

Driving Sustainability from Within: The Strategic Role of Green HRM and Employee Environmental Commitment

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Abstract:

This paper examines how Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) has strategic implications of other environmental practices (environmental commitment by employees (EEC)) mediated by psychological green climate (PGC) and moderated by environmental transformational leadership (ETL). Based on the Resource-Based View (RBV) and the Social Exchange Theory (SET), the study employs a cross-sectional quantitative design, surveyed the employees in Pakistani organizations that are environmentally active. The evidence shows that GHRM can promote the EEC substantially directly and indirectly. In particular, PGC mediates the EEC GHRM connection, which means that an environmentally supportive organizational culture is significant. Besides, this relationship is even concretized by ETL, which shows that the positive impacts of GHRM practices are reinforced by transformational leaders. The paper has both theoretical and practical implications and clarifies the theoretical and leadership pathways that highlight the relationship between HR practices and environmental results and offers the management practice to integrate sustainability into the organizational culture and human systems. It concludes that sustainability programs tend to work more efficiently when they are people driven as compared to being policy driven.

Keywords: Green HRM, Environmental Commitment, Green Transformational Leadership, Psychological Green Climate

Introduction

The rising environmental issue, which the modern world has to confront due to climate change, the lack of resources, and environmental degradation, made organizations reconsider their policies and include the idea of sustainability into their very functioning. External forces such as green technology and government regulations have already been given a lot of focus, but it is beginning to dawn on people that internal organizational characteristics, most importantly HRM, make these sustainable practices thrive within an organization. In that regard, the concept of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) has been introduced as a strategic element that incorporates the environmental issue into the practices of recruitment, training, performance appraisal, and its rewarding (Aboramadan, 2022; Jia et al., 2023). GHRM does not only help an organization achieve

environmental objectives but also helps to influence employee behavior and culture to appear in line with the previously discussed environmental objectives. Recent research has highlighted the view that GHRM may induce the pro-environmental behavior of the employees as it establishes an ecologically conscious workforce by making HR policies consistent with the sustainability agenda (Yong et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2023). But in addition to behavior, there may prove to be an increasing interest to better comprehend the extent to which GHRM can produce deeper attitudinal levels of outcome such as employee environmental commitment defined as the emotional-psychological attachment of employees to the environmental mission and goals of their employer. Environmental employee commitment is also essential as it translates to voluntary and incessant subsistence in green conducts, frequently past job description (Zhao et al., 2022). Notwithstanding the applicability of this result, there seems to be a gap in the literature in terms of process wherein GHRM can affect environmental commitment, wherein research in the emerging market setting needs to be filled. The establishment of a psychological green climate is one of the major ways in which GHRM is suspected to advance environmental commitment. This climate is the employees joint notion that the organization appreciates, values, and reinforces environmental sustainability (Liu & Zang, 2022). In situations where employees see that green HR practices are consistently deployed, like training or a reward system with an environmental focus employees have the perception that the unit is serious about being committed to being green. Such a perception enhances the organizational commitment to the environment by increasing their psychological alignment with the organizational values (Tang et al., 2021). Therefore, psychological green climate can play a key role in the connection between GHRM and environmental commitment of the employees. Additionally, the organizational leadership contributes to the strengthening or mitigating of the outcomes of GHRM practices. Specifically, transformational leadership characterized by leaders describing a future in which the environment is more friendly, motivating them through personal example, and delegating powers to engage in sustainability to other people can help employees become environmentally motivated and engaged (Xie et al., 2023). The presence of such leaders means that the impact of the GHRM practices is likely to be more profound, so that the employees can have the impression of consistency in the messages emitted by HR and acted upon by the leaders. As such, the GHRM and employee environmental commitment could have a strengthened relationship through environmental transformational leadership acting as a moderating variable. Despite the growing interest in research on GHRM, there are gaps that have not yet been covered both theoretically and empirically. Second, although the studies have already developed the clear connection between GHRM and actions aimed at the environment protection, the influence of GHRM on the more internal aspects of the behavior, like commitment, has not been thoroughly investigated (Jamal et al., 2022). Second, little has been done on mediators and moderators to explain how and when GHRM produces greater environmental commitment. Third, the existing body of literature is significantly biased toward developed economies, with very limited empirical research conducted in developing countries, where sustainability is more often of emerging nature and has to go through special cultural and institutional filters (Khan et al., 2025). To overcome such gaps, this paper will research the strategic importance of GHRM in culturing employee environmental commitment, and especially the mediating effect of psychological green climate as well as moderating effect of environmental transformational leadership. Theoretically, the study is embedded with two proven frameworks that are namely the resource-based view (RBV) and the social exchange theory (SET). RBV Bases the sources of sustained competitive advantage on human resources especially the valuable, rare, inimitable and non-substitutable human resources. GHRM can assist companies to build these internal capabilities because the practice helps interested and ecologically attentive personnel (Yong et al., 2020) This is a study, which contributes to the theory and practice, in many ways. In theoretical terms also, it contributes in enriching our theorization on the GHRM commitment relation by breaking down the psychological and leadership processes involved. On the part of a manager, it offers practical ideas or tips to HR professionals and sustainability officers who can utilize HR practices in terms of

