

Impact of Green Human Resource Management on Employee Green Behavior: The Mediating Role of Green Attitude

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Abstract: This study's main objective was to examine the impact of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) on green behaviors through the green attitude of employees. A sample of 150 employees from a chosen information technology company in Sri Lanka was drawn to accomplish this objective. The data were collected using a structured survey questionnaire, and the survey instruments were validated. The SPSS process macro was used to produce the expected impact findings. Results showed that the GHRM impacts green behaviors through employees' green attitudes, indicating a partial mediation. The study concluded that organizations must engage in GHRM practices to strengthen employees' green behaviors in implementing environmental and sustainability strategies. Theoretical implications of the study's findings include validating the resource-based view, social identity theory, attitude theory, and measurement instruments used for the impact of GHRM on green behavior through green attitudes. The findings revealed GHRM's contribution to the environmental management literature, particularly by creating new knowledge of the predicted impacts in the information and communication technology industry in a developing country context. This study also provides limitations and future research directions.

Keywords: green attitude, green behavior, green human resource management.

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INTRODUCTION

There is conservational exploitation in the modern global setting due to rapid industrialization. Thus, current business realities prepare to study green aspects (Ahmad, 2015) and adopt sustainability (Jones et al., 2017; Pratama et al., 2022; Yüce et al., 2020) and green behaviors (Paillé et al., 2014; Khoiruman & Haryanto, 2017; Weerarathna et al., 2018; Lavuri & Susandy, 2020). Specifically, the awareness of the importance of going green initiative and accepting numerous environmental administration strategies has increased within business societies (Ahmad, 2015; Jabbour et al., 2013). GHRM has emerged as a critical business tool (Dumont et al., 2017; Ercantan & Eyupoglu, 2022). It is a new term that refers to human resource characteristics in the realm of “green,” wherein the human resource department plays a critical role in green initiatives at work (Ahmad, 2015).

The GHRM procedures include the applications, activities, and tactics executed to reduce the adverse consequences on the environment and improve environmental performance (Arulrajah et al., 2016). GHRM



assists with environmental-related issues through administration policies such as environmental safety measures (Rani & Mishra, 2014). The “green recruitment, selection and training, and development” align workers with an organization’s eco-friendly tactics (Renwick et al., 2008). They help increase employees’ green awareness (Ercantan & Eyupoglu, 2022). Performance management is used to evaluate the employees’ environmental performance (Perron et al., 2006; Ratnamiasih et al., 2022). The rewarding management is aligned with the employees’ environmental performance (Ercantan & Eyupoglu, 2022; Perron et al., 2006). They allow for better-quality workforce awareness and accountability for environmental sustainability (Mezher, 2011). Thus, GHRM develops “green competencies, green attitude, green behaviors, and green results” (Opatha, 2013). The green attitude and green behaviors contribute to the GHRM’s primary goal of generating, developing, and sustaining greening inside every employee (Opatha & Arulrajah, 2014), thus creating an ecological workplace (Ercantan & Eyupoglu, 2022).

Researchers regard the effects of GHRM on employees’ green behaviors as a new field (Dumont et al., 2017; Ercantan & Eyupoglu, 2022; Paillé et al., 2014; Perron et al., 2006). Several studies have found that many companies’ environmental programs rely on employees’ sustainable behaviors through green attitudes (Robertson & Barling, 2013; Vicente-Molina et al., 2013). Thus, these behaviors are considered contributing factors to the organization’s long-term success (Blok et al., 2015). It is necessary to have a thorough understanding of the processes and mechanisms by which GHRM practices influence these green behaviors (Paillé et al., 2014; Zibarras & Coan, 2015). The primary purpose of this study is to investigate how green behavior results from GHRM practices through green attitudes. The GHRM practices include green recruitment, selection, training, and development, which have been found to impact green behaviors (Dumont et al., 2017; Ercantan & Eyupoglu, 2022; Ojo et al., 2022; Renwick et al., 2013). Thus, they were used as the GRHM practices in this study. Based on these, the study’s primary objective was to investigate the impact of GHRM on green behavior through green attitudes.

