

Analysis of Green Recruitment, Green Performance Management and Green Reward Management Practices in Manufacturing Companies in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Industrialization worldwide enhances business, technology, and overall quality of life but also exacerbates environmental hazards. Organizations must adopt Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices to mitigate these threats. This study explores the impact of green recruitment, green performance management, and green reward management in fostering a sustainable work environment. It also examines the challenges organizations face in implementing these practices and the benefits they gain from doing so. Using a qualitative approach, this research involved interviews with 12 manufacturing firms in Sri Lanka, selected through purposive sampling. Thematic analysis was conducted to identify key insights. Findings indicate that while GHRM practices contribute positively to sustainability, their adoption is hindered by various organizational challenges. Since the study focuses solely on the Sri Lankan manufacturing sector, the findings may have limited generalizability. However, they offer valuable insights for HR professionals in policy development and implementation of Green HRM strategies within their organizations.

Keywords: Green HRM; Green HRM Practices; Green HRM Outcomes; Green HRM Challenges

1. Introduction

The urgency to protect the environment has escalated due to pressing global challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. The UNEP's 2021 report underscores the triple planetary crisis, which includes climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, and pollution as critical threats to global sustainability. Additionally, NASA's 2021 global temperature records show a rise of 0.85 degrees Celsius above the average from 1951 to 1980, highlighting the alarming pace of global warming. These environmental challenges have spurred global awareness and prompted governments and organizations to take action by encouraging sustainable and eco-friendly practices (Mukherjee et al., 2020). In response, organizations are urged to meet environmental standards such as ISO 14001 to reduce their environmental impact and mitigate the negative effects of their operations (Opatha, 2013). Business activities, however, remain major contributors to environmental degradation, with pollution and resource depletion being direct consequences of industrialization (Ahmad, 2015; Lakshmi & Battu, 2018).

Green Human Resource Management (Green HRM) has emerged as a strategic approach that organizations use to implement eco-friendly practices and sustainability initiatives. Green HRM encourages companies to adopt environmentally sustainable processes, produce eco-friendly products, and minimize their negative environmental impacts (Robinson, 2008). HR managers are key to integrating environmental goals into HR functions, such as recruitment, training, performance management, and reward systems. By doing so, they ensure that employees are motivated and equipped to contribute to environmental sustainability initiatives. Green HRM is vital in mitigating global warming, reducing natural disasters, and minimizing harm to ecosystems (Opatha, 2013). These HR functions align employees with the organization's environmental strategies, fostering eco-friendly behavior and ensuring compliance with environmental standards (Wehrmeyer, 1996; Govindarajulu & Daily, 2004; Daily & Huang, 2001; Ramus, 2002).

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In Sri Lanka, industrialization has significantly contributed to environmental pollution, with the overuse of natural resources and waste production from manufacturing processes playing a major role in environmental degradation (Thilakarathne et al., 2019). The country was ranked 132nd out of 180 nations in the 2022 Environmental Performance Index (EPI), indicating considerable environmental challenges. Green HRM practices are crucial in addressing these issues, as they encourage organizations to reduce their environmental footprints and adopt sustainable resource management practices. Green HRM involves integrating environmental management practices into HR functions at all organizational levels, promoting responsible resource use and preserving intellectual capital (Opatha & Arulrajah, 2016; Mandip, 2012). HR functions such as recruitment, selection, training, performance management, and reward systems are instrumental in embedding environmental goals within the organizational culture (Renwick et al., 2008). Organizations that successfully implement Green HRM benefit from improved environmental performance and contribute to their corporate sustainability goals by engaging employees in green initiatives (Suharti & Sugiarto, 2020). HR professionals are crucial in fostering an environmentally conscious workforce, ensuring employees are motivated and empowered to adopt green practices in their daily work (Jackson et al., 2011; Dutta, 2012). By transforming traditional HR functions into green practices, organizations can not only improve their environmental performance but also gain a competitive edge in the market (Jabbour, 2011). Ultimately, Green HRM helps companies positively contribute to environmental protection while achieving long-term sustainable success (Opatha, 2013).

1.1. Problem Statement

The research on Green Human Resource Management (HRM) has grown globally, with increasing awareness of environmental management and sustainable development. However, the effective implementation of Green HR practices in corporate culture remains challenging. While there are many research opportunities, the concept of Green HRM is still vague, and more empirical research is needed to fill the gaps in this field. Most Green HRM research has been conducted in Western countries, with limited studies in Asia, particularly Sri Lanka. In Sri Lanka, Green HRM is a relatively new concept, and further research is needed to understand its practical applications in local industries, especially in the manufacturing and service sectors. Existing studies focus mainly on a few HRM functions like recruitment, training, performance evaluation, and reward management. The proposed study will explore how Green HRM practices, specifically recruitment, performance management, and reward management, can be implemented in Sri Lanka's manufacturing industry. Therefore, this study seeks to address the question: "How can selected Green HRM practices be implemented by the Manufacturing Industry in Sri Lanka?"

