

How Green HRM Helps to Nurture Green & Innovative Behaviours: A Case of SMEs from Kosovo

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Abstract

Aim: This study investigates the impact of green human resource management (GHRM) on employee green behavior, and innovative work behavior, with a focus on the moderating role of green creativity and the mediating role of green commitment among the Green SME sector in Kosovo. Organizational Identity Theory and Social Exchange Theory are integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics in the context of the Green SME sector.

Methodology: Data were collected from 300 senior managers and SME owners within this sector, employing a cross-sectional approach. The study adopts a quantitative methodology, with Smart PLS used for analysis. The primary statistical method employed to assess the study's hypotheses was partial least squares-structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM).

Findings: The findings reveal significant relationships, highlighting the direct positive influence of GHRM on employee green behavior and innovative work behavior. Furthermore, the study underscores the mediating effect of green commitment and the moderating role of green creativity in shaping these relationships.

Implications/Novel Contribution: The implications of these findings are discussed in light of sustainable human resource practices in the Green SME sector. The findings offer valuable insights for policymakers in the Green SME sector, illustrating how green human resource management can play a positive role in fostering employee green behavior. This paper stands out for various reasons. Firstly, it makes a valuable contribution to the broader literature on green human resource management in Kosovo. Secondly, it adds to the limited body of knowledge concerning green human resource management within the specific context of the green SME sector. Thirdly, a distinctive aspect of this study lies in its introduction of innovative work behavior as an outcome resulting from green human resource management, with green commitment serving as a mediating variable in the correlation between green human resource management and both employee green behaviors and innovative work behavior.

Keywords: Green human resource management, Employee green behavior, Innovative work behavior, Green creativity, Green commitment, Organizational identity theory, Social exchange theory.

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INTRODUCTION

The three primary features that distinguish SMEs from larger companies are included in the economic definition that correctly describes SMEs. First off, proprietors or co-owners with a limited market share usually oversee SMEs. Ramaj et al. (2022), function autonomously, eschewing the use of complex organized management structures or operating within larger organizations. Small and medium-sized businesses, or SMEs, are well-known to play a critical part in Kosovo's economic expansion. SMEs are the cornerstone of economic progress worldwide, but especially in developing nations. The World Bank claims that SMEs have a significant role in the growth of the world economy and the generation of jobs. Over 50% of workers are employed by SMEs, which account for 90% of all firms globally. In emerging economies, formal SMEs can account for as much as 40% of GDP (gross domestic product) (Halilaj, 2021). Kosovo's SMEs, which made up 99.9% of all businesses in 2016, are particularly significant to the country's "non-financial business economy," according to the European Commission, 2022 (Loku et al., 2021; Ramaj et al., 2022). In Kosovo, SMEs produced 81.0% of the value added overall. This is a substantial increase over the average of 56,2% that SMEs contribute to the overall value added of the EU's

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"non-financial business economy" (Loku et al., 2021; Ramaj et al., 2022). SME research on green manufacturing and environmental sustainability has been chosen since SMEs play a significant role in Kosovo's economic growth. The majority of research on SMEs' experiences with environmentally friendly manufacturing practices focuses on their production facilities. Therefore, the primary goal of this research is to examine the extent to which the products of Kosovo's SMEs are environmentally friendly, as well as the implementation of SMEs' greening plans and any obstacles to their adoption (Dauti et al., 2020; Halilaj, 2021; Ramaj et al., 2022).

Despite significant advancements over the last few decades, there is still much to learn about innovation and behavior. More information is specifically needed about how innovation occurs in SMEs during times of transition. To determine if SMEs may achieve higher growth and benefits, few studies have examined the interplay between various forms of innovation (Loku et al., 2021; Ramaj et al., 2022). To reach their competitive potential and experience economic growth, green SMEs in Kosovo must overcome a wide range of systemic and structural obstacles that must be addressed by the national and local governments as well as other relevant stakeholders. Notwithstanding these problems, Kosovo possesses 1.1 million hectares of land, of which 53% is used for agriculture (consisting of 54.3% permanent grasslands, 43.6% arable land, 1.9% permanent crops, and 0.3% kitchen garden), 41% is forested, and 6% is used for other purposes (Ramaj et al., 2022). Additionally, accounting for 34% of all employment in Kosovo, the agriculture industry is the biggest employer in the country. It makes up roughly 10.3% of the GD, while agricultural products account for 17.6% of the overall export value (Loku et al., 2021).

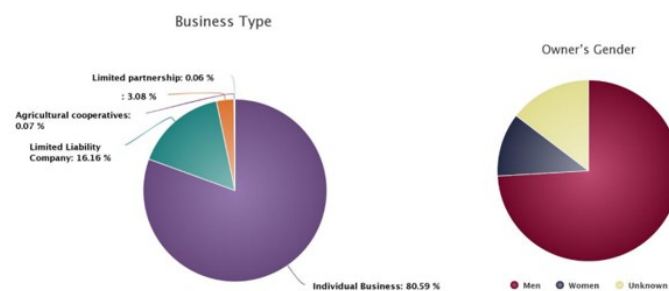


Figure 1. Statistics of Kosovo's Economic Ecosystem

Providing a happy and healthy work environment for employees has become essential for many firms. It can be characterized as employee activities that positively influence the environment (Asurakkody & Kim, 2020; Lin, 2023; Zhang et al., 2021). Researchers have defined employee green behavior that is distinctive to the workplace (Akram et al., 2020; Graves et al., 2013; Odugbesan et al., 2023). Prior research has demonstrated the critical role that well-being plays in organizational success. Employee happiness is critical to the success of the firm. When workers are happier, they will work more efficiently, which will help the company because they will be more engaged and show green behavior at work. Many studies on green behavior have been conducted, according to Tian et al. (2020), however, more empirical data is needed to ensure the accuracy of the findings (Knezović & Drkić, 2021; Zhu et al., 2021).

Employee innovation is a key component in defining an organization's competitive advantage (Akram et al., 2020; Di Vaio et al., 2021; Sutardi et al., 2022). Activities related to an employee's creation, dissemination, and application of a beneficial innovation at any organizational level are referred to as innovative work behavior (Jafari et al., 2021). Khan et al. (2020), who define it as any employee behavior aimed at developing, introducing, and/or utilizing concepts, methods, products, or procedures that are novel for the applicable unit of adoption give a thorough explanation of innovative work behavior. It is believed that these innovations will have a significant positive impact on the unit of adoption be it a position, a group, or the entire organization (Afsar & Umrani, 2020; Jafari et al., 2021; Lin, 2023). This knowledge emphasizes how important it is to support creative work practices as a tactical component of organizational development and long-term competitive advantage.

