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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GREEN HRM AND EMPLOYEE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENT

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the relationship between Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices and employee environmental commitment. GHRM integrates environmental thinking into human resource policies and practices such as recruitment, training, performance management, and rewards. Employee environmental commitment reflects the extent to which employees identify with, support, and are prepared to act for their organization's environmental goals. Through a synthesis of existing literature and conceptual analysis, this paper argues that systematic GHRM practices foster stronger environmental commitment among employees by shaping attitudes, norms, and capabilities. The paper outlines a conceptual framework linking GHRM components to behavioral and attitudinal outcomes, discusses mediating mechanisms (e.g., green organizational culture, perceived organizational support), and identifies boundary conditions and practical implications. Finally, it suggests research directions and practical recommendations for organizations seeking to enhance employee environmental commitment.

KEYWORDS: Sustainable HR Practices, Green Recruitment, Green Training and Development, Green Performance Management, Green Rewards and Recognition, Green Organizational Culture

INTRODUCTION

Climate change, resource scarcity, and regulatory pressures have made sustainability a strategic priority for organizations worldwide. Beyond technical fixes, lasting environmental performance requires human behavior change. Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) has emerged as an approach that embeds environmental objectives into HRM systems to mobilize employees as active contributors to sustainability. Employee environmental commitment—the psychological attachment and willingness of employees to support environmental initiatives—is a critical outcome for organizations seeking to translate policy into practice. This paper explores how GHRM practices contribute to fostering employee environmental commitment, why this relationship matters, and how organizations can design HR systems to strengthen employees' environmental attitudes and behaviors.

1. Literature Review

Green HRM is commonly defined as the inclusion of environmental management principles within HR policies and practices. Typical GHRM practices include green recruitment and selection, green training and development, green performance management, and green reward systems. Existing studies indicate that these practices can influence employee knowledge, skills, motivation, and opportunities to engage in pro-environmental behavior at work.

Employee environmental commitment refers to an employee's affective attachment to their organization's environmental goals, internalization of those goals, and readiness to expend effort on environmental tasks beyond formal job requirements. Commitment has cognitive (belief in the importance), affective (feelings of pride), and behavioral (willingness to act) dimensions. In organizational behavior literature, commitment is a strong predictor of sustained discretionary actions. Research on the GHRM–commitment link suggests several pathways: informational (training increases awareness and competence), normative (organizational signals create expectations and social norms), and instrumental (reward and appraisal systems shape incentives). However, empirical evidence varies across contexts and research designs, and the field still needs comprehensive models that integrate mediators and moderators.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This paper proposes a conceptual framework that links four clusters of GHRM practices to employee environmental commitment through three mediating mechanisms: green organizational culture, perceived organizational support for the environment (POSE), and green self-efficacy.

1. GHRM Practices:

- a. Green Recruitment & Selection — Attracts candidates whose values align with environmental goals and signals organizational priorities.
- b. Green Training & Development — Builds knowledge and skills needed for environmental tasks.
- c. Green Performance Management — Clarifies expectations and evaluates environmental contributions.
- d. Green Rewards & Recognition — Reinforces desired behaviors through extrinsic and intrinsic rewards.

2. Mediators:

- a. Green Organizational Culture — Shared values, norms, and narratives that prioritize sustainability.
- b. Perceived Organizational Support for the Environment (POSE) — Employees' belief that the organization values and supports their environmental efforts.
- c. Green Self-Efficacy — Confidence in one's ability to perform environmentally relevant actions.

3. Propositions

Based on the conceptual framework, the paper advances the following propositions for empirical testing:

P1: Implementation of comprehensive GHRM practices is positively associated with employee environmental commitment.

P2: Green organizational culture mediates the relationship between GHRM practices and employee environmental commitment.

P3: Perceived organizational support for the environment moderates the impact of GHRM on commitment such that the relationship is stronger when POSE is high.

P4: Green self-efficacy mediates the effect of green training on employee environmental commitment.

4. METHODOLOGY

To empirically examine the propositions, researchers may use a cross-sectional or longitudinal survey design combined with qualitative interviews. Key elements include:

Sampling: Employees from organizations with explicit sustainability agendas across sectors (e.g., manufacturing, services, IT, hospitality). Stratified sampling ensures diverse representation.

Measures: Use validated scales where possible. Example constructs include:

- GHRM practices (composite scales capturing recruitment, training, performance management, and rewards).

- Employee environmental commitment (multi-dimensional scale assessing affective, normative, and behavioral commitment).

- Mediators: green organizational culture, POSE, green self-efficacy.

Analysis: Structural equation modeling (SEM) to test mediation and moderation effects. Qualitative interviews can enrich understanding of contextual factors and causal mechanisms.

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Although this paper does not present new empirical data, synthesis of prior studies and theoretical reasoning yields several insights:

1. **Holistic GHRM Design Matters:** Fragmented or symbolic green initiatives produce weaker commitment effects. Employees respond when environmental goals are embedded across HR systems rather than in isolated programs.
2. **Role of Leadership and Middle Management:** Leaders who visibly support GHRM amplify its signals. Middle managers are critical in translating HR policies into meaningful daily practices.
3. **Interaction with Organizational Identity:** When GHRM aligns with an organization's core identity and mission, employees are more likely to internalize environmental goals.
4. **Reward Structures:** Both intrinsic (recognition, meaningful work) and extrinsic rewards (bonuses, promotions tied to green KPIs) influence commitment, but intrinsic motives often sustain long-term engagement.
5. **Cultural and Contextual Moderators:** National culture, industry demands, and resource constraints moderate how GHRM affects commitment.

6. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Managers seeking to strengthen employee environmental commitment should consider the following actions:

- Integrate green criteria into recruitment and selection to build a workforce predisposed to sustainability values.
- Invest in regular, practical green training that ties environmental tasks to daily job roles.
- Embed environmental objectives into performance appraisals and career development pathways.
- Design reward systems that balance short-term incentives with recognition that affirms employees' environmental identity.
- Communicate consistently about environmental goals and celebrate small wins to reinforce green organizational culture.

7. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This paper is conceptual and based on literature synthesis, which limits the ability to make definitive causal claims. Future research should:

- Conduct longitudinal studies to assess causality and the durability of commitment effects.

- Use multi-level designs to capture individual, team, and organizational-level influences.
- Explore boundary conditions such as job type, industry norms, and national culture.
- Investigate unintended consequences, such as green fatigue or perceived hypocrisy when organizational practices do not match green rhetoric.

8. CONCLUSION

Employee environmental commitment is a pivotal outcome for organizations aiming to achieve sustained environmental performance. By aligning HR practices with environmental objectives, GHRM can shape employees' attitudes, skills, and perceived support, thereby strengthening commitment. The proposed conceptual framework identifies mediating mechanisms and boundary conditions that can guide empirical research and managerial action. Organizations that treat GHRM as a strategic, integrated agenda rather than a stand-alone initiative are more likely to cultivate a committed workforce capable of advancing sustainability goals.

9. REFERENCES

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