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It is Not Easy to be Green: Towards Understanding The Factors Influencing the Employees' Engagement in Multiple Pro-Environmental Behaviors

Jianing Song

University of Manchester, Global Development Institute, Manchester, UK
Jianing.song@manchester.ac.uk

ABSTRACT: The integration of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) into organizational environmental management has increasingly gained attention as a significant topic in academic research, and the impact of GHRM on individual and organizational outcomes has received increasing attention. Despite the existence of these studies, there is still a paucity of research about a conceptual model that considers the national differences and underlying individual differences linking GHRM to employees' engagement in multiple pro-environmental behaviors. In view of such gaps, this paper proposes a conceptual model of GHRM using the ability-motivation-opportunity framework, open-system theory, theory of reasoned action, and theory of planned behavior as theoretical foundations. The model identifies societal factors, including economic policy, cultural orientation, and level of development, as well as organizational green orientation, such as organizational green culture, green activities, and available green resources, as antecedents of GHRM practices. The proposed model also includes eight indicators of GHRM, including green selective staffing, green training, and green participation in decision-making. Additionally, the paper discusses how this framework connects GHRM practices to employees' engagement in multiple green behaviors, such as Green formal behavior, Green Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (GOCB), and Green Interpersonal Citizenship Behaviour (GICB), through the mediating role of employee green attitude. This paper contributes to the theoretical understanding of GHRM and suggests avenues for future research.

KEYWORDS**:** Green Human Resource Management, Societal Antecedents, Employee Green Behaviour, Green Attitude, Organizational Green Orientation

1. Introduction

In response to the growing interest in environmentalism, organizations are facing increased scrutiny over the environmental impact of their business operations (Opatha 2013). Consequently, companies are compelled to implement green practices, and integrating sustainability into corporate strategy has become mandatory to address the negative consequences of their operations. Notably, implementing green practices has become essential for organizations to gain a competitive edge in the current business environment (Ahmad 2015). Research suggests that human resource management plays a crucial role in achieving environmental performance (Mishra 2017). For example, organizations are integrating green practices into their personnel selection, performance evaluation, and other HR functions to achieve their environmental objectives.

The concept of green human resource management (GHRM) has emerged to highlight the need for coherence between traditional HR practices and environmental goals, emphasizing the incorporation of eco-friendly concepts into human resource management (Chaudhary 2020a). In this direction, it has been proposed that effective GHRM practices can help organizations achieve their sustainability goals by fostering positive employee attitudes and behaviors (Saeed et al. 2019; Masri and Jaaron 2017; Chaudhary 2020b).

In addition to prioritizing environmentally sustainable practices through GHRM initiatives within organizations, there is an increasing emphasis on examining the effects of GHRM on the workforce (Pham et al. 2019; Jia et al. 2018; Garavan et al. 2023). Yeşiltaş et al. (2022) investigated the mediating role of GHRM between organizational green culture and green employee behavior (GEB) in green hotels. Meanwhile, Omarova and Jo (2022)

examined the effects of environmental transformational leadership (ETL) on fostering pro-environmental behavior (PEB) among employees in both private and public organizations operating in Kazakhstan. Chaudhary (2020b) examines the impact of GHRM practices on employee green performance behaviors (task-related and voluntary) with organizational identification as a mediator in the automobile sector in India. Although there is some evidence linking GHRM practices to employee green outcomes, recent literature has identified some theoretical gaps. In particular, the individual differences that might influence how employees respond to GHRM practices are still not fully understood.

