

Green Orientation of Human Resource Management and Green Attitude of Employees: Moderation Effect of Personal Character

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Abstract: This study is a systematic and scientific attempt to assess whether personal character moderates the relationship between green orientation of human resource management and green attitude of employees. The data were gathered using self-administered and structured questionnaires from 327 branch managers working in licensed commercial banks in Sri Lanka. There were two hypotheses developed in this paper based on the theoretical and empirical accounts regarding the green attitude of the employees. Accordingly, the findings revealed that green orientation of human resource management directs to employees' green attitude and such relationship is significantly moderated by the personal character of employees. Based on this significant impact, it is possible to theorize that personal character of employees is an imperative concept that should be considered in the organizational contexts while making crucial decisions related to their attitude. Further, the findings are significant in terms of adding new knowledge to the literature and provide grounds to inquire the importance of green orientation of human resource management in explaining the deep understanding of green attitude of employees.

Keywords: *Green attitude, Green orientation of HRM and personal character*

Introduction

Today, world is moving towards the sustainable growth and thus organizations adopt difference practices to sustain in the market and they are required to be in charge of green management due to the emerging strategic challenge of environmental protection. Green movement was the preliminary step of developing the concept of Green Orientation of Human Resource Management (GOHRM) in the organization (Sharma & Gupta, 2015). Such concept has become a key business strategy where human resource management plays an active

role in the ongoing green movement (Hossari & Elfahli, 2022). Management researchers have begun to examine the managerial applications of green in their fields of accounting, marketing, supply-chain management, and human resource management to increase awareness of the concept of green (Sharma & Gupta, 2015). To this end, many research were done in the field of marketing, accounting and management with regards to the concept of green (Peattie, 1992; Owen, 1992; McDonagh & Prothero, 1997; as cited in Opatha & Kottawatta, 2020). GOHRM practices have a variety of positive effects on employees, including higher employee

morale, a better public image, more loyalty among employees, enhanced brand recognition, competitive advantages, higher productivity, higher employee retention (Janmitha & Rai, 2019) and enhance the sustainable environmental performance of the organization (Arulrajah *et al.*, 2015). However, theoretical, and empirical gap still exists with regards to the use of green idea in the field of human resource management (Renwick *et al.*, 2008; Jackson *et al.*, 2011). And Opatha in 2013 stated that there are hardly any studies on green human resource management conducted in Sri Lanka or by Sri Lankan academics. Such research gap led the many researchers to concentrate on the concept of green human resource management and now it is considered as a popular research area for many researchers and academician.

HRM is a key function that supports organization to achieve its mission (Nishii *et al.*, 2008; Whicker & Andrews, 2004) and considered as an imperative asset for every organization (Opatha & Kottawatta, 2020). However, the success or failure of the application of human resource management practices highly depends on the employees in the organization like their attitude, character, and behavior. Among which the attitude of the employees has the crucial role to determine the efficiency and effectiveness of the human resource management functions and the competitive advantages of the organizations (Opatha & Kottawatta, 2020). Several researchers identified that the GOHRM practices as the key variable to influence on such

employees' attitude and it enrich the employees' knowledge, skills and attitudes with regards to the environment friendly applications in the business context (Bangwal & Tiwari, 2015; Opatha & Kottawatta, 2020). Hence, it is essential to analyze the impact of GOHRM on green attitude of employees in the organization. Though several scholars have highlighted green human resource management influence on green work behavior (Zhang, 2018) and green attitudes, there is no any single study conducted in Sri Lankan context (Opatha & Kottawatta, 2020). Furthermore, it is also stated that there is no theoretical arguments and empirical evidence on the moderating effect of personal character on the relationship between GOHRM and green attitude of the employee (Hewapathirana *et al.*, 2020). It reveals that the moderating effect of the personal character of the employee on GOHRM and green attitude linkage has neither been theoretically argued nor been empirically tested in the Sri Lankan context, perhaps in the international context.

Therefore, this study is aimed to investigate the relationship between GOHRM and green attitude of employees who are working in the licensed commercial banks in Sri Lanka and study the moderating effect of personal character on the relationship between GOHRM and green attitude. Therefore, the research questions of this study are developed as; (1) Does GOHRM significantly and positively relate to green attitude of employees in licensed commercial banks in Sri Lanka? (2) Does personal character have the moderating effect

on the relationship between GOHRM and green attitude of employees in licensed commercial banks in Sri Lanka?

