

Impact of Green HRM Practices on Green Behaviour Mediated by Green Attitude of Executive-Level Employees: A Study on a Selected Apparel Company in the Southern Province, Sri Lanka

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A B S T R A C T

The objective of this study is to investigate the impact of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices on employees' green behaviour, with the mediating role of green attitude in the apparel sector of Sri Lanka. The mediating role of green attitudes has been explored in the ICT sector and in the apparel sector at various hierarchical levels of employees. However, scant attention has been paid to the executive-level employees in the apparel industry. This study addresses this by investigating the mediating role of green attitudes among executive-level employees of a selected apparel company in Sri Lanka. The study examines key Green HRM practices, such as Green Performance Management, Green Reward Management, and Green Industrial Relations, and their influence on green attitudes and behaviours. This study uses a quantitative research approach. A cross-sectional survey was conducted among 118 executive-level employees of a selected apparel company, selected through simple random sampling, using a structured questionnaire. Data were analysed using IBM SPSS version 25 and Hayes' PROCESS macro to examine the mediating role of green attitudes on the impact of green HRM practices on green behaviour. The results indicate that Green HRM practices are significant predictors of green attitudes ($\beta = 0.7342, p < 0.001$) and green attitudes are significant predictors of green behaviour ($\beta = 0.7081, p < 0.001$). The indirect effect was significant ($\beta = 0.5199$, BootSE = 0.1025, 95% BootCI [0.3200, 0.7284]), and the direct effect was not significant ($\beta = 0.0568, p = 0.6309$), confirming full mediation. The findings provide an important implication for human resource managers and policymakers in promoting Green Behaviours in the apparel industry in developing countries. Practically, apparel firms can embed green values into human resource management practices to boost the green behaviour of their executive-level employees.

Keywords: Green Attitude (GA), Green Behaviour (GB), Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices

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1. Introduction and Research Problem

The global apparel industry is facing a significant pressure to reduce its carbon footprint as it emits a lot of greenhouse gases. The apparel industry is considered the world's largest polluter after the oil industry (De Fonseka, 2023). Sharif and Malik (2026) stated that the textile industry is the second most polluting industry in Pakistan, and they confirmed that the textile industry emits 6% of greenhouse gases into the environment. Meanwhile, the global apparel industry emits 10% of carbon into the environment (Okafor et al., 2021). "The urgency for an environmentally conscious textile industry grows as climate change becomes increasingly visible. However, technology is not sufficient to address this problem: organisations must thrive in promoting sustainable practices among their employees" (Valente, 2025, p.). The Sri Lankan apparel industry is well known for "sustainable manufacturing" and therefore positions "Sri Lanka as a leading destination for brands concerned about the environmental impacts of their clothing" (De Fonseka, 2023, p.02). In order, green HR practices are playing a pivotal role in the apparel sector in Sri Lanka to maintain sustainable manufacturing (Jayasekara and Wickramasooriya, 2025).

Adopting green practices can help companies reduce waste, cut costs, and improve environmental performance (Opatha, 2013). Green human resource management (GHRM) is recognized for specific GHRM practices such as Green Performance Management, which evaluates environmental targets; Green Reward Management for environmental goals, which incentivizes eco-friendly behaviours; and Green Industrial Relations, which fosters collaborative dialogue with unions on sustainability (Opatha and Kottawatta, 2020). According to Robertson and Barling (2013), green behaviours are voluntary actions aimed at reducing the environmental footprint of an organisation or individual, often driven by personal attitudes and organisational culture. Green attitudes of employees play a significant role in determining the effectiveness and efficiency of the green HRM functions and in gaining competitive advantages (Hristova and Stevceska-Srbinska, 2020).