Moreover, most of the research regarding GHRM is analyzed in the organizational context and focuses on organizational and/or employee outcomes, while few studies paid attention to the societal antecedents of GHRM in a broader context. Christensen and Lægreid (2007) suggest that contextualization plays a pivotal role in the success or failure of transformations. In line with this argument, Zubair et al. (2020) advocate for a thorough examination of governance and sectoral context, in recognition of Andrews's (2008) claim that reform efforts bereft of consideration for context and environment can lead to solutions that are incompatible with the prevailing circumstances and incoherent. (p.380). Thus, there is an urgent need to take broader context and environment into account to contextualize GHRM. The research community has recently recognized the growing importance of the green orientation concept. This term refers to the process of redefining one's mindset and behaviors to align with environmentally sustainable objectives, thus promoting ecological friendliness. Thus, this paper adopts the concept of green orientation to understand how societal context impact organizational green orientation influencing the application of GHRM.

Given the aforementioned context, our paper aims to put forth a conceptual model of GHRM that considers the wider societal context, organisational environment, and individual variances. Our research specifically investigates the potential influence of national distinctions on an organization's green orientation towards implementing GHRM. Furthermore, this framework intends to shed light on the employee outcomes associated with adopting GHRM, as viewed through the lens of employee green orientation. These outcomes include green attitude, green in-role work behavior, and green extra-role work behavior. This paper endeavours to address the following questions:

- What societal factors determine the organizational green orientation?
- What are the green employee outcomes linked to the adoption of GHRM?
- What underlying mechanisms connect GHRM to various green employee behaviors?

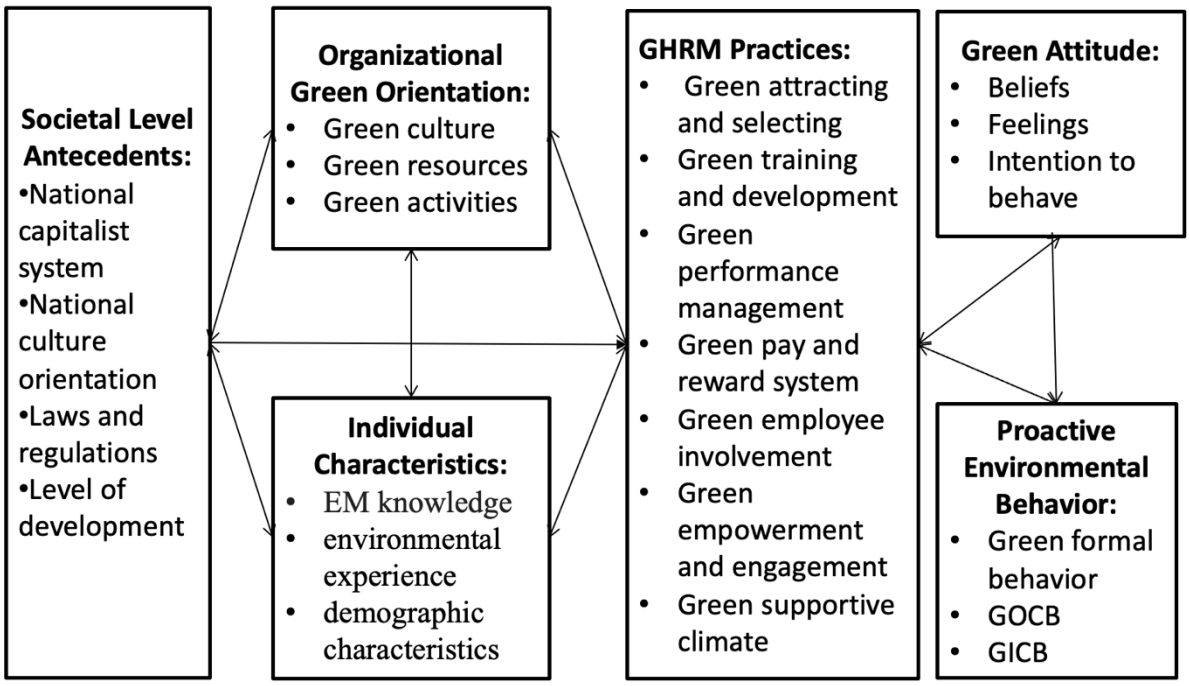
The forthcoming section introduces the proposed conceptual framework of GHRM and provides a thorough review of relevant literature, culminating in precise propositions grounded in four theoretical foundations and substantial evidence from existing sources. The objective of our paper is to offer theoretical insights and recommendations for forthcoming research and practical implementation within the scope of business practices.