developing a committed and environment-responsible workforce. Namely, it underlines the necessity to establish a gleeful green climate and empowering leadership style that will enable to capitalize on the advantages of GHRM. Briefly, sustainability remains to be on the organizational agenda, hence, it is critical to know how to utilize organizational assets, particularly human capital. This study looks at developing the discourse by analyzing how GHRM practices motivate employees to be environmental committed via permissive climate and leadership. The results will provide guidance to an organization to incorporate sustainability into their human systems and culture such that its green movement is a people driven program instead and not a policy driven one.

Literature Review

Green HRM and Employee Environmental Commitment

Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) can be defined as an intentional effort to incorporate environmental aspirations and ideals into HR activity and training, performance measurement as well as reward (Tang et al., 2021). GHRM contributes to the building of a green workforce through the development of environmental awareness and skills in employees. An expanding amount of literature shows that by recruiting, training and compensating employees with an environmental emphasis, the propensity towards adopting pro-environmental behavior and attitudes at the workplace will grow (Jia et al., 2021). Environmental commitment is a multi- dimensional construct that entails both the affective, continuance, and normative commitment of employees to the environment-oriented goals and initiatives (Zhao, 2021). Studies have demonstrated that GHRM can facilitate the enhancement of this commitment, which is one of the factors of strong links to our purposes, the alignment of organizational values with personal values, and the development of psychological ownership over the results of our actions in the environment (Yong et al., 2020). As an example, green training enhances the expertise and abilities of the employees in order to execute ecologically friendly duties, whereas green rewards offer the acknowledgement of sustainable work and strengthen the intrinsic and extrinsic forms of motivation. Recent literature has developed to prove that GHRM is a significant factor in transforming the employee attitude and actions towards environmental sustainability (Khan et al., 2023; Aboramadan, 2022). Hypotheses, therefore, are stated as follows:
H1: Green HRM positively influences employee environmental commitment.

The Mediating Role of Psychological Green Climate

Psychological green climate is the collective perceptions by employees on the place of their organization in terms of environmental values, policies and practices (Zhang & Liu, 2022). It denotes how successful people feel their organization supports and encourages them to partake in eco-friendly actions. Meanwhile, the literature base holds that HR practices are understood as the symbolic gestures as to what an organization values. The visibility and consistency of GHRM practices will demonstrate a high level of environmental orientation and that will create psychological climate that supports sustainability (Norton et al., 2015). As set out by SET, employees who feel the organization is supporting the environment will have the feeling of giving something back by increasing commitment and behavioral support to organizational goals. Psychological green climate is both a mediator between the practices of the organization (GHRM) and the outcomes of the employees (environmental commitment). It influences cognitive appraisals and inner motivation in employees, which is likely to bring a twist towards them undertaking the green steps of the organization in a sustainable manner and have a psychological affiliation to the green goal of the organization. The above data reveal that psychological climate has a potent mediatory effect in HR-outcome relationships, particularly when such perceptions are aligned with strategic aims of employees (Kim, Kim, Choi, & Phetvaroon, 2019). We therefore offer the following:

