

Green Hrm And Pro-Environmental Behavior: A Strategic Key To Organizational Sustainability

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Abstract:

In the context of escalating environmental challenges and the global trend toward sustainable development, Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) has emerged as a critical strategy for helping organizations align their human resource activities with environmentally friendly practices. GHRM encompasses policies and practices designed to promote green behavior among employees, thereby contributing to the creation of resource-efficient and socially responsible workplaces. Beyond being a management tool, GHRM reflects an organization's strategic commitment to sustainability through enhanced employee engagement and empowerment. This study focuses on analyzing the relationship between GHRM practices and environmental performance, with particular emphasis on the role of individual green behavior in driving collective sustainable outcomes. Accordingly, the research offers practical recommendations for integrating sustainability into organizational culture and operations.

Keywords: *Green human resource management, environmental performance, sustainable workforce, green behavior, environmental engagement.*

Date of Submission: 02-07-2025

Date of Acceptance: 11-07-2025

I. Introduction

Amid the severe challenges posed by climate change and global environmental degradation, the demand for a sustainable development model has become an urgent priority for all nations and organizations. International commitments such as the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasize the crucial role of strategies aimed at minimizing environmental impacts across all sectors (UN DESA, 2020).

The negative consequences of uncontrolled production, consumption, and emissions have placed tremendous pressure on ecosystems, significantly affecting socio-economic stability and calling for immediate changes in both organizational and individual behavior (Huisingh et al., 2015).

In this context, many businesses have adopted environmentally friendly operational models as part of their broader sustainability strategies. Particularly, Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) has emerged as an integrated approach that bridges economic goals with environmental protection (Islam et al., 2019).

GHRM not only contributes to environmental performance but also enhances employee satisfaction, engagement, and green behavior through practices such as green recruitment, environmental training, performance appraisal aligned with sustainability goals, and recognition of eco-friendly behavior (Hameed et al., 2020).

This study aims to analyze the relationship between GHRM practices and environmental performance, with a special focus on the role of individual green behavior. The structure of the paper includes: a theoretical overview, research framework and methodology, practical analysis, and conclusions with policy recommendations.

II. Research Methodology

This article adopts a qualitative research approach, grounded in a systematic literature review and content analysis of recent academic works, policy documents, and empirical studies related to Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) and green behavior within organizations. The objective is to synthesize key theoretical foundations, identify prevailing implementation trends, and propose practical recommendations for integrating sustainability into corporate strategy and culture.

The data collection process consisted of the following steps:

- First, a comprehensive search was conducted in international academic databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, using keywords including: "green human resource management," "sustainable HRM," "green behavior," "employee engagement," and "organizational sustainability." Priority was given to peer-reviewed articles published between 2015 and 2025 to ensure the relevance and reliability of the information.

- Second, thematic reports from consulting firms (e.g., Deloitte, PwC, KPMG), international organizations (e.g., UNEP, ILO, World Economic Forum), and government strategy papers were integrated to reflect real-world practices and supplement the theoretical analysis.

- Finally, selected case studies and industry-specific examples (e.g., manufacturing, services, technology) were reviewed to illustrate how organizations implement GHRM and promote green behavior in practical settings.

The collected materials were analyzed using content coding techniques, with key themes categorized into three main groups: (i) the strategic role of GHRM in promoting organizational sustainability; (ii) the relationship between GHRM and individual green behavior; and (iii) solutions for encouraging green behavior in the workplace. Analytical generalization was applied to compare patterns across various contexts and draw conclusions relevant to organizations in emerging economies.

By combining theoretical insights with practical analysis, this methodology aims to bridge the gap between academic research and real-world application, offering feasible recommendations to enhance environmental performance and organizational sustainability through GHRM.

III. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

3.1. Green Human Resource Management (GHRM)

Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) is a strategic approach in the field of human resource management, where functions such as recruitment, training, performance appraisal, rewards, and employee retention are integrated with environmental protection goals (Majeed, Khan, & Sayeed, 2019). GHRM is not merely a system of administrative tools but also serves as a mechanism that promotes behavioral, cultural, and value transformation among employees toward sustainable development (Renwick, Redman & Maguire, 2013).

