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Green Human Resource Management and Green Innovation: Past Lessons and Future Pathways for Business Continuity

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ABSTRACT

The study underscores the necessity of green innovation and GHRM in organizations to accomplish environmental objectives and long-term sustainability. It presents a factorial analysis of environmental performance, green innovation, and GHRM. The research indicates that environmental performance is enhanced by sustainable development and pollution reduction. Green innovation, which encompasses process and product enhancements, is necessary to enhance environmental performance and sustainability. This strategy is facilitated by advancements in product design and manufacturing. Environmental sustainability is a critical issue that organizations must address in light of the numerous challenges that developed and emerging countries are currently confronting. This research has significant implications for senior management and academia, as it assists executives in the establishment of a green innovation culture in products and processes. The study also urges for additional research on sustainable performance, GHRM, and green innovation in a variety of sectors and environments.

Keywords: human resources management; green management; sustainability; green innovation; efficiency

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, there has been an increasing awareness among nations of the significant challenges that the natural environment faces. The influence of environmental integrity on human well-being has become a subject of growing concern for both scholars and global policymakers. As a result, there is a substantial amount of pressure from a diverse array of stakeholders to create strategies that encourage sustainable practices. This has led human resource teams to strive for the incorporation of sustainability and pro-environmentalism in nearly all operational dimensions. The efficacy of environmental management initiatives within organizations is a critical factor in the development and maintenance of internal competencies and skills (Ilic, 2023; Shi et al., 2024).

The firm's natural resource-based perspective underscores the importance of organizations proactively enhancing and balancing their interactions with the environment. Product stewardship, sustainable development, and pollution reduction are interconnected environmental strategies that function as instrumental mechanisms in the pursuit of this objective. Organizations are increasingly integrating technology and environmentally sustainable practices into their corporate social responsibility initiatives, which substantially contribute to their long-term viability and success (AlQershi et al., 2023). The implementation of environmentally sustainable practices is essential for the establishment of an organization's reputation and the acquisition of a competitive advantage. To resolve environmental challenges, it is necessary to integrate authentic human resource (HR) practices and maintain a steadfast commitment to sustainability. Manufacturing entities can effectively align their commercial objectives with their environmental aspirations by implementing Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) principles. The functions of human resource management (HRM) and leadership are essential in the development of an organization's internal competencies and capabilities (Papagiannakis et al., 2024; Rasheed et al.,

2024). GHRM involves the integration of environmental policies, procedures, and operational guidelines into HR practices that are consistent with the organization's overarching objectives.

Organizations are progressively integrating sustainable practices into their HR management due to a variety of factors. GHRM implements processes and initiatives that are intended to enhance the environmental cognizance of employees and encourage the sustainable utilization of corporate resources. The sustainable utilization of organizational resources is facilitated by the application of HRM strategies, principles, and procedures by GHRM. Furthermore, it strives to resolve environmental challenges within the organization, thereby fostering environmental sustainability. This transition has been significantly influenced by the growing emphasis on climate action and resource efficiency. GHRM ensures that organizations can simultaneously achieve their long-term sustainability objectives and mitigate any adverse social and environmental consequences by integrating green technologies (Li et al., 2024; Pamukçu et al., 2023).

Green innovation (GI) is a term that refers to innovations that utilize advanced management strategies, technologies, and systems to mitigate the negative environmental consequences of a diverse range of activities. Green innovation is distinguished from conventional technological innovation by its focus on resolving environmental issues. GI's goal is to enhance the ecological sustainability of existing products and processes (Abadie et al., 2024; Faieq & Cek, 2024). A variety of strategies can be employed to promote GI, such as the efficient use of water, electricity, and other raw materials, the reduction of waste, the implementation of eco-design principles in product development, the reduction of carbon emissions and footprints, and the selection of more sustainable raw materials.

Research indicates that green innovation (GI) practices have a beneficial effect on consumer loyalty, enhance a company's brand image, ensure safety, promote equitable opportunities, and support ethical conduct. Consequently, it is imperative to conduct supplementary research in order to develop a comprehensive human resource (HR) strategy that incorporates sustainable organizational policies and innovative solutions (Ilic, 2023; Zhang & Hao, 2023). Prioritizing the preservation of green human resource management (GHRM) through the implementation of environmentally conscious initiatives and sustainable policies is one potential approach. In this context, the present research aims to provide a comprehensive review of the limited existing literature on environmental performance, green innovation practices, and green human resource management from a variety of sources, as well as recommendations for future research.

