The Emergence of Green Human Resource Management as a 'Higher-Order Construct' in the Asian Context

Saba Farooq[a*], Muhammad Umair Javaid[b], Munawar javed Ahmad[c], Muhammad Zulqarnain Arshad[d], Muhammad Ali Arshad[e], Irfan Sabir[f], [a,b,d]Department of Management Sciences, Lahore Garrison University, Lahore, Pakistan, [c]Departement of Management Sciences, Iqra University, Pakistan, [e]School of Business Management, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Malaysia, [f]Faculty of Management Sciences, University of Central Punjab, Pakistan, Email: [a*]sabafarooq@lgu.edu.pk

The world is now moving from a production-based to a knowledge-based economy. In the present era, environmental concerns are the core objective of any organisation. Green HRM is one of the strategic resources which create competitiveness. Green human resource management (GHRM) is drawing the attention of researchers, academics and practitioners around the globe. However, there exists a gap in the methodological assessment of the dimensions of GHRM on individual, organisational, and environmental effects. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to fill the gaps in the literature by synchronising the dimensions of GHRM as a higher-order construct. The study suggests guiding principles for the managers to align the dimensions of green HRM and offers a conceptual review of the GHRM and its diverse structural dimensions. This study addresses the research void, conceptualising the GHRM as a higher-order construct in the developing countries where there is a lack and underutilisation of the resources.

Key words: *GHRM, Higher-Order Constructs, Policy Matters, Asia.*

Introduction

In the present epoch, environmental management is gaining the attention of researchers from almost all fields of studies (Daily, Bishop, & Massoud, 2012). Environmental management and sustainability, being plausible areas of business, have attracted the attention of managers to care about the influence of these concepts on the long-term success and competitiveness of their organisations {Formatting Citation}. The researchers have argued that to successfully achieve better performance in environmental management, the organisations must recognise the momentous role of human resource management (Daily et al., 2012; Jackson, Renwick, Jabbour, & Muller-Camen, 2011; Tang, Chen, Jiang, Paillé, & Jia, 2018). In the context of resource-based research, human resources – owing to their value, absolute and non-repeatable nature – are considered to be essential factors for firms to gain competitive advantage (Tang et al., 2018). From the perspective of environmental protection, human resource management can streamline the development and execution of environmental management (Daily, 2001) by orienting the HR practices, i.e., recruitment and selection, performance management and training with the environmental goals (Jabbour, De, Govindan, Teixeira, & De Souza Freitas, 2013). Ergo, there is an upsurge in need to amalgamate the green concepts with HRM, termed as green human resource management (Mishra, Sarkar, & Kiranmai, 2014). The human resource function plays a fundamental role in determining the conservation practices which must be executed in all areas and stages of a business as a continuous process (Yusoff, Nejati, Kee, & Amran, 2018). The green HR management practices result in reductions in costs, enhanced efficiencies, higher levels of employee retention and engagement, ultimately leading the organisation to achieve a reduction in the employee carbon footprints (Yusoff et al., 2018).

Regardless of all the significance and contribution of the past literature towards the Green Human Resource Management practices, there exists a research void in literature owing to the fact that GHRM is an emerging concept in the developing countries. In most of the previous studies, the researchers studied lower-order dimensions of the practices of GHRM (Green Recruitment and Selection, Green Training, Green Performance Management, Green Pay and Reward, and Green Involvement). Few studies focussed on the higher-order construct, i.e., GHRM practices, and those studies include a few dimensions of GHRM (Kim, Kim, Choi, & Phetvaroon, 2019). Therefore, this study tries to address this gap by including the most common five dimensions of GHRM practices in a single construct and applying a hierarchical component modelling technique to test GHRM.

Literature Review
Green Recruitment and Selection

The principal objective of recruitment and selection is identifying the efficient potential employees who are capable of delivering the optimum performance and recognising the areas

where they best fit (Obaid & Alias, 2015). The management of an organisation must hire employees who are considerate of green practices. This will add to the motivation level of employees, enhance their degree of engagement, and will reduce the turnover rate (Vijaykarthigeyan & Giriprakash, 2019). Recruitment entails attracting, selecting and hiring the right candidate for the right job at the right time while the selection is the process of choosing the right candidates from a pool of applicants, who are most suitable for the vacant job position and the organisation (R. Wayne Mondy, 2016).