GHRM has the potential to foster individual green behavior within organizations through practices such as environmental training, rewarding green behavior, incorporating environmental criteria in performance appraisals, and internal communication. Hameed et al. (2020) argue that the psychological aspects-such as intrinsic motivation and awareness-of employees can be activated through GHRM to promote pro-environmental behavior. Similarly, Jabbour & Santos (2008) emphasize the role of GHRM as a central element in the implementation of environmental management initiatives, thanks to its strong influence on employees' perceptions, beliefs, and actions.

3.2. Environmental Performance

Environmental performance refers to the tangible outcomes of an organization's production, business, or product design activities that aim to reduce negative environmental impacts and promote sustainable development (Weng, Chen & Chen, 2015). It is one of the core components of an Environmental Management System (EMS), which functions to assess compliance with environmental regulations, resource efficiency, emission levels, and the organization's capacity to manage ecological risks (García-Machado & Martínez-Ávila, 2019).

According to Schultze and Trommer (2012), the concept of *environmental efficiency* describes the extent to which an organization harms the environment through its operations-the lower the impact, the higher the sustainability. Enhancing environmental performance is not limited to regulatory compliance, but also represents a value-creating strategy that strengthens brand reputation, customer trust, and competitive capacity (Singh et al., 2020; OECD, 2021).

3.3. Theoretical Foundation: Resource-Based View (RBV)

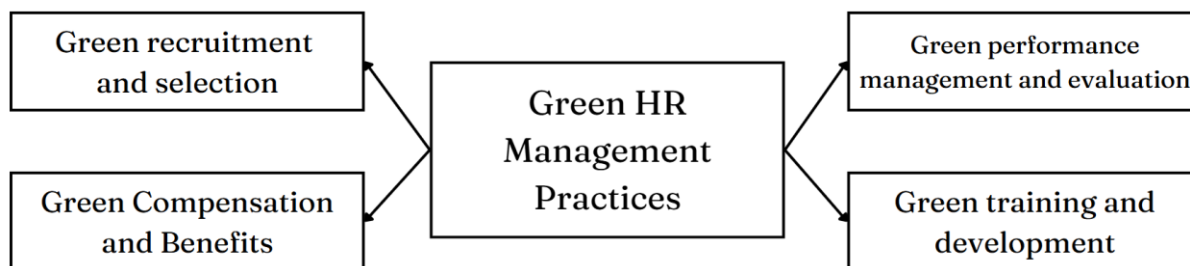
To explain the role of GHRM in improving environmental performance and individual green behavior, this study draws on the Resource-Based View (RBV)-a widely applied theoretical framework in strategic and human resource management (Barney, 1991; Caliskan, 2010). RBV posits that organizations can achieve sustainable competitive advantage by effectively utilizing their internal resources, with human capital being one of the most critical.

In this context, GHRM is regarded as a strategic instrument that enables organizations to "green" their human resources through practices such as environmentally aligned recruitment, green training, performance evaluation linked to pro-environmental behavior, and eco-friendly reward systems. These practices not only enhance work performance but also cultivate individual green behavior-an essential link between human resource practices and overall environmental performance (Collins & Clark, 2003; Darwish, 2013).

According to Ismail et al. (2010), RBV provides a theoretical basis for arguing that organizations should invest in strategic HRM practices if they aim to develop sustainable resources. When implemented effectively, GHRM helps businesses not only comply with existing ESG standards but also build organizational capabilities that support adaptability, innovation, and long-term development.

IV. Green HRM Practices

The table below provides an overview of the core components of green HRM practices:



Source: Author's own compilation

4.1. Green Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment and selection represent foundational stages that have a direct influence on building a workforce oriented toward sustainable development. In the context of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM), green recruitment not only involves seeking candidates with the right qualifications, but also emphasizes their environmental awareness and commitment. According to Rozario, Venkatraman, and Abbas (2019), recruitment is the process of attracting candidates with the appropriate skills, knowledge, motivation, and personal values, while selection involves filtering to identify individuals who best align with the organization's green development orientation.

The concept of "green recruitment" was first introduced by John Sullivan in 2007 and has since become an essential component of modern GHRM strategies (Gupta & Gupta, 2013). Applying green recruitment enables organizations to attract not only talented individuals, but also to embed an environmentally friendly culture from the outset. During interviews, companies may integrate criteria such as: the candidate's concern for environmental issues, experience or initiatives in sustainable development, previous behaviors such as energy-saving at work, and their potential to influence colleagues toward greener practices (Ehnert et al., 2016).