Unlike other studies, the current study used employees in the IT sector to test this phenomenon. Mainly IT sector employees are supposed to work for green solutions that can save carbon footprints, lower costs, reduce waste, and efficiently use energy and other resources (El-Kassar & Singh, 2019; Ojo & Fauzi, 2020; Sharanya & Radhika, 2016). Their green attitudes will help create more positive outcomes for environmental performance and sustainability (Ojo et al., 2022; Ojo & Fauzi, 2020). Moreover, the context; Sri Lanka used for the study lacks the phenomenon investigated in the IT sector while having extant empirical investigations in manufacturing (Opatha & Kottawatta, 2020; Rasan, 2016; Weerakotuwa, 2018), tourism (Siyambalapitiya et al., 2018), public sector (Wijesingha et al., 2020) and banking (Sandaruwan et al., 2020; Sithy Safeena, 2020). The study makes a valuable contribution to the literature by assessing IT Employees’ perceptions of the GHRM practices on green behavior through the green attitude. It emphasizes the importance for organizations to recognize the growing interest and concern about efforts to attract prospective employees who are inclined to exhibit green behavior.

METHODS

The data were collected through a pre-tested structured questionnaire using simple random sampling. The online survey method was used. The sample contained males and females from a selected ICT firm in Sri Lanka. The company was selected with the recommendation of SLASSCOM, the national chamber organization for the ICT industry in Sri Lanka. Such a recommendation was needed as the authors needed to find out a company with GHRM concerns. The target population of the selected firm was 300 employees. The sample size, 207, was

calculated based on the Roasoft calculator with a 5% margin of error, 99% confidence level, and 50% response distribution. At the end of the data collection, the sample was 150, with a response rate of 96%.

Initially, the human resource manager in the selected firm was contacted and obtained the employee name list. That was considered as the sample frame. The sample was drawn using the random number table. The social media accounts of the employees selected for the sample were searched, and the questionnaire was distributed to them through social media.

Response guidelines were provided, and confidentiality was ensured to control the common method bias. The dependent variable scales were placed before the independent variables in the questionnaire to control response consistencies (Harrison et al., 1996). Additionally, exploratory factor analysis was performed, and the three-factor model was received as expected, with a total variance of 85% (Eigenvalue > 1). All this evidence ensures that the common method bias is not an issue.

The survey questionnaire was adopted from Opatha & Kottawatta (2020). A seven-point Likert scale was used to scale the responses ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree to the corresponding questions for GHRM, green attitudes, and green behavior. The instrument was considered reliable because its Cronbach's alpha value was greater than 0.70 (Collier, 2020; Hair et al., 2007; Nunnally, 1994). They ranged from 0.82 to 0.84. Specifically, the GHRM consisted of green recruitment and green training and development, where green recruitment was measured through 7 item scale, and training and development was measured through the 8-item scale. Thus, Cronbach's alpha value for GHRM was 0.82. Similarly, Cronbach's alpha values for green attitude and green behavior were 0.84 and 0.82, respectively.

The normality of the data set was assessed by Kolmogorov–Smirnov statistic, scatterplot, and Skewness and Kurtosis. Kolmogorov–Smirnov statistic verified the existence of normality. Scatterplots confirmed the presence of multivariate normality. As a result, the linearity and homoscedasticity assumptions were not violated. Skewness and kurtosis were both within the limited range of ± 1 . These figures revealed the possibility of proceeding with the analysis and interpretation of data. Furthermore, no correlations were greater than 0.90, tolerance was greater than 0.10, and VIF was less than 10 for all variables, indicating that the multicollinearity assumption was not violated.

The average variance extracted (AVE) value recognizes the convergent validity of the study measurements. According to Hair et al. (2017), the values were required to exceed 0.50. However, contemporary arguments have set the minimum value to 0.4 or above (Hair et al., 2017; Nascimento et al., 2022) as long as the Composite Reliability is greater than 0.6. (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Huang et al., 2013; Nascimento et al., 2022). The AVE values of green attitude, green behavior, and GHRM were 0.538, 0.506, and 0.435, respectively. As a result, all constructs can be considered valid (convergent validity) because their AVE values are greater than the benchmark value. The discriminant validity of the items was assessed through Fornell & Larcker's (1981) criterion. The square root of AVE values of constructs must be higher than inter-construct correlation values (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The condition is met for all the items of the constructs, and thus they have discriminant validity. The structural model was assessed through SPSS process macro option. The test statistic results of the structural model assessment are given in the results section.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The profile of the dataset is shown in table 1. It revealed that most respondents were male (58.7%) and belonged to the 26 to 30 years old category. The majority of the respondents (32%) were educated up to a bachelor's degree level, and the majority (36.7%) had 3-4 years of experience in their current job.