Given the current trend of corporations moving toward greener agendas, human resources management professionals are at a critical crossroads where it is necessary for them to reassess their mission (Islam et al., 2023).

Green human resource management experts are strongly encouraged to incorporate green management techniques due to the changing landscape, which demands a wider approach and improved procedures. Policies and procedures that encourage environmentally friendly behavior among workers and the sustainable use of company resources are referred to as "green HRM" (Aboramadan, 2022). Research on Green HRM is gaining traction globally despite the recognition of its significance; yet, a significant portion of these studies are restricted to the concept's conception alone (Bhutto et al., 2021; Odugbesan et al., 2023). To fully investigate its far-reaching, more research is required, especially from a relational viewpoint (Islam et al., 2023; Khan et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2021). To this end, a few studies Khan et al. (2022); Malik et al. (2020); Zhu et al. (2021) have focused on the relational perspective of Green HRM and emphasized the need to explore the impact of Green HRM on employees' non-green and green behaviors.

Developing green creativity among employees is one of the GHRM practice orientations. Bhutto et al. (2021); Song and Yu (2018); Tuan (2020), found that depending on how their firm implemented GHRM policies, employees' environmental values had varying effects on how important and creative green work was seen. These results highlight how important it is to match GHRM policies with employee values in order to positively influence good employee behavior, particularly employee green innovation. Likewise, an earlier study discovered a connection between employee green creativity and the GHRM (Haldorai et al., 2022). Additionally, a study's conclusion suggested a connection between pro-environmental conduct and the GHRM. These two correlations were, however, mediated by the ethical leadership style variable (Gill et al., 2021). In this context, "green creativity" refers to the generation of innovative and practical concepts for environmentally friendly activities, goods, or services (Zhu et al., 2021). It is impacted by a variety of human and organizational factors. Organizations with a strong green commitment integrate environmentally conscious practices into their daily operations, spanning areas such as resource management, waste reduction, energy efficiency, and the adoption of sustainable technologies (Sugiarto & Huruta, 2023). The present study determines that GHRM on EGB, and innovative work behavior, as well as green creativity as moderator and green commitment as mediator and organizational identity theory and social exchange theory involved.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Underpinning Theory

In the context of organizational identity theory, the idea of "green organizational identity" is defined as a common interpretive framework created by participants. The focus of this framework is the administration of the environment and preservation; it functions as a collaborative construction that gives members of the organization's actions meaning (Chang & Chen, 2013). According to Chen (2011), green HRM is essential to this interpretation framework, especially when it comes to creative work practices. Adopting an organizational green innovation strategy becomes crucial for reshaping business models and promoting a management style that encourages green creativity in the context of organizations facing major environmental challenges brought on by expanding industrial activities. Green employee behavior is thought to be sparked by these organizational improvements (Chen, 2011; Zhu et al., 2021). Creatively responding to external demands to address green employee behavior and foster creativity can result in new and valuable solutions when a firm has a strong sense of green corporate identity. In consequence, these concepts strengthen the organization's ability to be creatively green Chang and Chen (2013); Song and Yu (2018). As a result, these creative and advantageous green ideas could make a big difference in encouraging green employee behavior inside the company. According to Chen (2011), the definition of creativity given by the Green Organizational Identity Theory is the ability to generate ideas that are both original and practical. It is suggested that GHRM has a beneficial impact on green creativity (Song & Yu, 2018). Extending this, the claim is made that an organization's green conduct can influence its green creativity. Chen (2011); Zhu et al. (2021) show that technological developments, which are fueled by the push and pull of the market, frequently drive innovation.

Hypothesis Development

Finally, incentives such as promotions and awards that acknowledge and value an employee's green performance encourage people to actively engage in and support green initiatives (Aboramadan et al., 2022; Gill et al., 2021). Aboramadan et al. (2022) provide support for these claims since their employees revealed that green

human resource management had an effect on extra-role green behaviors in addition to having a direct and indirect effect on in-role green behaviors. Since green human resource management procedures formally recognize, value, and promote these behaviors becoming embedded as standard workplace conduct they are expected to have a direct effect on employees' in-role green habits. Since voluntary green behavior is not explicitly acknowledged or rewarded, the impact of GHRM on it may differ (Fawehinmi et al., 2020; Islam et al., 2023; Montani et al., 2020). Rather, they are influenced by people's knowledge of the company's green practices, their readiness to participate in them, and the green routines they follow on a daily basis (Aboramadan et al., 2022; Saleem et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2021). Green conduct by employees is a reflection of their personal environmental consciousness (Norton et al., 2015). Employees are expected to reciprocate their organization's environmental dedication and efforts by modeling green behaviors when it comes to environmental management practices. This can be achieved by offering clear green goals, green training and development, efficient green performance appraisal, and green rewarding systems (Pham et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2021).

Employee green behavior includes reducing waste (such as by editing documents electronically rather than printing them out), recycling (such as by printing drafts on scrap paper), conserving water (such as by reporting bathroom leaks), saving energy (such as by turning off the lights when leaving offices), and utilizing resources efficiently (such as by using teleconferencing instead of traveling to meetings) (Gill et al., 2021; Odugbesan et al., 2023). It could be classified as unproductive work conduct, organizational citizenship behavior, or task performance. Contextual factors have long been known to have an impact on general green behaviors (Ahmed et al., 2020; AlGhazali & Afsar, 2021; Fawehinmi et al., 2020; Gill et al., 2021). Pro-environmental behavior, defined as acts that safeguard and even improve the environment, is the precursor of employee green behavior (Saleem et al., 2020). Pro-environmental behavior becomes employee green behavior when it pertains to the workplace and is important to the workers (Jafari et al., 2021). This idea was defined employee green behavior as an ecologically friendly action carried out by staff members within a company (Zhu et al., 2021). Employee green behavior can be divided into its dimensions in two ways. Based on behavioral results, Usmanova et al. (2021) categorize employee green behavior into five groups: (1) working sustainably, (2) saving resources, (3) influencing others, (4) taking initiative, and (5) avoiding harm. However, because the criteria are ambiguous and difficult to differentiate, these five categories are not mutually exclusive, and a behavior may fall into more than one category at the same time (Norton et al. 2015). As a result, Fawehinmi et al. (2020) separated employee green behavior into two categories: mandatory employee green behavior. The term "required employee green behavior" describes the green behavior that workers engage in as part of their mandated job obligations, which is comparable to task performance. Required employee green behavior either directly or indirectly supports an organization's strategy and mission. For instance, an average worker in a manufacturing plant would be expected to fulfill employee green behavior requirements such as adhering to organizational policies and procedures, selecting substitutes, and producing environmentally friendly goods (Aboramadan et al., 2022; Gill et al., 2021; Odugbesan et al., 2023). The term "voluntary environmental governance behavior" describes individual green behavior that goes above and beyond the expectations of the organization and is comparable to organizational citizenship behavior. For instance, an average worker in a manufacturing plant may choose to use double-sided printing, turn off the lights when leaving, and encourage other workers to adopt greener practices (Fawehinmi et al., 2020). Given this, the writer recommends the following:

H1: Green human resource management has a significant direct impact on employee green behavior.

