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GREEN HRM, EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND CORPORATE SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY: EVIDENCE FROM KERALA, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The term "green human resource management" (GHRM) refers to the application of HR procedures that encourage the sustainability and preservation of the environment in the workplace. As part of their HR strategies, companies have begun to place greater emphasis on ecologically friendly practices in recent years. This study looks at how GHRM, employee engagement, and corporate social sustainability relate to each other in Kerala, India. Understanding how GHRM practices affect employee engagement and how employee engagement supports corporate social sustainability is the primary goal. A structured questionnaire was used to gather primary data from 200 workers in various industries. SmartPLS 4 was used to analyse the data using the PLS-SEM method. The findings indicate that employee engagement has a positive impact on corporate social sustainability and that GHRM has an important beneficial effect on employee engagement. Additionally, the link between human resources management and corporate social sustainability is found to be partially mediated by employee engagement. This suggests that a key factor in transforming green HR practices into long-term organizational results is engaged employees. The study emphasizes how crucial it is to implement eco-friendly HR procedures in order to boost employee engagement and advance long-term sustainability objectives.

KEYWORDS: Green Human Resource Management, Employee Engagement, Corporate Social Sustainability

INTRODUCTION

One of the most crucial issues in contemporary organizational management is sustainability. To ensure long-term growth and survival, organizations from around the world are placing a greater emphasis on environmentally responsible practices. Green human resource management (GHRM), which combines environmental management with human resource practices, has become a crucial strategy in this regard. Through initiatives like green hiring, training, performance reviews, and incentive programs, GHRM promotes eco-friendly behavior among staff members. In order to link human

resource practices with organizational outcomes, employee engagement is essential. Employee engagement increases commitment, motivation, and willingness to take part in corporate social responsibility and sustainability initiatives. Employees are more likely to support and adopt environment friendly practices at work when they are actively involved. The social and ethical obligations that businesses have to society, such as community development, environmental preservation, and employee welfare, are the main focus of corporate social sustainability. Organizations have come to understand in recent years that attaining sustainability objectives calls for employee involvement in addition to policies and strategies. Therefore, it's critical to comprehend how GHRM affects employee engagement and how this engagement supports corporate social sustainability. While earlier research has looked at the connection between GHRM and sustainability, little of it has addressed the mediating function of employee engagement, particularly in the Indian context. In Kerala, where the corporate sector is progressively implementing sustainable practices, there is a lack of empirical data. Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate how Green HRM affects employee engagement and how that affects corporate social sustainability of organizations in Kerala. Additionally, the study looks at how employee engagement may improve the link between GHRM and sustainability outcomes.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) and its role in promoting sustainability have gained increasing attention in recent years, with several studies highlighting the importance of human resource practices in achieving sustainable organizational outcomes. Mishra S and Gupta R (2024) found that employee engagement plays a significant mediating role between HRM practices and sustainable business outcomes in the Indian context, showing that practices such as training, performance management, and employee involvement indirectly support sustainability by enhancing engagement levels. Similarly, Shafaei A, Nejati M and Quazi A (2023) emphasized that engaged employees act as change agents in promoting corporate social responsibility, as they actively participate in sustainability initiatives beyond their routine job roles. In the same direction, Arulrajah A A and Opatha H H D N P (2022) suggested that GHRM contributes to sustainable competitiveness through employee involvement, highlighting that integrating sustainability into HR functions can improve environmental performance and innovation. Further, Roscoe S, Subramanian N and Wu L (2021) established a strong link between GHRM practices and overall sustainability performance in Asian firms, including economic, environmental, and social aspects. Moreover, Pham N T, Tučková Z and Jabbour C J C (2019) found that green HR practices such as training and reward systems positively influence employee morale and engagement, leading to stronger environmental awareness among employees. Although these studies provide important insights, most of them are conducted in different contexts and focus broadly on HRM practices, with limited attention given to the mediating role of employee engagement between GHRM and corporate social sustainability, especially in the

