






Sustainability in the Workplace: Green HRM Practices and Pro-Environmental Behaviour among Employees of Public and Private Universities

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of Green Human Resource Management (HRM) practices on fostering pro-environmental Behaviour among employees. The primary objective is to assess how Green HRM practices affect and influence academic staff members' environment conscious Behaviour. Furthermore, within the context of Green HRM, the study aims to identify critical components like training, incentives, and communication that are crucial in promoting employee involvement in environmentally friendly practices. Structured questionnaires were used to gather quantitative data from a representative sample of staff members from public and private universities in Delhi NCR. In the specific context of public and private universities, this study aims to deepen our understanding of the connection between green human resource management practices and environmentally conscious Behaviour. The results will not only add to the body of knowledge on sustainability in

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academia but will also offer HR specialists and college administrators useful advice on how to encourage an environmentally conscious culture in their establishments.

Keywords: Green HRM. Pro-Environmental Behaviour. Environmental Knowledge. Higher Education Institutions.

1 Introduction

In an era marked by heightened environmental awareness and the growing importance of sustainable business practices, organizations globally are increasingly acknowledging the necessity of incorporating environmental considerations into their strategic frameworks. This shift towards sustainability permeates the core of organizations, affecting fundamental aspects of human resource management (Okr glicka, Mittal, & Navickas, 2023). However, despite this recognition, several barriers hinder the seamless integration of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices. Due to the emergence of international environmental standards and increasing global environmental concerns, organizations have to adopt environmentally friendly initiatives (Awewomom et al., 2024). Universities, as influential institutions in shaping societal perspectives and preparing future professionals, are actively responding to the call for sustainability. Their focus on sustainability reflects not only external pressures but also a commitment to nurturing an environmentally conscious generation. Results by Xie et al.'s (2023) show that green HRM practices—apart from green recruiting and selection, which encourages employees to engage in more pro-environmental activities—have a positive impact on workers' job satisfaction. Furthermore, it was found that the relationship between green HRM practices and pro-environmental behavior is partially mediated by work satisfaction, with the exception of green recruiting and selection. The study contributes to the field of psychology and sociological analysis of businesses' green initiatives by evaluating employee job satisfaction as a psychological factor that bolsters the association between pro-environmental behavior and green human resource management.

However, barriers exist within the academic landscape that challenge the effective implementation of Green Human Resource Management (Giesenbauer & Müller-Christ, 2020). Green management practice implementation requires a high level of managerial and technical expertise. The organization will encourage staff members to take on environmental projects that will significantly affect the competitive sustainability of the businesses Sudin's (2011). This chapter aims to explore the intersection of sustainability, human resource management, and higher education, specifically examining the effects of Green Human Resource Management practices and pro-environmental Behaviour of employees in both public and private universities.(see figure 1).