In literature, green recruitment and selection constitute three aspects that include candidates' green awareness, green employer branding, and green criteria to attract candidates (Saeed et al., 2019). Candidates' green awareness is the foundation of the process as it involves the basic personality traits that help an organisation achieve its environmental goals. A series of tests can confirm this at the time of screening the pool of candidates. The good environmental reputation of the organisations fosters a sense of pride among the environmentally-responsible job candidates (Saeed et al., 2019). Job seekers tend to find common ground in the interests and core values of the organisation where they apply. For an organisation, a potent way of attracting new and environmentally conscious younger talent is projecting its image as an employer promoting green practices; this shapes up the reputation of the organisation and improves the employer's branding (Road & Kingdom, 2013). The last criteria are to evaluate and select the employees based on the green criteria; employers can emphasise the environmental aspects in the job description and employee specification (Saeed et al., 2019; Tang et al., 2018).

Some green recruitment practices, as stated in the literature, are: creating job portals, conducting telephonic, audio and video interviews, using résumé scanners, and employing e-recruiting software. The aim of green recruitment and selection is to acquire environmentally-conscious talent into the organisation, while green training is implemented to equip current employees with the talent to respond to the stimulus of the environmental changes (Yusliza et al., 2019).

Green Training

Training in the context of HRM is defined as the planned and systematic range of activities that aim to achieve better organisational performance by engaging the employees in learning activities to enhance their knowledge, skills, and attitude towards work (Jabbour, 2013). Green training entails systematic activities to encourage the employees to learn environment preservation skills, be considerate of environmental issues, and efficiently execute green working practices in the organisation (Chaudhary, 2019). Training can improve employees' skill-set, abilities, skills, and knowledge towards the activities of environmental management (Fernández, Junquera, & Ordiz, 2003).

Green training can help the firms in three ways, which are: awareness enhancement, knowledge management, and climate building. Green training can help the organisation instil a sense of responsibility among the employees to act in pro-environmental ways (Tang et al., 2018). Employees can better understand the significance and benefits of environmental management by virtue of the green training; also, it can lead to the identification of the sources of pollution and conservation of the resources by adopting activities like recycling and reusing the wastes (Wong, 1998). Knowledge management helps the firms inculcate motivation among the employees to get involved in the activities of environmental management (Del Brío, Fernández, & Junquera, 2007). Research reveals that the employees of Chinese firms get influenced by knowledge management and get engaged in sustainable activities. Green knowledge management entails providing green training, taking measures to improve employees' environment-related behaviours, skills, and enhancing their capabilities to respond to environmental management dilemmas (Govindarajulu & Daily, 2004). Green training can add to the environmental expertise of the employees (Roy & Thérin, 2008).

Green Performance Management

Performance management can be defined as the process of monitoring, gauging, and developing the performance of the human resources of an organisation in line with the strategic objectives of the organisation (Schleicher et al., 2018). When managing the performance, the organisation identifies how well the employees are performing and then employs effective measures to enhance their performance over time. It entails analysing and systematically measuring the employees' performance and communicating the assessment with them (Robert, 2017). Improving the performance of the individual employee is the main focus of the performance management process (Tziner & Rabenu, 2018).

The process of green performance management entails the evaluation of the activities of the employees to monitor if they are adding value to the organisation's activities of environmental management. The performance of the employees can be appraised by taking green targets, green purpose, responsibility and results of the green activities into account (Krithika, Divyapriyadharshini, & Gokulapriya, 2019).

Organisations need a systematic method to manage the performance of employees (Saeed et al., 2019; Tang et al., 2018). Green performance management develops performance indicators that define the green criteria to appraise the performance of all employees. The green criteria cover the environmental incidents, reduction in the emission of carbons, environmental policies, and communicating the environmental concerns to the organisational members (Jabbour, Santos, & Nagano, 2008; Saeed et al., 2019). Researchers have recommended the use of an E-performance management system and E-HR system to keep track of the carbon

emissions caused by the activities of the management as well as the employees (Vijaykarthigeyan & Giriprakash, 2019).

To employ green performance management, organisations adopt a systematic method. For most of the organisations, the adoption of a standard performance management approach is the priority. The organisations develop green performance indicators to formulate criteria to appraise the performance of the employees. These criteria cover wide topics like environmental responsibilities, environmental management policies, and organisation-wide communication, and reduction of carbon footprints of the employees (Saeed et al., 2019).

Green Pay and Reward

Green pay and reward is a strategic system of aligning the pay practices and corporate goals to attract, retain and motivate the employees (particularly senior managers) to add towards the environmental conservation motives of the organisation (Renwick, Redman, & Maguire, 2013; Tang et al., 2018). Incentives and rewards bridge the organisational interests with those of its employees. They have the propensity to motivate the employees and influence them so as to work with their utmost attention to help the organisation take a step further towards the achievement of its goals (Mandago, 2018). The organisations are transforming their pay and reward systems to incorporate the green dimension. The pay and reward policies encourage the employees to develop and enhance their skills, behaviours and attitudes that could help the organisation meet its objectives (Jabbour & Santos, 2008).