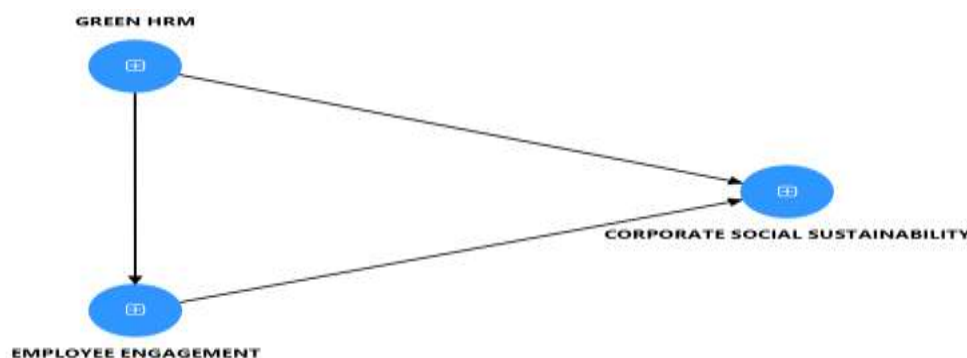
Kerala context. Therefore, this study attempts to fill this gap by examining how GHRM influences employee engagement and how this engagement contributes to corporate social sustainability.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the impact of green human resource management on employee engagement.
2. To analyse the effect of employee engagement on corporate social sustainability.
3. To identify the mediating role of employee engagement between green human resource management and corporate social sustainability.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 1
Figure showing conceptual framework



Conceptual model variables

- Independent Variable: Green Human Resource Management (GHRM)
- Mediator: Employee Engagement
- Dependent Variable: Corporate Social Sustainability

This framework helps to know how the green HR practices influence employee behaviour and contribute to the sustainable organizational performance.

HYPOTHESIS

- H1: Green human resource management has a positive and significant effect on employee engagement.
- H2: Green human resource management has a positive and significant effect on corporate social sustainability
- H3: Employee engagement has a positive and significant effect on corporate social sustainability.

H4: Employee engagement mediates the relationship between Green HRM and corporate social sustainability.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a descriptive and quantitative research design to examine the relationships between Green Human Resource Management (GHRM), Employee Engagement, and Corporate Social Sustainability. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of items measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The measurement items were adapted from previously validated studies to ensure reliability and validity. A total of 200 employees from various corporate organizations in Kerala were selected using a convenience sampling technique. The collected data were analysed using SmartPLS 4 software by applying the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) technique. The analysis was carried out in two stages, namely measurement model assessment to evaluate reliability and validity using outer loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE), and structural model assessment to examine the relationships between variables using path coefficients, t-values, p-values, and R² values. The study also ensured that participation was voluntary and that the responses of the participants were kept confidential and used only for academic purposes.

RESULTS

Table 1
Table showing the demographic characteristics of the respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	110	55%
	Female	90	45%
Age	Below 25 years	60	30%
	26-35 years	80	40%
	36-45years	40	20%
	Above 45 years	20	10%
Education	Graduate	120	60%
	Postgraduate	80	40%
Job Experience	Less than 5 years	90	45%
	5- 10 years	70	35%
	More than 10 years	40	20%

(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation

The above table shows out of 200 respondents, 55% were male and 45% were female, indicating a balanced gender representation. Most respondents that are 40% were between the ages of 26-35 years, followed by 30% below 25 years. Most of them were graduates (60%), while 40% held postgraduate qualifications. 45% of respondents had less than 5 years of experience, 35% had 5-10 years, and 20% had more than 10 years of experience.

