
Investigating the Impact of Green Human Resource Management on Employees' Green Innovation Behaviour and Performance in China: The mediating role of Green Mindfulness and the moderating role of Green Self-efficacy

Project abstract:

Green human resource management (GHRM) is an emerging field of academic research, driven not only by the increasing global awareness of the environmental crisis but also by its potential to create substantial value for organisations. Encouraging employees' green innovation behaviours has become a significant focus of scholarly inquiry. In China, as the concept of green development progressively matures, green behaviours have unfortunately fallen behind. Therefore, promoting green behaviours in China has become essential for realising the green concept. This study aims to explore the relationship between GHRM and employees' green innovation behaviours, with green mindfulness serving as the mediating variable. Furthermore, this research includes green self-efficacy as a moderating variable to determine whether it influences the relationship between green human resource management and green innovation behaviours in China. This research examines the impact of green human resource management on employee green innovation behaviours and green innovation performance in China, emphasising the mediating role of green mindfulness and the moderating role of green self-efficacy to thoroughly analyse the Chinese context and promote the development of green human resource management in Chinese enterprises.

Ten small and medium enterprises (SMEs) selected from ISO 14001 certified organisations will be pre-selected. It is planned to distribute a single survey questionnaire to 500 employees from May to June 2025, aiming for a response rate of 60% or higher. The survey will encompass questions related to demographics, participants' positions within their organisations, green human resource management behaviours, green mindfulness, and more. All analyses will be based on the environmental context and situation in China. The conclusion will seek to explore the impact of Green Human Resource Management on employees' green innovation behaviours and green innovation performance, focusing on the mediating role of green mindfulness and the moderating role of green self-efficacy in China.

Key Words: Green Human Resources Management; Employees Green Innovation Behavior; Green Mindfulness; Green Self-efficacy; China; Chinese Green Human Resources Management

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Green human resource management (GHRM) is an emerging topic in academic research not only because of the world's increasing awareness of

environmental crisis, but also because of its ability to generate great value for organisations regardless of their business nature (Ali et al., 2020; Song et al., 2021). More and more enterprises have begun to implement green innovation policies and management systems (Yang & Lin, 2020). Therefore, how to stimulate employees' green innovative behaviour has become a common focus issue in academic research (Shahzad et al., 2023).

Research evidence shows that Human Resources Management (HRM), in combination with environmental management (EM), serves as a source of organisational competitive advantage (Stone et al., 2020; Angarwal, 2020). Environmental sustainability is increasingly a key factor influencing business growth. Pressure from stakeholders, such as governments, consumers, competitors, and suppliers, compels companies to prioritise environmental issues. Green innovation is essential for businesses to attain sustainable development and is linked to the nation's and businesses' fundamental competitiveness and sustainable development (Zhou & Cao, 2019). More and more enterprises have begun implementing green innovation policies and management systems (Yang & Lin, 2020). The effectiveness of employee green innovation management activities is a prerequisite for an organisation's improvement in green innovation performance and an important guarantee for its sustainable development (Singh et al., 2020). Therefore, how to stimulate employees' green innovative behaviour has become a common focus issue in academic research.

There are not many studies on green innovation behavior at the employee level, but it has been gradually studied in recent years. The relationship between employees' green innovation behavior and GHRM has been the subject of several studies. Theoretically, GHRM can cultivate employees' green innovation behavior, a prerequisite for organisations to improve their green management performance. This study indicates that green mindfulness is the crucial link between the organisational context and employee green output. Dharmesti, Merrilees, and Winata (2020) assert that green mindfulness is a significant mediating mechanism between pro-environmental habits and green behaviours. Employee green output and organisational settings are largely correlated with green mindfulness. It is clear that green mindfulness plays a vital role in explaining how situational elements influence employees' green output in the realm of green management research. Therefore, the aim of this study is to explore the relationship between GHRM and employees' green innovation behaviour, using green mindfulness as a mediating variable. To address the lack of research from the bottom-up perspective, this study will investigate the impact of GHRM strategies by evaluating individual employees' development of green innovation behaviour and their relevant understanding.

The generation of innovative behaviour results from the joint action of individual self-efficacy and environmental factors. Therefore, it is important to investigate whether the interaction between green self-efficacy and green human resource management affects employees' green innovation behaviour. In an organisational environment, green human resource

management is a significant environmental factor. Only a limited amount of literature examines whether the effect of green human resource management on employees' green innovation behaviour depends on green self-efficacy (Nisar et al., 2024). Consequently, this study selected green self-efficacy as the moderating variable to explore its potential moderating role in the relationship between green human resource management and green innovation behaviour.

However, in China, as the concept of green development gradually deepens, green behaviour has lagged (Zhang et al., 2021). Therefore, how to promote green behaviour has become the key to practicing the green concept (Qi et al., 2020). Taking employee green mindfulness and the moderating role of green self-efficacy as an example, most of the relevant results of green behaviour research refer to foreign research concepts and measurement scales, and rarely consider the local characteristics of green behaviour in the Chinese context. At the same time, the perspective is also focused on scholars or managers, without considering individual employees' cognition of green behaviour.