GHRM might involve favoring environmentally conscious and sensitive workers during the hiring and selection process (green hiring and selection), putting in place a system of learning and development to enhance workers' environmental awareness and environmental management skills (green training). In addition, evaluating workers' performance based on how well they contribute to the organization's environmental goals (green performance management), rewarding workers financially and nonfinancial for exhibiting environmentally friendly attitudes and behaviors (green compensation management), and giving workers the chance to engage in and participate in environmental management activities within the company (green involvement) (Aboramadan et al., 2022; Fawehinmi et al., 2020; Malik et al., 2020). GHRM is derived from multidisciplinary organizational studies that focus on worker involvement, performance administration, corporate culture, people training and

development, and tactical leadership (Aboramadan et al., 2022; Aktar & Islam, 2019; Malik et al., 2020; Zhu et al., 2021). According to Khan et al. (2022), the implementation of GHRM aims to develop operational procedures that facilitate the company's sustainable success. Since environmental protection strategies are now the focus of firms, HR must also include environmental protection-related policies in order to connect its corporate-level strategies. HR may encourage people to participate in long-term pro-social activity, according to (Gill et al., 2021). GHRM is capable of carrying out sustainable environmental strategies. According to Haldorai et al. (2022), GHRM is now understood to impact the environment through "recruiting, selection, training, development, motivation, and performance review". HR managers are now accountable for teaching staff members about ways in which they may support environmental sustainability. The only way to make this happen is to match company HR policies with environmental sustainability policies. The strategic approach of green human resource management has been embraced by (Aboramadan et al., 2022; Fawehinmi et al., 2020; Gill et al., 2021; Islam et al., 2023). Khan et al. (2022) highlighted the strategic importance of Green HRM activities like hiring and selection, training and development, and rewarding staff members for participating in environmental projects. They made this claim based on an assessment of the Green HRM literature. In order to link the strategic HRM practices to the environmental performance of the firms, AlGhazali and Afsar (2021) provided evidence of the mediating role those employees' discretionary environmental behavior plays. Haldorai et al. (2022) confirmed the impact of GHRM policies on employees' active engagement in environmental activities through various case studies conducted across three subsidiaries of a multinational organization. According to Khan et al. (2022), there is a mediation effect of a psychological green atmosphere on employees' pro-environmental behavior when it comes to GHRM practices. Nevertheless, there is still no evidence to support the variables of when and how GHRM practices affect a company's environmental performance Haldorai et al. (2022). According to (Sutardi et al., 2022), workers possessing greater environmental knowledge and awareness are likely to produce more inventive and beneficial environmental management concepts, hence bolstering the organization's green innovation efforts. According to AlGhazali and Afsar (2021), second, green training and coaching methods allow workers to get the knowledge and experience necessary to support their creative practices. Third, green performance evaluation and incentive programs will align employee behavior with the company's environmental goals (Afsar & Umrani, 2020; Lin, 2023). This is because employee environmental commitment is heightened through green performance evaluation Knezović and Drkić (2021), which in turn promotes green innovation behaviors. Fourth, earlier studies Jafari et al. (2021); Karimi et al. (2023) suggested that workers typically provide inventive work practices back to the company in return for the company's dedication to human resource management. The following theory can be put out in light of the earlier arguments:

H2: Green human resource management has a significant direct impact on innovative work behavior.

According to Karimi et al. (2023), creativity is helpful for producing fresh, practical ideas that can spark the development of new innovations. Within an organization, innovation is the process of turning those ideas into new, practical, and profitable commercial products, services, and business practices, whereas creativity is the act of coming up with and producing new ideas, approaches, and activities (Tuan, 2020). Since creativity serves as the foundation for innovation, it is an essential stage in the process. According to Karimi et al. (2023), an organization's dynamic capacities would have a favorable impact on organizational innovation. We introduce a brand-new concept called "green creativity," which we describe according to (Bhutto et al., 2021) as "the development of new ideas about green processes, services, products, or practices that are judged to be original, novel, and useful". The creation of innovative and practical green concepts for green activities, goods, or services is known as green creativity (Bhutto et al., 2021; W. Li et al., 2020; Tuan, 2020). According to Bhutto et al. (2021), it is the creation of fresh concepts for environmentally friendly goods, services, procedures, or behaviors that are deemed worthwhile, unique, and inventive. According to W. Li et al. (2020), creativity is the ability of an individual or small group of individuals to come up with novel and practical ideas. These concepts might relate to brand-new goods, services, procedures, or methods. The componential hypothesis states that the social environment (workplace) can influence both organizational and individual creativity and that individual creativity can produce at least modest creative work in multiple domains over time.

Effective creativity, informed by an understanding of employees' needs, abilities, and motivations, plays a

crucial role in guiding and encouraging employees to contribute innovative green ideas for the future. In order to support the implementation of environmental initiatives and contribute to green organizational outcomes, green human resource management is essential in influencing the attitudes and behaviors of employees (Aboramadan, 2022; Asurakkody & Kim, 2020; Gill et al., 2021; Tuan, 2020). Increasing employee commitment via eco-friendly behavior-based incentives and performance reviews fosters a sense of environmental responsibility. Furthermore, giving employees more possibilities through knowledge-sharing and enhanced employee involvement fosters contributions and the development of fresh ideas connected to the environment (Ahmed et al., 2020; Graves et al., 2013; C. Li et al., 2020). Green human resource management practices will improve staff members' capacity to come up with original ideas and solutions for green practices. The factors used include the following: employees' sense of accomplishment from engaging in green creative endeavors; encouragement to engage in green creative work; pride associated with involvement in green creative tasks at the workplace; recognition of employees' engagement in green creative work as a significant activity; flexibility in thinking about (Akram et al., 2020; Usmanova et al., 2021). Green creative issues while at work; proficiency in thinking about green creative matters; detailed consideration of green creative issues; continuous reflection on green creative steps; effective collaboration with colleagues on green creative projects; knowledge and skill-sharing regarding green creative endeavors among employees; encouragement of others in the workplace regarding green creativity (Nazir & Islam, 2020; Wang et al., 2021; Zhu et al., 2021). To facilitate the carrying out of sustainable practices and help achieve green organizational outcomes, GHRM plays a significant role in modifying the attitudes and behaviors of employees (Aboramadan et al., 2022; Fawehinmi et al., 2020; Gill et al., 2021; Malik et al., 2020). Green commitment describes businesses that may like to issue an environmental statement but may not believe that further action is really necessary to support this declaration. Therefore;

H3: Green creativity has a significant moderating impact on green human resource management and green commitment.

