

Green HRM and Employee Environmental Commitment in Star-Rated Hotels

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between green human resource management practices and employee environmental commitment in four- and five-star hotels across India, Thailand, and the United Arab Emirates. Grounded in the Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) framework, a quantitative survey-based methodology was employed, collecting data from 378 hotel employees across 22 properties. Four dimensions of green HRM were examined: green recruitment, green training and development, green performance appraisal, and green rewards and compensation. Structural equation modelling revealed that all four green HRM practices positively predicted employee environmental commitment, with green training exhibiting the strongest effect ($\beta = .35$, $p < .001$). Environmental commitment, in turn, was significantly associated with both environmental performance and organisational citizenship behaviour toward the environment. Five-star hotels demonstrated higher adoption levels of green HRM practices compared to four-star properties, though the relationship between practices and commitment was consistent across star ratings. The findings suggest that systematic integration of environmental criteria into HRM processes can cultivate a workforce that actively contributes to hotel sustainability objectives.

Keywords: - Green HRM, Environmental Commitment, Hotel Employees, AMO Theory, Sustainable Hospitality, Green Training

I. INTRODUCTION

Hotels are labour-intensive organisations where employee behaviour directly shapes environmental outcomes. The energy a housekeeper uses when cleaning rooms, the water a chef consumes in kitchen operations, and the waste a front-desk team generates through printing practices all of these daily activities aggregate into the hotel's environmental footprint (Kim et al., 2019). Recognising this, a growing number of hotel chains have begun to integrate environmental objectives into their human resource management systems, an approach broadly termed Green Human Resource Management (Green HRM).

Green HRM encompasses the alignment of recruitment, training, performance management, and compensation practices with organisational environmental goals (Renwick et al., 2013). In the hotel context, this might include preferencing candidates with environmental awareness during hiring, providing staff with sustainability-focused training programmes, incorporating environmental targets into performance reviews, and rewarding employees who champion waste reduction or energy saving initiatives (Pham et al., 2019). The underlying logic is that environmental performance cannot be achieved through technology and policy alone; it requires employees who possess the ability, motivation, and opportunity to act in environmentally responsible ways.

The Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) theory (Appelbaum et al., 2000) provides a useful framework for this investigation. Applied to Green HRM, the theory suggests that green training builds environmental ability (knowledge and skills), green rewards and recognition create environmental motivation (incentives and intrinsic drive), and green participation opportunities provide the structural context for environmental action (Renwick et al., 2013). When all three elements are present, employees are more likely to develop genuine environmental commitment rather than mere compliance.

Despite growing scholarly interest, empirical research on Green HRM in hospitality remains geographically concentrated in developed Western economies, with limited attention to the rapidly growing hotel sectors of South and Southeast Asia and the Middle East. This study addresses this gap by examining Green HRM practices and their relationship

with employee environmental commitment across 22 four- and five-star hotels in India, Thailand, and the United Arab Emirates.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Green HRM: Conceptualisation and Dimensions

The concept of Green HRM emerged from the broader intersection of strategic HRM and corporate environmental management. Jabbour and Santos (2008) were among the first to propose that HRM practices could be systematically 'greened' by embedding environmental criteria throughout the employee lifecycle. Subsequent work by Renwick et al. (2013) and Opatha and Arulrajah (2014) developed this idea into a multi-dimensional construct encompassing green recruitment and selection, green training and development, green performance management and appraisal, and green compensation and rewards.

Green recruitment involves attracting and selecting candidates who demonstrate environmental awareness and values, signalling the organisation's environmental commitment to potential employees (Tang et al., 2018). Green training equips employees with the knowledge and skills to perform their roles in environmentally responsible ways, covering topics such as energy conservation techniques, waste sorting protocols, and chemical management procedures (Jabbour, 2013). Green performance appraisal incorporates environmental metrics into employee evaluation criteria, creating accountability for sustainability targets (Ahmad, 2015). Green rewards provide financial and non-financial incentives for environmentally beneficial behaviour, ranging from monetary bonuses for energy saving ideas to public recognition programmes (Jabbour et al., 2019).