Figure 2

Figure showing combined demographic profile of respondents

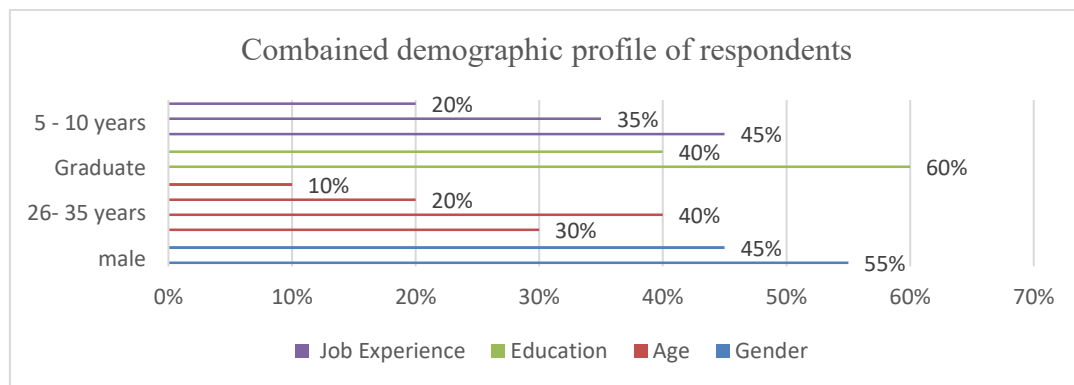


Table 2

Table showing outer loadings (for measurement model result)

	Outer loadings
CSS1 <- Corporate social sustainability	0.871
CSS2 <- Corporate social sustainability	0.857
CSS3 <- Corporate social sustainability	0.855
CSS4 <- Corporate social sustainability	0.835
EE1 <- Employee engagement	0.869
EE2 <- Employee engagement	0.890
EE3 <- Employee engagement	0.887
EE4 <- Employee engagement	0.911
GHRM1 <- Green HRM	0.821
GHRM2 <- Green HRM	0.824
GHRM3 <- Green HRM	0.777

GHRM4 <- Green HRM	0.825
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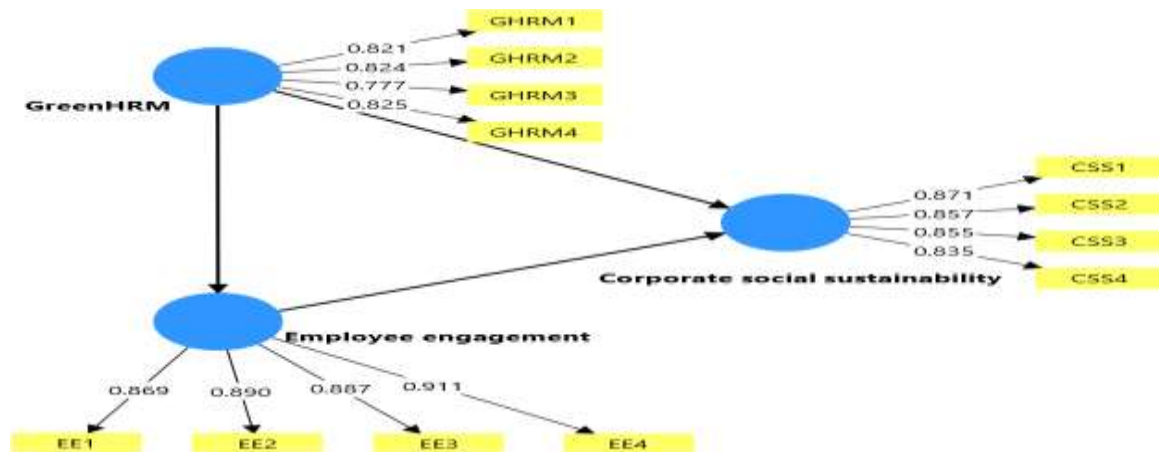
(source: primary Data)

Interpretation

The above table shows that all the outer loadings are all above 0.70, which means each item clearly represents the factor it is measuring. This shows that the data is reliable and the indicators are working well.

Figure 3

Figure showing measurement model



Interpretation

The measurement model shows all indicators and their loadings, confirming that each construct is measured by its respective items. All loadings are above the acceptable threshold (>0.70).