Research indicates that HRM affects employees' attitudes and behaviors, which in turn affects how well an organization performs (Aboramadan, 2022). Thus, green behavior at work is likewise impacted by GHRM (Odugbesan et al., 2023). As a result, the workers' environmental awareness and conduct will increase and their green values will be strengthened (Zhu et al., 2021). Similarly, environmental duties can be linked to job descriptions and responsibilities of employees. In a similar vein, an employee's performance, advancement, and benefits might be determined by how environmentally conscious they are inside the company; this could encourage other employees to fulfill their environmental goals by hitting their targets (W. Li et al., 2020). According to Jafari et al. (2021); Karimi et al. (2023), employees' opinions and reasoning regarding the reasons behind institutions' and organizations' adoption of different HRM policies explain how those actions will impact the employee's behavior. Similarly, an organized, interconnected collection of GHRM measures communicates to staff members the GC of companies, and as a result, it is required of them to behave in accordance with the policies of the company. Additionally, research indicates that GHRM fosters environmentally conscious behavior, attitudes, and commitment among staff members (Aboramadan et al., 2022; Fawehinmi et al., 2020; Gill et al., 2021). An employee's sentiment and connection to an organization's environmental management is known as their GC. Because of GHRM, GC represents employees' attitudes, organizational values, and efforts toward improving an organization's environmental performance (Bhutto et al., 2021; Tuan, 2020). Individual invention is profitable, as most firms are aware. According to Sutardi et al. (2022), the company must make sure that its employees are willing and able to participate in IWBs if it hopes to obtain a competitive advantage and be highly competitive in the market. According to Karimi et al. (2023), this innovative approach provided the first theory of organizational innovation and creativity, attempting to explain the relationship between organizational innovation and individual creativity as well as how they impact one another. In light of this claim, numerous factors that influence inventive behavior have been investigated. According to the extensive literature analysis, human, organizational, and environmental factors all have an impact on creativity (Jafari et al., 2021; C. Li et al., 2020). However, in the case of IWB, the presumption that everything begins on a personal level led to a greater emphasis on individual traits (Akram et al., 2020). According to Montani et al. (2020), "a continuous commitment to learning is central to innovativeness." According to Lin (2023), education can be a crucial component of creativity, and the innovative work behavior of

adopting and putting those good ideas into practice is a precursor to the creative behavior of idea production. Di Vaio et al. (2021) state that learning orientation is one of numerous motivational orientations that people can have. This type of behavior involves the person in activities that assist them in coming up with and putting into practice practical ideas.

According to Karimi et al. (2023), employee commitment is the psychological condition of workers that indicates how attached they are to their company. According to published research, an employee's dedication influences how they behave (Sugiarto & Huruta, 2023). GC is dependent on the psychological attachment, awareness of environmental responsibility, and consideration of company aims and values by the employee (Haldorai et al., 2022). According to Karimi et al. (2023), GC is therefore regarded as employee attachment, engagement, identification, involvement, and care for the ecological environment of the workplace. It makes sense that employees who are not as passionate about the environment and who are not as committed to it would be less concerned about ecological issues when going about their regular business at work. An organization's efforts to promote environmentally sustainable policies and ethical business practices are anchored by its green commitment. It denotes a commitment to promoting environmentally responsible actions, rules, and plans inside the company structure (Khan et al., 2022). Green commitment, as it relates to GHRM, is the unwavering determination to incorporate eco-friendly policies and practices into all GHRM operations (Sugiarto & Huruta, 2023). GHRM has a favorable impact on employees' GC. Previous research has validated the positive association between GHRM and individual-level green constructs. Examples of these studies include Ahmed et al. (2020); AlGhazali and Afsar (2021); Song and Yu (2018); Tian et al. (2020). According to Karimi et al. (2023), employee commitment is the psychological condition of workers that indicates how attached they are to their company. According to published research, an employee's dedication influences how they behave (Pham et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2021). GC is dependent on the psychological attachment, awareness of environmental responsibility, and consideration of company aims and values by the employee (Bhutto et al., 2021). According to Karimi et al. (2023), GC is therefore regarded as employee attachment, engagement, identification, involvement, and care for the ecological environment of the workplace. It makes sense that employees who are not as passionate about the environment and who are not as committed to it would be less concerned about ecological issues when going about their regular business at work. Employee behavior is positively impacted by personal connection and affection (Malik et al., 2020). Therefore, green behavior in the workplace, such as energy conservation, turning off unnecessary lights, recycling, and general care for environmental issues, is linked to employee GC (Haldorai et al., 2022; Zhu et al., 2021). Accordingly, previous research has demonstrated that emotional attachment along with commitment causes pro-environmental conduct, and that pro-environmental behavior increases with GC levels (Fawehinmi et al., 2020; Malik et al., 2020). Essentially, green commitment expands upon this commitment paradigm by emphasizing environmental values in particular, demonstrating a deliberate commitment to ecological concerns within the context of the firm (Khan et al., 2022; Sugiarto & Huruta, 2023). Consequently,

H4: Green commitment has a significant mediating impact between green human resource management and employee green behavior.

H5: Green commitment has a significant mediating impact between green human resource management and innovative work behavior.

