









# “How does green HRM influence environmental and social sustainability in hotels?”

<b>AUTHORS</b>	Zuhair Abbas   Rasa Smaliukienė  Roman Zamečnik   Ghulam Kalsoom  Elona Cera 
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Roman Zámečník, Ghulam Kalsoom,  
Elona Cera, 2023

Zuhair Abbas, Ph.D. Candidate,  
Research Scholar, Business  
Administration Department, Faculty  
of Management and Economics,  
Tomas Bata University in Zlin, Czech  
Republic. (Corresponding author)

Rasa Smaliukienė, Professor, Creative  
Communication Department,  
Faculty of Creative Industries, Vilnius  
Gediminas Technical University  
(VilniusTech), Lithuania.

Roman Zámečník, Associate Professor,  
Business Administration Department,  
Faculty of Management and  
Economics, Tomas Bata University in  
Zlin, Czech Republic.

Ghulam Kalsoom, Doctoral  
Researcher, Department of  
Business Administration, Faculty of  
Management and Economics, Tomas  
Bata University in Zlin, Czech Republic.

Elona Cera, Ph.D. Candidate, Business  
Administration Department, Faculty of  
Management and Economics, Tomas  
Bata University in Zlin, Czech Republic.



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Zuhair Abbas (Czech Republic), Rasa Smaliukienė (Lithuania), Roman Zámečník (Czech Republic), Ghulam Kalsoom (Czech Republic), Elona Cera (Czech Republic)

# HOW DOES GREEN HRM INFLUENCE ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY IN HOTELS?

## Abstract

Green human resource management (GHRM) is bringing positive transformations in business and society, as well as challenges for hotels. Drawing from social cognitive theory (SCT), this study examined green HRM with environmental and social performance. Significantly, this paper also used organizational green culture as a mediation variable. This empirical study employed a quantitative research method. Data were collected from 155 employees working in Pakistan's hotels. The results demonstrate that green HRM (t-statistic value = 9.676, p-value = 0.000) is positively related to organizational green culture. In addition, organizational green culture (t-statistic value = 11.254, p-value = 0.000, t-statistic value = 16.882, p-value = 0.000) has a significant effect on environmental and social performance. Moreover, organizational green culture fully mediated the relationship between green HRM and environmental performance (t-statistic value = 5.444, p-value = 0.000). Finally, organizational green culture fully mediated the relationship between green HRM and social performance (t-statistic value = 7.218, p-value = 0.000).

## Keywords

green HRM, organizational green culture, environmental performance, social performance, hotels, Pakistan

## JEL Classification

M12, M14, Q01, R11

## INTRODUCTION

The topic of green human resource management has received increasing attention from scholars and practitioners (Ren et al., 2022). Environmental performance and social sustainability are essential for business excellence (Chaudhary, 2021). Moreover, research on green HRM has partially examined social sustainability in developing and promoting CSR programs, specifically in service organizations (Dumont et al., 2017). However, it is understood that company managers' discretion will influence outstanding social performance and how managers will use it besides widening their choice to facilitate socially responsible strategies and deliver pro-social results (Manner, 2010). Similarly, Amrutha and Geetha (2020) discovered that scholars had ignored social performance or social sustainability as it is considered a rarely studied component of the existing literature. However, recent theoretical developments have revealed that GHRM practices play a crucial role for organizations as a business strategy for promoting green culture in the workplace (Hameed et al., 2020).

Against this backdrop, this study highlighted the role of organizational green culture (OGC). Formulating effective environmental strategies through corporate resources may also lead to ecological and social performance by initiating organizational green culture in the workplace (Wang, 2019). Surprisingly, there is limited research on

green culture (Pan et al., 2022). Further research on Pakistan's hotel sector has been suggested (Abbas et al., 2022a; Latif et al., 2020). Pakistan is undergoing significant transformation, necessitating the urgent reform of economic growth and development models (Ren et al., 2018). At the same time, Pakistan is dealing with various environmental challenges (Abbas et al., 2022b). As a result, this study reacts to ecological matters to maximize environmental performance.

