

Green orientation of human resource management and green attitude of employees: moderation effect of personal character

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ABSTRACT

This research is a methodical and scientific effort to determine if individual traits influence the connection between the environmentally friendly practices of human resource management and employees' environmental attitudes. The information was collected from 327 branch managers in licensed commercial banks in Sri Lanka through self-administered and structured surveys. Two hypotheses were formulated in this paper by drawing on both theoretical and empirical evidence related to employees' green attitudes. The results showed that a focus on green practices in HR management influences employees' environmental attitudes, with this connection being influenced by employees' individual characteristics. Due to this considerable influence, it can be suggested that the individual qualities of staff members are crucial and must be taken into account in organizational settings when making important decisions regarding their behaviour. Additionally, the results play a crucial role in contributing fresh insights to existing research and give a reason to explore the significance of integrating green practices into human resource management to better understand employees' environmentally friendly attitudes.

KEYWORDS: Green attitude, Green orientation of HRM and personal character

1. INTRODUCTION

Currently, the global focus is on achieving sustainable development, leading organizations to implement various strategies in order to remain competitive in the market. As a result, they must take responsibility for green management to address the growing strategic challenge of environmental conservation. The Green movement served as the first stage in the creation of the concept of Green Orientation of Human Resource Management (GOHRM) within the organization (Sharma & Gupta, 2015). Such concept has become a key business strategy where human resource management plays an active role in the ongoing green movement (Hossari & Elfahli, 2022). Management researchers have begun to examine the

managerial applications of green in their fields of accounting, marketing, supply-chain management, and human resource management to increase awareness of the concept of green (Sharma & Gupta, 2015). To this end, many research were done in the field of marketing, accounting and management with regards to the concept of green (Peattie, 1992; Owen, 1992; McDonagh & Prothero, 1997; as cited in Opatha & Kottawatta, 2020). GOHRM practices have a variety of positive effects on employees, including higher employee morale, a better public image, more loyalty among employees, enhanced brand recognition, competitive advantages, higher productivity, higher employee retention (Janmitha & Rai, 2019) and enhance the sustainable environmental performance of the organization (Arulrajah et al., 2015). Still, there is a gap in theory and empirical research on the implementation of green practices in human resource management, as noted by Renwick et al. (2008) and Jackson et al. (2011). In 2013, Opatha noted the lack of research on green human resource management in Sri Lanka or by Sri Lankan scholars. This research gap prompted numerous researchers to focus on the idea of green human resource management, which has since become a popular research area for many researchers and academics.

Human resource management (HRM) is essential for organizations to accomplish their goals, as it is regarded as a vital resource for all organizations. Nonetheless, the effectiveness of applying human resource management practices largely relies on the employees within the organization, such as their attitude, character, and behavior. Among which the attitude of the employees has the crucial role to determine the efficiency and effectiveness of the human resource management functions and the competitive advantages of the organizations (Opatha & Kottawatta, 2020). Several researchers identified that the GOHRM practices as the key variable to influence on such employees' attitude and it enrich the employees' knowledge, skills and attitudes with regards to the environment friendly applications in the business context (Bangwal & Tiwari, 2015; Opatha & Kottawatta, 2020). Hence, it is essential to analyze the impact of GOHRM on green attitude of employees in the organization. Though several scholars have highlighted green human resource management influence on green work behavior (Zhang, 2018) and green attitudes, there is no any single study conducted in Sri Lankan context (Opatha & Kottawatta, 2020). Furthermore, it is also stated that there is no theoretical arguments and empirical evidence on the moderating effect of personal character on the relationship between GOHRM and green attitude of the employee (Hewapathirana et al., 2020). It reveals that the moderating effect of the personal character of the employee on GOHRM and green attitude linkage has neither been theoretically argued nor been empirically tested in the Sri Lankan context, perhaps in the international context.

This study aims to examine how GOHRM is related to the green attitude of employees in licensed commercial banks in Sri Lanka, and to examine how personal characteristics affect this relationship. The research study's inquiries are formulated as follows: (1) Is there a significant and positive correlation between GOHRM and the green attitude of employees in licensed commercial banks in Sri Lanka? (2) Does personal character play a role as a moderator? What is the connection between GOHRM and employees' environmentally friendly attitudes in licensed commercial banks in Sri Lanka?