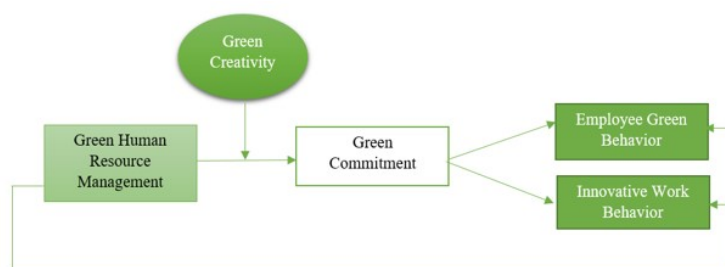


Figure 2. Conceptual framework

METHODOLOGY

The links between "Green Human Resource Management (GHRM), Green Creativity (GC), Green Commitment (GCOM), Employee Green Behavior (EGB), and Innovative Work Behavior (IWB)" in the context of the Green SME sector were examined using a quantitative approach in this study. Sustainable development greatly benefits from the Green SME sector, and it is critical to comprehend the variables impacting green practices in these businesses. This investigation used a quantitative research approach in order to test hypotheses and determine the causes of the variables. The study adopted a cross-sectional design by utilizing primary data collected through a survey instrument distributed among 300 senior managers and SME owners. This data was gathered at a single point in time when the respondents were requested just once. The purpose of this paper is to provide a detailed overview of the research methodology and design, including the sampling technique, data collection process, analysis tools, and measurement instruments. The study's hypotheses were tested using Smart PLS, and various statistical tests were conducted to align with the research nature. The proposed hypotheses were tested using appropriate statistical tests, aligning with the descriptive and explanatory nature of the research. Smart PLS was selected as the primary statistical tool for data analysis, given its suitability for structural equation modeling. The population was known, justifying the use of a non-probability sampling technique, specifically the convenience sampling method. The instrument was validated through face and content validation before data collection to enhance the study's reliability and validity.

Data Collection Process

The population of interest included senior managers and SME owners working in the Green SME sector. Given the known population, a non-probability sampling technique was chosen. Convenience sampling was employed for practical reasons, allowing easy access to respondents. The primary data collection instrument was a questionnaire containing five sets of questions corresponding to the variables under investigation. The questionnaire included demographic information to aid in data analysis. Validation of the instrument was also taken into consideration before collecting the data. To ensure the reliability and validity of the instrument, face, and content validation were conducted before data collection. This involved assessing the questionnaire's clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness. Data was collected through the distribution of 350 questionnaires, achieving an 86 percent response rate. The study adhered to ethical standards, ensuring participant confidentiality and voluntary participation. Participants were provided with comprehensive information about the study's purpose and were not coerced into participating. Descriptive statistics were employed to present an overview of the data.

Instrumentation

In this study, the total variables were five, and among these, GHRM was the independent variable, and Green Creativity was the moderating variable. Green Commitment was the mediating variable. Employee Green Behavior and Innovative Work Behavior were the dependent variables. To measure the results, data was collected by using a survey approach and a questionnaire was the method for recording the response. This instrument questionnaire was adapted from different sources against each variable. Green Human Resource Management was measured by adapting the 9 items from the scale developed by Islam et al. (2023). The mediating variable Green Creativity was measured by adapting the 6 items from the scale of Chen and Chang (2013). Green commitment was measured as a mediating variable by adapting the 3-item scale of Haldorai et al. (2022). The outcome variable of the study Employee Green Behavior was measured by adapting the 8-item scale of Saleem et al. (2020) and Innovative Work Behavior was measured by adapting the 4-item scale of De Jong and Den Hartog (2008). The instrument contained demographic information as well, where close-ended options were given. For the understanding of the study, complete information was provided to each respondent where it was mentioned what is the purpose of the study and why we were collecting the data. No one was forced to respond; only agreed respondents were requested to respond against the instrument. This research employed a quantitative approach to investigate the relationships among Green Human Resource Management (GHRM), Green Creativity (GC), Green Commitment (GCOM), Employee Green Behavior (EGB), and Innovative Work Behavior (IWB) in the context of the Green SME sector. The Green SME sector plays a crucial role in sustainable development, and understanding the factors influencing green practices within these enterprises is essential.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

SPSS version 25.0 was used in this study to analyze descriptive statistics and assess the sample's demographic profile. Table 1 below displays the responses to the respondent's profile among SME in Kosovo.

Table 1: Demographic profile

Demography	Description	%
Gender	Male	63
	Female	37
Age	25-35	35
	35-45	40
	Above 45	25
Qualification	Under-graduate	32
	Post-graduate	38
	Diploma	30
Designation	Senior Managers	71
	SME Owners	29
Job Experience	Less than 4 Years	34
	5-8 Years	31
	More than 8 Years	35

Measurement Model

While the measurement model outlines the links between latent variables and their measured items, the structural model delineates the relationships between dependent and independent latent variables (Hair et al., 2019; Hair Jr et al., 2020). The measurement scale in SEM might be reflecting or formative in nature. The link between the indicators on formative measuring scales could be positive, negative, or nonexistent. As such, evaluations of the discriminant validity, internal consistency, and indicator reliability of formative measuring scales are not carried out.

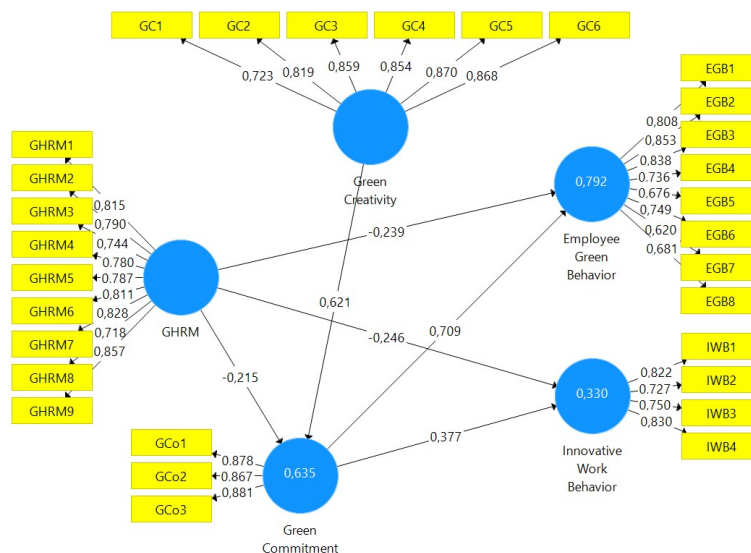


Figure 3. Measurement model

Validity and Reliability Analysis

Using the PLS-SEM technique, this study ensured the validity and reliability of the analysis by evaluating the measurement model's quality using the Smart PLS Algorithm. Using standard PLS-SEM criteria, including

Average Variance Extracted, Factor Loadings, Cronbach's Alpha, and Composite Reliability, the measurement model's convergent validity was carefully evaluated throughout the first phase (Cheah et al., 2020).

