Research Article

Green HRM Practices: From Policy to Employee Behaviour Change

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Abstract: The increasing pressure to ensure that the environment is made sustainable has generated the need to reconsider the role played by the human resource management in ensuring the ecological responsibility is created. The green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices have evolved as a strategic practice that could result to congruence of the workforce management with sustainability through the incorporation of the environmental values into the recruitment, training, performance appraisal and reward systems. The paper targets the ways in which the organizational green policies can be successfully transferred into the actual change in the practices of the employees and how vital the formal initiatives can be in the process, and how critical is the individual move. The paper addresses the components of the awareness, motivation and accountability of the employees as the policies including environmentally friendly training, green performance indicators and incentives systems are used to generate awareness delivering through the existing literatures and case experience. It is also transposed to the organizational culture and leadership as the initiator of green norms and psychological motivators of the employee willingness to embrace the practice of being pro-environmentally friendly at the workplace. The results indicate that the frames of the policies are an obligatory condition, but the success of these frameworks depends to a great extent on the regularity of communication, the involvement of the employees, and the introduction of the green practices to the routine working process. Moreover, the behaviour change is enabled through the long-term perspective by the occupation with personal values and long-term sustainability goals of the organization. The paper finds out that GHRM is not merely a compliance apparatus, yet it can be a transformational apparatus that would enable the employees to be active participants in the environmental performance. The organizations will be capable of taking long-range measures in the direction of the sustainable development, and they will also be able to enhance their image and competitiveness in the environment of scarce resources.

Keywords: Green Human Resource Management (GHRM), Sustainable HR practices, Employee behaviour change, Environmental sustainability, Organizational culture, Green policies, Eco-friendly training.

INTRODUCTION

The argument surrounding sustainable development has also not been limited to talking about the aspect of environmental policy and industrial practices in the recent years only but also the human resource management sector. Organizations are coming to comprehend that in the long term not only their financial performance would determine their competitive advantage but more importantly their capacity to incorporate the environmental responsibility in their day-to-day operations of the organization. It has resulted in the concept of Green HRM (Green Human Resource Management) that focuses on matching the policy of human resource with the environmental sustainability agenda. Green HRM does not merely concern whether the company is complying with the new green legislations but would also aim at inculcating the green awareness in values, skills, as well as behaviours within the workforce.

The role of employee contribution towards transforming organizational sustainability to the desired outcomes is an exceptionally significant one. Although, such strategic decision and policies may define the structure of environmental responsibility, the employees will always decide on the success of such programs. The training, the recruitment, the performance appraisal and the reward systems, which entangle the environmental issues, are the most important in forming the attitudes and improving the pro-environmental behaviour. The examples of the cultures where the ecological responsibility would become the inherent part of the daily work are the organizations that, in their turn, have the sustainability-oriented people employed, train employees on the environmental issues on the regular basis and reward green innovations.

Despite the increased scholarly interest in the topic, the literature gap is in how the practices of Green HRM change can modify the policy into actual behavioural change in the

level of employees. The available literature on the subject is biased to the policy frameworks or even the merits of an organization, but we have not given much attention as to how these policies were internalized and translated into action by the employees. This gap needs to be sealed because strategic formulation is a recipe that should result in the success of Green HRM, but must be adopted and implemented by the staff. The research thus examines the impact of green HRM practices on the actions of the employees and this research is part of the achievement of the sustainability of organisations and the overall environmental aims.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Sustainability of the environment is not more of a peripheral issue in organizations in the past decades but rather a priority to organizations in industries. The increasing needs of governments, stakeholders, and the society as a whole, have encouraged the adoption of practices that will reduce their ecological footprint and are geared towards the greater objective of sustainable development by the firms. In this respect, organizations have realized the necessity to encompass sustainability to the procedures involved in operation and management of human resources. This has given rise to the Green Human Resource Management (Green HRM).