2. A Proposed Conceptual Model of Green Human Resource Management

With regard to GHRM research, it is common practice to consider industry and geographic context as essential components in research design and result interpretation (Paillé et al. 2014). However, few studies directly focus on these contextual factors. Context is a complex construct that includes multiple dimensions such as economic, normative, technological, and legal facets that have not been comprehensively explored. Consequently, the need to develop knowledge that takes into account the societal contextual influences on the phenomenon of interest remains a critical challenge.

Employees' favorable perceptions of human resource practices trigger their green orientation which includes employee green attitude and green behavior (Iddagoda et al. 2022). Although there are many studies regarding the relationship between GHRM and employees' green behavior, very little is known about the individual differences underlying GHRM to

employee green behavior. In light of this reasoning, this paper adopts green attitudes as a mediator linking GHRM to Green official behavior (GOB), Green Organizational Citizenship Behavior (GOCB) and Green Interpersonal Citizenship Behavior (GICB). Moreover, this paper argues that analyzing the employees' green orientation (green attitude and behavior) can give feedback to GHRM and broader social antecedents.



Note: GOCB=Green organizational citizenship behavior; GICB=Green interpersonal citizenship behavior

Figure1. A Conceptual Model for Green Human Resource Management

2.1. Theoretical Foundations

Yong et al. (2020) suggest that incorporating theories, such as the Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) framework, could enhance comprehension of how GHRM is interconnected to diverse behavioral outcomes. This study, in particular, expands upon this concept by utilizing other three theoretical foundations. In doing so, this research applies the open-system theory, theory of reasoned action, and theory of planned behavior, along with supporting information obtained through relevant literature, to establish an international GHRM conceptual model.

The Open-System Theory can explain 'what' why' and 'how' of GHRM in the proposed conceptual framework. This theory emphasizes the importance of understanding organizations as open systems that interact with their environment through inputs and outputs of energy and information. In this proposed conceptual framework, the System theory (open system model) is applied, and a new perspective is added from the standpoint of green HRM. The framework considers society as a system that operates through energetic input-output mechanisms, where the energy coming from the output reactivates the system. Within this perspective, an organization can be seen as a subsystem that is influenced by what happens in the wider society. Green human resource management is also viewed as a subsystem that exchanges information and energy with the external environment to attract, develop, motivate, and retain employees who ensure the effective functioning and survival of the organization (Arulrajah and Opatha 2016). Furthermore, the proposed conceptual framework also considers the organization as a system and employees as a subsystem. As such, the perception and behavior of employees can be influenced by the organizational environment. By applying the System theory (open system model) and incorporating the perspective of GHRM, this framework emphasizes the interconnectedness among society, organizations and employees.

Our paper introduces a comprehensive conceptual model of GHRM that aligns with the widely recognized AMO framework. As a dominant theory in the field, the AMO framework is known for its effectiveness in explaining the impact of human resource practices on employee and organizational outcomes (Ari et al. 2020). In line with this theory, our model suggests that human resource initiatives aimed at enhancing employee ability and motivation lead to positive performance outcomes. Human resource practices, as categorized by Jiang et al., are divided into three categories, namely skill-enhancing, motivation-enhancing, and opportunity-enhancing. For instance, skill-enhancing training programs that teach employees how to handle customer problems with greater efficacy (opportunity-enhancing) often result in higher levels of work engagement and improved performance outcomes.

