, $\beta = 0.37$, $p < 0.03$ for the USA, China, and India, respectively; see Table 3). Hypothesis 3b is only partially supported. A positive relationship exists between perceiving business as responsible for environmental sustainability and likeliness to pursue a job for both the respondents from the USA and China ($\beta = 0.19$, $p < 0.001$ and $\beta = 0.34$, $p < 0.001$, respectively). No such relationship is found for the respondents from India (see Table 4).

5.6 *Government responsibility for environmental sustainability*

Hypothesis 4a is partially supported. A positive relationship exists between beliefs in government responsibility for environmental sustainability and job attractiveness toward organisations viewed as environmentally sustainable for respondents from China ($\beta = 0.27$, $p < 0.001$), but not for respondents from the USA and India (see Table 3). Hypothesis 4b is also partially supported. A positive relationship exists between beliefs in government responsibility for environmental sustainability and likeliness to pursue a job with an organisation viewed as environmentally sustainable, for respondents from China ($\beta = 0.17$, $p < 0.01$). No such relationship is found for respondents from the USA or India (see Table 4). Thus, Hypotheses 4a and 4b are supported only by respondents from the USA and India, but not by respondents from China.

6 Discussion

This study makes a significant contribution to the environmental sustainability literature by identifying some overall differences in respondents from the USA, China, and India regarding their beliefs about the importance of, as well as the locus of responsibility for, environmental sustainability. Additionally, this study identifies some similarities across the three countries in students' perspectives of how environmentally sustainable values would influence their job attitudes and predicted behaviours in their job search. Findings provide support for the belief that, although overall differences may exist in the three 'super-powers' of the business world, there are still sustainable values that employers can communicate to attract a global audience of employees supportive of environmental sustainability.

Compared to respondents from the USA and China, the respondents from India rate environmentally sustainable values higher in importance. This finding is not surprising as it coincides with the fact that many Indians still follow the Gandhian philosophy that the environment is sacred (Rudolph, 1971). This philosophy appears contradictory to India's current ecological footprint; however, the increase in the footprint is attributed to rapid population growth as more food, shelter, power, sanitation and material goods are needed to support the population (Global Footprint Network, 2008). As noted earlier, India is a developing country and is attempting to prioritise concerns. The respondents from China indicate that they would be more impacted in their job decision by organisations' environmental values. This may be in part attributed to recent attention on Confucianism including the importance of environmental sustainability (Zhu, 2015). There may also be a built-in bias lacking realism in how likely they are to be impacted as many of the students from China have not been previously employed.

Despite the overall differences in responses, there is a consistent relationship among respondents from all three countries studied (the USA, China, and India): Students who personally hold ecological values and perceive environmentally sustainable values as being important also see organisations with sustainable values as being more attractive and as someplace where they would be more likely to pursue a job. If organisations can identify individuals whose ecological and environmentally sustainable values match theirs, they may be more likely to recruit these individuals. The ability to recruit individuals more supportive of environmental sustainability then helps organisations to increase the number of employees within their organisation who may work harder toward the organisation's environmental sustainability goals.

The NEP results, which examine an individual's beliefs about how important it is to be respectful of the environment, also receive the highest ratings from Indian students. This finding coincides with their cultural beliefs about living harmoniously with nature, despite conflicting issues related to industrialisation and population growth. However, no relationship is found with how respondents from the USA and India rate on the NEP scale and how attractive they view a job with an organisation that values environmental sustainability. A negative relationship exists between these variables for the respondents from China.

In retrospect, perhaps the nature of the NEP scale is more focused on a holistic and individual impact view of the environment. This may explain why the focus placed on environmental sustainability in the job-search process is believed to be less important. The USA respondents indicate a positive relationship regarding environmental sustainability and the likeliness to pursue a job, but not with the attractiveness of the job. This emphasises the importance of a sustainable environment and a belief that an organisation will be more successful if it values and practices environmental sustainability, even though the attractiveness of the position may not change.

