

DOES GREEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT, EMPLOYEE GREEN BEHAVIOR? THE MEDIATING ROLE OF GREEN CORPORATE CULTURE

A GESTÃO ECOLÓGICA DE RECURSOS HUMANOS INFLUENCIA O COMPORTAMENTO ECOLÓGICO DOS FUNCIONÁRIOS? O PAPEL MEDIADOR DA CULTURA CORPORATIVA ECOLÓGICA

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Abstract

As environmental issues intensify, there is a global focus on environmental protection and green development. This study investigates the impact of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) on employees' green behaviors and the potential mechanisms involved, targeting 600 employees and middle managers from high-star hotels in Yunnan, Beijing, Guangdong, and Zhejiang. The results indicate that GHRM positively influences employees' green behaviors, with organizational culture mediating this relationship. These findings could provide valuable recommendations for the hotel industry in China.

Keywords: Hotel. Green Human Resource Management. Employee Green Behavior. Green Organizational Culture.

Resumo

À medida que as questões ambientais se intensificam, observa-se um foco global na proteção ambiental e no desenvolvimento sustentável. Este estudo investiga o impacto da Gestão Sustentável de Recursos Humanos (GHRM) nos comportamentos sustentáveis dos funcionários e os possíveis mecanismos envolvidos, tendo como alvo 600 funcionários e gerentes de nível médio de hotéis de alto padrão em Yunnan, Pequim, Guangdong e Zhejiang. Os resultados indicam que a GHRM influencia positivamente os comportamentos ecológicos dos funcionários, com a cultura organizacional atuando como mediadora dessa relação. Essas descobertas podem fornecer recomendações valiosas para o setor hoteleiro na China.

Palavras-chave: Hotel. Gestão Ecológica de Recursos Humanos. Comportamento Ecológico dos Funcionários. Cultura Organizacional Ecológica.

1 INTRODUCTION

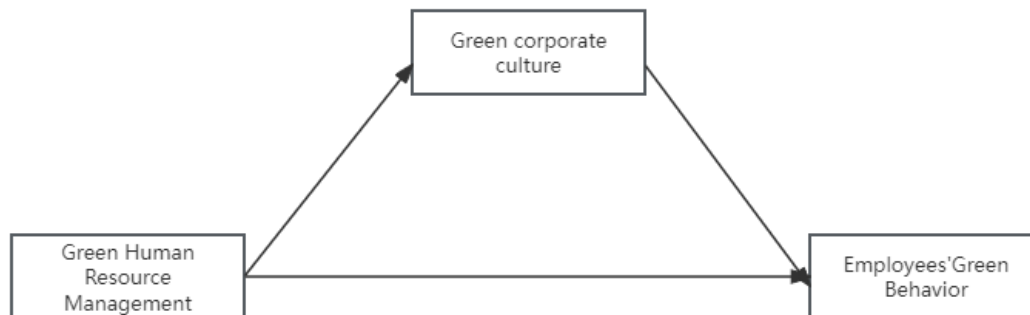
With the intensification of global environmental issues, Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) has gained attention as an innovative HR practice among businesses. GHRM not only focuses on the environmental impact of corporate operations



but also guides employees towards green behaviors (such as resource conservation) through recruitment and other HR processes. Research indicates that GHRM can enhance employees' awareness and actions regarding environmental behaviors; however, relying solely on it may not fully stimulate employees' green behaviors, suggesting that organizational culture may play a crucial mediating role.

Organizational culture embodies the implicit values and behavioral norms within a company, profoundly influencing employee behavior. When green principles are integrated into the culture, employees are more likely to perceive green behaviors as part of the organization's values, actively practicing and promoting sustainable practices. Therefore, exploring the mediating role of organizational culture between Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) and employees' green behaviors can provide critical insights for companies aiming to implement GHRM and enhance their environmental performance.