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Green Attitudes

It has always been stated that employees' attitudes can be used to anticipate their behavior. Employees' views on environmental values, beliefs, and standards are now a key factor in modern organizations focusing more on the company's sustainability. Additionally, it was mentioned that these environmentally friendly attitudes were influenced by religious and ethical values, practical and human-centered viewpoints, and beliefs that all living things have the right to exist and thrive (Kempton et al., 1995). Environmental attitudes, ecological attitudes, environment- friendly attitudes, and environmentally sustainable attitudes are the common words used for green attitude in the existing literature (Coskun, 2018). Opatha & Arulrajah (2014) define green attitude as appropriate beliefs (cognitive), feelings (affective) and intention to behave (behavioral intentions) with regards to greening.

Green Orientation of Human Resource Management

Human resource management is an imperative function of every organization that deals with the most precious assets of an organization which is human resources (Ahmad, 2015). The entire context of human resource management is presently being considered in the perspective of sustainability which illustrated that GOHRM is the most significant element of sustainability. Mampra (2013) defines GOHRM as “the use of human resource management policies to encourage the sustainable use of resources within business enterprises and promote the cause of environmentalism which further boosts up employee morale and satisfaction”. Further, Opatha & Arulrajah in 2014 defined the concept as “all the activities that involved in development, implementation and on- going maintenance of a system that aims at making employees of an organization green” (Arulrajah et al. 2015). Others described the concept of GOHRM as “the use of human resource management policies, philosophies, and practices to promote sustainable use of business resources and thwart any untoward harm arising from environmental concerns in organizations” (Zoogah, 2011) Further, Opatha & Arulraja (2014) concluded that GOHRM is the “orientation of all human resource management functions and practices at all levels in the organizational context”.

Personal Character

The meaning of character is not concrete as the concept is abstract (Opatha, 2013). Also, he stated that Word itself is ambiguous as it has many meanings. Hence, there is no any universally accepted definition for personal character. It is naturally a multidimensional phenomenon (Park & Peterson, 2006) and something which cannot be separated from the person (Ricoeur 1992). According to Opatha (2013) personal character is defined as the aggregate of all of the relatively persistent moral qualities he/she has that combines to form his/her real nature. According to Weragoda & Opatha (2015) there are two extreme sides of character which are virtues and vices, and an individual can master both aspects simultaneously.

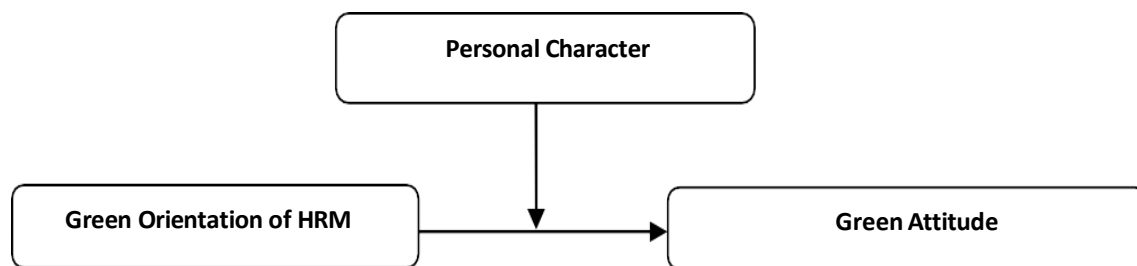


Figure 01: Nomological Network of Green Attitude

The schematic diagram of the Nomological Network is shown in Figure 1. To support the causal effects of the three variables, general system theory was utilized which explains how the things can be materialized through the inputs, processing and the outputs (Pouvreau, 2014). In application of the general system theory for the present research, GOHRM (independent variable) is treated as input, personal character is treated as a throughput or process which facilitates transformation of input into desired output and, green attitude is treated as the desired output. Moreover, the social exchange theory was utilized to explain the relationship between dependent (green attitude) and independent variable (GOHRM) which explained under the research hypotheses.

3. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

A hypothesis is a provisional statement that can be tested and helps to predict the anticipated connections in the research (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Two possible hypotheses (H1 and H2) were developed for the study to analyze the connections between the variables in

the nomological network. Under the deductive method, the overarching system theory and social aspects are considered.