2.2. Employee Environmental Commitment

Environmental commitment refers to an employee's psychological attachment to and identification with the organisation's environmental objectives (Cantor et al., 2012). Drawing on Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component model of organisational commitment, environmental commitment can be differentiated into affective (emotional attachment to environmental goals), continuance (perceived cost of abandoning environmental behaviours), and normative (felt obligation to behave environmentally) dimensions. In hospitality research, affective environmental commitment has received the most attention, as it is most strongly associated with discretionary pro-environmental behaviours that go beyond job requirements (Daily et al., 2009).

The link between Green HRM and environmental commitment is theorised to operate through multiple mechanisms. Training builds competence and self-efficacy, which Foster et al. (2000) argue increases employees' confidence in their ability to contribute to environmental goals. Performance appraisal creates goal clarity and accountability. Rewards signal organisational values and reinforce desired behaviours. And green recruitment ensures a baseline alignment between personal and organisational environmental values from the outset of the employment relationship.

2.3. The AMO Framework in Green HRM Research

The AMO theory (Appelbaum et al., 2000) posits that individual performance is a function of ability (can do), motivation (will do), and opportunity (allowed to do). Applied to Green HRM by Renwick et al. (2013), this framework suggests that green training enhances ability, green rewards boost motivation, and green participation and empowerment create opportunity. Several scholars have used this framework to structure Green HRM investigations in manufacturing (Pinzone et al., 2016) and healthcare (Pham et al., 2019), but its application in hospitality settings is limited, particularly in emerging economy contexts where institutional and cultural factors may alter how AMO mechanisms operate.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

Drawing on the AMO framework and the literature reviewed above, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H1: Green recruitment is positively related to employee environmental commitment.
- H2: Green training and development is positively related to employee environmental commitment.
- H3: Green performance appraisal is positively related to employee environmental commitment.
- H4: Green rewards and compensation is positively related to employee environmental commitment.
- H5: Employee environmental commitment is positively related to environmental performance.
- H6: Employee environmental commitment is positively related to organisational citizenship behaviour toward the environment.

IV. METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional quantitative design was adopted. The target population comprised operational-level and supervisory employees at four- and five-star hotels in three countries: India (Mumbai, Delhi, Goa), Thailand (Bangkok, Phuket, Chiang Mai), and the UAE (Dubai, Abu Dhabi). Hotels were selected through stratified random sampling from national hotel association directories, with stratification by star rating and city. Twenty-two hotels agreed to participate: eight in India, eight in Thailand, and six in the UAE.

A structured questionnaire was developed using validated scales. Green HRM practices were measured using items adapted from Pham et al. (2019) and Kim et al. (2019), with separate subscales for green recruitment (5 items), green training (6 items), green performance appraisal (5 items), and green rewards (5 items). Employee environmental commitment was assessed using the 8-item scale from Cantor et al. (2012). Environmental performance was measured with 6 items adapted

from Ones and Dilchert (2012), and organisational citizenship behaviour toward the environment used Daily et al.'s (2009) 10-item instrument. All items were measured on 5-point Likert scales.

Questionnaires were distributed in English, Thai, and Arabic through departmental managers during staff briefings. A total of 520 questionnaires were distributed, and 402 were returned (77.3 percent response rate). After removing 24 incomplete responses, 378 usable surveys remained. Data were analysed using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS 4.0, following Hair et al.'s (2017) two-stage approach of measurement model assessment followed by structural model evaluation.

V. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

5.1. Demographic Profile

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (n=378)

Variable	Category	Percentage
Gender	Male / Female	58% / 42%
Age	21–30 / 31–40 / 41–50 / 50+	34% / 39% / 20% / 7%
Education	Diploma / Bachelor / Master+	28% / 51% / 21%
Department	F&B / Housekeeping / Front Office / Other	32% / 27% / 22% / 19%
Tenure	<2 yrs / 2–5 / 5–10 / 10+	18% / 35% / 31% / 16%
Hotel star rating	4-star / 5-star	45% / 55%
Country	India / Thailand / UAE	36% / 38% / 26%
Position	Operational / Supervisory	67% / 33%

5.2. Structural Model Results

Fig 1 presents the structural model with standardised path coefficients. The model demonstrated acceptable fit, with SRMR = 0.058 (below the 0.08 threshold) and all variance inflation factors below 3.0, indicating absence of multicollinearity.