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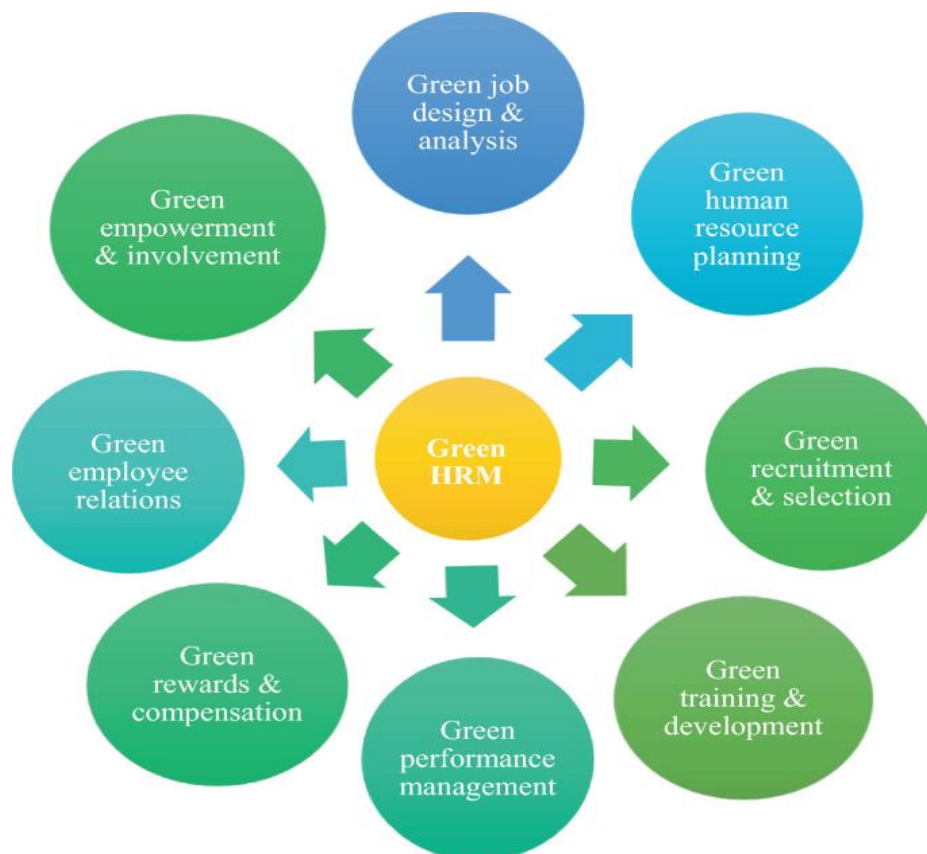
Green HRM refers to integrating the environmental objectives in the traditional Hr practices in recruitment, training, performance management, and reward systems. Introducing sustainability in these areas, organizations pay attention to shaping the attitudes of workers, the pro-environmental behaviours, and support of ecological aims on all levels of the personnel. However, despite the fact that most companies have developed green policies which show the interest of observing green practices, the question that has been proposed with a sharp sense of urgency has been how the policies are translated to the actual implementation of change in behaviour by the employees.

The level of separation is high between the implementation of behaviour and policy making. Sustainable practices can be defined in terms of organizational policies, and so long as the employees are not involved in any way in a serious way, the initiatives will remain symbolic. The key participants of the green initiatives at the ground level are the employees who can contribute to the conservation of the energy, cut-down of the waste, encourage recycling, or support innovative solutions to environment-friendly. Therefore, Green HRM is not only an issue that is pegged on the setting of the policies but also the extent to which the employees have internalised and applied the environmental responsible behaviour in their day-to-day operations.

In organizations that are riddled with the desire to achieve the competitive advantage and maintain social legitimacy in an increasingly environmentally-conscious market place, it is worth noting that there exists the relationship between the policy and practice of Green HRM. The study positions itself as such cross-over with the study that examines the manner in which green

HRM initiatives cut across policy frameworks to influence actual organizational behavior among employees. This relationship will also give an understanding of the effectiveness of HRM in bringing a sustainable change in the organization as well as reveal the significance of employees as the source of ecological responsibility.

Justification

The increased fear of climatic change and environmental deterioration has put organizations on the lifeboat to embrace environmentally friendly business practices. Although the role of the technological innovation and regulatory compliance prevails, the human factor is the key feature of the change, which is long-term. The effect that Human Resource Management (HRM) has on the organisational culture and individual behaviour can move beyond what the policy can implement once implemented in line with the objectives of the environment. Green Human Resource Management (Green HRM) is based on it. The existing sustainability literature is growing in size, but there is the knowledge gap which concerns the way of translating the HR policies into behavioural change on the level of the employees. The formal requirements of most of the companies cover the environment policy, and the parameters to which the policies have restored the manner of operation and the mindset of the employees are not completely investigated. The organization sustainability policies cannot run without the involvement of employees and their adherence to the program as it would only be a semblance and not revolution.