However, environmental and social performance are under-researched, making it one of the weaker sustainability pillars, specifically in developing countries (such as Pakistan). Future empirical research on green HRM with environmental-social sustainability may be undertaken (Ahmed et al., 2021; Pham et al., 2020). GHRM studies raise increasingly essential issues that have yet to be explored in the more effective human resource management literature (Zhao & Huang, 2022). Although environmental and social performance has not received adequate attention from the research community (Ren et al., 2020), linkages between employee green behavior on sustainability remain at its nascent stage (Paulet et al., 2021) that calls for rigorous research on the employee level to get a better understanding of the hotel employees' perceptions (Mousa & Othman, 2020). Despite the accumulated knowledge regarding green HRM with voluntary green behavior, the existing literature still needs to provide more insight into its antecedents, especially in service sectors such as hotels (Garavan et al., 2022).

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## 1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

A social cognitive theory provides a framework to show psychosocial functions. Personal faith and aspirations dynamically influence behavior, and people can activate environmental responses (Bandura & Cervone, 1986). Behaviors, in turn, influence people and their emotional states. The environment influences both individual attitudes and behaviors. SCT's significant aspects are: broadening workers' intellectual, interpersonal, and psychosocial strengths via simulation aptitude, fostering confidence in their skills so they can utilize their skills and abilities, and improving a person's efforts through all the target system (Wood & Bandura, 1989).

Similarly, SCT also emphasizes interactionism in moral phenomena, which means that ethical notions and empathy interact with individuality, ethics, and external factors (Bandura, 2014). Personal chronic constructs have been shown in studies to promote various objective behaviors (Whitaker & Godwin, 2013). Similarly, by paying attention to environmental protection and socially responsible behavior in the workplace, GHRM can affect green organizational behavior (Zoogah, 2011). When employees are constantly granted valuable learning, they will think about how they act in terms of sustainability and go out of their way to do things they think are ethically sound (Holtbrügge et al., 2015).

Prior research revealed that green HRM positively affects environmental performance (Umrani et al., 2020). However, organizations have been forced to adapt and encourage environmentally responsible behaviors due to pressures from shareholders and other stakeholders (Paillé et al., 2013). Subsequently, extensive research on sustainability practices and green HRM has been recommended that links with the behavior and context of individuals from the hospitality sector (Yusoff et al., 2020). Similarly, to develop sustainability in the hospitality sector, it is crucial to provide the best opportunities by analyzing the crucial part of sustainability practices and green HRM (Tulsi & Ji, 2020).

Green recruiting and selection are positively linked to environmental performance at work to be more explicit regarding those practices of green HRM (Pham & Paillé, 2020). In addition, recruitment initiatives have immense significance, such as the organization's environmental credibility and reputation (Guerci et al., 2016). To develop talent, it is vital to use a company's environmental performance in the recruiting process (Raza & Khan, 2022). Furthermore, environmental-based managerial input enhances developers' skills, abilities, and expertise (Rawashdeh, 2018).

There is a partial exploration of green HRM with social sustainability that affects stakeholders' social performance. Prior research has shown that identifying employee care before addressing ex-

ternal social responsibility challenges improves firm performance (Tang et al., 2012). Therefore, incorporating external issues into the organization's culture is necessary. However, green HRM practices promote social sustainability by emphasizing social equity, health, wellness, and well-being (Amrutha & Geetha, 2020). Volunteering events after work hours, leave of absence to work with a voluntary group, volunteer participation combined with performance assessment, soliciting employee feedback while choosing or revising social performance programs, and other related work processes are discussed (Boselie, 2014).

GHRM practices and green behavior shape to meet an organization's social sustainability goals. In reality, businesses that engage in green practices to increase environmental quality can often recognize the need for social sustainability (Paillé et al., 2018). Employees should be conscious that their company's sustainability policies would provide them with a healthier existence in terms of mental and health well-being (Gulzar et al., 2020). Corporate social responsibility requirements prompted many organizations' GHRM programs. Employers must incorporate green protocols in all of their organization's operating divisions. Companies would be forced to curb their morally irresponsible actions and, in specific ways, also help fix the challenges they helped develop as societal issues became more common in stakeholders' minds (Lin-Hi & Müller, 2013).