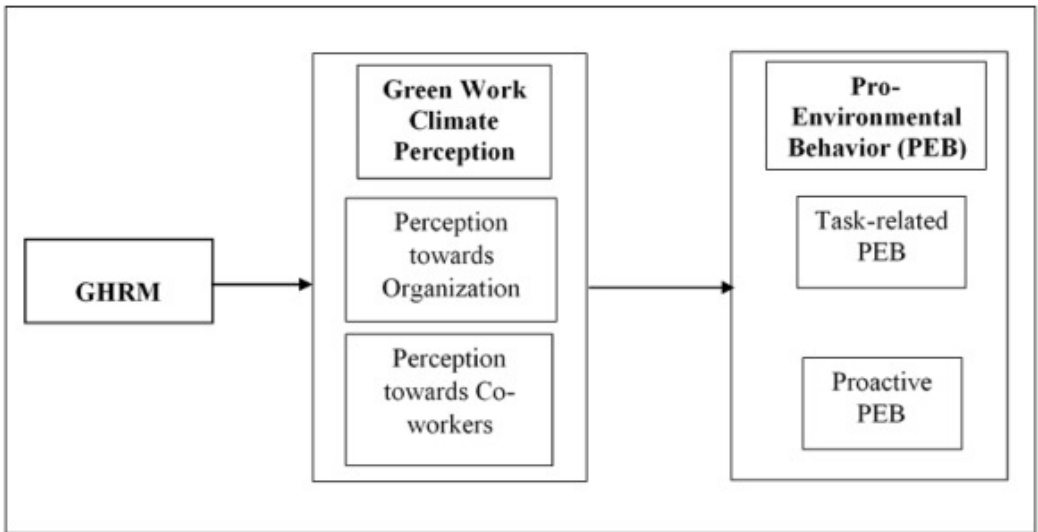


Figure 1. Green Human Recourse Management and Pro-Environmental Behaviour

1.1 Green HRM and its Significance

The majority of people on the planet now understand that staff members in any organization may increase environmental sustainability by implementing pro-environmental policies (Lülfes & Hahn, 2013). Organizations are taking greater responsibility for environmental activities because of the dire circumstances forced on by the irreversible change in the climate, environmental degradation, and resource scarcity (Zibarras & Coan, 2015). Nowadays, environmental conservation is becoming more and more popular worldwide. Environmental protection policies are vital for many organizations to implement, as they are a matter of concern for all societies (Čábelková et al., 2023). Saeed et al.'s (2019) conducted research, found that green HRM practices were the most engaging for the companies, and looked at the impact of green HRM pro-environmental Behaviour practices. The findings showed that employee Behaviour is positively impacted by green HRM practices, and that psychological climate has a mediating effect (Renwick, Redman, & Maguire, 2013). Organizations can develop and use HRM to successfully implement environmentally sustainable strategies and objectives, referring to such environment-oriented HRM as GHRM, since they are shifting from profit-making to environmentally sustainable organizations. It is the responsibility and function of HR to educate and teach staff members about environmental sustainability. (Chandana et al., 2024). There were multiple ap-

proaches to merge HR policies and processes, leading to increased employee engagement, reduced expenses, and improved performance efficiencies (Albrecht et al., 2015).

1.2 Green Performance Management and Appraisals (GPMA)

Performance evaluation is linked with environmental performance because the firm aims to achieve the green goals and employee performance at the same time (Jabbour, Santos, & Nagano, 2008). Managers must apply performance management (PM) techniques, such as creating performance indicators, conducting green audits, and utilizing information technology, in order for environment management (EM) to be successful. It is urged to communicate about environmental policies and other problems as part of performance appraisal (Renwick, Redman, & Maguire, 2013). Green performance management and appraisal refers to the procedure where employee activities are assessed as part of environmental management. Certain employees have the abilities and knowledge that managers lack when it comes to tacit knowledge. These skills are utilized to create strategies for locating pollution sources, managing crises, and avoiding problems by coming up with feasible solutions (Ercantan & Eyupoglu, 2022). For organizations to effectively apply green performance management, organizations must establish a uniform standard and explicitly define its indicators for each and every member, such as cutting carbon emissions, working together, and putting environmental policies into action.

2 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework has been demonstrated in the following diagram.(see figure 2).