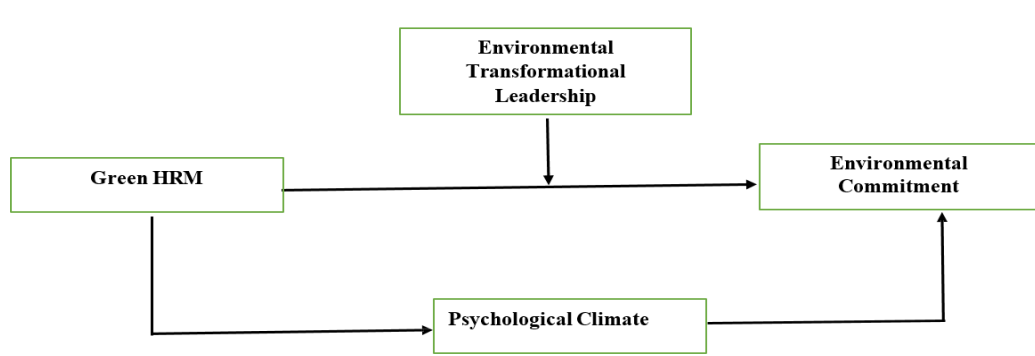
H2: Psychological green climate mediates the relationship between green HRM and employee environmental commitment.

The Moderating Role of Environmental Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership involves the capacity to inspire, intellectually challenge and to give individual attention to employees by often being able to establish an appealing vision and serving as a role model. The environmental transformational type of leadership builds on this model to focus on the values of the environment and motivating employees to adopt green efforts, and promoting futuristic initiatives of sustainable activities (Robertson & Barling, 2013). On the one hand, GHRM can offer structural and policy-based support of the sustainability, whereas on the other hand, transformational leaders can influence the employees on an emotional- cognitive level. They aid in GHRM effectiveness and this means that they show model green behaviors, incentivize green behaviors, and incorporate sustainability into the daily vernacular. This bilateral effect of structural (HRM) and behavioral reinforcement can work in a synergetic way on getting commitment on the part of employees. Recent studies indicate that leadership practices, especially the effective ones, can reinforce or undermine the usefulness of HR policies. In cases where leaders fail to promote or embrace the green values, even effective GHRM systems can lack credibility and fail to attract employees to the firm in a significant way (Graves, Sarkis, & Zhu, 2013). Conversely, when environmental leadership is high, environmental HRM has greater influence on employee environmental commitment since they increase trust and legitimacy of the environmental HRM. Hence, the association between GHRM and the employee environmental commitment may therefore be assumed reliant on the degree of environmental transformational leadership in the firm.

H3: Environmental transformational leadership positively moderates the relationship between green HRM and employee environmental commitment.

Figure No 1: Conceptual Framework



Methodology

This research investigates the background whereby the use of a quantitative, cross-sectional type of research design will find out how Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) affects employee commitment to the environment with a mediating factor of psychological green climate, and a moderating factor of environmental transformational leadership. The collected data were collected using a structured, self-administered survey between the employees in the Pakistani environmentally active organizations. The sectors that are represented by these organizations include manufacturing, energy, and services, where more and more importance is placed on environmental practices. A convenience sampling was applied in the approach to reach participants because environmentally responsible firms and their employees were restricted to be contacted because of organizational restrictions. The survey comprised closed questions in the forms of statements on a 1-5 point likert scale as strongly disagreeing to strongly agreeing. We used scales that have been tested before and are valid, and the survey items were slightly modified to see how well they would match the research context or even take into consideration the original construction of the scale. The questionnaire was based on constructs such as green human resource practices, green psychological climate, employee environmental commitment and transformational leadership environmental climate. Statistical

Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) were used through AMOS, in order to analyze the data. To test the proposed relationships as well as path analysis, descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were used to test the hypothesized relationships. Indirect effects, mediation and moderation effects were carried out with bootstrapping to determine interaction terms and effects. Ethical considerations were adhered to and all the participants took an informed consent before their data was collected. The study was done with confidentiality of the responses.

Results

Descriptive Statistic

The descriptive statistics give an outline or inform the opinions of the respondents towards Green Human Resource Management (GHRM), Psychological Green Climate (PGC), Employee Environmental Commitment (EEC), and Environmental Transformational Leadership (ETL). Each of the variables expressed mean scores that are above the middle point of the Likert scale (3.0) and indicate generally positive responses in the sample. The highest mean of score is 3.87 (SD = 0.40) at EEC which shows that the employees have a very strong commitment towards the environment. There is also a positive perception in GHRM (M = 3.78, SD = 0.47), which is an indication that green HRM practices are rather incorporated in the studied organizations. The PGC mean (M = 3.65, SD = 0.59) indicates that the employees attain moderately the perception that the climate of their work is supportive of environmental sustainability. The average value of leadership (M = 3.70, SD = 0.51) indicates that leadership is to some extent being transformational in support of environmental values. The moderate values of standard deviations in all the variables indicate that there is no extreme skewness or variant data in the data.