Green attitude (GA) pertains to an individual's positive or negative evaluation and feelings toward environmental preservation and sustainability. Individuals with a positive attitude are more prone to environmentally friendly behaviour (Coskun, 2018). However, on some occasions, green attitude can exceed green behaviour or vice versa (Fabio, Croce, and Calabrese, 2025). It seems that some individuals are not behaving in an environmentally friendly way as expected, and some act in a more environmentally friendly way, which shows the attitude-behaviour gap (Fabio, Croce, and Calabrese, 2025). It shows that attitude plays a crucial role in employee pro-environmental behaviour. Most of the extant literature (Edirisuriya and Deegahawathura, 2022; Opatha, Hewapathirana and Gamage, 2024; Pathiraja, 2025) focuses on the direct effect of Green HRM practices on employee behaviour; however, the mediating effect of green attitude has very little understanding in the apparel sector.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) maintains that attitudes towards behaviour influence behavioural intentions and behaviours. Hence, green attitude can be conceptualized as a mediating variable through which organisational practices influence employee behaviours. Edirisuriya and Deegahawathura (2022, p.314) also stated that "prospective research can look into mediators and moderators to further explain the effect of green HRM practices on pro-environmental behaviours". Dilhani and Ranasinghe (2025) explored the moderating role of green attitudes in the apparel industry; however, their study did not specifically analyse the executive group, who are unique in their strategic decision-making, environmental literacy, and capacity to institutionalise green policies, and thus have a considerably different attitudinal-behavioural relationship compared to operational employees, as they combined

employees from all hierarchical levels. Similarly, Priyashantha and Priyangaa (2022) examined a similar mediation model in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) industry, a low-waste, knowledge-based sector with discretionary and office-oriented green behaviours that are of little relevance to the resource-intensive, production-oriented apparel manufacturing industry. Hence, this study investigates the mediating role of green attitudes between green HRM practices and green behaviour by focusing on the executive level employees of a selected apparel company operating in the Southern Province, Sri Lanka.

2. Research Methodology

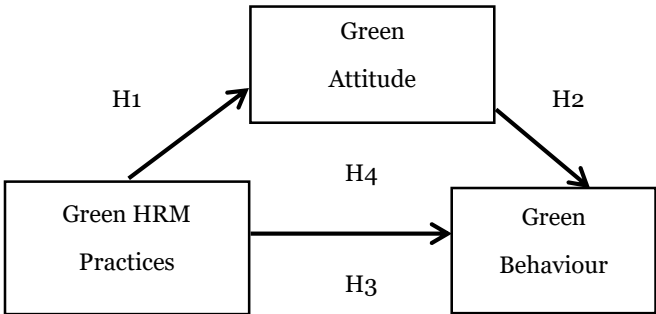


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 above illustrates the direct and indirect effects of Green HRM Practices on Green behaviour, as well as the mediating effect of Green Attitude.

The conceptual framework depicts the impact of the independent variable on the dependent variables in the current study, specifically describing the influence of the green human resource practices on employee green behaviour mediated by green attitude. Green Behaviour is considered a dependent variable in this model, while Green HRM Practices are considered an independent variable. Green Attitude is considered a mediating variable when examining the impact of Green HRM practices on Green Behaviour. According to Opatha and Kottawatta (2020), green work behaviour consists of three dimensions: organisational citizenship behaviour, green interpersonal citizenship behaviour, and Green official behaviour. GHRM practices are referred to as an independent variable. The instrument used to measure the GHRM in this study consisted of Green Performance Management, Green Reward Management, and Green Industrial Relations as the dimensions of measuring green HRM (Opatha and Kottawatta,2020).

Based on the objective nature of the research question, the study employed a quantitative research design to investigate the impact of green human resource practices on employee green behaviour mediated by green attitude. 118 executive employees were selected as the sample for the study using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table. An online survey questionnaire and a paper-based questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale were used to collect primary data to test hypotheses from executive employees in a selected apparel company.

The questionnaire consisted of three main sections. Section one was designed to collect the demographic information of the respondents, including Gender, Age, Work Experience, and Education. Section two collected the data related to the Green Human Resource Management Practices, and it consisted of 12 questions. These questions collected data related to the three

indicators, such as green performance management, green reward management, and Green Industrial Relations, with four questions for each one. The final section consisted of 12 questions to collect data related to the employee Green Behaviour and Green Attitude.