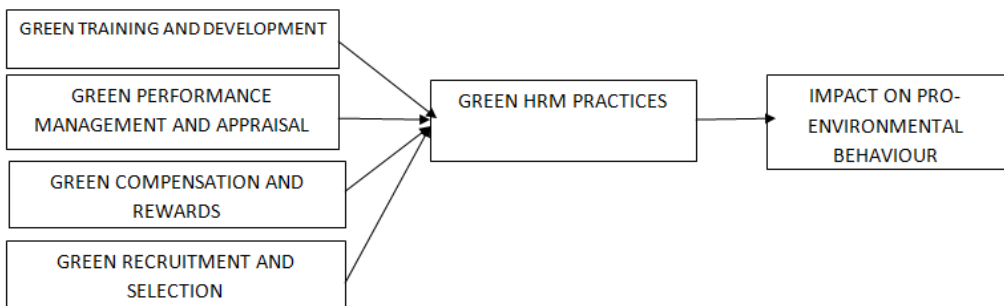


Figure 2

2.1 Green Reward and Compensation (GRC)

Green Reward and Compensation are the strategies to attract and motivate employees by giving monetary and non-monetary rewards in achieving the environmental goals (Zibarras & Coan, 2015). To attract, retain, and motivate staff members to engage in environmentally friendly activities, a green compensation and reward system is also utilized for non-cash advantages. (Jabbour et al., 2013). Incentives for matching employee performance are more effective instruments for accomplishing company objectives. In addition to financial incentives like green taxes, green recognition, and green travel benefits, non-financial incentives should also be offered. Green tax benefits include concessions meant to encourage the use of cars that emit less pollution. Employee transportation and travel rewards are included in green travel incentives. These monetary benefits have a significant influence on employees' desire to support environmental sustainability (Cheema & Javed, 2017). When firm environmental goals are linked with incentives and rewards, employees are more likely to engage in a pro-environmental manner and produce better results. This makes incentives and rewards a highly effective tool for employee motivation.

2.2 Green Training and Development (GTD)

Green training and development inform staff members on green projects and activities, waste reduction, energy efficiency, and environmentally friendly practices (Zoogah, 2011). Additionally, develop the green culture with ongoing training. Within the company, green training and development are essential for encouraging and shaping employee Behaviour towards environmental sustainability and participation in green activities. Green training and development refers to organized programmes and initiatives that help staff members acquire the knowledge and abilities necessary to safeguard the environment and make thoughtful decisions about environmental concerns (Moradeke, Ishola, & Okikiola, 2021). These programmes play a critical role in encouraging a sustainable culture among university communities and equipping faculty members to support environmental preservation efforts. Employees, whether in support, administrative, or academic capacities, are essential to putting sustainable principles into action and encouraging environmental stewardship.

As a result, it's critical to incorporate green training and development programmes that are customized to the unique requirements and obligations of university staff. Opportunities for professional development, such as workshops and certificates, keep staff members up to date on new developments in sustainable trends and technologies. Promoting staff involvement via programmes such as green teams or employee-led projects cultivates a feeling of responsibility and dedication. Acknowledging and praising staff members for their contributions to sustainability increases engagement and strengthens

a strong workplace culture. Universities may guarantee that their green training and development programmes adapt to the ever-changing sustainability issues by evaluating and improving them continuously. This will enable their workforce to take the lead in significant environmental conservation initiatives.

2.3 Green Recruitment and Selection (GRS)

Green Recruitment and Selection is the vital factor of Green HRM because firms can hire employees having a sense of responsibility towards the environment. Green hiring techniques include conducting green interviews, accepting soft copies of resumes, posting job ads online, using as little paper as possible throughout the selection process, and raising questions about the environment (Jamil et al., 2023). Employer branding is used to make sure that businesses hire people who are conscious of their surroundings and come from a younger generation. The hiring process's importance in the recruitment process is based on choosing workers who are aware of the organization's ideals and the perceptions and reputation it has in the community (Renwick, Redman, & Maguire, 2013). Private colleges can demonstrate their commitment to sustainability and improve their employer brand by implementing green recruitment strategies. Universities can demonstrate their commitment to environmental stewardship by using green employment practices such as green interviews, accepting soft resumes, and using as little paper as possible. Hiring ads and interview questions that emphasize environmental concern can draw in candidates who are driven by sustainability principles. Using green hiring and selection procedures, public institutions can improve their leadership in research and sustainability education. Universities can draw in competent and dedicated staff by including sustainability standards in the hiring process. This strategy encourages candidates to match their principles with the university's sustainability goals and highlights their obligation to protect the environment.

2.4 Pro-Environmental Behaviour (PEB)

Employee willingness to participate in pro-environmental activities is a measure of their pro-environmental behaviour. These actions include turning off lights after work, conserving energy, riding a bike or taking public transportation, and starting new projects to support environmental sustainability. Employees that practice pro-environment behaviour greatly contribute to the sustainability of the environment (Saeed et al., 2019). Pro-environmental behaviour is a multifaceted behaviour because it involves a pro-social component, pro-environmental behaviour is complex, and managers find it difficult to encourage or influence such behaviour in their staff members using traditional techniques of leadership (Paillé & Boiral, 2013). In both public and private universities, pro-environmental behaviour (PEB) is essential to achieving sustainability objectives. It includes taking steps

to conserve the environment, like cutting back on energy use, producing less waste, and encouraging environmentally friendly transportation. Faculty, staff, and administrators are among the employees who are essential to the PEB's implementation. While administrative staff carry out policies supporting sustainability, faculty members can integrate sustainability principles into their research and teaching. Workers can support PEB by engaging in regular activities such as recycling and taking part in campus sustainability projects. Public universities can make use of community collaborations and public service missions, while private universities have greater liberty in putting PEB into practice.