Table No:1 Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	25%	Median	75%	Max
GHRM	3.78	0.47	2.49	3.45	3.80	4.05	5.16
PGC	3.65	0.59	1.66	3.24	3.65	4.01	5.91
EEC	3.87	0.40	2.91	3.58	3.87	4.13	5.13
ETL	3.70	0.51	2.35	3.35	3.71	4.04	5.02

Correlation Analysis

Correlation matrix reflects the relationship associated with Green Human Resource Management (GHRM), Psychological Green Climate (PGC), Employee Environmental Commitment (EEC), and Environmental Transformational Leadership (ETL). The correlations are all positive and statistically significant which means that there is a practical meaning of connection between these variables. Highest correlation is found between GHRM and PGC ($r = 0.61$). This implies that good practice of green HRM is strongly linked to perception of employees on pro-environmental climate of psychological climate. This means that the existence of green HR practices like environmentally friendly training, performance appraisal, and recruitment will facilitate the employees to feel that the work environment is more environmentally friendly. There is also a strong positive correlation between GHRM and EEC ($r = 0.57$) which means that the practices of green HRM are responsible in increasing the input of employees towards environmental initiatives. This indicates the essence of HR practices in determining sustainable employee behavior. ETL has a positive correlation with all variables, and in our case, it is very significant with GHRM ($r = 0.54$) and PGC ($r = 0.49$), which implies that an environmentally transformative leader supports both green HR practices and a favorable environmental climate. Finally, EEC and ETL correlation ($r = 0.47$) signify that transformational leadership helps in developing environmental commitment among the workers. These are indicative of the posited model and affirm the proposed connections.

Table No 2 Correlation Analysis

Variables	GHRM	PGC	EEC	ETL
GHRM	1.00			
PGC	0.61	1.00		
EEC	0.57	0.58	1.00	
ETL	0.54	0.49	0.47	1.00

Regression Analysis

According to the results of hypothesis testing, all the hypotheses formulated proved to be quite robust and positive. Hypothesis 1 (H1) addressed the plain connection alongside between Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) and Employee Environmental Commitment (EEC).

Based on the results in the table, the positive effect (pro) is indeed strong (pro = 0.62, $t = 10.72$, $p < 0.001$), meaning that organizations using GHRM-practices are also successful in increasing their employees commitment to environmental sustainability. This implies that the green HR practices like green training, green recruitment and performance appraisal system can greatly influence pro environmental practices among the workforce. Hypothesis 2 (H2) investigated Mediating effect of Pro-Environmental Organizational Culture (PGC) on the relationship between GHRM and EEC. The partial mediation results were further confirmed by the fact that the indirect path GHRM-PGC-EEC was also significant (beta = 0.58, $t = 9.86$, $p < 0.001$). It means that GHRM does not affect EEC vacuously: instead, it fosters environment-friendly culture at the organization that gives credence to EE-friendly attitude among employees. It stresses that when green HR practices become part of the culture, the effect of the practices on employee attitude increased. Hypothesis 3 (H3) was used to test the moderating effect of Environmental Transformational Leadership (ETL) in the connection between GHRM and EEC. The moderation is justified by the large interaction effect (0.49, $t = 7.34$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that the positive effects of GHRM on EEC will be intensified under conditions when employees will consider their leaders transformational as regards to environmental ideals. TL in turn are inspirers, motivators and role models and by doing so they will improve outcomes of green HR practices which ultimately will facilitate sustainability principles. Combined, the results show that GHRM in isolation is effective, however, internal cultural alignment and supportive leadership only reinforces such activity. These lessons provide strategic guidance to managers who want to develop sustainable behavior by strengthening the coordination of HR, leadership, cultural practices.

Table No: 3

Hypothesis	Path	Beta (β)	t-value	p-value	Result
H1	GHRM → EEC	0.62	10.72	<0.001	Supported
Mediation Analysis					
H2	GHRM → PDC→EEC	0.58	9.86	<0.001	Supported
Moderation Analysis					
H3	GHRM → ETL→EEC	0.49	7.34	<0.001	Supported