The researcher utilized exchange theory, arguments, empirical evidence, and logical beliefs to examine the hypotheses of this study.

Green Orientation of Human Resource Management and Green Attitude

Based on the existing literature, the author argued that the GOHRM in the organizations leads to green attitude of employees. Opatha & Kottawatta (2020) investigated the relationship between green human resource management and green attitude of employees and they found that developing knowledge, skills and attitudes among employees regarding the environment-friendly applications in the business context is a more crucial area in the agenda of enriching the greening concept within the organization and ultimately within the country. It also fosters a positive work atmosphere where employees are motivated to participate in making the environment sustainable, promoting their eco-friendly mindset in the company's operations. Therefore, the author contended that the environmentally-friendly attitude is the outcome of the Green Organization Human Resource Management (GOHRM). Moreover, according to the social exchange theory, it can be confirmed that when an employee receives sufficient training and development on maintaining a sustainable organizational environment, along with effective performance evaluation and reward systems for promoting sustainability, the employee will demonstrate improved performance by displaying a green attitude. Therefore, one could make the case that A strong correlation exists between Green Organizational Human Resource Management (GOHRM) and employees' environmental attitudes. This logical and theoretical argument led the researcher to the following formulation of the study's first hypothesis.

H1: There is a positive and significant relationship between GOHRM and green attitude of employees.

Impact of Personal Character on the relationship between Green Orientation of Human Resource Management and Green Attitude of employees

Based on the available research, it is plausible to hypothesize that if the organization has high levels of effective green human resource management practices, employee green attitudes will rise. Theoretically, this association does not hold true in the case of employees who lack good character. It might be true for the people who have excellent character and care about preserving the environment in a sustainable way. Though the organizations generally focus more in the GOHRM practices with an intention to increase the green attitude of their employees, it might not happen if employees lack in their good personal character. Therefore, every organization should have the responsibility to ensure their employees' personal character to validate the relationship between GOHRM and green attitude of employees. Therefore, this study logically argue that the personal character of employees significantly moderates the relationship between GOHRM and green attitude of the employees. This logical argument led the researcher to develop the following formulation of the study's second hypothesis.

H2: The relationship between GOHRM and green attitude is significantly moderated by personal character.

3. METHODOLOGY

Study Design

There are six components of the research design as stated by Sekaran & Bougie in 2016 which are the purpose of the study, type of investigation, extent of researcher interference with the study, study setting, unit of analysis, and the time horizon of the study. This research was explanatory or hypothesis testing as it seeks to elucidate the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable in the nomological network. The type of investigation in this research is a correlational study. The unit of analysis was individual, that is, branch managers in licensed commercial banks in Sri Lanka. Employees' attitude matters

for every organization to be survived in the contemporary market. Here, branch managers are selected to analyze the organizational GOHRM practices and their employees' green attitude. Further, the time horizon of this study was cross-sectional, with one reason being the time constraint. 327 branch managers were selected by using convenient sampling method. The survey was administered with 346 branch managers, of which 327 responded to. Hence, the survey was completed with a 94.5% response rate which is an acceptable response rate as stated by Saunders et al in 2009.

Structure of the Questionnaire

The instruments were developed in accordance with the Nomological Network. Since there are three variables: GOHRM, personal character and green attitude, the author developed three instruments. All variables in terms of dimensions, and elements were properly conceptualized and operationalized based on the existent literature, and they were measured by using multi-item interval scales established by the author. All items relating to this variable's dimensions were measured on a five-point scale ranging from 1= "Strongly disagree" to 5= "Strongly agree".

Validity and Reliability

The accurate conceptualization and operationalization of relevant construct ensured the content validity as recommended by Sekaran & Bougie (2016). Thus, content validity and face validity of the three instruments were assured. Further, the Cronbach's coefficient alpha was calculated to test the reliability of the measures and the results of all three variables were over 0.70, indicating that the questions all deal with the same underlying construct (Spector, 1992). The Cronbach's alpha of the variables is GOHRM - 0.946, personal character- 0.887, and green attitude- 0.965. All the three dimensions were retained as they presented adequate reliabilities (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The questionnaire was composed of the three instruments representing the three variables under the study, which consisted of 37 items.