Table 3

Table showing reliability and validity

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Corporate social sustainability	0.877	0.878	0.915	0.730
Employee engagement	0.912	0.915	0.938	0.791
Green HRM	0.828	0.830	0.886	0.660

(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation

The above table shows that all the constructs have strong reliability scores and AVE values are above 0.50. This confirms that the measurement items are consistent and accurately represent each construct.

Table 4
Table showing discriminant validity (Fornell -Larcker)

	Corporate sustainability	social	Employee engagement	Green HRM
Corporate sustainability	0.855			
Employee engagement	0.646		0.889	
Green HRM	0.575		0.665	0.812

(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation

The above table shows good discriminant validity, as each construct's AVE is higher than its correlations with other constructs.

Table 5
Table shows structural model path coefficients

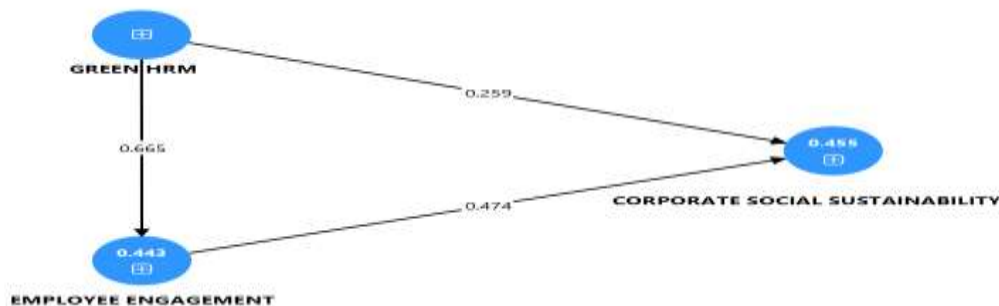
	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ((O/STDEV))	P values
EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT -> CORPORATE SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY	0.474	0.475	0.061	7.801	0.000
GREEN HRM -> CORPORATE SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY	0.259	0.259	0.066	3.927	0.000
GREEN HRM -> EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT	0.665	0.668	0.038	17.395	0.000

(source: Primary Data)

Interpretation

The above table shows that all the paths are positive and significant, showing that Green HRM boosts Employee Engagement, which in turn enhances corporate social sustainability, while GHRM also directly impacts sustainability.

Figure 4
Figure showing structural model



Interpretation

The structural model displays the hypothesized relationships between constructs along with R² values for the dependent variables.

Table 6
Table showing R² values

Endogenous Construct	R-square
Corporate social sustainability	0.455
Employee engagement	0.443

(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation

The above table shows that R² value for Employee Engagement (0.443) indicates that Green HRM explains 44.3% of its variance. The R² value for Corporate Social Sustainability (0.455) shows that Green HRM and Employee Engagement together explain 45.5% of its variance. This indicates a moderate level of explanatory power.

Table 7
Table showing bootstrapping results

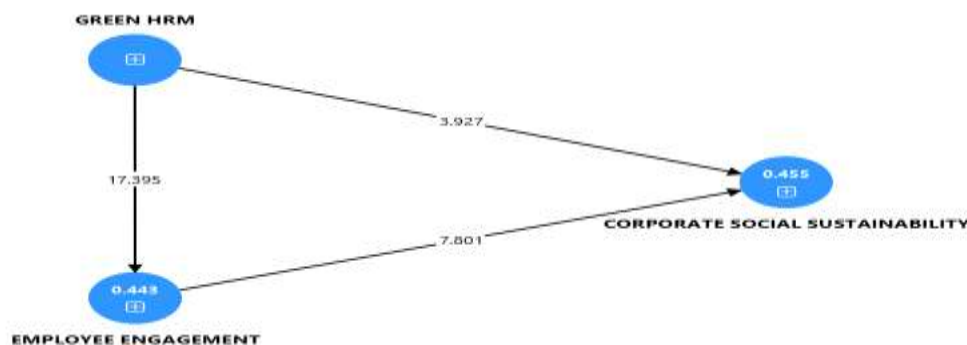
	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Employee Engagement -> corporate social sustainability	0.474	0.475	0.061	7.801	0.000
GREEN HRM -> corporate social sustainability	0.259	0.259	0.066	3.927	0.000
GREEN HRM -> Employee Engagement	0.665	0.668	0.038	17.395	0.000

(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation

The above table shows all the paths are significant. That is Green HRM increases Employee Engagement and Corporate Social Sustainability, and Employee Engagement also improves sustainability.