Discussion

The paper sought to focus on determination of the strategic nature of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) in the improvement of the Employee Environmental Commitment (EEC), as

well study the mediating effect by use of the Pro-Environmental Organizational Culture (PGC) and moderating studies on the impact of Environmental transformational leadership (ETL). The findings offer strong indications that GHRM has significant predictive power, both directly and indirectly, on EEC by way of the mechanisms of culture and leadership. The similar strong direct impact that GHRM has on EEC also provides evidence of the idea that environmentally-minded HR practices like green hiring, green training, sustainability-based performance appraisal, among others, are not in any way toothless, but, in fact, shape the mindset and behavior of the employees in a meaningful way (Renwick et al., 2021). Employees are more engaged to environmental aspirations in the event that they sense that the company supports sustainability by means of HR practices. It aligns with the research evidence that HRM policies that actively promote green behavior values make the employees better engaged in them (Pham et al., 2020). PGC as a mediator showcases how GHRM leads to creation of EEC. Organizational culture is integrated with green practices, and this produces a common ground and a sense of mind committed to the environmental stewardship. This anchoring is not only strengthened into green behavior but it also maintains the behavior beyond formal HR processes. This cultural integration can contribute to sustainability over the long term in organizational sustainability, because doing so increases the importance of environmental values as a component of organizational identity. Moreover, the fact that ETL moderate consequences agrees that leadership is escalating impacting in green HR settings. Environmentally conscious leaders create feelings of obligation, instill confidence, and express an explicit vision of going green and hence increase the impact of GHRM on EEC (Ahmad et al., 2024). Transformational leadership fosters emotion and psychological safety and makes employees engage in activity aimed at putting their environment values into practice without fear of contradiction or aggression. In combination, the foregoing results support the belief that GHRM, organizational culture, and transformational leadership are interconnected levers of strategy that propel organizational sustainability internally. Firms that integrate both formal HR infrastructure and coherence with a given culture, as well as inspirational leadership, have more means to develop intense and long-lasting employee dedication to environmental goals, which in turn are aligned to their wider corporate sustainability.

Practical Implications

The present study also has a number of implications on organizational leaders and HR professionals who intend to improve sustainability performance. On the one hand, organizations are recommended to incorporate the practices of Green HRM in their central HR strategy including elements of green recruitment, the use of environmental training, the performance evaluation based on the concept of sustainability in employees in order to foster the mercantile awareness and engagement among them. Not only do such practices promote environmental friendliness but they also engender the feeling of collective ownership of the sustainability agenda. Second, the results state the significance of developing a Pro-Environmental Organizational Culture (PGC). Managers ought to practice free communication on environmental targets and also grand green accomplishments as well as integrate sustainability on organizational values and in day-to-day activities. This forms a situation of expectation and reinforcement of green behaviors. Third, the effect of the moderating impact of the role of a leader behavior namely Environmental Transformational Leadership (ETL) is also emphasized. The leadership must assume the role model status environmentally, motivate subordinates by a vivid environmental vision, and encourage employee programs involving sustainability. Organizations can overcome this by placing environmental competencies in leadership development programs. Converting HRM practices and organizational culture, as well as leadership, to sustainable values will help firms enhance the environmental commitment of employees and implement a significant corporate contribution to the environmental responsibility alongside with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Limitations and Future Research

Although the study can provide substantial insights, some limitations have to be identified. First, data were taken out of one geographical setting (e.g., manufacturing and service industries within Pakistan), which can be a curtailment of cross-cultural application or cross-industry. The external validity could be improved by including cross-cultural comparison or the result in various industry sectors (future research). Second, this study used cross-sectional design which denied it to draw a conclusion on the presence of causality. Longitudinal studies would come in handy in determining the time factor and how Green HRM and environmental commitment is changing with respect to time. Third, the research involved self-reported information and this may be biased. In the future, researchers were perhaps able to combine multi-source information or objective environmental performance indicators to increase their reliability. Finally, the model may be applicable in the inclusion of other mediating or comparing effects including green organizational identity, subordinate proactivity, or an environmental psychological ownership to further develop the perception of green workplace behavior.

Conclusion

This research illuminates the strategic importance of Green HRM in ensuring Employee Environmental Commitment with the mediation of Pro-Environmental Organization Culture at the clustering influence of Environmental Transformational Leadership. Findings affirm that every internal approach where the HR practices, leadership and culture integrate is paramount in internalizing the issues of environmental sustainability in employee behavior. This study can contribute to theory and practice by presenting meaningful patterns among GHRM, PGC, ETL, and EEC, which can be seen as providing practical ways toward the development of environmentally responsible workforces. Finally, companies that are sustainability leaders will be more able to react to environmental issues in the world and be at the forefront of green economy.

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