Table 1 Profile of the Data Set

Socio-demographic factors	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	88	58.7
	Female	62	41.3
	Total	150	100.0
Age of the employee (Years)	21 - 25	17	11.3
	26 - 30	46	30.7
	31 - 35	35	23.3
	36 - 40	28	18.7
	Above 40	24	16.0
	Total	150	100
Educational level	Degree	48	32.0
	Both Degree and Professional Qualifications in IT	41	27.3
	Post Graduate Diploma	35	23.3
	Master's Degree	26	17.3
	Total	150	100.0
Period of service years	Less than one year	22	14.7
	1-2 years	53	35.3
	3-4 years	55	36.7
	More than four years	20	13.3
	Total	150	100.0

Source: Survey data (2022)

The study tested the mediation impact of a green attitude on the impact of GHRM on the green behavior of the employees. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Study Results for Mediation Analysis

Separate effects	β	SE	t	R ²
GHRM regressed on GA	0.75**	0.05	23.14	0.78
GA regressed on GB	0.66**	0.07	8.96	0.83
GHRM regressed on GB	0.40**	0.10	3.99	
Total, Direct, and Indirect effects of GHRM on GB and R ²				
Total and Direct Effects	β	SE	LLCI	ULCI
Total Effects of GHRM --GB	0.90	0.05	0.0930	0.3239
Direct Effect of GHRM--GB	0.40**	0.10	0.2044	0.6048
Indirect effect	β	Boot SE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
Indirect Effect of GA on the impact of GHRM on GB	0.50**	0.91	0.6552	0.9822

LLCI: lower-level confidence level; ULCI: upper-level confidence interval. GHRM: green human resource management; GA: green attitude; GB; green behavior; p** < 0.01; p* < 0.05

Source: Survey data (2022)

Hypothesis one was the positive impact of GHRM on green behavior. According to Table 2, the standardized beta value of the impact of GHRM on green behavior was 0.40 ($p < 0.01$), which indicated that GHRM contributed to green behavior. Thus, hypothesis one is accepted. Hypothesis two is the positive impact of GHRM on the green attitude. The impact was given by the standardized beta value of 0.75 ($p < 0.01$). It represented that GHRM impacted green attitude.

Accordingly, hypothesis two is accepted. Hypothesis three is the positive impact of a green attitude on green behavior. The impact was given by the standardized beta value of 0.66 ($p < 0.01$). It represented that green attitude impacted green behavior, and therefore, hypothesis three is accepted.

The mediation impact of green attitude on the impact of GHRM on green behavior is given by the standardized beta value of 0.50 ($p < 0.01$). It indicated that the impact of GHRM on green behavior is mediated by green attitude. The effect is significant as the bootstrapped confidence intervals at 95% (BootLLCI=0.6552 and BootULCI=0.9822). The mediation shows significant results because there is no zero between the lower (Boot LLCI) and upper (BootULCI) bootstrapped confidence intervals. Therefore, it can be stated that mediation exists. The direct effect of GHRM on green behavior is significant, as zero does not fall between the lower (LLCI=0.2044) and upper bound (ULCI=0.6048) of the confidence interval. The total effect of GHRM on green behavior is significant, as zero does not fall between the lower (LLCI=0.0930) and upper bound (ULCI=0.3239) of the confidence interval. Given that GHRM has a significant direct effect on environmentally friendly behavior (0.40, $p < 0.01$), there is evidence that green attitudes may partially mediate this effect.

Given the recent increase in corporate interest in greening the business, modern human resource managers have been tasked with incorporating green concepts into the corporate mission statement and HRM policies to foster green behaviors. Based on Resource Based View (RBV) (Wernerfelt, 1984) and Attitude Theory (Bull, 1952), the present study proposed a pathway model of the impact of GHRM on green behavior through the development of green attitudes. A structured questionnaire survey was conducted to assess the predicted impacts. The data were collected from 150 employees in an ICT company in Sri Lanka. The study's results validated measurement instruments, and all the hypotheses developed were accepted as the results supported the predicted impacts. Hence, the study's findings confirm the theoretical foundations of RBV (Wernerfelt, 1984), Social Identity Theory (Ashforth & Mael, 1989), and Attitude Theory (Bull, 1952). Further, the findings provide theoretical contributions, implications for practice, and future research directions. Besides, this research had several limitations in this section's latter part.