Fig 1. Structural Model with Path Coefficients: Green HRM Practices and Environmental Commitment

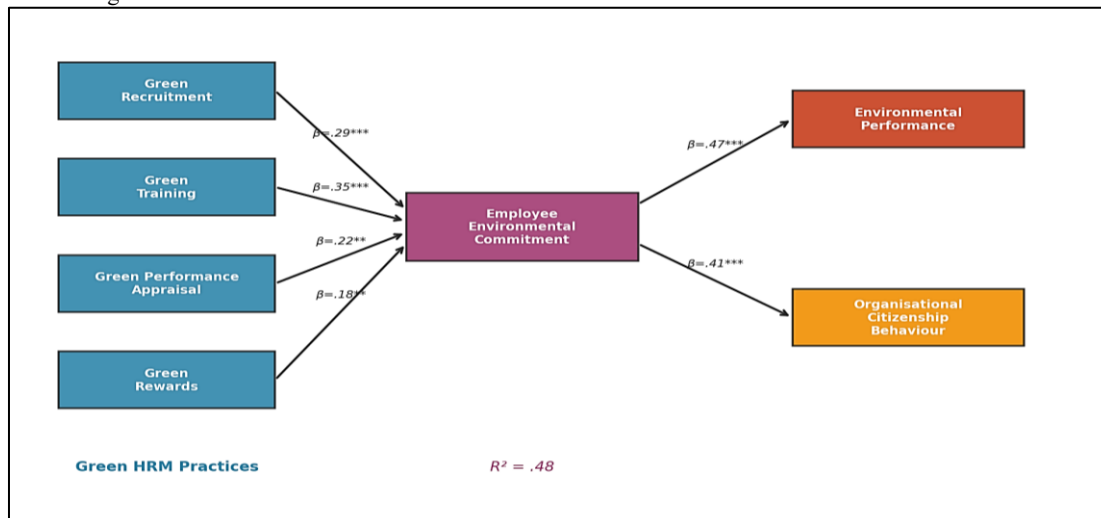


Table 2. Hypothesis Testing Results from Structural Equation Modelling

Hypothesis	Path	β	t-value	Result
H1	GR → EC	.29	4.87***	Supported
H2	GT → EC	.35	6.12***	Supported
H3	GPA → EC	.22	3.74**	Supported
H4	GRW → EC	.18	3.21**	Supported
H5	EC → EP	.47	8.63***	Supported
H6	EC → OCB-E	.41	7.28***	Supported

All six hypotheses received empirical support. Green training demonstrated the strongest effect on environmental commitment ($\beta = .35$, $p < .001$), followed by green recruitment ($\beta = .29$, $p < .001$), green performance appraisal ($\beta = .22$, $p < .01$), and green rewards ($\beta = .18$, $p < .01$). Together, the four Green HRM practices explained 48 percent of variance in environmental commitment ($R^2 = .48$). Environmental commitment, in turn, strongly predicted both environmental performance ($\beta = .47$, $p < .001$) and organisational citizenship behaviour toward the environment ($\beta = .41$, $p < .001$).