Literature Review

Green Attitudes

It has always been emphasized that employees' behavior can be predicted by their attitudes. Employees' attitudes with regards to the green values, beliefs and norms have become an important consideration in today's organizations which have more concentration on the sustainability of the firm. Further, it was stated that such green attitudes were inspired by religious and ethical values, pragmatic and anthropocentric orientations and biocentric beliefs that all living organisms have rights to exist and survive (Kempton *et al.*, 1995). Environmental attitudes, ecological attitudes, environment-friendly attitudes, and environmentally sustainable attitudes are the common words which used for green attitude in the existing literature (Coskun, 2018). Opatha & Arulrajah (2014) defines green attitude as appropriate beliefs (cognitive), feelings (affective) and intention to behave (behavioral intentions) with regards to greening.

Green Orientation of Human Resource Management

Human resource management is an imperative function of every organization that deals with the most precious assets of an organization which is human resources (Ahmad, 2015). The entire context of human resource management is presently

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

Personal Character

The meaning of character is not concrete as the concept is abstract (Opatha, 2013). Also, he stated that Word itself is ambiguous as it has many meanings. Hence, there is no any universally accepted definition for personal character. It is naturally a multidimensional phenomenon (Park & Peterson, 2006) and something which cannot be separated from the person (Ricoeur 1992). According to

Opatha (2013) personal character is defined as the aggregate of all of the relatively persistent moral qualities he/she has that combines to form his/her real nature. According to Weragoda & Opatha (2015) there are two extreme sides of character which are virtues and vices, and an individual can master both aspects simultaneously.

Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

Using author’s general theories, logical beliefs, previous empirical

findings, and arguments, an attempt was made to develop a network of associations among the three variables. GOHRM is considered as independent variable since these GOHRM practices are directly influenced the dependent variable. Thus, the green attitude can be considered as dependent Variable and the personal character is considered as the moderating variable on the relationships between GOHRM and green attitude. This study examines all these variables in a nomological network as shown in figure 01.

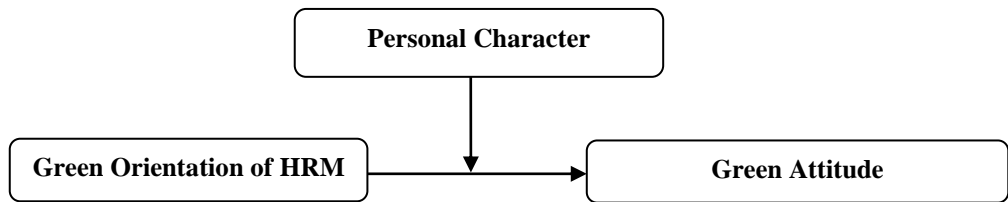


Figure 01: Nomological Network of Green Attitude

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

relationship between dependent (green attitude) and independent variable (GOHRM) which explained under the research hypotheses.

Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis is tentative, yet it is a testable logical statement which facilitates to predict expected relationships of the study (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Two (H1 and H2) tentative hypotheses were formulated for the empirical investigation to test the relationships between those variables in the nomological network. Under the deductive approach, the general system theory and social

exchange theory, arguments, empirical evidence, and logical beliefs of the researcher were used to discuss the hypotheses of this study.

Green Orientation of Human Resource Management and Green Attitude

Based on the existing literature, the author argued that the GOHRM in the organizations leads to green attitude of employees. Opatha & Kottawatta (2020) investigated the relationship between green human resource management and green attitude of employees and they found that developing knowledge, skills and attitudes among employees regarding the environment-friendly applications in the business context is a more crucial area in the agenda of enriching the greening concept within the organization and ultimately within the country. Further, it creates good working environment where employees can be engaged with the intention of maintaining the environment sustainable and thus lead to show their green attitude in the organizational activities. Hence, the author argued that, such green attitude is the results of GOHRM of an organization. Furthermore, based on the social exchange theory it can be validated that if an employee provided with adequate training and development in how to keep the organizational environment in a sustainable manner, proper performance evaluation and reward management for keeping environment sustainable way, the employee performs better in return by the behaving and showing his/her green attitude. Hence, it can be argued that

there is a significant relationship between GOHRM and green attitude of employees. This logical and theoretical argument led the researcher to the following formulation of the study's first hypothesis.

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

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

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

employees. This logical argument led the researcher to develop the following formulation of the study's second hypothesis.

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

Research Methods

Study Design

There are six components of the research design as stated by Sekaran & Bougie in 2016 which are the purpose of the study, type of investigation, extent of researcher interference with the study, study setting, unit of analysis, and the time horizon of the study. This research was explanatory or hypothesis testing as it seeks to elucidate the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable in the nomological network. The type of investigation in this research is a correlational study. The unit of analysis was individual, that is, branch managers in licensed commercial banks in Sri Lanka. Employees' attitude matters for every organization to be survived in the contemporary market. Here, branch managers are selected to analyze the organizational GOHRM practices and their employees' green attitude. Further, the time horizon of this study was cross-sectional, with one reason being the time constraint. 327 branch managers were selected by using convenient sampling method. The survey was administered with 346 branch managers, of which 327 responded to. Hence, the survey was completed with a 94.5% response rate

which is an acceptable response rate as stated by Saunders *et al* in 2009.