3 Implementation of Green HRM Practices

- **Enhance Communication and Awareness:** Employee support for pro-environmental Behaviour appears to be widespread, based on the positive view of such Behaviour. To support this mindset even more, though, make sure that the institution's sustainability goals, efforts, and the significance of individual contributions are communicated in an open and efficient manner. Campaigns, workshops, and regular updates can help keep staff members informed and involved.
- **Strengthen Incentive Programs:** Although most employees recognize the importance of taking individual action and are motivated to participate in environmentally conscious activities, opinions on the effects of green remuneration plans are divided. Reexamine and enhance incentive schemes to better meet the needs and goals of staff members. This could entail updating current guidelines, presenting fresh rewards, or emphasizing the advantages of ongoing initiatives.
- **Improve Training and Development:** There are green training and development programmes available; however, respondents vary about how successful they are. To find areas for improvement and to be input on the current programmes, hold focus groups or surveys. Make training materials more entertaining and appropriate for varying employee roles and environmental awareness levels.
- **Emphasize Organizational Values:** Employees are determined that the institution's reputation is enhanced by cultivating a pro-environmental culture. Make the most of this feeling by including environmental stewardship in the mission and fundamental values of the company. Stress how sustainability initiatives support long-term performance and are in line with larger organizational objectives.
- **Streamline Green Recruitment Practices:**
As participants agree that eco-friendly hiring methods draw in applicants who care about the environment, keep making sustainability a top priority when hiring new employees. When hiring new staff, emphasize the organization's dedication to environmental stewardship and highlight ongoing projects for potential hires. Additionally, to draw in prospects that have similar values, think about using employee references.

- **Regular Evaluation and Adaptation:**
Utilize performance indicators, environmental impact assessments, and employee feedback to continuously monitor and analyse the efficacy of green HRM practices. Make data-driven decisions using this knowledge, and adjust your tactics as necessary to maintain continuous development and alignment with company goals.
- **Create a supportive organizational culture:** Develop an environment at work that is supportive of pro-environmental Behaviour, going beyond policies and programmes. Employees that actively support sustainability initiatives should be acknowledged and rewarded, whether through official recognition programmes, financial rewards, or career-growth chances.

4 Discussion

Implementing Green Human Resource Management (HRM) practices in both public and private universities can face several challenges. Here are some common ones:

- **Resistance to Change:** Employees may resist changes in their daily routines or job processes required to adopt green practices. This resistance can stem from a lack of awareness, fear of job insecurity, or reluctance to learn new methods.
- **Lack of Awareness and Training:** Many employees may not fully understand the importance or benefits of Green HRM practices. Providing comprehensive training and awareness programs can help overcome this challenge.
- **Resource Constraints:** Implementing green practices often requires initial investments in technology, infrastructure, and training. Public universities, especially those facing budgetary constraints, may find it challenging to allocate resources for such initiatives.
- **Cultural Barriers:** Organizational culture plays a significant role in the successful adoption of green practices. In universities where sustainability is not a core value or where there is resistance to change, implementing Green HRM practices can be particularly challenging.
- **Limited Support from Leadership:** Without strong support and commitment from top management, implementing Green HRM practices can be difficult. Leaders need to champion sustainability initiatives and allocate resources accordingly.
- **Measurement and Evaluation:** Establishing metrics to measure the effectiveness of Green HRM practices and their impact on organizational performance can be challenging. Without proper measurement tools, it's difficult to assess the progress and justify the investments made.
- **Balancing Priorities:** Universities often have multiple competing priorities, such as academic excellence, research, and financial sustainability. Green HRM practices may not always be perceived as a top priority, leading to challenges in garnering support and resources.