2.Literature Review for Green Human Resources Management and Green Innovation

Organizations are presently in the process of reevaluating their strategies and objectives to ensure that they are more in line with environmental sustainability objectives. Nevertheless, the academic literature that is presently in place primarily emphasizes the environmental consequences of larger corporations, thereby disregarding the significant environmental consequences that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) experience as a result of their operational activities. Despite the substantial environmental impact of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), scholarly research has not adequately investigated them. Although environmental sustainability is frequently perceived as a corporate objective, the relationship between industrial strategy and ecological preservation has historically been characterized as a dichotomy between economic benefits and environmental performance (Deste et al., 2024; Ilic, 2023; Zhou et al., 2024). Therefore, there is a dearth of scholarly research in this area. Numerous organizations acknowledge the significance of employee engagement in initiatives that are intended to enhance sustainable performance. This involvement entails the implementation of strategies that are designed to enhance the efficient utilization of energy and other resources and to reduce waste (Cheng et al., 2023; Hoang et al., 2024).

Technological, systemic, and managerial innovations that are specifically designed to reduce the negative environmental repercussions of a variety of operations are referred to as Green Innovation (GI). In contrast to conventional technological innovation, GI places a higher priority on the reduction of environmental footprints. It is founded on well-established conceptual frameworks (Dzikriansyah et al., 2023; Huang et al., 2024).

Green innovation (GI) is the process of creating environmentally sustainable products and processes by prioritizing the use of eco-friendly raw materials, implementing eco-design principles to reduce material consumption and emissions, and optimizing resource utilization, including utilizing water and electricity. Organizations that implement green innovation strategies are more likely to achieve success and exhibit superior overall performance in comparison to their competitors, according to a substantial body of prior research. This enhanced performance is the result of the effective utilization of green resources and capabilities, which allows them to respond to consumer demands in a timely and efficient manner, while concurrently enhancing intangible organizational assets.

The current body of literature suggests that human resource management (HRM) systems are in the process of transitioning from conventional methodologies, which are defined by minimal employee engagement, to more inclusive and supportive frameworks (Sohns et al., 2023a). Modern methodologies generate opportunities for the enhancement of employees' dispositions, knowledge, and capabilities. Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) is a strategic approach that incorporates and optimizes human resource management practices to advance sustainability objectives. This framework influences the behaviors, attitudes, awareness, and motivation of individuals, thereby contributing to the development of an environmentally sustainable culture. The implementation of GHRM practices is advantageous to both organizations and their employees, as it fosters improved morale and productivity. In order to improve employee performance in relation to environmental sustainability, GHRM employs a diverse array of strategies, including green recruitment and selection (GRS), green training (GT), and green pay and reward (GPR) (del Socorro Encinas-Grijalva et al., 2024; Song et al., 2022).

The potential to improve green performance (GP) in organizational settings is present through the implementation of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM). This can be achieved by attracting environmentally conscious personnel, providing training that prioritizes sustainability, incentivizing eco-friendly initiatives through reward systems, and cultivating a culture that promotes employee involvement in environmental activities. Sriram et al. (2013) and Sulich et al. (2023) have demonstrated that employees at various functional levels within organizations have a substantial impact on the environmental performance outcomes.

3. Research Design

Bibliometric analysis is a methodological approach that is widely recognized and is used to evaluate the statistical significance of extensive scientific datasets. The primary goal of bibliometric analysis is to determine the current state of knowledge within a particular academic domain, identifie the most frequently cited publications, and evaluate their impact on future research endeavors. Citation analysis, co-citation analysis, and content analysis are among the most prominent bibliometric techniques. Bibliometric analysis provides a comprehensive framework for mapping the structure of knowledge, facilitating its evaluation and measurement, regardless of the specific method selected by the researcher. It is particularly focused on the bibliographic examination of scientific publications aggregated within a database.