Structure of the Questionnaire

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

Validity and Reliability

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

representing the three variables under the study which consisted of 37 items.

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

Data Analysis and Results

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

Hypotheses Testing

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

Table: 01 Pearson Correlation Coefficient

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

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

According to the above table, the correlation coefficient of GOHRM and green attitude was significant at $p < 0.05$ and thus the correlation analysis supported to accept the developed first hypothesis (H_1) of the study. It is empirically and statistically evident that GOHRM has a positive and significant relationship with green attitude of employees.

The second hypothesis of the study is the relationship between GOHRM and green attitude is significantly moderated by the personal character of the employees. A moderator is a variable that alters the direction or strength of the relation between a predictor and an outcome (Baron & Kenny, 1986). This study was followed with the application of Baron

and Kenny's approach for the moderation analysis. The approach suggested following three steps to establish the role of the moderator between predictor variable and outcome variable (Frazier et al., 2004).

The first step (Path a) is to demonstrate that the predictor variable (GOHRM) has an impact on outcome

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

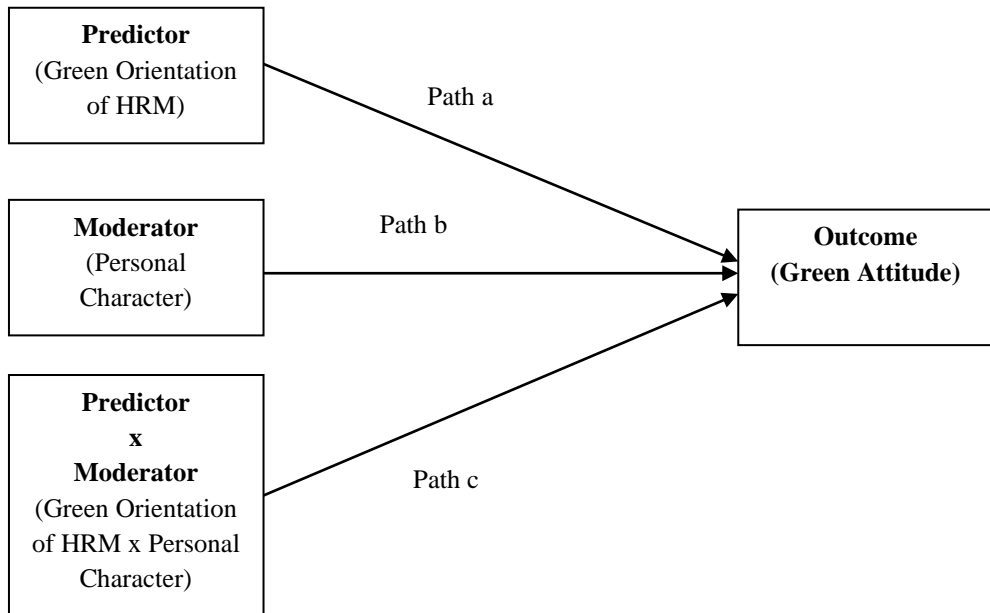


Figure 02: Moderation Model

Source: Baron & Kenny, 1986

The above figure (figure 2) of moderation model of the study illustrated that how causal effects of predictor variable (GOHRM), moderator variable (personal character) and the interaction of predictor and moderator variables (GOHRM and personal character) effect on outcome variable (green

attitude). Since the hierarchical multiple regression procedures retain the true nature of continuous variables result in fewer Type I and Type II errors for detecting moderator effects (Bissonnette *et al.*, 1990) it was decided to test the moderation effect via hierarchical multiple regression.

Table 02: Results of Hierarchical Multiple Regression

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

The above table (table 02) illustrated that the p value for path c is 0.008 ($P < 0.05$) which found that the effect is statistically significant. Based on the argument of Baron & Kenny in 1986 when the interaction (Path c) is statistically significant, the moderator hypothesis is supported. Hence, the author accepted the second hypothesis (H_2) which is the relationship between GOHRM and green attitude is significantly moderated by personal character of employees.

Discussion of Findings

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

The first objective of this study was to find the relationship between GOHRM and green attitude of employees. The statistical results show that GOHRM is significantly and positively related to green attitude. Hence, the author

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

employees to enhance their green attitude.

Conclusion and Implications of the Study

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

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

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

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