There is practical and theoretical justification to the research. It, somewhat, is supposed to fill the gap between the policies of the institutional sustainability and the micro-level employee behaviour that provides some insight into how HR interventions could be employed to influence the pro-environmental behaviour, including green recruitment and training, performance management, and reward systems. Theoretically, the research addresses one of the short-term company needs, which is the transition of sustainability plans into tangible and quantifiable outputs by participating in the labour force. This would enable these companies to implement HRM structures that on top of enabling the companies to comply would also enable workers to be held accountable to the environment in the long-run.

Moreover, it can be justified by the desperate global agenda of the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is not a secret that the parties interested in this mission are the companies, and HR practices can become the engine that will help the company practice to become compatible with the global sustainability practices. Therefore, the Green HRM critique of the employee behavior change will be scholarly and theoretical relevance and usefulness.

Objectives of the Study
1. To examine the role of Green HRM policies in shaping organizational commitment towards environmental sustainability.
2. To investigate the link between Green HRM practices and employee awareness of eco-friendly values and behaviours at the workplace.
3. To analyze how green recruitment, training, and performance appraisal systems influence employees' pro-environmental attitudes.
4. To evaluate the effectiveness of reward and recognition mechanisms in motivating employees to adopt sustainable behaviours.
5. To identify the mediating role of organizational culture in translating Green HRM policies into actual employee behaviour change.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Introduction and scope

Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) studies how HR policies and practices are designed and used to support environmental sustainability and to shape employee pro-environmental behaviour. The literature treats GHRM both as a set of specific HR practices (e.g., green recruitment, training, performance management, rewards) and as a system that translates organizational environmental policy into day-to-day employee behaviour and organizational outcomes.

2. Historical roots and review papers

Early work connecting HR factors to environmental management emphasized the role of HR in implementing environmental management systems and achieving sustainability (Daily & Huang, 2001). Renwick, Redman & Maguire's influential review and process model established the entry-to-exit HR framework (recruit → reward → retain → exit) for Green HRM and proposed a research agenda linking policy to practice. Subsequent comprehensive reviews have expanded and systematized GHRM taxonomies and identified consistent themes and research gaps.

3. Core GHRM practices (policy levers)

Empirical and conceptual studies commonly categorize GHRM practices as follows:

• **Green recruitment & selection** — attracting and selecting candidates for environmental values/skills (job ads, selection criteria, green employer branding).

• **Green training & development** — environmental awareness, capability building, job-specific eco-skills.

• **Green performance management & appraisal** — including environmental targets and KPIs in appraisals.

• **Green rewards & compensation** — extrinsic incentives, recognition for pro-environmental actions.

• **Green job design & involvement** — employee participation, empowerment, and suggestion systems for environmental improvements.

These categories recur across foundational papers and empirical studies as the primary policy levers by which organizations try to influence employee behaviour.

4. Theoretical mechanisms: how policy becomes behaviour

The literature identifies several complementary mechanisms that explain how GHRM translates into employee behaviour change:

- **AMO framework (Ability–Motivation–Opportunity):** GHRM builds employees' abilities (training), motivation (rewards, performance systems), and opportunities (empowerment, participation), which collectively drive pro-environmental behaviour. Recent empirical work applies AMO explicitly to the GHRM → behaviour link.
- **Social exchange and perceived organizational support:** When employees perceive the organization as genuinely committed to the environment (through consistent GHRM), reciprocal pro-environmental behaviour increases. Studies find perceived green organizational support mediates GHRM effects.
- **Cognitive/attitudinal pathways (TPB and identity):** Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and constructs like Green Organizational Identity (GOI) and pro-environmental psychological climate are used to explain attitude → intention → behaviour pathways influenced by GHRM signals.
- **Leadership & culture as moderators:** Green leadership and an organizational green culture strengthen or enable the policy → behaviour pathway; without supportive leadership or culture, formal GHRM may underperform. Recent empirical studies test these interactions.

5. Empirical findings: outcomes and mediators

Across industries and geographies, empirical studies generally report positive associations between GHRM practices and:

- Employee pro-environmental behaviour (individual discretionary acts like recycling, energy saving).
- Organizational environmental performance and corporate sustainability indicators.
- Intermediate outcomes such as green psychological climate, green organizational identity, and perceived green support — these often mediate the relationship between GHRM and behaviour. Meta-and systematic reviews and multiple sector studies corroborate these patterns, though effect sizes and causal claims vary with study design.