This paper explores how Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) influences employees' green behaviors through organizational culture from both theoretical and empirical perspectives. After analyzing existing literature, hypotheses are formulated and empirically tested to provide practical guidance for businesses. The aim is to reveal the interaction between GHRM and organizational culture and its impact on employees' green behaviors, thereby supporting corporate sustainability. Based on Self-Determination Theory and Social Information Processing Theory, the study focuses on the mediating role of organizational culture in facilitating employees' green behaviors through GHRM (see Figure 1).

Figure 1*Hypothesized research model*

2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

2.1 Green human resource management and employee green behavior

With the emergence of the concept of sustainable development, academia has recognized the significant role employees play in the effectiveness of organizational environmental management during research on corporate social responsibility and environmental protection. Consequently, the research perspective has shifted toward human resources Wehrmeyer, (2017).

Jabbour and Santos (2008) argue that in response to environmental pressures, leading companies have begun to promote and implement proactive environmental management systems and practices, extending this environmental mindset to various functional departments within the organization, such as green behaviors, green recruitment, and green training. Howard-Grenville *et al.* (2014) contend that Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) also originates from organizations incorporating sustainability into their internal activities and decision-making processes, emphasizing the responsive support of human resource management in addressing green issues.

Building on the previous research of scholars on Green Human Resource Management, this study adopts the definitions provided by Guang (2003) and Jian (2009) to incorporate green principles into human resource management to achieve employees' green behaviors, thereby gaining a competitive advantage for the organization. Implementing Green Human Resource Management facilitates companies in achieving

their green strategic goals and delivering green value to society. Therefore, we propose the following hypotheses:

H1: There is a positive correlation between Green Human Resource Management and Employee Green Behavior.

2.2 The mediating role of green organizational culture

Organizational culture is the cultural atmosphere, corporate spirit, and business philosophy formed through long-term operational practices, reflected in the shared values, ethical standards, and behaviors of employees Ling, (2007). Green culture is a new theory arising under the global "green revolution," spanning across ecological, economic, and scientific domains, increasingly influencing and integrating into organizational culture.

Li (2012) posits that green corporate culture is a core element and subsystem of modern organizational culture, reflecting values that protect resources, the environment, and human health. Jian & Fei (2006) suggest that green corporate culture in hotels is based on the development of green productivity, ensured through green activities, and driven by the satisfaction of employee needs, achieving sustainable development on multiple fronts. This culture is integral to all aspects of hotel operations and serves as the essence of the green management model.

Additionally, Monika I. Winn & Stefano Pogutz. (2013) argue that companies can enhance their environmental performance by incorporating "green" elements into their corporate culture. This helps construct a green corporate culture that supports employee participation in the organization's practices, thereby influencing the principles of Green Human Resource Management.

Based on Social Information Processing Theory, Liu Wenhui (2009) proposes that the content system of green corporate culture encompasses three levels: the spiritual level, the behavioral level, and the image level. The spiritual level includes the company's mission, core values, and a series of value concepts. The behavioral level comprises organizational policies and employee behaviors. The image level encompasses a series of image designs related to entrepreneurs, employees, and the environment.

In conclusion, green corporate culture is a new cultural concept formed by integrating green cultural principles into organizational culture in response to the trends in environmental protection demands. It represents a transformation of existing practical culture and reflects the values, spirit, and operations of green enterprises in all organizational behaviors. Therefore, we propose the following hypotheses:

H2: There is a positive correlation between Green Human Resource Management and Green Organizational Culture.

H3: There is a positive correlation between Green Organizational Culture and Employee Green Behavior.

Qamaruddin *et al.* (2022) argue that green corporate culture can mediate the relationship between Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) and employees' green behaviors, fostering a sense of responsibility and loyalty towards the company while enhancing employees' willingness to engage in environmentally sustainable actions. Cherian and Jacob (2012) explored and demonstrated that the implementation of GHRM motivates more members to adopt environmentally responsible behaviors. Furthermore, Fu Hui (2011) found that the establishment of a green environmental culture in hotels requires not only the formation of certain hardware conditions but also, more importantly, the development of an environmental spirit and philosophy. This approach should fully consider the interests of stakeholders such as customers, hotels, and society, aiming to achieve long-term benefits for both hotels and customers as the ultimate goal of development.