Practical examples can be seen in multinational corporations such as Unilever and Google, which have integrated environmental factors into their recruitment processes early on. For instance, Google places importance on selecting applicants who have participated in environmental activities or contributed to sustainability initiatives during their academic years. In Vietnam, FMCG companies like Vinamilk and Nestlé Vietnam are gradually replacing paper-based applications with electronic submissions and conducting online interviews to minimize carbon emissions (Saifuddin, Hussain & Khan, 2020).

Building a green employer brand is also a key factor in attracting high-quality candidates. Organizations that are recognized for environmental responsibility are more likely to earn trust and attract younger generations such as Millennials and Gen Z-groups increasingly prioritizing workplaces aligned with environmental values (Nawangsari & Sutawidjaya, 2018).

4.2. Green Performance Management and Appraisal

Green performance appraisal is the process of monitoring, measuring, and providing feedback on employee performance based on environmentally relevant criteria. It serves not only as a management tool, but also as a motivational mechanism that aligns employee efforts with the organization's sustainability goals.

According to Shen, Dumont, and Deng (2018), given that every organization has its own structure, industry, and direction, green performance appraisal systems must be flexibly customized. However, common criteria include: compliance with corporate environmental policies, individual initiatives to reduce waste, minimize printing, conserve energy, lower CO₂ emissions, and contribute to green process improvements (Delmonico et al., 2018).

For example, at Patagonia, employees are encouraged and evaluated based on their ability to propose environmental solutions in their daily work. In Vietnam, SCG has implemented the "SCG Eco Value" program as an indicator within the departmental performance evaluation system. Individual or group contributions to greener production processes are acknowledged and rewarded based on measurable outcomes.

Moreover, research by Saswatecha et al. (2015) indicates that linking green performance appraisal with reward systems significantly increases employee effectiveness and long-term engagement. Establishing clear environmental KPIs motivates employees to actively practice green behaviors and reinforces the organization's commitment to sustainability-not just in policy, but also in practical operations.

4.3. Green Training and Development

Training and development is a vital activity within human resource management, aiming to enhance employees' knowledge and skills (Balakrishna, 2019). In the context of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM), green training refers to the design and implementation of programs that improve employees' awareness, knowledge, and capabilities in relation to environmental issues and sustainable development (Jabbour & de Sousa Jabbour, 2016).

Green training programs are applicable to both new and existing employees, from managerial levels to operational staff. Core training content often includes: waste identification and treatment, energy optimization, recycling practices, water and electricity conservation, and integration of green procedures in daily tasks (Nawangari & Sutawidjaya, 2018). Some organizations also offer in-depth workshops on international standards such as ISO 14001 Environmental Management Systems to align internal competencies with global benchmarks. The training process typically involves three phases:

- (1) Needs assessment – identifying knowledge gaps and environmental awareness levels among employees;
- (2) Instruction and coaching – involving interactive learning activities led by experts or internal leaders;
- (3) Evaluation – measuring the extent to which the training has improved green behaviors and been applied in the workplace (Jabbour & Jabbour, 2016).

A practical example can be seen at Toyota, where employees are trained in “zero waste” production and the use of renewable energy. In Vietnam, Suntory PepsiCo has implemented training programs on resource conservation and the “3Rs” (Reduce – Reuse – Recycle) as a key part of its sustainability strategy.

4.4. Green Compensation and Benefits

Green compensation and benefits represent a critical component of GHRM, reflecting an organization's commitment to encouraging employee participation in environmental goals through both financial and non-financial incentives. According to Shree, Manjunath & Bharathi (2016), it is a strategic management tool that enhances motivation, loyalty, and environmentally aligned performance.

Green reward systems may include: financial bonuses (e.g., for meeting electricity-saving targets or reducing printing), green tax exemptions, and non-financial benefits such as public recognition of green behavior, eco-tourism trips, bicycle provisions, or public transport subsidies. Nawangsari & Sutawidjaya (2019) found that many employees reported greater motivational impact from symbolic recognition (e.g., “Green Employee of the Month”) than from monetary incentives alone-though combining both approaches yields the highest effectiveness.