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) is a social psychology theory that has been widely used as a model to predict individual behavior based on their pre-existing attitudes and behavioral intentions (Ha 1998, Vallerand et al. 1992, Blue 1995). Developed by Fishbein (1979), the TRA suggests that an individual's behavior is determined by their intention to perform that behavior and their attitude towards it. In this theory, attitudes are considered to be a function of an individual's beliefs about the consequences of performing a particular behavior and their evaluation of these consequences (Montano and Kasprzyk 2015). Over the years, the TRA has been applied in various fields, such as marketing, health, and environmental studies. In marketing, the TRA has been used to understand consumers' purchase intentions and behaviors. For example, in the study of Teng and Wang (2015), the TRA was used to predict consumers' purchase intentions of organic food. Similarly, in environmental studies, the TRA can also be adopted to understand the factors that influence individuals' green behaviors.

Ajzen (1991) introduced the concept of perceived behavior control to supplement the TRA, considering external factors that may influence an individual's intentions and behaviors, which is known as the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). This model includes beliefs related to access to resources and opportunities necessary for performing a specific behavior. An individual's perception of their own resources and opportunities positively influences their perceived behavioral control over subsequent actions. As GHRM practices can be seen as a perceived behavior control that has an indirect influence on employee green behavior, this theory is adopted to predict the relationship between GHRM, green attitude and green behavior. Since TPB argues that perceived behavior control has both a direct effect on behavior in the workplace and an indirect attitudinal implication on work behavior through intentions, it is reasonable to argue that environmental attitude is a primary reason why GHRM impacts employees' pro-environmental behavior at work.

2.2. Societal Context

Numerous studies have explored the concept of GHRM within organizations; however, there are few research that explores the factors influencing GHRM beyond the workplace. This paper serves to illuminate the significance of the macro-level external environment on the implementation of GHRM. Across various geographical locations, national disparities have been observed in the realm of GHRM(Ren et al. 2018). Such differences stem from regulations and laws, national cultural orientation, national capitalist systems, and level of development.

Coordinated market economies VS liberal market economies

According to Witt and Jackson (2016), the Varieties of Capitalism framework remains a predominant framework in the field, and recent studies affirm that advanced industrialized nations tend to cluster in either Coordinated Market Economies (CMEs) or Liberal Market Economies (LMEs). This paper adopts the classical framework of LMEs and CMEs as a general guide to investigate the influence of national capitalist systems on organizational environmental strategies. CMEs are regulated markets with strict rules regarding labor standards, union density, and corruption. Trade unions and employer associations coordinate wages across industries, and

employers are encouraged to invest in employee training, resulting in greater job security and trust within organizations (Walker et al. 2019). In contrast, LMEs rely less on strategic collaboration and lean towards unregulated markets with a greater emphasis on current earnings and share price, resulting in managers having greater freedom in hiring and firing employees. Relationships between organizations in LMEs tend to rely on formal contracts and antitrust regulation, as opposed to voluntary collaborations built on trust, characteristic of CMEs (Ritchie 2009). As a consequence, companies in CMEs are more likely to face environmental challenges due to their stricter policies and pressures to maintain healthy relationships built on trust and mutual collaboration. Some empirical studies also identified the association between country-level factors and organizational environmental strategies. For example, Basoglu and Uzar (2019) found that financial institutions operating in CME countries are involved in more environmental matters than banks domiciled in LME cultures. Similarly, Walker et al. (2019) analyzed five years of data across 16 countries and found significantly greater corporate social responsibility in CMEs compared with LMEs.