Moreover, the author was used the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to investigate the primary data collected from the respondents. Missing values and outliers are frequently encountered while collecting data (Schlomer et al., 2010). Therefore, data cleansing was done to pursue raw data for errors, correct them, and deal with missing data, and it was identified with no missing value and outliers. The first hypothesis was related to the relationship hence the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Technique was utilized. The second hypothesis concerned the moderation effect which was tested by using hierarchical multiple regression analysis and procedures based on the recommendation of Baron & Kenny (1986).

4. DATA ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

The 327 usable responses of the sample were used in the final data analysis. There were 269 males and 58 female branch managers among the respondents. Majority of the respondents were with the master's degree as the educational qualification and had the more than 10 years of working experience in the present organization, the percentages are 79.5 and 56.3 respectively. For the study, two hypotheses were formulated, and hypothesized relationships are shown in the following table.

4.1 HYPOTHESIS TESTING

There were two hypotheses formulated in this study. The following table (table 1) shows the results of correlation analysis of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation, which was used to examine the first hypothesis of the study.

Table: 01 Pearson Correlation Coefficient

No	Variables	Coefficient	Sig
1	GOHRM and Green Attitude	0.506**	0.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level. And the N= 327.

According to the above table, the correlation coefficient of GOHRM and green attitude was significant at $p < 0.05$ and thus the correlation analysis supported the acceptance the developed first hypothesis (H1) of the study. It is empirically and statistically evident that GOHRM has a positive and significant relationship with green attitude of employees. The second hypothesis of the study is the relationship between GOHRM and green attitude is significantly moderated by the personal character of the employees. A moderator is a variable that alters the direction or strength of the relation between a predictor and an outcome (Baron & Kenny, 1986). This study was followed with the application of Baron and Kenny's approach for the moderation analysis. The approach suggested following three steps to establish the role of the moderator between the predictor variable and outcome variable (Frazier et al., 2004).

The first step (Path a) is to demonstrate that the predictor variable (GOHRM) has an impact on outcome variable (green attitude); second step (Path b) is to show that the impact of moderator variable (personal character) on outcome variable (green attitude); and third step (Path c) is to show that the interaction or product of predictor (GOHRM) and moderator variable (personal character) on outcome variable (green attitude).