It is frequently argued in the green management literature that organizational actions should go beyond the technical fixes by accepting and adopting novel environmental and socially responsible values, behaviors, and beliefs to behave more sustainably. In this regard, the journey toward environmental performance relies on the green culture (Harris & Crane, 2002). Moreover, several researchers argued that organizations must undergo cultural change and transform significantly to align with the required responses to tackle environmental and societal challenges (Welford, 2005).

Similarly, previous research explored important pillars like organizational green culture and pursued sustainability practices to achieve environmental and social performance, especially in hotels (Pham & Tuckova, 2018). In this vein, organ-

izational culture can be a strong pillar for transformation toward sustainability in the workplace (Roscoe et al., 2019).

Therefore, this study aims to examine green HRM with environmental and social performance through a mediation mechanism of organizational green culture under a social cognitive perspective in hotels. For this purpose, the paper formulated the following hypotheses:

- H1: *GHRM has a significant impact on organizational green culture.*
- H2: *Organizational green culture is positively related to environmental performance.*
- H3: *Organizational green culture is positively related to social performance.*
- H4: *Organizational green culture mediates the link between GHRM and environmental performance.*
- H5: *Organizational green culture mediates the link between GHRM and social performance.*

## 2. METHODOLOGY

A quantitative research approach is employed to comprehend the targeted population's attitude, uniqueness, and actions (J. W. Creswell & J. D. Creswell, 2017). Survey questionnaires are used for the data collection; a quantitative approach is employed to investigate the association among different variables (Saunders & Lewis, 2017). Meanwhile, to collect the maximum reliable responses (data), the hard and soft copies of the questionnaire were administered and validated using non-probability and probability techniques. In addition, the non-probability technique was employed to select the analysis units (hotels) precisely because of the accessibility to the respondents, cost-effectiveness, and geographical proximity, among others (Vehovar et al., 2016). Moreover, the hard copy was used to appeal to the respondents (employees) of the targeted analysis unit.

In contrast, the questionnaire in the soft copy was forwarded to the employees (respondents) who were not available or accessible to answer the

questions at the time of interception. Therefore, ensuring the participants' confidentiality is essential after sending a participation letter to all the respondents (Oldendick, 2012). The total number of distributed questionnaires was 400 (both the hard and soft copies) sent to the full-time employees at the hotels, from which 155 responses were retrieved, i.e., 38.75% of responses were found valid and reliable for the analysis.

G\*Power 3.1.9.2 software was utilized to assess sample size (Faul et al., 2007). This software reported that 85 samples were enough to obtain 80% statistical power with a medium effect (0.15) at a significance level of 5% (0.05). This study utilized 155 samples to achieve research objectives, which is also consistent with other standard guidelines of thumb (Hair et al., 2010; Kline, 2015).

The Green HRM scale is taken from Kim et al. (2019). A five-item questionnaire assessed organizational green culture (OGC) as a potential mediator (C. Jabbour & A. Jabbour, 2016). This paper used the environmental performance scale from Paillé et al. (2014). Finally, a five-item social performance scale was adopted from Wood (2010) and Yong et al. (2020).

### 3. RESULTS

The Harman single-factor analysis showed that there is about a 26% difference in the data, eliminating the possibility of a common method bias. Furthermore, Table 2 indicates that VIF values are less than 3; thus, collinearity is not a significant issue in this analysis (Diamantopoulos & Sigauw, 2006).