Table 2: Reliability and validity

Construct	Item	Loadings	CA	CR	AVE
Employee Green Behavior	EGB1	0.808	0.888	0.910	0.561
	EGB2	0.853			
	EGB3	0.838			
	EGB4	0.736			
	EGB5	0.676			
	EGB6	0.749			
	EGB7	0.620			
	EGB8	0.681			
GHRM	GHRM1	0.815	0.926	0.938	0.629
	GHRM2	0.790			
	GHRM3	0.744			
	GHRM4	0.780			
	GHRM5	0.787			
	GHRM6	0.811			
	GHRM7	0.828			
	GHRM8	0.718			
	GHRM9	0.857			
Green Commitment	GCo1	0.878	0.848	0.908	0.766
	GCo2	0.867			
	GCo3	0.881			
Green Creativity	GC1	0.723	0.912	0.932	0.695
	GC2	0.819			
	GC3	0.859			
	GC4	0.854			
	GC5	0.870			
	GC6	0.868			
Innovative Work Behavior	IWB1	0.822	0.789	0.864	0.614
	IWB2	0.727			
	IWB3	0.750			
	IWB4	0.830			

Discriminant Validity

Cross loadings and AVE were used to examine the discriminant validity following the convergent validity. Discriminant validity, as defined by Hair Jr et al. (2020), is the degree to which a latent variable differs from other variables in the model. The test proposed by Hair Jr et al. (2020) is used to evaluate the discriminant validity. Every construct should have a bold value as its initial value. As a result, Table 3 indicates that the constructs' discriminant validity has met its acceptance criterion, meaning that all of the variables' diagonal values are higher than their non-diagonal values.

Table 3: Discriminant validity

	EGB	GHRM	GCo	GC	IWB
Employee Green Behavior	0.749				
GHRM	-0.724	0.793			
Green Commitment	0.873	-0.685	0.875		
Green Creativity	0.840	-0.755	0.784	0.834	
Innovative Work Behavior	0.638	-0.505	0.546	0.522	0.783

Structural Model

The inner model, sometimes referred to as the structural model. An extra part of structural equation modeling (SEM) that identifies connections between latent variables is Hair Jr et al. (2020). The structural model can specify the pattern of relationships between the constructs. The PLS-SEM bootstrap technique provides the output of the structural model (Hair et al., 2019; Hair Jr et al., 2020).

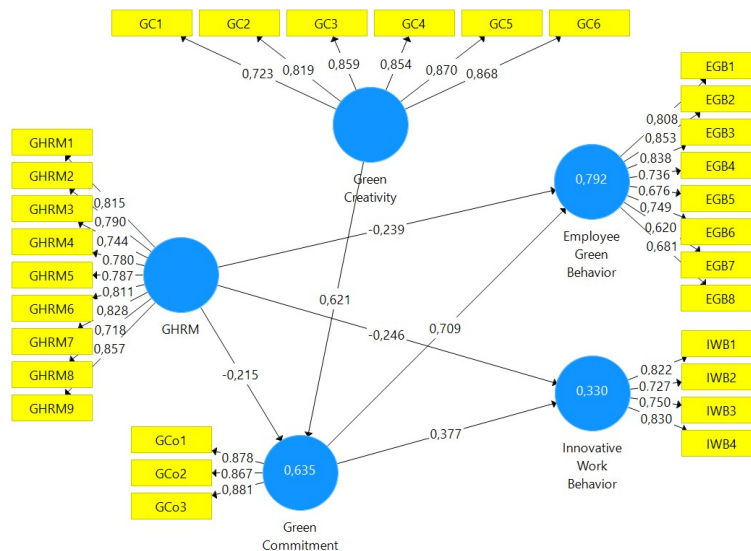


Figure 4. Structural model

Hypothesis Testing

A standardized regression coefficient (beta) in PLS-SEM, the route coefficient tests the structural model and hypothesis and shows the direct effect of an independent variable on a dependent variable (Cheah et al., 2020; Hair et al., 2019; Hair Jr et al., 2020). The path coefficient criteria states that if the p-value is less than .05, .01, or 1.0, the link between the indicators will be considered significant. According to Hair Jr et al. (2020), a hypothesis is deemed accepted if its t-value is greater than 1.96 and rejected if it is less than 1.96, with a significance level of either 5% or 1%. Table 4 displays the outcomes of the Smart PLS analysis performed on the entire dataset. A thorough examination was carried out in light of the favorable results from the validity and reliability tests in the measurement and structural models. As Table 4 illustrates, every hypothesis was validated. The path coefficients (s) that were computed show statistical significance ($p < 0.05$). Table 4 provides specifics on the model fit and quality indices of the structural model, which were evaluated in detail. The sufficiency of our structural model was confirmed by the fact that every index either attained statistical significance or fell inside their respective criteria (Cheah et al., 2020; Hair et al., 2019; Hair Jr et al., 2020). The results show that green human resource management has a negative but significant impact on green employee behavior ($= -0.239$, $T\text{-value} = 4.177$, $p\text{-value} = 0.000$). The result shows that green human resource management has a negative but significant impact on innovative work behavior ($= -0.246$, $T\text{-value} = 2.560$, $p\text{-value} = 0.011$).

Importantly, these results strongly support our mediation hypothesis, given the long-term importance of

the direct effect. The methodology of Hair Jr et al. (2020) is used in our mediation study; according to their criteria, "Rule Z mediates the link between X and Y if the direct path between X to Z and Z to Y is significant." Furthermore, Hair Jr et al. (2020) acknowledge partial mediation when both the direct and indirect channels are relevant, but advocate full mediation when the indirect path is substantial but the direct path is not. The results of our mediation analysis show that green commitment acts as a mediator in the interaction between creative work practices and green employee behavior as well as green human resource management. The results show that the mediating role of green commitment has a negative but significant impact on green human resource management and green employee behavior ($=-0.238$, $T\text{-value}=4.805$, $p\text{-value}=0.000$). The results show that the mediating role of green commitment has a negative but significant impact on green human resource management and green employee behavior ($=-0.127$, $T\text{-value}=3.013$, $p\text{-value}=0.003$). The results show that the mediating role of green creativity has a positive and significant impact on green human resource management and green commitment ($=0.171$, $T\text{-value}=2.766$, $p\text{-value}=0.006$).