National Cultural Orientations

National cultural orientations can also have a significant impact on the development and adoption of organizational green strategies. Different cultures may place varying degrees of importance on environmental concerns and sustainability, which can affect the way they perceive and respond to green initiatives. For example, in some cultures, there may be a strong emphasis on individualism and immediate gratification, which can make it challenging to promote sustainable behaviors that require long-term thinking and sacrifice. Similarly, societies with a fatalistic orientation believe that much of what happens in society is largely beyond their control (Chauvin 2018). They see nature as capricious and, thus, uncontrollable. Given these characteristics, they tend to be indifferent toward environmental risk, except for risks that affect them personally and directly. In contrast, other cultures may prioritize collective well-being and stewardship of the environment, making it easier to implement and embrace green initiatives. In addition, this paper argues that another cultural variable-time orientation can influence organizational green attitudes and green practices, including Green HRM. Societies with long-term orientation are more likely to consider green issues more seriously than those with short-term orientation. This is because green issues are issues that have long-term implications. Also, employees from long-term orientation societies are more likely to comprehend organizational green orientation vision and strategies than those who are from short-term orientation culture. Moreover, the society with cultural orientation towards harmony with the environment are more likely to take environmental issues into account. Drawing on the example of Asia, it appears plausible that cultural values prevalent in the region may facilitate GHRM. Confucianism and Daoism, which are prominent philosophical traditions in East Asia, have always emphasized harmony with nature (Ren, Wood, & Zhu 2015). China, for instance, has been grappling with escalating air pollution, particularly smog (wumai in Chinese), which has led to widespread speculations about the ecological and ethical legitimacy of businesses. In response, the Chinese government has initiated a nationwide campaign to cultivate a harmonious society in China, which has resulted in key measures and initiatives as outlined in the latest (13th) Five-Year Plan (2016-2020), greater transparency in reporting and information channels (BBC, 2016), and revisions to the Environmental Protection Law in 2014 (Zhen 2014). By contrast, some societies with cultural orientation towards dominance of the environment are less likely to pay attention to environmental issues.

Laws and Regulations

Governments around the world are increasingly enacting legislation and regulations aimed at promoting environmental sustainability, such as emissions reduction targets, waste management requirements, and renewable energy incentives. For instance, The Clean Air Act in the United States, which was first passed in 1963 and has been amended several times since then, sets national standards for air quality and regulates emissions from a range of sources, including

power plants, factories, and vehicles. India's National Green Tribunal Act, which was enacted in 2010, established a specialized court to hear cases related to environmental issues, with the aim of providing faster and more effective resolution of environmental disputes. The European Union's Waste Framework Directive sets out a legal framework for waste management in the EU, with the aim of promoting the transition to a circular economy and reducing the environmental impact of waste. Organizations must comply with these laws and regulations, which can require significant investments in infrastructure, technology, and processes. However, these regulations can also provide opportunities for organizations to differentiate themselves and gain a competitive advantage by demonstrating their commitment to sustainability. Therefore, Laws and regulations regarding environmental issues can have a significant impact on the development and implementation of organizational green strategies.

The Level of Development

The level of development of a country or region can have a significant impact on the development and implementation of organizational green strategies. In less developed countries, there may be more pressing social and economic issues that take priority over environmental concerns. These countries may lack the necessary infrastructure, technology, and financial resources to invest in green initiatives, and may be more focused on addressing basic needs such as food, shelter, and healthcare. In contrast, more developed countries may have greater access to resources and technologies that support environmental sustainability and may be more likely to adopt green initiatives as a way to differentiate themselves and gain a competitive advantage. However, even in developed countries, there can be significant differences in the level of support for green initiatives, with some industries and regions more supportive than others. The paper asserts that, according to open system theory, it is crucial to recognize that external societal factors can significantly influence organizational culture and practices. Therefore, variations in societal elements such as national economic systems, cultural orientations, legal frameworks, and levels of development can affect an organization's green orientation, ultimately shaping the implementation of GHRM within the organization.

2.3. The Impacts of GHRM at the Employee Level

Multiple Employee Green Behavior

As stated by Neal et al. (2000), an organization values behaviors that are linked to organizational involvement, effort, performance, and output. The concept of behavior is dictated by the activities that are performed; therefore, green activities result in green behavior. Yeşiltaş et al. (2022) further assert that employee green behaviors are not independent of others, but rather complement the self-efficacy of individuals as opposed to being a reflection of their authenticity or "real me". This means that employees exhibit altruism and assist others connected with the idea of green, irrespective of their own green identity. According to Laeeq (2021), 'green behavior' indicates the level of engagement in activities aimed at promoting eco-friendliness. Iddagoda et al. (2022) have identified three aspects of green behavior, namely green interpersonal behavior, green organizational citizenship behavior, and green formal behavior. These components comprise the dimension of green behavior.