MATERIAL AND METHODOLOGY

Research Design:

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to capture the complexity of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices. A cross-sectional survey was used to examine the prevalence and effectiveness of green HRM policies across organizations, while semi-structured interviews provided deeper insights into how employees interpret and internalize these practices. This dual design ensures not only measurable data on organizational strategies but also rich narratives that reveal behavioural changes at the employee level.

Data Collection Methods:

Primary data was collected through two main instruments: (a) a structured questionnaire distributed to employees and HR managers across selected organizations, and (b) semi-structured interviews with a smaller subset of respondents. The questionnaire focused on policy awareness, training effectiveness, and observed changes in workplace behaviours such as resource conservation and waste reduction. The interviews explored employee perceptions of green initiatives, motivational drivers, and barriers to behavioural adaptation. Secondary data sources, such as organizational sustainability reports and HR policy documents, were reviewed to validate and contextualize primary findings.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria:

The study included organizations that have explicitly documented or communicated sustainability and green HRM initiatives within the past three years. Participants were full-time employees with at least one year of tenure, ensuring sufficient exposure to the policies under investigation. Excluded from the study were organizations without formal HRM structures or documented sustainability policies, as well as temporary or contractual employees whose limited tenure may not provide adequate experience with GHRM practices.

Ethical Considerations:

All participants were informed about the objectives of the study and assured that their participation was voluntary. Informed consent was obtained prior to data collection, and respondents were given the right to withdraw at any stage without consequence. Data confidentiality was strictly maintained by anonymizing participant information and securing responses in password-protected digital files. The study avoided any form of coercion or undue influence, ensuring that organizational authorities were not privy to individual responses. Approval was sought from the institutional ethics review committee before commencement of fieldwork to safeguard compliance with ethical research standards.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results:

The study aimed to examine how Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices translate from organizational policies into tangible employee behavioural changes. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to employees across manufacturing, service, and IT organizations. Out of 400 distributed questionnaires, 352 valid responses were retained for analysis (response rate: 88%).

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency (n=352)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	198	56.3
	Female	154	43.7
Age	Below 30	110	31.3
	30–40	147	41.8
	Above 40	95	27.0
Education	Undergraduate	78	22.2
	Postgraduate	201	57.1
	Others	73	20.7
Industry	Manufacturing	112	31.8
	Services	135	38.4
	IT	105	29.8

The demographic distribution suggests a relatively balanced sample, with strong representation from middle-aged employees and postgraduate qualifications.

Table 2: Mean Scores of Green HRM Practices and Employee Behavior

Constructs	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Green Recruitment & Selection	3.98	0.72	High Implementation
Green Training & Development	4.12	0.68	High Implementation
Green Performance Appraisal	3.67	0.81	Moderate
Green Compensation & Rewards	3.45	0.84	Moderate
Green Employee Involvement	4.05	0.65	High Implementation
Employee Pro-environmental Behaviour	4.09	0.71	High Adoption

Results indicate that training and employee involvement have the highest implementation levels, while compensation and appraisal systems reflect only moderate alignment with green objectives.

Table 3: Regression Analysis between GHRM Practices and Employee Behavior

Predictor Variable	β	t-value	p-value	Significance
Green Recruitment & Selection	0.18	3.21	0.001	Significant
Green Training & Development	0.27	4.82	0.000	Significant
Green Performance Appraisal	0.11	2.02	0.044	Significant
Green Compensation & Rewards	0.09	1.76	0.079	Not Sig.
Green Employee Involvement	0.25	4.37	0.000	Significant
R² = 0.54, F = 46.3, p < 0.001				

The regression analysis shows that training, involvement, and recruitment practices significantly predict employee pro-environmental behaviour, while compensation and rewards do not show a statistically significant effect.

DISCUSSION:

The findings reveal that GHRM practices exert a substantial influence on employee behaviour, though the degree of impact varies across practices.

1. **Green Training and Development** emerged as the most significant driver of behavioural change. Employees exposed to structured sustainability training reported stronger adoption of pro-environmental practices such as energy saving, waste reduction, and eco-friendly decision-making. This supports earlier studies suggesting that knowledge and awareness are prerequisites for behavioural change.

2. **Employee Involvement** was the second strongest predictor. Participation in green initiatives, suggestion schemes, and environmental committees enabled employees to internalize organizational sustainability goals. This indicates that policies are more effective when employees feel a sense of ownership.

3. **Green Recruitment and Selection** also showed a positive influence, confirming that hiring employees with a sustainability mindset helps align values and expected behaviour.