Table 4: Hypothesis testing

	Original Sample	T Statistics	p Values	Decision
GHRM -> Employee Green Behavior	-0.239	4.177	0.000	Supported
GHRM -> Innovative Work Behavior	-0.246	2.560	0.011	Supported
Moderating Effect 1 -> Green Commitment	0.171	2.766	0.006	Supported
GHRM -> Green Commitment -> Employee Green Behavior	-0.238	4.805	0.000	Supported
GHRM -> Green Commitment -> Innovative Work Behavior	-0.127	3.013	0.003	Supported

Notably, we concentrate on the moderating function of green creativity. We find a simple slope with a moderate loss in its significance when there is a small decrease in green creativity. On the other hand, when levels of green commitment are low, the influence of green creativity on GHRM is more noticeable (Hair Jr et al., 2020). In these cases, there is a positive correlation between higher levels of GHRM and a greater presence of green creativity within the business. This trend implies that there is a stronger influence on both GHRM and green commitment when there is a deficiency in green inventiveness. These nuanced results provide important new understandings of the complex relationships between green creativity, green commitment, and GHRM in our study.

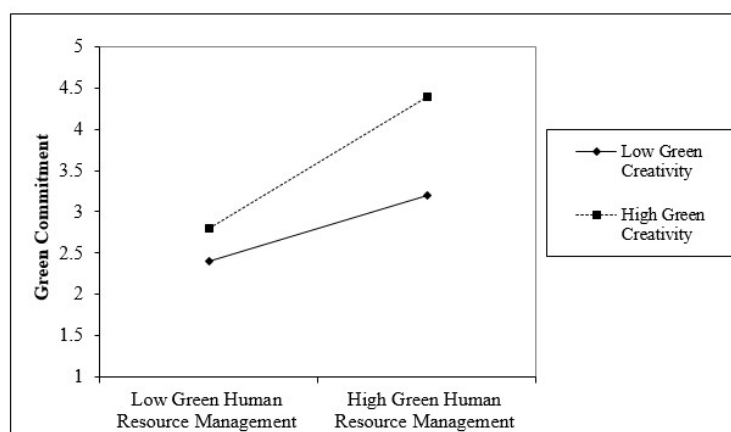


Figure 5. Moderating effect of green creativity

DISCUSSION

This study examines how innovative work practices and green behavior among employees are affected by green HRM. Using organizational identity theory and social exchange theory, it also examines the roles that green commitment and green creativity play as mediators and moderators, respectively. Smart-PLS was used to validate

each hypothesis.

The result shows that GHRM has a negative but significant impact on green employee behavior and IWB. The majority of research has looked at how general HRM procedures affect employees' green behaviors (Aboramadan, 2022; Asurakkody & Kim, 2020; Gill et al., 2021). Green workplace practices are influenced by GHRM. By doing this, it advances our knowledge of the intricate underlying mechanisms that underpin the relationship between GHRM and employee green behavior. People that are highly motivated to learn put out effort to learn anytime they come across an opportunity, which may result in the acquisition of new skills and knowledge. According to Islam et al. (2023), people who enjoy learning are frequently driven, value personal development, and find satisfaction in mastering any task. Strong learners view challenges as chances for personal growth and development ask for criticism from others to make improvements and view failure as a teaching moment (Saleem et al., 2020; Tuan, 2020). As a result, employees are more motivated to acquire new knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform creatively (Dauti et al., 2020; Fawehinmi et al., 2020). Human resource managers working in green SMEs are recommended to prioritize green HRM systems on par with other green HRM efforts, such as promoting creative work techniques and environmentally responsible employee conduct.

The results show that the mediating role of green creativity has a positive and significant impact on green human resource management and green commitment. Increasing employee motivation can be achieved by associating eco-friendly behavior with performance evaluation, awards, and salary. This encourages employees to take responsibility for the environment. Furthermore, providing opportunities to increase employee involvement and knowledge sharing motivates staff members to contribute and provide fresh ideas pertaining to the environment (Saleem et al., 2020). Given this, it makes sense that GHRM procedures would improve staff members' capacity to generate original concepts and solutions for environmentally friendly operations. This is in line with earlier research Islam et al. (2023), that supports the favorable correlation between green creativity and GHRM. This finding also aligns with the organizational identity theory Islam et al. (2023), which states that providing green training to improve workers' knowledge and skills (skill-enhancing), encouraging their participation in sustainable initiatives (opportunity-enhancing). Motivating them by associating rewards and compensation with green behavior (motivation-enhancing) are likely to inspire workers to come up with creative and practical green ideas and solutions to meet environmental goals. According to Islam et al. (2023), this suggests that hotels can boost their green inventiveness by implementing green training and basing their performance evaluations for incentives, pay, and promotions on their staff members' environmentally conscious behavior. Only a limited number of studies Aboramadan et al. (2022); Aktar and Islam (2019); Bhutto et al. (2021) have attempted to substantiate its potential implications through empirical evidence. Prior investigations into GHRM have primarily used qualitative approaches. With a focus on the viewpoint of the employees, this study seeks to close the knowledge gap by explicitly investigating the impact of GHRM on green creativity (Ababneh, 2021; Halilaj, 2021; Odugbesan et al., 2023).

The results show that the mediating role of green commitment has a negative but significant impact on GHRM and GEM and IWB. According to Sutardi et al. (2022), green strategy and culture, green technology and goods, green recruitment and evaluation, and green communication all have a beneficial impact on employee commitment. Tian et al. (2020), have argued for the importance of green commitment as a mediating factor in forming a link between GHRM and a variety of green employee behaviors as well as creative work practices. According to Afsar and Umrani (2020), green commitment in this context as an employee behavior and creative work behavior that acts as a bridge between green behavior and GHRM. Thus, an organization's GHRM affects staff members' environmental commitment, which in turn influences their eco-friendly actions and creative work habits.

Implications

It is important to note the theoretical and practical ramifications of this work. Furthermore, our results support the application of the social exchange theory of Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) to the setting of senior managers and owners of SME in Kosovo's Green SME sector. Practically speaking, it is clear that senior managers and SME owners in the green SME sector have a strong association with GHRM, green commitment, green creativity, employee green behavior, and innovative work behavior. Additionally, our real-world observations

strongly advise senior managers and SME owners in the Green SME sector to take action to guarantee or support millennials' commitment to being green, since this is likely to improve employee behavior and spur creative work practices. Organizations that use green human resource management adopt the steps necessary for recruiting, training, and employee awareness building that are ecologically conscientious. They also aggressively encourage and seek the dedication of their employees to support environmentally friendly and creative work behavior. By integrating organizational identity theory and social exchange theory, the research provides a comprehensive framework for examining the complex relationships within environmentally conscious workplace practices. The incorporation of green creativity as a moderator and green commitment as a mediator enhances the depth of theoretical insights. The results highlight the significance of taking into account the psychological and behavioral components of employees, highlighting the need for a more sophisticated comprehension of how green HRM promotes eco-friendly behaviors and creative contributions. In addition to adding to the body of knowledge already in existence, this theoretical integration creates the framework for further investigations into the principles behind creative and sustainable organizational behavior.

