

Management PhD Research Topics

Examining the Dark Side of Green Human Resource Management

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Abstract

Green Human Resource Management (HRM) practices are crucial for achieving sustainability in organisations. While the positive impacts of green HRM on employees and organisations have been widely studied, there is a dearth of research examining the dark side of green HRM. In response to calls for further research to explore the broader impacts of green HRM across different contexts and industries, this project aims to investigate the dark side of green HRM and identify the boundary conditions that determine when and how green HRM results in various sustainability-related outcomes.

Project

Traditionally, green HRM literature has mainly focused on its positive outcomes and the potential negative impacts of green HRM have been largely ignored. Sustainability at a macro level starts with employee behaviour (Tjahjadi et al., 2023), since employees are at the centre of generating ideas that may contribute to the sustainability of organisations (Wang et al., 2021). Yuan et al. (2024) postulate that while the positive impact of green HRM practices is promising, this area of research often neglects the challenge that “it is not easy being green” (p. 93), suggesting that GHRM practices can have adverse effects on employees (Ahmed et al., 2024). Indeed, green HRM practices diverge from traditional business norms grounded in the economic model of performance (Ren & Jackson, 2020).

Despite the marketing efforts of organisations to present themselves as environmentally friendly, researchers and practitioners have noted that businesses often struggle to see a direct correlation between green management and the bottom line (Barros et al., 2021). Green HRM practices demand that employees allocate additional resources beyond their usual tasks to ensure compliance, as these practices can exhaust employees’ limited physical and psychological resources, leading to feelings of depletion and emotional exhaustion (Yuan et al., 2024), which is likely to ignite their propensity to engage in negative behaviours at the workplace (Ahmed et al., 2024). The broader HRM literature similarly overlooks the potential negative effects of GHRM practices on employee outcomes, prompting calls for more research into these aspects (Chen et al., 2021; Tuan, 2022).

The proposed project which examines the dark side of green HRM has been the subject of various recent calls for research. This makes it an emerging research field which can expand the current program of research within the school on the topic. This also links with some of the other relevant research studies undertaken by the lead supervisor. For example, in a 2023 publication, Nejati and Shafaei (2023) examined and found empirical support for the role of perceived authenticity in how employees respond to an organisation's social responsibility practices. This research could inform the current proposed project as Atikbay and Öner (2020) have argued that

employees perceive a disconnect between organisational promises and actual practices, particularly when they feel that HRM practices are more about image than genuine environmental concern.

Some possible research questions could be the following. However, the project is not limited to these.

1. What are the negative consequences of green human resource management?
2. What is the nexus between green HRM practices and perceived meaningfulness?
3. What is the nexus between green HRM practices and workplace deviance?
4. To what extent individual green values moderate the nexus between green HRM practices and employee-related outcomes?

This project aims to fill the gaps identified in the literature by responding to the calls made by Chaudhary and Firoz (2024), who emphasise the need for more rigorous and multi-method research in this area to develop a deeper understanding of the dark side of green HRM practices. This comprehensive approach will help to elucidate the pathways and mechanisms through which the negative consequences of green HRM practices influence behavioural outcomes.

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