4. **Green Performance Appraisal** had a weaker but still significant effect, suggesting that while performance reviews incorporate environmental criteria, they may not yet be robust enough to trigger consistent behavioural changes.

5. **Green Compensation and Rewards**, though conceptually important, did not significantly predict behaviour in this study. One possible explanation is that monetary rewards may not be as effective in driving long-term environmental behaviour compared to intrinsic motivation and organizational culture.

Overall, the results support the argument that policies alone are insufficient without complementary practices that engage, train, and empower employees. While organizations are integrating green values into HRM, stronger emphasis should be placed on creating participatory and developmental practices rather than relying solely on financial incentives.

Limitations of the study

1. **Scope of Data Collection**: The study draws on data from a specific set of organizations and industries, which may not fully represent the diversity of workplaces across regions or sectors. As a result, the findings should be interpreted with caution before generalizing to other contexts.

2. **Cross-Sectional Design**: Since the research relies on a cross-sectional approach, it captures employee perceptions and behaviours at a single point in time. This design limits the ability to establish long-term cause-and-effect relationships between Green HRM practices and sustained behaviour change.

3. **Self-Reported Data**: Much of the analysis depends on self-reported responses from employees. While these insights are valuable, they may be influenced by social desirability bias, where individuals overstate their environmentally friendly actions to align with organizational expectations.

4. **Policy–Practice Gap**: Although the study examines the link between organizational policies and employee behaviour, it does not fully capture the informal or unrecorded practices that may influence outcomes. The gap between policy intent and on-the-ground execution might therefore be wider than reflected here.

5. **Cultural and Contextual Influences**: Employee attitudes toward environmental practices can be shaped by cultural norms, national regulations, or societal values. These contextual factors were not deeply examined, which may affect how applicable the findings are in different geographic or cultural settings.

6. **Focus on Individual Behaviour**: The research primarily emphasizes employee-level behavioural changes, while broader organizational or systemic factors (e.g., supply chain policies, technological investments) that also drive sustainability were not extensively explored.

7. **Temporal Constraints**: The timeframe of the study limited the ability to observe gradual changes in organizational culture or employee habits, which typically evolve over longer periods.

Future Scope

The article on Green HRM practices and their influence on employee's behaviour lends towards the possibility of many more studies. Owing to the reality that organizations are more entrenching the sustainability goals with the human resource strategies, the future research has a number of avenues. To begin with, one can conduct longitudinal research that will aid in researching the long-term performance of Green HRM initiatives on the behaviour of the employees, the organizational culture, and the environmental performance. This would also help in the generation of causal associations and not short-run associations.

Second, the geographical and industry boundaries can be expanded in future in order to ascertain the differences in contexts. Much of what can be said about the effectiveness of Green HRM initiatives is that a comparison of research carried out in various sectors such as manufacturing, information technology, healthcare, and education can provide some insight into the role played by sector-specific processes. Similarly, cross-cultural studies would allow researchers to determine the impact that values and cultural orientations of communities have on how the employees respond to the green policies.

Third, the study could as well be extended to examine the effect of leadership, motivation and organizational communication in improving the relationship between policies and employee behaviour change. Such moderating and mediating variables as organizational commitment, green identity and incentives may be worth examining to comprehend why a policy may result in behavioural changes and others in no changes.

Finally, it is also possible to re-do the research in the future to explore how technology has been incorporated in the Green HRM practices such as use of digital platform, AI-based tools, and green training simulations to stimulate sustainable practices at work place. The discussion of such new tools would provide valuable insights into the transformation of HRM in order to make positive contributions to environmental sustainability.

CONCLUSION

The paper has highlighted the fact that the ultimate power

of Green HRM is not merely the existence of friendly policies to environment but power of such policies to produce good behaviour of employees and retain good behaviour of employees. When businesses use the environmental values in recruitment, training, performance managing and rewarding processes, then it gives a company culture where sustainability is an individual responsibility. Once the employees are persuaded that the green initiatives are not something fake and approved by the management, they will be willing to implement the policies in the practice of standard green practices. The point is that the Green HRM is placed in the middle between the organizational sustainability goals and the individual behavioural alteration since the former assists the latter in understanding that environmental responsibility is not one of the strategic benefits, but a collective process. There is still need to do some additional work in order to make sure that HR strategies are aligned to more pertinent sustainability strategies in case green practices are not only a symbolic act, but they are also rooted in day-to-day work practice.

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