Green Attitude

According to Kempton (1995), environmental attitudes take inspiration from a range of sources, including religious and ethical values, pragmatic and anthropocentric orientations, and biocentric beliefs asserting that all living organisms have the right to exist and survive. Dunlap et al. (2000) identify three key determinant facets of environmental attitudes and emphasize that these attitudes encompass multiple beliefs and values. In the field of environmental psychology, environmental attitude is a pivotal concept recognized by scholars such as Kaiser et al. (1999) and Milfont (2007). Green attitude is also known as environmental attitudes, ecological attitudes,

environment-friendly attitudes, and environmentally sustainable attitudes (Opatha and Kottawatta, 2020). According to Kautish and Sharma (2019), green attitude plays a crucial role in shaping our behavior towards the environment. (Rusyani et al., 2021) further delineate green attitude as a set of appropriate beliefs, feelings, and intentions to behave with regards to greening. According to Amoako et al. (2020), the definition of green attitude centers around an individual's belief in eco-friendly activities and issues, reflecting their concern for the environment. In line with the open-system theory introduced earlier, this paper considers employees as a 'subsystem' in this framework and argues employees' attitudes and behaviors can be influenced by organizational strategies. Thus, GHRM practices have impacts on both employee green attitude and multiple green behavior.

Green Attitude and Green Workplace Behavior

According to TRA, this paper asserts that the behavioral intentions of individuals, which serve as the precursors to their actions, are influenced by prominent information or beliefs regarding the probability of engaging in a specific behavior. The concept of using psychometric testing as part of the recruitment process, a practice that continues to be implemented, is rooted in the assumption that the behavioral intentions of potential employees can be identified as either suitable or unsuitable based on their attitudes and subjective norms towards the job description, even prior to joining the workforce. For instance, it is normally expected that people with pro-environmental attitudes (beliefs, feelings and intentions to behave) are more likely to behave in a way that can benefit the environment. Consequently, employees' green attitude relates positively to green behavior. Furthermore, according to TPB, the extent to which individuals believe they possess these resources and opportunities tends to enhance their perceived ability to control their behavior. When individuals perceive little control over the performing of their conduct due to limited resources, their intention to perform the action may be hampered even if they hold favorable attitudes and/or subjective norms towards the given behavior (Madden et al. 1992). Therefore, the information, pressure and direction provided by societal green context and ability, opportunity and motivation emphasized by green human resource management practices can be seen as resources outside individual control, which can have a positive impact on employee green behavior through enhancing their green attitude and intentions.

3. Conclusion

3.1. Theoretical Contributions

Most studies analyzed GHRM at the organizational or individual level, while few studies understand this topic at the macro-societal level. The conceptual framework of this paper contributes to the GHRM literature to consider whether countries' differences shape the GHRM systems. Specifically, this paper proposes four main social/country-level factors that may influence organizational environmental strategies (including GHRM): economic model, national culture orientation, laws and regulations and level of development. Understanding countries' differences as direct influences on GHRM and as moderators that shape the adoption and effectiveness of GHRM is especially important as environmental issues increasingly require transnational collaboration (Ren et al. 2018).

There is a growing trend towards utilizing a behavioral perspective in order to explain how GHRM affects employees' capabilities, motivations, and opportunities (Ren et al. 2018). While it is important to continue building upon the foundational research in the area of strategic HRM literature and the behavioral perspective, only focusing on the behavioral perspective is not sufficient. This article posits that the current GHRM literature requires theoretical development that draws upon a more diverse range of disciplines and philosophical foundations in order to provide a thorough understanding of the phenomenon. There are several promising theoretical perspectives, such as the open system theory (Von

Bertalanffy, 1950), the theory of reasoned action and the theory of planned behavior in psychology, that offer innovative pathways forward.