Figure
Figure showing Bootstrapping structural model



Interpretation

The bootstrapping structural model shows the t-values used to test the hypothesis.

Table 8
Bootstrapping indirect effects

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
GREEN HRM -> EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT -> CORPORATE SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY	0.315	0.318	0.046	6.789	0.000

(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation

The above table shows that employee engagement significantly mediates the effect of Green HRM on corporate social sustainability.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study clearly indicate that Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) has a significant positive effect on employee engagement, which supports the idea that environmentally responsible HR practices can motivate employees and increase their level of involvement in organizational activities. When organizations adopt green practices such as environmental training, performance evaluation, and reward systems, employees become more aware of sustainability issues and show greater commitment towards their work. This result is consistent with earlier studies, particularly Pham N T, Tučková Z and Jabbour C J C (2019), which highlighted that green HR practices improve employee morale and engagement. The study also reveals that employee engagement has a strong positive impact on corporate social sustainability. Engaged employees are more likely to actively participate in organizational initiatives, including social and environmental activities, which ultimately enhances the organization's sustainability performance. This finding is in line with Shafaei A, Nejati M and Quazi A (2023), who found that engaged employees act as key contributors to corporate social responsibility efforts. Furthermore, the results show that GHRM has a direct positive effect on corporate social sustainability, indicating that organizations implementing green HR practices can directly improve their social and environmental performance. At the same time, employee engagement partially mediates this relationship, suggesting that the effectiveness of

GHRM is strengthened when employees are actively engaged. This supports the findings of Mishra S and Gupta R (2024), who emphasized the mediating role of employee engagement in linking HR practices with sustainable outcomes. Overall, the study highlights that while GHRM directly contributes to sustainability, its impact becomes stronger when employees are engaged and motivated. Therefore, organizations should not only implement green HR practices but also focus on improving employee engagement to achieve better and more meaningful sustainability outcomes.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that in Kerala's corporate sector, green HRM is essential for raising employee engagement and advancing corporate social responsibility. The findings show that GHRM dramatically raises employee engagement, which in turn has a positive impact on an organization's ethical and social performance. The relationship between GHRM and corporate social sustainability is also mediated by employee engagement, suggesting that motivated and engaged workers are more conducive to the success of green HR practices. The study's overall findings emphasize how crucial it is to incorporate environmental responsibility into HR operations in order to increase employee engagement and support long-term organizational results.

IMPLICATIONS

Managerial Implications

- Integrate green HR practices to boost employee engagement.
- Encourage employee participation in environmental initiatives.
- Use engagement as a strategy to improve social sustainability performance.

Theoretical Implications

- Confirms employee engagement as a mediator between GHRM and sustainability.
- Adds evidence to GHRM research in the Indian/ Kerala context.

Practical Implications

- GHRM can enhance motivation and strengthen corporate social responsibility.
- Promotes a positive sustainability image among stakeholders.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

- The sample size used in the study is only 200, which may limit the generalizability of the findings.
- The study is limited to organizations in Kerala, so the results may not be applicable to other regions.
- A cross-sectional design was adopted, which does not capture changes over time.

- Data were collected using self-reported questionnaires, which may be affected by response bias or social desirability bias.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

- Future studies can be conducted with a larger sample size to improve the generalizability of the findings.
- Similar studies can be carried out in different states or countries to compare results across regions.
- Longitudinal studies can be conducted to examine changes in relationships over time.
- Future research can include additional variables such as organizational culture, leadership style, or environmental awareness.
- Sector-specific studies can provide more detailed insights.
- Comparative studies between public and private sector organizations can be explored.

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