- **Complexity of Implementation:** Green HRM practices involve various stakeholders and departments within the university, including human resources, facilities management, and procurement. Coordinating efforts and ensuring consistency across different areas can be complex and time-consuming.
- **Regulatory Compliance:** Compliance with environmental regulations and standards adds another layer of complexity to implementing Green HRM practices. Universities need to stay updated on relevant laws and regulations and ensure that their practices align with these requirements.
- **Communication and Engagement:** Effective communication and employee engagement are crucial for the successful implementation of Green HRM practices. Universities need to communicate the rationale behind these initiatives clearly and involve employees in decision-making processes to gain their buy-in.

Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach, including leadership commitment, employee engagement, investment in resources, and continuous monitoring and evaluation of outcomes.

Our exploration has revealed significant insights into how organizations can cultivate a culture of environmental responsibility and promote sustainability within their workforce. By implementing eco-friendly recruitment, training, performance management, and rewards systems, organizations can align their HRM practices with sustainability objectives, thereby fostering a more environmentally conscious workplace culture. Drawing on theoretical frameworks such as the Theory of Planned Behaviour and Social Learning Theory, we explored the psychological and social factors influencing employees' engagement in sustainability practices. By identifying both internal and external factors that shape pro-environmental Behaviour, organizations can develop targeted interventions to promote environmental responsibility among their workforce. By embracing emerging technologies, fostering leadership commitment, engaging employees through education and empowerment, and aligning HR policies with sustainability goals, organizations can drive meaningful change towards environmental responsibility.

In conclusion, the integration of sustainability into HRM practices is essential for addressing pressing environmental challenges and creating a more sustainable future. By prioritizing sustainability in recruitment, training, performance management, and rewards systems, organizations can cultivate a culture of environmental responsibility that not only benefits the planet but also enhances employee well-being, organizational performance, and societal impact. As HR professionals, it is our responsibility to lead the way in championing sustainability initiatives and driving positive change within our organizations and communities. Together, we can build a more sustainable world for future generations.

4.1 Strategies to overcome barriers & foster a culture of sustainability in the workplace

Moreover, studies suggest that employees have a strong tendency to act in a manner that is environmentally friendly and understand the importance of their individual actions in supporting environmental conservation initiatives. This suggests the workforce has a high degree of personal drive and environmental awareness. Employees perceive the organization's efforts to promote pro-environmental Behaviour favourably and believe they are crucial to achieving the institution's sustainability objectives. Employees' optimistic views on environmental issues on a personal level indicate a supportive atmosphere for sustainable activities and highlight the significance of cultivating an environmental responsibility culture within the organization. Hence, it satisfies the second objective. AI is being utilized more and more in HRM activities, such as employee engagement, which is a vital component of workforce management (Jora et al., 2022).

Finally, The statistical analysis demonstrates that Green HRM practices have a direct impact on employees pro environmental Behaviour. Employees appreciate initiatives like green compensation plans, hiring procedures, and performance management standards as useful incentives to encourage eco-friendly Behaviour. This emphasizes how crucial it is to incorporate green HRM practices into organizational initiatives in order to promote long-lasting Behavioural change. Prioritizing green HRM practices can help organizations see a positive organizational culture change towards sustainability, which can improve their reputation and attract new candidates who are concerned about the environment. These results demonstrate how green HRM practices may significantly improve an organization's impact on the environment and build an environmentally friendly culture that proves the third objective of the study. Organizations may effectively promote environmental responsibility and address significant environmental concerns while improving their reputation and attracting top talent by integrating HRM strategies with environmental objectives and cultivating employee participation.

5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the results provide insight into the complex interaction among Green HRM practices, employee attitudes, and environmentally conscious Behaviour in workplaces. Several important insights have been revealed by a thorough examination of employee awareness, perceptions, and the effects of green HRM practices. These insights significantly add to our understanding of the various ways in which businesses may successfully encourage sustainability and environmental responsibility. According to the first objective, employees have a favourable opinion of their understanding and awareness of green HRM practices. This suggests that the university has either effectively communicated its

environmental initiatives, maybe with the help of strong leadership support or effective communication channels. Employees' strong commitment to environmental stewardship is demonstrated by their awareness of the importance of integrating green HRM practices into organizational strategies. Moreover, the favourable opinion held by employees signifies a favourable setting for developing a sustainable culture in the workplace. The company's initiatives to raise knowledge and comprehension of green HRM practices are essential to fostering in employees a sense of accountability and involvement in environmental preservation.

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