Utilizing the Bibliometrix and Biblioshiny programs, the current research was able to produce bibliometric indicators that were relevant to the efficacy of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and to green human resources management and innovation. This was accomplished by conducting an evaluation of keyword analysis, citation counts, and publication volume. Additionally, the analysis's primary findings are summarized through a variety of visual representations, such as thematic maps, country collaboration maps, and network visualizations, which collectively depict the research landscape and enable multiple correspondence analysis (MCA).

4. Key Findings

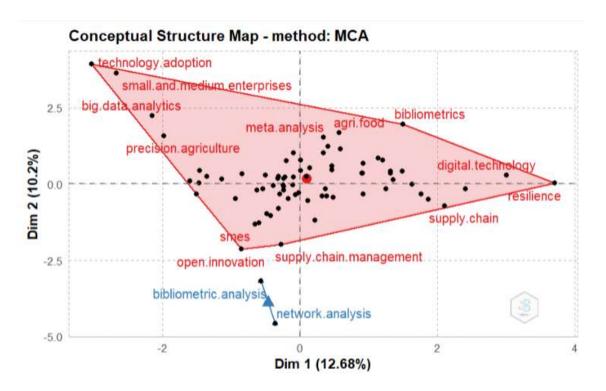


Figure 2: Factorial Analysis

The results of the factorial analysis of the documents are presented using a framework of Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA). The objective of this analytical method is to visually represent, investigate, and define the relationships between two or more categorical variables. A conceptual structure map is used to illustrate the findings. The MCA map illustrates the aggregation of documents and underscores the significance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) integrating eco-friendly and emerging technologies in the current investigation. The MCA results also indicate that SMEs should prioritize the digitalization of their logistics operations. Logistics encompasses the physical transportation of goods within urban environments, their distribution to consumers, and the administration of goods on-site. This encompasses the inputs to warehouses, commercial enterprises, or industries (Corcoran et al., 2024; Lyulyov et al., 2024). The digital capture of physical management processes is necessary for each phase of logistics. The capacity of logistics companies to collect, communicate, and process data with regulatory public services, consumers, and partners is enhanced by an increased level of digital maturation, which leads to a decrease in the costs and time associated with cargo management. The effectiveness of logistics is not solely determined by the digital maturity of SMEs; it is also influenced by the digital maturity of their stakeholders and the public sector (Belias, Rossidis, Papademetriou, & Lamprinoudis, 2022; Belias, Rossidis, Papademetriou, & Mantas, 2022; Papademetriou et al., n.d., 2022). The following actions are deemed essential for the purpose of facilitating digital transformation and enhancing logistics operations: (i) the generation of digital documents (eCMR, bills of lading, invoices, consignment notes, etc.) that are generated once and subsequently made accessible to regulatory bodies and the supply chain, as well as the provision of statistics to all industry participants; (ii) the interconnection and capability for digital customs clearance, even before the goods arrive at customs; and (iii) the promotion of digital transformation within facilities through increased investment in automation and robotic systems.

This research serves as a systematic summary, clarifying the context and implications of the subject matter within the minireview (Kalogiannidis et al., 2023; Kalogiannidis, Kalfas, et al., 2024; Kalogiannidis, Kontsas, et al., 2024; Nikolaou et al., 2023). The implementation of a proactive environmental strategy can have a beneficial impact on environmental performance and function as a mediator in the relationship between environmental outcomes and green innovation, according to prior research in the field. Among the strategies under consideration are pollution reduction, sustainable development, and product stewardship. Despite the well-meaning endeavors of human resource personnel, the environment may not be substantially improved due to a lack of the requisite expertise. Nevertheless, it is highly likely that organizations that are actively engaged in green innovation will experience significant enhancements in their environmental performance (Russell et al., 2024; Tzitiridou-Chatzopoulou, Orovou, et al., 2024a, 2024b; Tzitiridou-Chatzopoulou, Zournatzidou, et al., 2024; Zournatzidou et al., 2024; Zournatzidou & Floros, 2023).

Previous research has shown that Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) indirectly affects the environmental performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) through the mediation of green innovation, as demonstrated by the ability-motivation-opportunity framework in conjunction with a resource-based perspective. The study's findings provide a range of practical and theoretical implications, and they corroborate all direct and indirect hypotheses (Singh et al., 2020a). Furthermore, a previous study, which examined the interaction between the opportunity, motivation, and ability dimensions of GHRM and their influence on corporate green performance, emphasized the advancements made in the field of green management research. Furthermore, this research establishes a comprehensive framework that enables the development of strategic, sustainable, and effective decisions regarding green management within organizations, thereby facilitating future research in this field.