5.3. Green HRM Adoption by Star Rating

Fig 2. Mean Green HRM Practice Adoption Scores by Hotel Star Rating

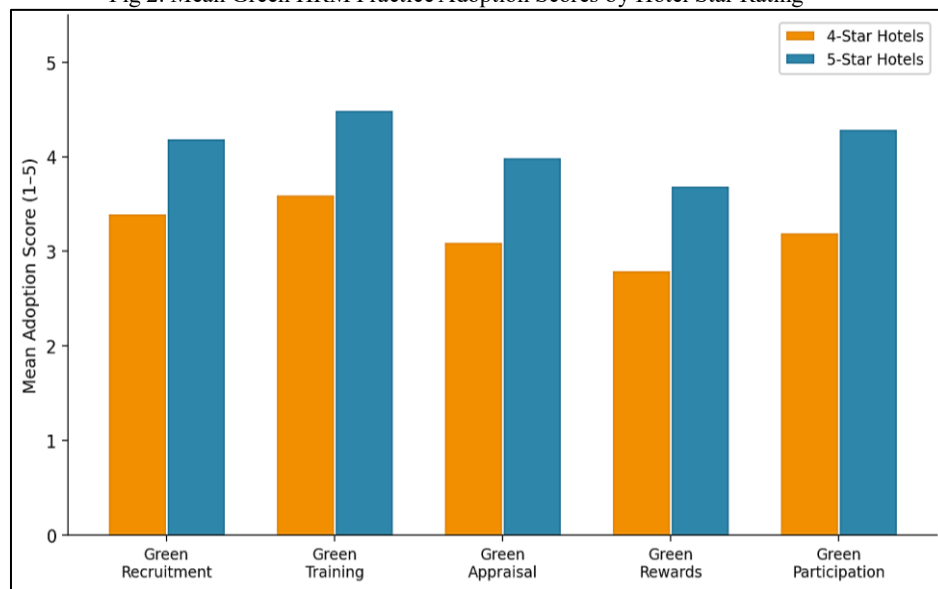


Fig 2 reveals a consistent pattern of higher Green HRM adoption in five-star hotels across all practice dimensions. The gap was most pronounced for green training (4.5 vs. 3.6) and green participation (4.3 vs. 3.2), suggesting that five-star properties allocate greater resources to environmental capacity building. Green rewards showed the smallest gap and the lowest absolute scores in both categories, indicating that financial incentives for environmental behaviour remain underdeveloped across the sector regardless of star classification.

VI. DISCUSSION

The results of this study provide empirical support for the AMO framework as an explanatory mechanism linking Green HRM practices to employee environmental commitment in hotel settings. The finding that green training exerted the strongest influence on commitment aligns with the 'ability' component of AMO theory and is consistent with Jabbour's (2013) argument that environmental knowledge and skills form the foundation upon which motivation and opportunity effects are built. Employees who lack understanding of environmental issues and practical techniques for addressing them are unlikely to develop genuine commitment, regardless of incentive structures or participatory opportunities.

The relatively weaker effect of green rewards compared to other Green HRM dimensions warrants attention. One interpretation, consistent with self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), is that external rewards may partially crowd out intrinsic motivation for environmental behaviour. Employees who develop environmental commitment through training and values alignment may not require financial incentives to sustain pro-environmental actions; indeed, such incentives may signal that environmental behaviour is an additional burden deserving compensation rather than an integral part of professional identity. This interpretation is supported by qualitative comments from survey respondents in Thailand, several of whom noted that recognition from peers and managers was more meaningful than monetary rewards.

The geographic comparisons revealed interesting patterns. Indian hotels showed higher green recruitment scores, which interviewees attributed to the large pool of hospitality graduates who have received sustainability education in their degree programmes. Thai hotels excelled in green training, reflecting the Thai Hotel Association's industry-wide environmental training programme launched in 2019. UAE hotels demonstrated higher green rewards scores, consistent with the performance-oriented compensation culture prevalent in Gulf hospitality. These variations suggest that Green HRM adoption is shaped by local institutional conditions as much as by corporate policy.

The strong association between environmental commitment and both environmental performance ($\beta = .47$) and organisational citizenship behaviour ($\beta = .41$) confirms that committed employees do not merely comply with environmental rules but actively seek opportunities to improve environmental outcomes. This finding has practical significance because many hotel environmental initiatives separating waste, reporting leaks, suggesting improvements depend on discretionary employee behaviour that cannot be fully specified in job descriptions or monitored by managers.

VII. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study demonstrates that Green HRM practices positively influence employee environmental commitment in four- and five-star hotels across India, Thailand, and the UAE, with green training emerging as the most potent predictor. The AMO framework provides a useful theoretical lens for understanding how different HRM practices contribute to environmental outcomes through distinct mechanisms of ability, motivation, and opportunity enhancement.

For hotel managers, the findings suggest that environmental training programmes should receive priority investment within the Green HRM portfolio. Training that combines environmental knowledge with practical skills such as energy auditing techniques, waste sorting procedures, and guest engagement methods appears to be the most effective pathway to building a genuinely committed environmental workforce. Green recruitment practices offer a complementary strategy by ensuring that new hires bring baseline environmental values that can be developed through subsequent training.

For human resource professionals, the study highlights the importance of integrating environmental criteria into existing HRM systems rather than treating sustainability as a separate initiative. When environmental performance is embedded in job descriptions, selection criteria, training curricula, and appraisal metrics, it becomes part of the organisational culture rather than an add-on programme vulnerable to budget cuts and management turnover.

Limitations include the cross-sectional design, which precludes causal inference, and the self-report measures, which may be subject to social desirability bias. Future research should employ longitudinal designs to track how Green HRM adoption influences environmental commitment over time and multi-source data collection methods that include objective environmental performance metrics alongside employee self-reports.

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