The finding that USA respondents place more responsibility on businesses for environmental sustainability than respondents from China and India holds with the current political environment of more government involvement in China and India. It is also not surprising because the USA culture tends to be much more commerce-oriented (Whitford and Wong, 2009). Despite these differences, respondents from all three countries (the USA, China, and India) who believe businesses are responsible for environmental sustainability also see a job with an organisation that has sustainable values and/or practices in place as more attractive. Additionally, the respondents from the

USA and China who see businesses as responsible for environmental sustainability, indicate a greater likeliness to pursue a position with such an organisation. Organisations with positive environmental sustainability values are also likely to attract employees who believe organisations' environmentally sustainable behaviours can make a difference. If employees believe that organisations can make a difference through their environmental sustainability behaviours, they may work harder to put environmental practices in place, supporting the organisation's goals.

It is also interesting to note that student respondents from India place government responsibility for environmental sustainability higher than respondents from the USA and China. This may be due to the government having authority on most issues related to the environment (Bhati, 2012). Additionally, for the USA and India respondents, no relationship is found between government responsibility and how attractive a job is or how high pursuit intentions are toward organisations placing value on environmental sustainability efforts. These findings hold with expectations that if individuals place more responsibility on government for environmental sustainability, they, in turn, focus less on environmental sustainability during their job search. Although this finding does not necessarily help companies recruit employees, it does alert them to an important aspect. In countries where the government is viewed as responsible for environmental sustainability, companies may want to educate potential employees on how the organisation can make an impact, and/or they need to understand that other recruiting practices may be more beneficial than focusing on environmental sustainability. However, respondents from China did indicate a positive relationship with business responsibility despite the importance placed on the government. These findings may be due to a higher overall relationship on the job attractiveness and likeliness to pursue scales in the respondents from China. The relationship between government responsibility and the perceived importance of environmental sustainability in the job search may also exist in China because student respondents are from a very selective university and employment rates are high – perhaps indicating more options in the employment sector. Past studies support that practice and reputation play a more significant role in job selection when job choice increases (Albinger and Freeman, 2000; Turban and Greening, 1996).

6.1 Limitations/future research

This study is cross-sectional in nature, investigating the views of students preparing for their job search at a specific point in time. The study looks at the recruitment phase of employment. A longitudinal study looking at the same students two years later would help identify if the measured perceptions of environmental sustainability actually impact their final job selections. As with many international studies, there are barriers to longitudinal studies such as distance. In this case, 755 students could not be tracked for two years as they are spread across the globe. A study looking at employment decisions would also need to consider factors such as the economy.

There is a clear limitation in the sample size obtained from India. The lack of some relationships may be due to this low sample size, rather than truly no relationship existing. There are numerous barriers in Indian data collection. Other limitations include the limited number of countries included in the study. Respondents from additional countries with different economic environments and at various stages of development should be explored to see how the relationships hold. Control variables and their impact

on the relationships should be examined to see if there are other factors impacting the findings. Additionally, a sample of job-seekers that have prior work experience should be examined in order to see if environmental sustainability becomes more important in future jobs, or if it is more important to currently graduating business students who do not have prior work experience.

Another avenue of potential research is the negative impact on job pursuit following a reputation damaging event. When job seekers read/hear negative news about an organisation, it may not change their intentions to consider the organisation, but it could change whether or not they actually pursue a job at that organisation (Jaidi et al., 2011).

Additionally, looking at economic conditions including unemployment rates at the time of data collection would add another interesting dimension to the study. From an employer perspective, when jobs are plentiful, sound ecological practice may help a small firm compete against large firms for talent (Bauer and Aiman-Smith, 1996).

7 Conclusions

This study has several important implications for organisations. A distinct difference in how important ecological values are viewed by future job seeking students and where responsibility for the environment is placed is noted across different cultures. Thus, organisations recruiting on a global scale need to make sure that they are aware of these overall differences. The primary implication of this research, though, is that if individuals hold ecological values as important, they will likely look favourably toward employment with organisations that communicate values related to environmental sustainability. This relationship holds across respondents from the three countries studied (the USA, China, and India). Organisations that value environmental sustainability may have more ability to hire individuals who will help support their organisational efforts. This study also supports the importance of environmental sustainability on an international level. The concern about the environment is not confined to one country, but is a world-wide concern. The perception of an organisation's environmental values influences candidates' job search process on an international basis. Understanding the overall differences in values placed on environmental sustainability, as well as the importance of the relationships between potential employee perspectives of these values and their job attractiveness and job seeking intentions is vital to organisations as they seek to gain competitive advantages in the global economy.

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