Notably, the first hypothesis was the impact of GHRM on the green behavior of employees. It was developed based on RBV, Social Identity Theory (Ashforth & Mael, 1989), and prior study findings (Dumont et al., 2017; Saeed et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2019; Zhixia et al., 2018). The results relating to the first hypothesis confirm all the theoretical underpinning and findings of prior studies. The second hypothesis was the impact of GHRM on the green attitude of the employees. That was developed based on the Attitude Theory (Bull, 1952) and prior studies on the same impact (Chaudhary, 2020; Opatha & Kottawatta, 2020; Pham et al., 2019; Sheikh et al., 2019). The results relating to the second hypothesis confirm these theories and the findings of prior studies. The third hypothesis was the impact on the employees' green attitude and green behavior. It was developed based on the Attitude Theory (Bull, 1952) and prior studies (Amoako et al., 2020; Chaudhary, 2020; Dunlap et al., 2000; Mohiuddin et al., 2018). The results of hypothesis three confirm the Attitude Theory (Bull, 1952) and prior study findings. Finally, the fourth hypothesis was the mediation impact of green attitude on the impact of GHRM on the green behavior of the employees. It was developed based on the RBV (Wernerfelt, 1984), the Attitude Theory (Bull, 1952), and prior studies (Amoako et al., 2020; Dumont et al., 2017; Dunlap et al., 2000; Mohiuddin et al., 2018; Sheikh et al., 2019). Acceptance of this hypothesis means that the

findings confirm the theoretical foundations used to develop this hypothesis. Thus, considering all the study findings, the current study attempted to extend and enrich the prevailing knowledge on GHRM practices on green behavior.

In particular, the GHRM was considered by the green recruitment and selection and green training and development initiatives in this study. It was revealed in this study that not only both these green recruitment and selection and training and development directly impact but also green attitudes toward green behavior. As per the findings, the direct impact of GHRM on green behavior is somewhat lesser ($\beta = 0.40$, $p > 0.01$) than the indirect effect ($\beta = 0.50$, $p > 0.01$) of GHRM on green behavior through green attitudes. However, the total effect of GHRM on green behavior is sufficiently significant ($\beta = 0.90$, $p > 0.01$). Therefore, the model developed in this study is ideal for predicting individuals' green behavior. Mainly, green recruitment and selection, training, and development are the major factors for creating green attitudes in employees, which leads to their green behaviors. It is a type of workplace behavior that employees adapt to satisfy the demands of their jobs while also adhering to the organization's laws and regulations. These green behaviors will be socially advantageous as they incur lower operational costs and accomplish ecological sustainability.

The results also point to the fact that organizations should engage in green recruitment and selection, ensuring the selection of employees with green-conscious and green attitudes. Moreover, the results show organizations' requirement to engage in green education, training, and development to enhance their employees' environmental awareness to have a green workplace. Such an awareness would improve employees' abilities to achieve organizational environmental strategic objectives, define individuals' significant role in the firm's environmental management, deepen their understanding of green management and adopt green behavior.

The theoretical implications include that the findings expand the use of RBV (Wernerfelt, 1984), Social Identity Theory (Ashforth & Mael, 1989), and Attitude Theory (Bull, 1952) to understand the impact of GHRM on green behavior through green attitudes.