Zhongyuan Li (2020) proposes, based on the SOR (Stimulus-Organism-Response) theory model, that environmental awareness mediates the relationship between green culture and employees' green behaviors. The SOR theory posits that external contexts (organizational green culture) stimulate psychological states (environmental awareness), which in turn affect individual behaviors (employees' green behaviors). Environmental awareness can be viewed as an organism's representation, with organizational green culture providing key information for green transformation, helping to address uncertainties, stimulating environmental awareness responses, and guiding employees to implement green behaviors. Based on this, relevant hypotheses are derived.

H4: The mediating role of Green Organizational Culture has a positive correlation in the relationship between Green Human Resource Management and Employee Green Behavior.

3 METHODS

3.1 Samples and procedure

Data were collected over three days via the Credamo platform, yielding an initial sample of 600 respondents. After excluding 18 invalid responses, 582 valid questionnaires were retained for analysis. Of these participants, 48.3% were male and 51.7% were female. In terms of age, a majority (53.1%) fell within the 21–30 age range, followed by those aged 31–40 (22.3%). Respondents aged 0–20 accounted for 9.1%, while 8.2% were 41–50, 5.7% were 51–60, and 1.5% were 60 or older. Regarding educational background, 29.4% held a bachelor's degree, 21.1% had completed senior school, and 20.8% had earned a master's degree or higher. Meanwhile, 15.8% had a junior high school education or below, and 12.9% possessed an associate degree. In terms of marital status, slightly over half of the respondents were unmarried (53.1%), while 44.0% were married, and 2.9% indicated other statuses. The monthly household income distribution showed that 28.0% earned between 6000–12000 RMB, followed by 21.6% at 12000–18000 RMB. A smaller proportion (13.9%) reported less than 6000 RMB, while 13.7% earned between 18000–24000 RMB, and another 13.7% fell into the 24000–30000 RMB range. Finally, 9.0% of respondents reported monthly household incomes of 30000 RMB or above.

3.2 Measures

All measures in the present study were translated into Chinese from established English scales. Participants rated each item on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Green Human Resource Management was measured using a 10-item scale developed by Tang (2018). A sample item was

“Businesses attract green job candidates who use green criteria to select organizations; companies will build the green employer brand and use it to attract more green employees.” The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient in this study was 0.945. Green Corporate Culture was assessed using a 9-item scale developed by Kim (2017). A sample item was “Actively encourage collaboration in the roles; I have a common vision for the future of the company.” The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for this scale was 0.951. Finally, Employees’ Green Behavior was measured using a 6-item scale developed by Magsi *et al.* (2018) ; and Yang *et al.* (2017). A sample item was “I use personal cups instead of disposable cups. I would use the stairs instead of the elevator when passing through fewer floors.” The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was 0.966.

3.3 Analytical strategy

Data were analyzed using SPSS (version 26), AMOS (version 24), and the PROCESS macro (version 2.16). First, we calculated Cronbach’s alpha and the correlation coefficients for all variables. We then conducted a confirmatory factor analysis to evaluate the fit of the proposed three-factor model. Finally, following the recommendation of Hayes (2013), we employed the hierarchical regression and PROCESS macro to test the mediating role of Green Corporate Culture in the relationship between Green Human Resource Management and Employees’ Green Behavior.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Confirmatory factor analysis

A structural equation model consists of two basic components: the measurement model and the structural model. According to Hair *et al.* (1998), the measurement model integrates several indicators for a given variable. In this study, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted on the data set of the study before conducting path analysis with the structural model. The purpose of CFA was to verify the underlying dimensions of the data, extract indicators, and guide model specification. The CFA model fit indices,

as shown in Table 2, suggest that the measurement model fits the data well, with the following fit indices: NFI = 0.91, CFI = 0.89, X^2/df = 3.75, RMSEA = 0.63, TLI = 0.86, and GFI = 0.93. These values indicate an excellent fit, and thus, there was no need to address the risk of overparameterization in the model.