**Table 1.** Demographic characteristics

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Item	Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	125	80.64
	Female	30	19.36
	Total	155	100
Age	Under 30	29	18.71
	30-40	55	35.48
	40-50	33	21.30
	50 and above	38	24.51
	Total	155	100
Qualification	Bachelor's	68	43.87
	Master's	47	30.33
	MS/MPhil	40	25.80
	Total	155	100
Work experience	Less than 1	13	8.38
	1-3 years	38	24.51
	4-6 years	24	15.48
	7-10 years	34	21.93
	Above ten years	46	29.7
	Total	155	100
Departments	Human Resources	42	27.09
	Quality Assurance	34	21.93
	Finance/Accounting	11	7.09
	Operations	34	21.93
	Health and Safety	18	11.64
	Marketing	16	10.32
	Total	155	100
Hotel	1 star	68	43.87
	2 star	41	26.46
	3 star	46	29.67
	Total	155	100

Note: n = 155.



**Table 2.** Measurement model

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Constructs	Indicator	Factor Loadings	VIF	Rho_A	CR	CA
<b>Green human resource management (GHRM)</b>	–	–	–	<b>0.915</b>	<b>0.932</b>	<b>0.912</b>
	GHRM1	0.829	2.832	–	–	–
	GHRM2	0.883	2.614	–	–	–
	GHRM3	0.833	2.672	–	–	–
	GHRM4	0.845	2.965	–	–	–
	GHRM5	0.857	2.737	–	–	–
	GHRM6	0.755	1.853	–	–	–
<b>Organizational green culture (OGC)</b>	–	–	–	<b>0.861</b>	<b>0.898</b>	<b>0.858</b>
	OGC1	0.824	2.011	–	–	–
	OGC2	0.746	1.620	–	–	–
	OGC3	0.782	1.876	–	–	–
	OGC4	0.817	2.143	–	–	–
	OGC5	0.825	1.990	–	–	–
<b>Environmental performance (ENP)</b>	–	–	–	<b>0.849</b>	<b>0.888</b>	<b>0.841</b>
	ENP1	0.797	1.950	–	–	–
	ENP2	0.832	2.152	–	–	–
	ENP3	0.818	1.931	–	–	–
	ENP4	0.793	1.685	–	–	–
	ENP5	0.669	1.374	–	–	–
<b>Social performance (SCP)</b>	–	–	–	<b>0.885</b>	<b>0.914</b>	<b>0.883</b>
	SCP1	0.779	1.864	–	–	–
	SCP2	0.814	1.992	–	–	–
	SCP3	0.856	2.461	–	–	–
	SCP4	0.819	2.346	–	–	–
	SCP5	0.856	2.430	–	–	–

As per Henseler et al. (2015), the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) also validated discriminant validity. As shown in Table 3, each HTMT ratio was lower than the most limiting criterion of 0.85.

**Table 3.** Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Constructs	ENP	GHRM	OGC	SCP
ENP	–	–	–	–
GHRM	0.681	–	–	–
OGC	0.857	0.746	–	–
SCP	0.511	0.795	0.713	–

The bootstrapping method was applied to identify how vital the parameter is (5,000 subsamples, one-tailed significance). *H1* is supported: green HRM ( $O = 0.663$ ,  $t = 9.676$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) was significantly related to organizational green culture (OGC). Next, *H2* is proved: OGC was shown to be substantially related to environmental performance ( $O = 0.735$ ,  $t = 11.254$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). Additionally, *H3* is also supported: OGC is positively related to social performance ( $O = 0.790$ ,  $t = 16.882$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ).

Table 4 and Figure 1 show the mediation analysis performed to test *H4* and *H5*. The results demonstrate that *H4* is accepted: organizational green culture mediates the link between green HRM and environmental performance ( $O = 0.487$ ,  $t = 5.444$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). In addition, *H5* is proved: organizational green culture mediates the link between GHRM and social performance ( $O = 0.524$ ,  $t = 7.218$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ).

This paper assessed the predictability of the study variables by estimating the  $R^2$  of the regression model (Table 4). An independent variable's possibility to clarify a given amount of variation within the dependent variable is evaluated by this coefficient. For example, the model  $R^2$  of the dependent variables environmental performance (ENP) (0.540) indicates 54%, and social performance (SCP) (0.624) shows 62.4% of the total variation of environmental and social performance. This can be accounted for by the cumulative effects of the separating variable: the practices of GHRM. At the same time, the mediation construct of organizational green culture (OGC) (0.440) shows 44%.