Leading companies such as Interface Inc., a U.S.-based carpet manufacturer, have developed initiatives like the “Cool Co-Workers” program to honor employees with outstanding environmental contributions. In Vietnam, companies like AEON Vietnam have launched programs such as the “Green Workplace Challenge,” awarding departments that achieve the greatest energy savings each month.

Designing flexible compensation packages that combine performance and environmental contributions enables firms not only to retain top talent, but also to shift internal culture toward sustainability and eco-consciousness.

V. Individual Green Behavior

Individual green behavior refers to employees' voluntary and proactive actions in contributing to environmental management within the workplace (Norton, Parker, Zacher & Ashkanasy, 2015). These behaviors go beyond formal job requirements and may include activities such as using water-saving devices, limiting paper printing, recycling office waste, or proposing sustainability-related improvements in workplace operations.

According to Norton et al. (2015), the organization's environmental attitudes and commitment play a crucial role in shaping employees' green behaviors. Research by Cantor, Morrow, and Blackhurst (2015) indicates that when organizations actively demonstrate concern for the environment-by offering support, encouraging innovation, and enabling voluntary initiatives-employees are more likely to exhibit higher levels of green behavior. Conversely, Zhang, Wang, and Zhou (2013) argue that in organizations with indifferent or negative environmental attitudes, employees' personal environmental norms tend to deteriorate, leading to reduced green actions.

VI. Discussion

Numerous studies, such as those by de Sousa Jabbour et al. (2015), have demonstrated a direct link between core GHRM practices (e.g., green recruitment, training, performance management, internal engagement) and individual green behavior. Such behaviors not only enhance job performance but also reflect extra-role commitment that contributes to the organization's environmental goals (Ababneh, 2021).

Implementing HR policies that are aligned with environmental responsibility enables organizations to improve environmental outcomes and enhance sustainable competitive advantage (Yusoff et al., 2020). Despite some remaining research gaps, scholars increasingly assert that fostering environmental performance is

foundational to encouraging employees' voluntary green behaviors (Perez et al., 2009). Moreover, employees must adapt their thinking, norms, and personal values to align with a green organizational culture (Pinzone et al., 2016).

In practice, regular participation in environmental initiatives helps raise awareness, strengthen employee engagement, and build a sense of responsibility toward sustainability goals (Jabbour & Santos, 2008). Notably, green training programs foster knowledge, skills, and mindsets aligned with long-term environmental orientation (Pham et al., 2019). Additionally, green compensation policies-including rewards, recognition, and non-monetary incentives-serve to activate intrinsic motivation. However, a lack of integration between training initiatives and organizational culture can undermine the overall effectiveness of GHRM (Bos-Nehles et al., 2013). Luu (2018) emphasizes that a comprehensive green organizational culture-encompassing policies, performance appraisals, training, and reward systems-is essential for attracting and retaining environmentally conscious talent, thereby fostering sustainable environmental commitment (Renwick et al., 2013).

In summary, GHRM must be implemented holistically across all HR functions to generate meaningful cultural transformation. This is a strategic imperative that enables organizations to improve environmental performance, build a positive public image, and strengthen long-term competitiveness in the context of globalization.

VII. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study underscores the strategic role of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) in enhancing environmental performance and promoting pro-environmental behavior within organizations. GHRM should not be viewed as a short-term trend, but rather as a long-term commitment to embedding sustainability into HR practices and organizational culture. By integrating green principles across core HR functions-such as green recruitment, environmental training, performance appraisal tied to sustainability, and eco-friendly reward systems-organizations can foster employee awareness, responsibility, and active participation in environmental initiatives. When individual green behaviors are supported and encouraged, they can create a ripple effect that contributes to a more environmentally conscious workplace. However, if GHRM practices are implemented superficially or in isolation from broader organizational strategies, their impact may be minimal or counterproductive. Therefore, raising environmental awareness, equipping employees with the necessary skills, and aligning their attitudes through targeted green training programs are essential. These efforts lay the foundation for building a green organizational culture that supports long-term sustainability goals and strengthens competitive advantage in an increasingly eco-aware global economy.

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