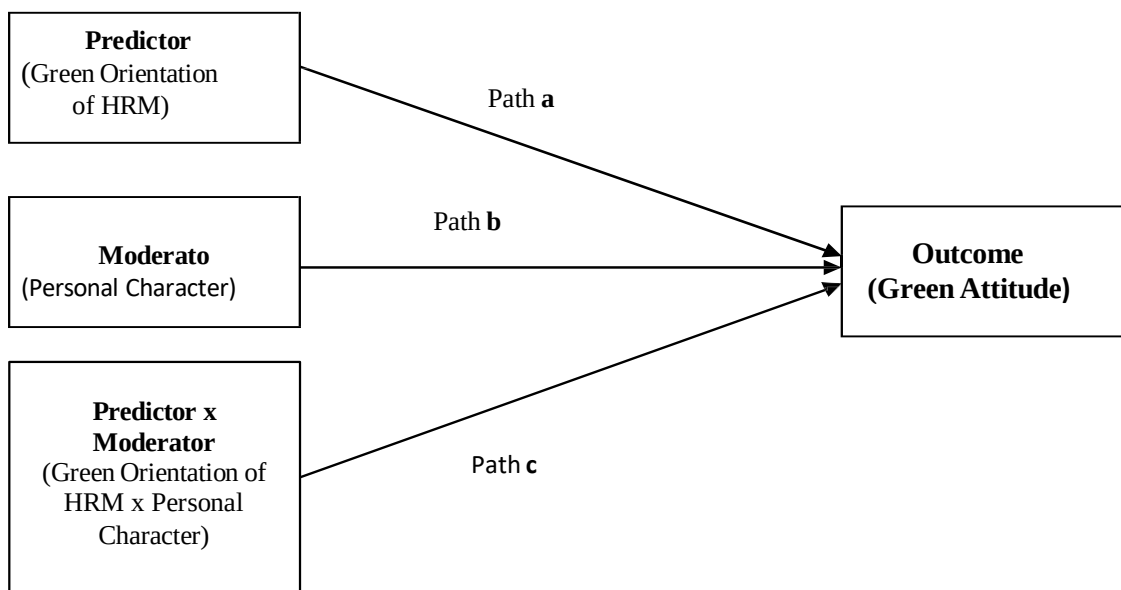


Figure 02: Moderation Model

Source: Baron & Kenny, 1986

The above figure (figure 2) of moderation model of the study illustrated how causal effects of predictor variable (GOHRM), the moderator variable (personal character) and the interaction of predictor and moderator variables (GOHRM and personal character) affect the outcome variable (green attitude). Since the hierarchical multiple regression procedures retain the true nature of continuous variables, result in fewer Type I and Type II errors for detecting moderator effects (Bissonnette et al., 1990) it was decided to test the moderation effect via hierarchical multiple regression.

Table 02: Results of Hierarchical Multiple Regression

Testing Step	Sig. t
Step 1 (Path a)	0.000
Outcome: Green Attitude	
Predictor: GOHRM	
Step 2 (Path b)	0.001
Outcome: Green Attitude	
Predictor: Personal Character	
Step 3 (Path c)	0.008
Outcome: Green Attitude	
Predictor: GOHRM x Personal Character	

The above table (table 02) illustrates that the p value for path c is 0.008 ($P < 0.05$), which indicates that the effect is statistically significant. Based on the argument of Baron & Kenny in 1986 when the interaction (Path c) is statistically significant, the moderator hypothesis is supported. Hence, the author accepted the second hypothesis (H2) which is the relationship between GOHRM and green attitude is significantly moderated by the personal character of employees.

4.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The nomological network of this study was developed by using two general theories, theoretical arguments, previous empirical evidence of the scholars, and rationalization of the author. Two hypotheses were developed, and they were tested by using a study setting of employees in licensed commercial banks in Sri Lanka.

The first objective of this study was to find the relationship between GOHRM and green attitude of employees. The statistical results show that GOHRM is significantly and positively related to green attitude. Hence, the author emphasized that it is crucial to every organization to consider their GOHRM practices to enhance the green attitude of employees in the workplace. The other objective of this study was to investigate the moderating effect of personal character of employees on the relationship between GOHRM and green attitude of employees. The second objective also statistically proved that the relationship between GOHRM and green attitude of employees significantly moderated by the personal character of the employees. Hence, courage, compassion, empathy, etc. Moreover, the researcher argued that in order to attain the sustainable green attitude of employees, the GOHRM practices and the personal character of employees play a significant role. This exemplified that organizations as well as every individual should take necessary actions to facilitate the virtue of the managers of the organization, who need to design and manage a workplace to enhance the green attitude of the employees. It can be done through developing strategies to enhance the Virtue of the employees, like patience, responsibility, honesty, respect for others, determination, punctuality, and encouraging employees to enhance their green attitude.

5. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Green attitude matters for every individual to maintain the sustainability of the nature and an imperative element of a pleasant, synergistic and competent work environment. Since the future of the world and survival of individuals are questionable due to increasing exploitation of resources, it is important to maintain and enhance the green attitude of employees on the organization. Hence, the managers in the organization need to manage their organization to amplify the green attitude of employees from the beginning stage of the employees' journey with an organization, especially through the GOHRM. This is a significant implication of the findings of this study. Further, every organization needs to make sure that their employees' personal character, which is the crucial part that affects the green attitude of the employees in the workplace. Further, the study validates the measurements for moderating effect of personal character on the relationship between GOHRM and green attitude of

employees and provides a structure for upcoming researchers. Beyond its theoretical implication, the professionals like human resource managers and other managers would understand how important of the GOHRM and personal character to enhance the employees' green attitude in the workplace.

Further, this study was limited to the employees who are working in the licensed commercial banks in Sri Lanka. Hence, the findings of the research may lead to difficulties in generalization. For that the author recommends doing future studies in different organizational settings locally and internationally. Moreover, the study was restricted with one independent variable and one moderator variable. Other than these variables, it can be identified and included other mediating variables and other independent variables or control variables to this study.

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