Practically speaking, the report provides firms looking to improve sustainability and innovation through GHRM with useful information. The favorable effects of GHRM on employee green behavior and inventive work behavior highlight the potential of GHRM for environmental and innovative results for firms. The necessity of encouraging a creative and environmentally sensitive work environment is shown by the moderating role of green creativity. Furthermore, the requirement for firms to foster a culture that unites employees' commitments and values with environmental sustainability goals is highlighted by the mediating influence of green commitment. To further demonstrate their dedication to eco-friendly employment processes, organizations ought to think about implementing transparent green hiring guidelines, long-term training and development plans, and potent communication techniques. All things considered, the study offers HR specialists and organizational leaders useful advice for putting GHRM into practice that has a beneficial influence on employee behavior and organizational innovation.

Limitations and Future Research

Employing a cross-sectional research approach does not establish a causal relationship between the constructs being studied. Panel data may be used in further research projects to explore the causal linkages between the same constructs, providing a more detailed picture of the dynamics at play. This study may have been biased because it simultaneously examined endogenous and exogenous variables. Future studies could take a longitudinal strategy to address this constraint by enabling cross-validation of the current findings. This change in methodology would allow for a more thorough analysis of causality and improve the overall validity of the study's findings. Second, in order to provide a more complete picture, future research could benefit from examining the multidimensional dimensions of green commitment, while this study only looked at one of them. Thirdly, because this study is quantitative, it may overlook some aspects. Future research may consider examining environmental management aspects using a sequential exploratory study in order to provide a more comprehensive view. In addition, extending the model to include different personality types as moderating variables could be a useful line of inquiry in the future, advancing our understanding of the complexities involved in the relationship between Green HRM, green commitment, and employee actions. The very small sample size of the study, which included senior managers and owners of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SME) in Kosovo's Green SME sector, might have reduced the external validity and generalizability of the results. The study's data was collected from Kosovo's Green SME sector personnel, which may have limited the conclusions' applicability to a wider audience. Therefore, by repeating the model with larger samples in future research, the study's robustness may be improved. Because this study was limited to the Kosovo environment, its generalizability to other nations may be limited. Other nations may do similar studies. Furthermore, because Green HRM is a relatively new idea, it could take some time for employees' behavior to change in line with it. This idea was disregarded throughout the study, and data was only collected once, raising doubts about causation. Longitudinal studies can be used in subsequent research to prove causation.

CONCLUSION

In order to achieve their green performance objectives, businesses should include effective "green" policies in the HRM framework. GHRM is one of the techniques to elicit and promote such attitudes and behaviors. Additionally, workers are more inclined to take initiative if their employer allows them to suggest ideas, find solutions, and make judgments. Additionally, workers who believe that their company is just and equitable are more likely to engage, which leads to activity that is more creative. The human resources division ought to inform staff members about GHRM best practices, their participation in knowledge-sharing activities, and the ways in which these activities help the business stakeholders. Furthermore, the employee can help to increase environmentally friendly conduct among employees. Employees may be rewarded and promoted, for instance, in accordance with their green commitment, and green employee behavior. Green HRM practices, such as organizing corporate environmental management initiatives, programs, and activities, setting green targets, goals, and responsibilities, encouraging staff to demonstrate commitment, concern. And participation in green activities, acquainting new hires with the organization's greening efforts, pushing them to practice green interpersonal citizenship, giving regular feedback to teams or individual employees to help them meet environmental performance targets, and giving staff members opportunities to get involved in green suggestion schemes, are likely to increase employee green initiatives. Investing in GHRM enables firms to acknowledge and embrace the efforts associated with green recruiting, raise employee awareness and education, and motivate staff to demonstrate green behavior in support of creative work practices. Future research can build on these findings by exploring additional contextual factors and expanding the scope of investigation to further refine our understanding of the intricate interplay between GHRM, employee behaviors, and organizational outcomes. The study's limitations and implications provide opportunities for future research endeavors in the same field.

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APPENDIX

Variables	Items	Sources
Green Human Resource Management	1. My organization has integrated several environmental protection responsibilities in each position. 2. My organization has incorporated the environmental aspect as a task in the job description. 3. My organization has incorporated environmental consciousness as a core competency in the competency model for talent. 4. My organization considers green criteria for the shortlisting of applicants. 5. Our organization prefers hiring individuals who have environmental awareness. 6. Our organization has incorporated 'green aware' criteria in HR staffing policy. 7. My organization practices the use of paperless recruitment and selection processes. 8. My organization assesses whether employees possess the necessary skills to master the content of the green training program. 9. My organization assesses who needs training in environmental management.	(Islam et al., 2023)
Green Creativity	1. The members of the green product development project suggest new ways to achieve environmental goals. 2. The members of the green product development project propose new green ideas to improve environmental performance. 3. The members of the green product development project promote and champion new green ideas to others. 4. The members of the green product development project develop adequate plans for the implementation of new green ideas. 5. The members of the green product development project would rethink new green ideas. 6. The members of the green product development project would find creative solutions to environmental problems.	(Chen & Chang, 2013)
Green Commitment	1. Top management at our company treats environmental protection as an important issue. 2. Top management and ownership groups allocate sufficient resources to implement environmental projects. 3. Top management at our company follows up on suggestions for improvement in environmental protection.	(Haldorai et al., 2022)
Employee Green Behavior	1. I recycle and reuse materials. 2. I try to reduce my energy use. 3. Try to learn more about the environment. 4. Find ways of working that are better for the environment. 5. Offer ideas for reducing our impact on the environment. 6. Share my knowledge about the environment with others. 7. Apply new ideas for reducing our impact on the environment. 8. Help create green processes and products. 7. Perform environmental tasks that are not required by my company.	(Saleem et al., 2020)
Innovative Work Behavior	1. I will actively participate in the development of green products and propose an appropriate plan and progress schedule. 2. I will try my best to reduce the possible harm from a product to users in the product design. 3. I will try to eliminate technical risks and reduce material waste in R&D. 4. Overall, I have already started working on product development by following "green" standards.	(De Jong & Den Hartog, 2008)