1.2 Research aims and objectives

This study aims to investigate the Impact of Green Human Resource Management on Employees' Green Innovation Behaviour and Green Innovation Performance which focusing on mediating role of Green Mindfulness and moderating role of Green Self-efficacy in China.

The main purpose of this study is reflected in the following aspects.

Firstly, combined with China's local environment and situation, does green human resource management affect employees' green innovation behaviour?

Secondly, test whether personal green mentality plays a mediating role between green human resource management and employees' green innovation behaviour in China?

Finally, study the role of personal green self-efficacy in the relationship between green human resource management and employees' green innovation behaviour in China?

2. Literature review

The literature review will discuss the connection between GHRM and green innovative behaviour. Secondly, it will consider the mediating role of green mindfulness. Thirdly, it will review the literature of the moderating role of green self-efficacy.

2.1 Green human resource management and green innovative behavior

Employee green innovation behaviour refers to the behaviour of employees who consciously generate or introduce novel ideas at work and use them in product design, processes, production methods. Existing research has

found that GHRM, as a typical green factor, has a direct impact on employees' green innovation behaviour, thus:

Hypothesis 1: Green human resource management has a positive impact on employees' green innovation behaviour.

2.2 The mediating role of green mindfulness

Realistically, Malik et al. (2020) hold the belief that measures such as green hiring and green performance evaluation aim to exclude or devalue those who do not meet the threshold of environmental awareness. It remains questionable whether these green measures will truly inspire employees to go green or if these measures will become an additional source of stress for them.

Hypothesis 2: The relationship between green human resource management and employees' innovative green behavior is mediated by green mindfulness.

2.3 The moderating role of green self-efficacy

Consequently, workers who possess a high level of green self-efficacy will have a positive understanding of the goals and objectives of the organization's GHRM practices.

Hypothesis 3: The effect of green human resource management on employees' green innovative behaviour is favourably regulated by green self-efficacy.

3. Methodology

This study will develop and administer an online survey questionnaire featuring both open- and closed-ended questions to obtain qualitative and quantitative data. Secondary data, such as organisational document analysis or organisational Sustainability/CSR Reports, will also be considered to complement the dataset from the online survey. Participants will include employees at all levels within the business from SMEs in China. Five ISO 14001 certified organisations will be pre-selected to demonstrate that these organisations have achieved international standards in environmental management and can ensure that various pollutants in their processes, products, and activities meet relevant requirements, which will help them establish a positive social image across manufacturing, construction, pharmaceuticals, and other industries. These organisations have a close relationship with Green Human Resource Management (GHRM). The implementation of the ISO14000 series of standards will enhance environmental awareness nationwide and foster the concept of sustainable development; it will improve public awareness of legal compliance and the enforcement of environmental laws and regulations; it will encourage enterprise initiative in preventing and controlling environmental pollution and urge businesses to continually enhance their environmental management; it will promote resource and energy

conservation and ensure their rational use; and it will facilitate bilateral and multilateral environmental certification among countries, effectively removing technical trade barriers. These enterprises maintain a strong connection to green human resources, making them suitable for thorough analysis and investigation.

The data collection will utilise an online questionnaire that includes both open-ended and closed-ended questions, employing qualitative and quantitative methods. The researcher chose the questionnaire format for various reasons, such as accessibility and the ability to facilitate remote participation across different geographical locations. This approach will also reduce costs and save time. The data collected will be anonymised and classified as personal and confidential, intended for research use only, and based on the participants' consent. The data to be collected will encompass demographic information, including age, gender, ethnic background, the region where the participants reside, job title or position, university attended, and the demographic details of SMEs to support the analysis. Before completing the online survey, participants will first fill in the consent form. Once they have completed the consent form, they may proceed to the online questionnaire.

The rationale for selecting SMEs is that these companies have a greater ability to acquire assessments, which larger enterprises are less likely to obtain. The company will be situated in Shanghai and its surrounding areas because Shanghai serves as the economic centre of China, advancing more rapidly than other cities. Companies in the vicinity of Shanghai, such as Hangzhou, are also progressing swiftly. Shanghai's key industries include finance, technological innovation, high-end manufacturing, and various other sectors. Hangzhou is cultivating its Internet economy and small commodity economy. Cities throughout the Yangtze River Delta have objectively advanced in recent years. Hangzhou's GDP in the first quarter of 2024 was 511.2 billion yuan, reflecting an increase of 8.24% compared to the same period last year (Ehangzhou.gov.cn., 2025). Shanghai and Hangzhou are located in the heart of the Yangtze River Delta and possess distinct advantages. Furthermore, the rapid development of high-speed railway networks in recent years has further enhanced the connections between Shanghai, Hangzhou, and the surrounding cities, forming a robust economic circle. Opting for these cities facilitates the identification of more GHRM companies, and as my hometown is Shanghai, it will be simpler for me to seek agreement to obtain assessments from these companies.

I chose the questionnaire form because it is accessible and allows remote participation, which is beneficial for people in different geographical locations. It will also reduce costs and save time. This study will utilize age, gender, education, years of experience, and position as control variables. Participants will include individuals working within the organisation in China, without specific departmental or functional roles. To confirm their role, when entering the online. The questionnaire includes linked-scaled questions with five possible outcomes (e.g., strongly disagree to strongly agree etc.).

4. Reference List

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