Table 1

The Results of CFA Model Fit Indices

Fit Index	Criteria	Results	Reference
X^2/df	2.0 ~ 5.0	3.75	Cain <i>et al.</i> (2017)
GFI	> 0.90	0.93	Hair <i>et al.</i> (1998)
RMSEA	< 0.80	0.63	
NFI	> 0.90	0.91	Assaf <i>et al.</i> (2018)
CFI	> 0.80	0.89	
TLI	> 0.80	0.86	Nunkoo & Ramkissoon (2012)

4.2 Descriptive analysis and correlations

As shown in Table 2, Green Human Resource Management demonstrated a significant positive correlation with both Green Corporate Culture ($r = 0.403$, $p < 0.001$) and Employees' Green Behavior ($r = 0.341$, $p < 0.001$). In addition, Green Corporate Culture was positively associated with Employees' Green Behavior ($r = 0.654$, $p < 0.001$). Following the procedures for CFA, discriminant validity was assessed by comparing the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) for each latent variable with the inter-construct correlations. The square roots of the AVE for Green Human Resource Management (0.830), Green Corporate Culture (0.844), and Employees' Green Behavior (0.903) all exceeded their respective intercorrelations, confirming good discriminant validity (Abbas & Khan, 2023; Wang *et al.*, 2022). Furthermore, the correlations among these constructs were moderate (ranging from 0.341 to 0.654) and statistically significant at $p < 0.001$, suggesting that the constructs are empirically distinct and that the measurement model is robust.

Table 2*Means, standard deviations, and correlations among the variables.*

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3
Green Human Resource Management	6.010	0.832	0.830		
Green Corporate culture	5.679	0.928	0.403*	0.844	
Employees' Green Behavior	5.567	1.185	0.341*	0.654*	0.903

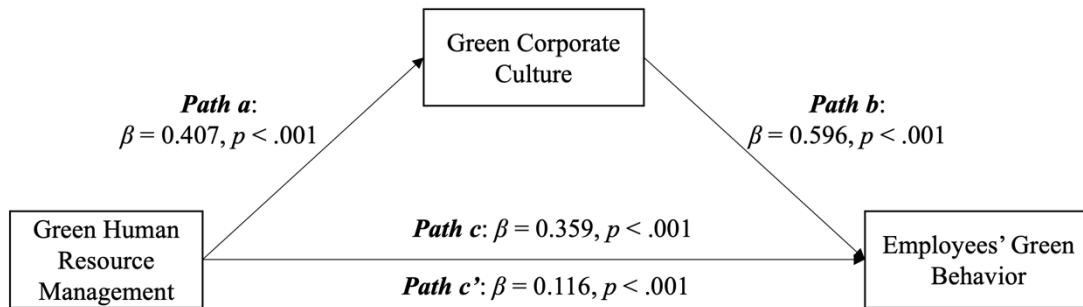
Note: * means $p < 0.001$

4.3 Hypothesis testing

The mediating effect was examined using both hierarchical regression and bootstrap analyses. First, we tested the total effect of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) on Employees' Green Behavior (EGB) by setting GHRM as the independent variable and EGB as the dependent variable. As shown in Figure 1, GHRM exerted a significant positive influence on EGB ($\beta = 0.359$, $t = 9.258$, $p < 0.001$), confirming the main effect. Next, we assessed the impact of GHRM on Green Corporate Culture (GCC), treating GHRM as the independent variable and GCC as the dependent variable; the results showed that GHRM significantly and positively affected GCC ($\beta = 0.407$, $t = 10.732$, $p < 0.001$). Finally, to evaluate the mediating role of GCC, both GHRM and GCC were entered as predictors of EGB. After controlling for GCC, the effect of GHRM on EGB remained significant but was reduced ($\beta = 0.116$, $t = 3.367$, $p = 0.001$), whereas GCC showed a significant positive effect on EGB ($\beta = 0.596$, $t = 17.288$, $p < 0.001$). These findings suggest that GCC partially mediates the relationship between GHRM and EGB, indicating that GHRM influences EGB both directly and indirectly via GCC, thus supporting H1–H4.