The prior study examines the relationship between green innovation and the set of practices associated with green human resource management (GHRM), as well as their impact on sustainability performance as defined by the Triple Bottom Line framework, which includes environmental, social, and economic dimensions (K. Ragazou, 2021; K. Ragazou, Passas, & Garefalakis, 2022; K. Ragazou, Passas, & Sklavos, 2022; K. Ragazou, Passas, Garefalakis, et al., 2022; K. Ragazou & Sklavos, 2021). The results suggest that green innovation has a significant impact on sustainability performance, with evidence suggesting that it partially mediates the relationship between the sustainable performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and GHRM practices. This research underscores the potential of GHRM to enhance the implementation of green innovation within firms, thereby enhancing their sustainability outcomes. Furthermore, the investigation illustrates the potential of environmental management strategies to advance sustainability in the human resource and innovation sectors. It is important to mention that the investigation did not account for the moderating effects of employees' environmental beliefs and values on the HRM-performance relationship. Consequently, we advocate for future research to examine the influence of GHRM on green innovation in accordance with the environmental values and beliefs of employees. Furthermore, it is highly recommended that future research incorporate the perspectives of both internal and external stakeholders in relation to sustainability performance and green innovation (Kiohos & Sariannidis, 2010; Mallidis et al., 2024a, 2024b; Sariannidis et al., 2016).

Green innovation is the process of improving manufacturing techniques and product design to achieve both process and product innovation. One of the primary objectives of green innovation is to mitigate the adverse environmental consequences of corporate activities, as well as to promote energy conservation, waste reduction, and pollution reduction. By increasing resource productivity, reducing environmental costs, and improving overall environmental performance, green innovation expands market share and generates new market opportunities. The implementation of green innovation provides organizations with a "first-mover advantage," which enables them to enter emerging markets, improve brand recognition, and establish a competitive advantage.

In summary, organizations must prioritize environmental stewardship and sustainability, as both developed and developing nations are encountering significant challenges related to these issues. Given the urgency of the situation, it is essential to embrace environmentally sustainable practices in order to implement transformative measures. The concept of environmental responsibility entails the implementation of business operations that are not only competitive in the global marketplace but also meet the most stringent standards of efficiency, efficacy, and value.

5. Conclusions

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are indispensable for the economic advancement of nations in the context of developing countries. In order to achieve their performance objectives in green innovation, it is imperative for small and

medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to implement environmentally sustainable business practices. Previous research has indicated that a stronger commitment to green organizational values improves the positive correlation between the innovation performance of firms and green innovative human resource management practices (Si Mohammed et al., 2024; Sohns et al., 2023b; Vara Prasad et al., 2023). Additionally, this study suggests a new approach that integrates Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) with a culture of green innovation to enhance the organization's environmental performance. It is imperative to recognize that the mediating effects of different types of green innovation may differ. Consequently, future research should strive to differentiate between the diverse forms of ecological innovation. In addition, it will be essential to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of the environmental strategies that businesses have implemented in order to advance this field of research (Paganou, et.al, 2024; Zournatzidou et.al., 2024; Ragazou et.al., 2024).

Policymakers and business leaders are increasingly acknowledging the importance of green innovation in advocating for sustainable business performance as environmental concerns become more closely intertwined with business operations. Nevertheless, the literature continues to demonstrate a substantial gap in its investigation of the relationship between the financial performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and green innovation and green entrepreneurial orientation (Karakostas et al., 2010; V. Ragazou & Karasavvidis, 2022, 2023; Smol, 2023; Thomas et al., 2023). By acquiring a more comprehensive understanding of the ways in which green innovation and entrepreneurial orientation contribute to sustainable business outcomes, managers of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have the potential to acquire valuable insights. Supplementary internal and external factors that may influence green innovation and its associated business outcomes should be investigated in future research. Furthermore, the sample population of the current study is a substantial limitation, as it raises concerns about the generalizability of the results across a spectrum of industries.

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