Specifically, sociological theories offer valuable insights into the complex, ambiguous, and tense nature of GHRM phenomena. Open system theory, for instance, represents a promising avenue for research aimed at enhancing our comprehension of GHRM systems' propagation across industries and countries. Analyzing the interplay between economic transformation, evolving social norms, and the diffusion of GHRM can provide a framework for deciding whether organizations should adopt a universal or individualized approach towards local contexts. Furthermore, psychology theories such as the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen and Fishbein 1977) and the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 2002) can offer valuable insights into the dynamic processes through which GHRM influences employee attitudes and behaviors.

3.2. Directions for Future Research

Empirical investigation is needed to explore the numerous conceptually relevant variations in context at the national level, as noted by (Ren et al. 2018). Specifically, it is advisable to assess how countries' differences inform the contours and specific elements of GHRM systems in organizations. Industry type also plays a pivotal role in shaping corporate environmentalism, as exemplified in the manufacturing sector (Jabbour 2011). However, it is essential to recognize that firms in other sectors also need to address environmental issues. Therefore, it is recommended to conduct further research that examines the service sector and compares different sectors, utilizing cross-national as well as cross-industry studies.

Additional studies are needed to prospect the application of artificial intelligence (AI) in the Green HRM practices. In order to further explore the relationship between AI and organizational green practices, it is suggested that forthcoming research place emphasis on the main differences between AI and previous advanced technology. Previous studies have already investigated how EHRM interact with GHRM to achieve organizational environmental goal (Yusoff et al. 2015, Ibrahim et al. 2015, Anjum et al. 2022). However, the combination of AI and GHRM is not investigated. For example, future research can examine the moderating role of AI on the association between GHRM and employees' green behavior. Such investigation has the potential to yield valuable insight into the extent to which GHRM can be optimized through adopting AI.

When it comes to the consequences of GHRM practices, most studies focus on organizational and/or employee green outcomes, such as organizational green performance and green organizational citizenship behavior. It would be worthwhile for future research to explore additional types of positive workplace variables that are not necessarily related to environmental sustainability. For example, future studies can investigate whether and how GHRM affect employees' career development and career satisfaction. By widening the scope of research to encompass a broader range of positive workplace factors, a more comprehensive understanding of how these variables impact employee well-being and productivity can be achieved.

An area that warrants further investigation for future research is the examination of the procedures that can most effectively ensure the integration and harmonization of GHRM with other functions of management. For example, if an organization designs and adopts a comprehensive GHRM system but other functional areas do not also implement new management and operational practices, the effects of GHRM are likely to be minimal. Thus, it is necessary to entail a thorough analyzis of the approaches that can be employed to attain optimal alignment between GHRM and other relevant areas of management. Such inquiry would serve as a valuable contribution to the field as it would enhance our understanding of the ways in which organizations can effectively establish and sustain a cohesive and integrated management framework.

3.3. Implications for Business Practice

Our organizational framework (Fig.1) can offer several practical implications. Firstly, it indicates that organizations must prioritize employee attitudes and interpretations of GHRM. Employee engagement surveys can be an effective investment for organizations to grasp employee perceptions and comprehend the alignment between GHRM practices and best HRM practices. Furthermore, fostering green work-life balance can help align compliance expectations in the work domain with employee attitudes towards the environment in their personal lives.

Additionally, to effectively develop and implement green strategies, multi-national organizations must take into account the economic model, cultural values, regulations and development level of the countries and regions in which they operate and adapt their strategies accordingly. This may involve partnering with local organizations and governments to better understand the unique challenges and opportunities related to environmental sustainability and developing tailored approaches that are appropriate for the local context. By doing so, organizations can help drive progress towards a more sustainable future, while also contributing to economic and social development in the communities in which they operate.

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