Figure 2

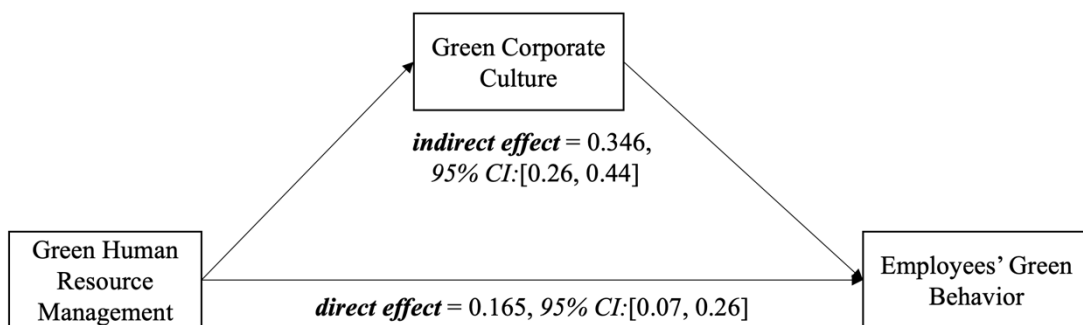
Hypothesis testing results based on hierarchical regression.



In addition, we employed (Hayes' 2013) PROCESS macro (version 2.16, Model 4) in SPSS with 5,000 bootstrap samples and a 95% confidence interval (CI) to further investigate the mediating role of GCC in the association between GHRM and EGB. Specifically, GHRM was specified as the independent variable, EGB as the dependent variable, and GCC as the mediator. As illustrated in Figure 2, the direct effect of GHRM on EGB was significant (direct effect = 0.165, SE = 0.05, 95% CI [0.07, 0.26]), and the mediating effect of GCC was also significant (indirect effect = 0.346, SE = 0.05, 95% CI [0.26, 0.44]). These results corroborate the findings of the hierarchical regression analysis and confirm partial mediation, thus offering further support for Hypothesis 3.

Figure 3

Mediation effect testing results based on bootstrap.



5 DISCUSSION

Based on the above analysis, it can be concluded that the scale exhibits good reliability and validity. Therefore, no items were modified or removed. The results indicate that all four variables (GHR = 0.830, GCC = 0.844, EGB = 0.903) have square roots of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values higher than their respective correlations with other constructs, indicating good discriminant validity. The correlations between constructs are moderate (ranging from 0.341 to 0.690), and all are statistically significant with $p < 0.001$. This suggests that these constructs are empirically distinct, supporting the robustness of the measurement model.

6 RECOMMENDATION

Given the limitations of the current study, future research should consider the following aspects:

1. Expand the sample range: Employ more scientific stratified random sampling techniques to include various regions and industries, thereby enhancing the representativeness of the sample and the generalizability of the research findings.
2. Optimize scale selection: Adjust the design of measurement scales according to local cultural and industry characteristics, and conduct in-depth studies on green organizational culture to enrich relevant scale options.
3. Strengthen data collection methods: Explore various techniques such as online surveys and phone interviews to alleviate the impacts of regional restrictions. Conduct regular follow-up surveys to determine causal relationships and reduce the risk of common method bias.
4. Utilize multivariate analysis methods: Adopt more complex statistical analysis techniques to accurately examine the relationships between variables, thereby increasing the reliability of the research conclusions.

Through these measures, the depth and breadth of research on Green Human Resource Management can be significantly enhanced, providing stronger support for policy formulation.

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Authors' Contribution

All authors contributed equally to the development of this article.

Data availability

All datasets relevant to this study's findings are fully available within the article.

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