There have been extensive arguments suggesting that the employees feel more motivated when served with non-financial rewards via a robust green pay and reward system of the organisation (Jabbour et al., 2008). However, Tang suggested that both financial and non-financial rewards are significant to motivate the employees, and the organisations must offer both in the form of green healthcare benefits, green tax, and green recognition. The provision of environment-friendly vehicles for the employees to commute is also a remarkable measure. The employees must be motivated and guided to reduce their carbon footprints and seek to gain more knowledge regarding the preservation of the environment (Tang et al., 2018). The green recognition awards instil a sense of pride and belongingness among the employees, and they feel more encouraged to take the green initiatives.

Green Involvement

The organisations can encourage the employees by providing opportunities to participate in the environmental management activities and avoid involvement in the process that can prove to be harmful to the environment (Renwick et al., 2013). To improve the organisational performance in environmental management, the involvement of the employees is of pivotal

importance. By involving employees in the environmental management activities, the organisations can reduce the pollution and wastage of the resources, leading to enhanced efficiency (Florida & Davison, 2001; Tang et al., 2018).

There are five aspects of green employee involvement, as highlighted by (Renwick et al., 2013), which are clear green vision, green learning environment, robust internal and external communication channels, green practices, and encouraging and promoting green involvement of the employees. Clear green vision comprises the system of shared values and symbols that advocate environmental management and motivate and guide the employees to increase their involvement in the initiatives of the environmental management activities (Renwick et al., 2013). The green learning environment and the availability of the robust multiple communication channels help the employees to keep abreast of the workplace environmental issues. The green learning environment inspires the employees to be concerned about the green behaviour and environmental awareness of their colleagues. This fosters a culture of awareness among the employees, and various formal and informal communication channels streamline the flow of information and nurture green culture. The employers can motivate the employees to participate in green activities by arranging workshops to elucidate the significance of environmental management, writing newsletters, and setting up environmental management teams. (Tang et al., 2018). Hence, encouraging green involvement can be entitled as the cornerstone of the successful implementation of GHRM.

Methodology

Before going on to conduct full research data collection, the reliability and validity of the constructs or instruments are required. GHRM is an emerging concept in developing countries like Pakistan. The validity and reliability of GHRM is a necessary aspect of the research. A structural questionnaire will be prepared, and data will be gathered by self-administration, and also by conducting interviews. SPSS software will be used for the construct reliability and validity. For construct validity, academic and industrial experts will be contacted. For empirical testing, a structural equation modelling technique (SEM) will be used by Smart-PLS 3.2.8 (Arshad & Arshad, 2019)

Conclusion

Green human resource management has gained extensive attention from academics and practitioners globally. This study highlighted the green human resource management as a higher-order construct in Asian countries. The developing countries lack the necessary resources, skills, and knowledge to integrate the elements of GHRM to achieve environmental objectives. The study has conceptualised how the activities of GHRM influence environmental management and can prove to be valuable for the organisations. As the study has suggested,

managers must consider all the activities of GHRM to optimise environmental management. Potential employees that the companies seek to hire must be environmentally sensitive candidates. This will result in environmentally responsible employees who demonstrate better green performance. The employers must solicit ideas from the employees regarding environmental management and associate the performance evaluation with green outcomes and behaviours. Employers must increase employee involvement and encourage them to pitch in on environmental decision making. To enhance firm performance, the Asian firms or the business organisations operating in any region of the world where there is less consideration regarding environmental management must seek to benchmark the policies of GHRM. This can be done by employing the dimensions of GHRM, as identified in this study. In our upcoming research article, we have thoroughly evaluated the validity and reliability tests of GHRM higher order in the manufacturing industries of Pakistan.

Some limitations can constitute the foundations for future research. First, currently, GHRM practices are in the conceptualising and construct validation phase in developing countries. This study focusses on the validation of the GHRM construct. Later, the researcher will focus on the causal effect to depict the factors that can be affected by GHRM practices: for example, firm performance, innovation, sustainable growth, and, competitiveness, etc. Secondly, GHRM practices generally are essential for both the manufacturing and service sectors. Thus, future research should focus on the manufacturing and service sectors. Lastly, as mentioned above, GHRM is still an emerging concept, so the researchers can apply these constructs in different relationships by considering longitudinal/cross-sectional research design.

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