Researchers highlight that the RBV (Dumont et al., 2017; Ojo & Fauzi, 2020; Paillé et al., 2014) and Social Identity Theory (Ercantan & Eyupoglu, 2022; Kim et al., 2019) have gained much attention for their capacity to explain the impact of GHRM on green behaviors. The RBV postulates that the GHRM practices offer resources to employees that can stimulate green behaviors (Dumont et al., 2017; Ojo & Fauzi, 2020; Paillé et al., 2014). As per the Social Identity Theory, employees' self-concept and self-esteem are strengthened due to the firm's improved reputation and position, and as a result, they connect more with the company. When organizational identification increases, workers exhibit behaviors that help to improve organizational performance. Attitude Theory (Bull, 1952) also suggests that GHRM affects green behavior through green commitment (Pham et al., 2019). In general terms, employee commitment is a form of attitude that needs to form at work (Robbins et al., 2010). Thus, green commitment is an outcome of GHRM representing employees' attitudes that lead to green behaviors (Chaudhary, 2020; Pham et al., 2019). Accordingly, it is argued that organizations adopting and implementing GHRM practices instill positive green attitudes in employees towards their green behavior (Zhu et al., 2021). Thus, the findings of this study validate these theoretical foundations. Moreover, the validated instruments for GHRM, green attitude, and green behaviors can be used for studies in other levels of organization and country contexts.

This study's findings add new knowledge to the theory that the GHRM (mainly green recruitment, selection, and training and development) can play a significant role in developing green attitudes in employees to guide green behaviors, particularly in the context of developing countries like Sri Lanka. Notably, there were gaps in the literature regarding investigating this phenomenon in the IT industry in Sri Lanka. Thus findings contribute to the literature to fill that gap.

The results focus on the environmental aspect of HRM. The results emphasized the contribution of GHRM to the environmental management literature. Notably, the findings provide an understanding of how to raise green awareness and attitudes through green training and development and how to foster a culture of green through green recruitment and selection, which helps policymakers make their environmental management decisions.

The study has several implications for managers and employers. The significant implication for the managers or policymakers is that the GHRM practices benefit organizations that improve environmental behavior at the individual level. The managers must launch many more green recruitment, selection and training, and development activities to promote green behaviors in organizations' greening strategies.

The findings of this study have implications for launching green-related practices such as energy conservation methods, material recycling (Ahmad, 2015), or any method that fosters environmental sustainability. Their sustainable implementation can be assured through GRHM practices.

This selected information and technology service and software firm implemented GHRM practices such as green recruitment and selection and green training and development. However, given the novelty of the GHRM concept in Sri Lanka, this organization's adaptation and performance met the required level of satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

The awareness and concern for accepting numerous environmental administration strategies have increased within the business. The GHRM has emerged as a critical contemporary business tool in creating green behaviors in employees. Within this context, The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of GHRM on green behaviors through the green attitude of employees. The study findings revealed that the measurements used to measure the constructs were validated and evidence to accept all the hypotheses in this study. Notably, study findings revealed that the GRHM impacts green behavior through the green attitudes of employees. It is a partial mediation of green attitudes on the impact of GHRM on green behavior. It, in other words, means that GHRM influences employees' green attitudes that, lead to their green behaviors. Thus, it can be concluded that organizations need to engage in GHRM practices to strengthen green attitudes. Such attitudes would improve employees' abilities to achieve organizational environmental strategic objectives, define individuals' significant role in the firm's environmental management, deepen their understanding of green management and adopt green behavior to have a green workplace. Even though this study was successfully conducted, there were some limitations. One major limitation of the selection of only four GHRM practices affecting green attitudes and green behaviors was at the authors' discretion. There could be more GHRM practices impacting green attitudes and behaviors in the empirical literature. one good technique for such is the Systematic Literature Reviews (SLR) (Priyashantha et al., 2021a, 2021b, 2021c, 2022). Such a review can help select the less empirically proven GRHM practices impacting green attitudes and behaviors to include for investigation in this study. That would help further validate such less empirically proven GRHM practices on green attitudes and behaviors. Besides that, some studies posit that green performance evaluations (Opatha & Kottawatta, 2020; Renwick et al., 2016), green reward management (Yusliza et al., 2017), and green industrial relations (Harvey et al., 2013) also impact green behaviors. They were not taken in this study. Another limitation was the selection of the sample from one organization. The results could be more interesting if many other employees were selected from other IT-related organizations. Since the constructs in this study were measured through opinion-based measurements, doing the investigations in the same sample at two points is essential. In that case, the longitudinal study design is ideal. However, we employed only the cross-sectional design, collecting the data and examining the

respondents' reactions at only one point. Moreover, the more the GHRM promotes green behaviors, the more employee-related outcomes for organizations; retention and satisfaction can be investigated. Thus, all these highlighted areas can be considered in future studies.

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