Source: Authors' elaboration.

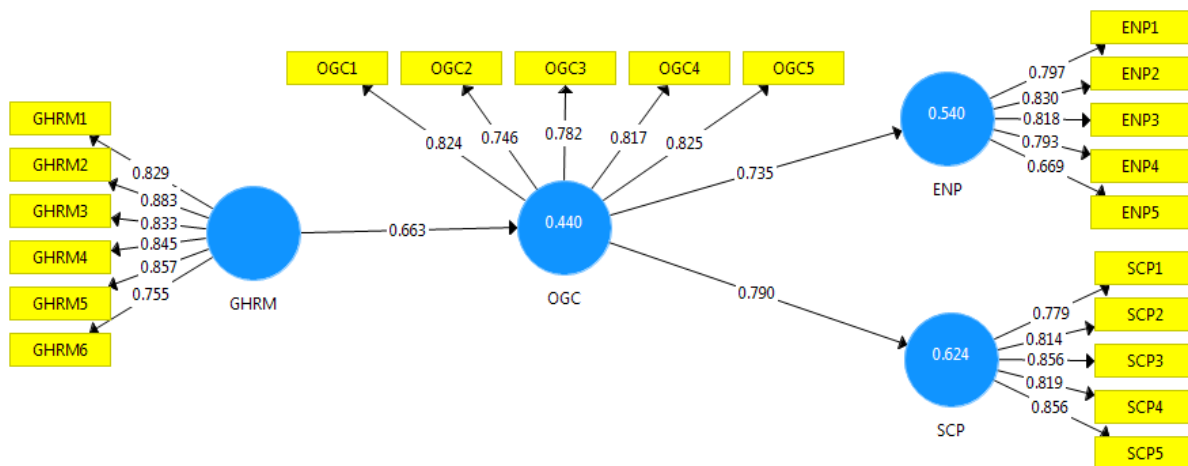


Figure 1. Final model

Table 4. Hypotheses testing (direct and indirect effect)

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Construct	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	STDEV	t value	p-value	Decision
<b>Direct Effect</b>						
H1: GHRM → OGC	0.663	0.670	0.069	9.676	0.000	Supported
H2: OGC → ENP	0.735	0.739	0.065	11.254	0.000	Supported
H3: OGC → SCP	0.790	0.795	0.047	16.882	0.000	Supported
<b>Indirect Effect</b>						
H4: GHRM → OGC → ENP	0.487	0.499	0.089	5.444	0.000	Supported
H5: GHRM → OGC → SCP	0.524	0.534	0.073	7.218	0.000	Supported
<b>Construct</b>	<b>Coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>)</b>			<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>		
ENP	0.540			0.535		
OGC	0.440			0.434		
SCP	0.624			0.621		

## 4. DISCUSSION

Drawing upon a social cognitive theoretical perspective, this study examined the effect of green HRM on environmental and social performance via the mediation mechanism of organizational green culture in hotels. This study found that (H1) GHRM positively relates to organizational green culture. This finding is aligned with Pham and Tuckova (2018), who found that GHRM brings a sustainable culture to the workplace in the hotel industry.

Subsequently, (H2) OGC is positively enhanced by environmental performance. This result supports Roscoe et al. (2019). They demonstrate that green culture is a strong predictor of boosting employee productivity. Additionally, green culture promotes environmental management prac-

tices (García-Machado & Martínez-Ávila, 2019). According to this study, hotels can use a green environmental approach to boost their environmental performance. Furthermore, these findings defied Hameed et al. (2020) and Umrani et al. (2020), who found a significant positive link between environmental performance and business performance.

The study supported H3: organizational green culture has a significant relationship with social performance. This result is consistent with Harris and Crane (2002) and Isaksson and Woodside (2016). They found that green culture is vital for employees to perform socially responsibly in the workplace. Similarly, González-Rodríguez et al. (2019) noted that employees work responsibly to accomplish the social performance of hotels. In addition, managers' vision, motives, and values also play an

essential role in influencing employee commitment toward societal obligations at the organizational level (Maak & Pless, 2006).