4. Results

4.1 Results of SPSS Process Macro of Hayes Model 4

The researcher used Hayes' process macro (Model 4) in SPSS software to identify the mediation impact of GA on the impact of GHRM on GB. The outcomes of the analysis are mentioned below in Table 4.1

Table 1: Results of Mediation Analysis

Separate Effects	β	SE	t	R ²	P
Impact of GHRM on GA	0.7342	0.0901	8.1444	0.3638	0.0000
Impact of GA on GB	0.7081	0.0969	7.3103	0.4419	0.0000
Impact of GHRM on GB	0.0568	0.1179	0.4818	0.4419	0.6309

Table 2: Results of Effect Analysis

Separate Effects	β	BootSE/SE	BootLLCI	BootULCI	R ²
Total effect of GHRM on GB	0.5767	0.1133	0.3522	0.8011	0.1825
Direct effect of GHRM on GB	0.0568	0.1179	-0.1767	0.2904	
Indirect effect of GA on the impact of GHRM on GB	0.5199	0.1025	0.3200	0.7284	

H1: Green HRM practices have a significant positive impact on Green Attitude.

The results of *H1* indicate that Green HRM practices have a significant positive impact on Green Attitude. β value is 0.7342, and the *p*-value is less than 0.05. Accordingly, *H1* was accepted.

H2: Green Attitude has a significant positive impact on Green Behaviour.

The results of *H2* indicate that Green Attitude has a significant positive impact on Green Behaviour. β value is 0.7081, and the *p*-value is less than 0.05. Accordingly, *H2* was accepted.

H3: Green HRM practices have a significant positive impact on Green Behaviour

According to the results, Green HRM practices do not have a significant positive impact on Green Behaviour, as its *p*-value is 0.6309, which is greater than 0.05. β value is 0.0568. However, *H3* was rejected.

H4: Green Attitude mediates the impact of Green HRM practices on Green Behaviour.

According to the mediation analysis results, the indirect effect of GHRM practices on green behaviour through green attitude was significant ($\beta = 0.5199$, BootSE = 0.1025, 95% BootCI [0.3200, 0.7284]), confirming the mediating role of green attitude. When the mediator was controlled, the direct effect of Green HRM practices on green behaviour was not significant ($\beta = 0.0568$, *p* = 0.6309). The results indicate full mediation; hence, *H4* is accepted.

5. Conclusions, Implications and Limitations

5.1 Conclusion

In the apparel sector, Green HRM practices such as green performance management, green reward management, and green industrial relations significantly shape the green attitudes of

executive-level employees. The findings indicate that Green HRM practices have a strong, positive and significant effect on Green Attitude in the apparel sector. Therefore, the study reinforces the theoretical argument that attitude is a key predictor of behaviour, particularly in the context of sustainability. The direct relationship between Green HRM and Green Behaviour was found to be positive but not statistically significant. The mediation analysis confirmed that Green Attitude fully mediates the impact of Green HRM on Green Behaviour (Indirect Effect = 0.5199). This indicates that Green HRM practices first influence employees' attitudes, which in turn drive their behaviour.

5.2 Theoretical Implication

The findings support the relevance of Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour regarding green employee behaviours. The important mediating effect of green attitude demonstrates that employees' environmental attitudes act as key psychological factors that connect GHRM practices with green actions. This highlights the significance of attitudinal factors in encouraging pro-environmental behaviours within organisations.

5.3 Empirical Implications

The findings of this study support previous empirical studies on green HRM and eco-friendly employee behaviour. However, in line with the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), our study highlights that the direct impact of green HRM practices on green behaviour may be rather limited in the absence of the mediating influence of green views. Specifically, this study confirms earlier findings (Dilhani and Ranasingha, 2025; Priyashantha, Priyangaa, 2022) that green attitudes have a crucial psychological role in turning corporate green initiatives into concrete.

5.4 Limitations

Research should be expanded to include multiple organisations within the apparel sector. This would enhance the generalisability of findings. In order to comprehend how Green HRM practices and green attitudes range across hierarchical levels and how these variations impact green behaviour, future research should include personnel at all organisational levels. Alternative mediating processes such as environmental knowledge, psychological empowerment, commitment, perceived organisational support for the environment, and perceived behavioural control are suggested in future studies. Employees' perceptions and experiences of Green HRM practices may be better understood through qualitative research techniques including focus groups, interviews, and case studies.

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