The mediation findings revealed that *H4* is supported: there is a clear association between green HRM and environmental performance mediated by organizational green culture (OGC). This result is similar to Muisyo and Qin (2021), who demonstrate that green culture enables employees to promote environmental performance by implementing green human resource management. Similarly, the findings revealed that *H5* is supported: OGC mediates the relationship between GHRM and societal effectiveness. Furthermore, hotels can develop a culture of social performance by establishing social goals for their employees to achieve social sustainability at work. Employee engagement may affect social performance after introducing corporate social programs in hotels.

There needs to be more research on environmental and social performance. Significantly, this study adds a body of knowledge on sustainable HRM, especially in developing countries (such as Pakistan). For this reason, this result contributes to the GHRM-social performance debate. It supports the theoretical assumptions of social cognitive theory and suggests GHRM as a way of thinking that generates positive social results.

Furthermore, few investigations highlighted the role of organizational green culture as a contributing factor to the use of green social initiatives. This finding enhances the existing literature, as performance metrics are imperative to evaluate hotels' environmental and social performance. Finally, this paper extends the workplace social-cognitive perspective to bring employees' green behaviors.

This analysis also provides important practical implications. First, it suggests that hotels should implement environmental strategies and adopt GHRM practices to promote green culture and responsible policies across their operational lines. In addition, hotels must launch corporate social programs for the achievement of social performance in order to accomplish the United Nations' goals for ecological sustainability. Second, hotels would benefit from hiring individuals committed to promoting workplace sustainability and social responsibility. Thirdly, this paper also suggests that hotels should provide incentives for corporate social responsibility initiatives for employees and managers, which can be vital in boosting results in terms of the environment and society. Finally, this study provides a pathway for policymakers to launch green policies and socially responsible programs to promote sustainable development in the industries at the micro and macro levels.

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## CONCLUSION

This study examined the influence of green HRM on environmental and social performance under the lens of social cognitive theory. It collected data from 155 employees from hotels in Pakistan. Moreover, this study demonstrates that green HRM pushes employees toward sustainability. Significantly, it was revealed that organizational green culture positively affects environmental and social performance. The study extends green HRM literature in an emerging area. Practically, it gives policymakers, HR managers, and leaders a pathway to develop green workplace policies.

However, this analysis has several limitations. First, the service (hospitality) sector was examined, especially in the setting of developing nations. There is an avenue for scholars to conduct research in a cross-country background among developing and developed countries to compare GHRM practices with corporate sustainability to get a better understanding. Thus, future research may consider validating the current findings across various cultural settings, such as exploring individualism and collectivist cultures and examining the adoption of employees' green behavior. Second, research may explore the relationship between GHRM practices and sustainability via a mediation mechanism of top management commitment to address grand challenges. Third, this study considered only two dimensions of sustainability. Therefore, it is suggested to examine the influence of economic performance and corporate governance on GHRM practices.



## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization: Zuhair Abbas, Roman Zámečník.

Data curation: Zuhair Abbas, Ghulam Kalsoom.

Formal Analysis: Zuhair Abbas, Ghulam Kalsoom, Elona Cera.

Funding acquisition: Zuhair Abbas, Rasa Smaliukienė, Roman Zámečník, Elona Cera.

Investigation: Zuhair Abbas, Rasa Smaliukienė, Roman Zámečník.

Methodology: Zuhair Abbas, Roman Zámečník, Elona Cera.

Project administration: Zuhair Abbas, Rasa Smaliukienė, Roman Zámečník.

Resources: Roman Zámečník, Elona Cera.

Software: Zuhair Abbas, Rasa Smaliukienė.

Supervision: Zuhair Abbas, Rasa Smaliukienė, Roman Zámečník.

Validation: Rasa Smaliukienė.

Visualization: Rasa Smaliukienė, Ghulam Kalsoom, Elona Cera.

Writing – original draft: Zuhair Abbas, Ghulam Kalsoom, Elona Cera.

Writing – review & editing: Zuhair Abbas, Rasa Smaliukienė, Roman Zámečník.

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