1.2. Research Questions

Based on the problem statement, the following research questions have been formulated.

- How do organizations in the manufacturing sector define the concept of green HRM?
- How do companies in the manufacturing industry practice the selected Green HRM practices?
- How do Green HR practices generate benefits for Sri Lanka's manufacturing sector organizations?
- What are the challenges faced by Sri Lankan manufacturing organizations in implementing selected Green HRM practices?

1.3. Research Objectives

Based on the problem statement, the following research objectives have been formulated.

- To identify how manufacturing sector companies in Sri Lanka define the concept of Green HRM
- To investigate how companies in the manufacturing sector have transformed selected HR practices into Green HR practices
- To explore how Green HR practices have created benefits for Sri Lanka's manufacturing sector organizations.
- To explore the challenges faced by Sri Lankan manufacturing sector organizations in implementing selected Green HRM practices.

2. Literature review

2.1. Green Human Resource Management

Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) plays a critical role in enhancing environmental performance by encouraging employees to adopt sustainable behaviors and promoting environmentally conscious attitudes within organizations. GHRM practices are essential for improving sustainability by integrating environmental management, sustainable development, and HR practices. They align human resource functions with the economic, social, and

environmental dimensions of sustainability (Muster & Schrader, 2011). GHRM not only influences employees' work-related environmental actions but also extends to their commitment to sustainability (Muster & Schrader, 2011; Vij, Suri, & Singh, 2013). By raising awareness and fostering green behaviors, GHRM helps organizations achieve long-term sustainability goals (Obaid & Alias, 2015; Opatha & Arulrajah, 2014; Suharti & Sugiarto, 2020). GHRM integrates green objectives into HR functions, motivating employees to align their actions with organizational sustainability goals, ultimately improving environmental performance (Mathapati, 2013; Khan et al., 2019).

Table 01 shows, how different scholars have defined the term “Green HRM”.

Table 1 Definitions of Green HRM

Author	Definition
Renwick et al, (2008)	“The integration of Corporate Environmental Management into Human Resource Management”
Jabbour et al, (2010)	“The greening of functional dimensions of Human Resource Management such as job description and analysis, recruitment, selection, training, performance appraisal, and rewards.”
Zoogah (2011)	Green HRM is the practice of philosophies and policies of HRM to promote ecological usage of business resources and prevent any harmful environmental effect arising with the operations of the firm
Jabbour (2011)	“The level of the greening of human resource management practices in terms of functional and competitive dimensions of HRM.”
Marhatta & Adhikari (2013)	“Use of HRM policies to promote the sustainable use of resources within organizations and more generally promotes the cause of environmental sustainability.”
Vij, Suri, & Singh (2013)	“Using every employee interface to promote sustainable practices and increase employee awareness and commitment on the issues of sustainability”
Renwick et al, (2013)	“HRM aspects of Environmental Management.”

2.2. Green Recruitment: Going Green through Recruitment Function

Green Recruitment is a key HR function for sustainability, focusing on hiring environmentally conscious individuals to align with organizational sustainability goals (Gupta & Gupta, 2013; Holtom, 2008). It involves selecting candidates with knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to environmental management systems, and minimizing environmental impacts through practices like paperless recruitment (Gupta & Gupta, 2013; Obaid & Alias, 2015). Green hiring is more cost-effective than training existing employees on environmental practices (Arulrajah, 2015). By integrating environmental concerns into recruitment processes, organizations improve their reputation as environmentally responsible employers (Ahmad, 2015). Green recruitment practices can also assess candidates' environmental attitudes and values to ensure alignment with sustainability goals (Renwick et al., 2013; Zubair & Khan, 2019). A listing of the exciting and certain new HRM practices under Green Recruitment is shown in Table 02.

Table 2 Green Recruitment Practices

Saini et al (2016)	Use 100 percent recycled paper throughout the interview process Take family-style food catering as it produces less waste Pitchers of water and large bottles of sodas instead of individual bottles and cans on the tables during interviews.
(Diana A.C., 2016)	Job Portals for Companies Applications are invited through online mediums like e-mail, online application forms or the Global Talent Pool, Use of Telephonic Interview Online, telephone & Video-based Interviews Software as a Service (SaaS) e-Recruiting software

Renwick et al (2008), Opatha (2013)	To include environmental criteria in the recruitment messages. To communicate the employer's concern about Greening through recruitment efforts. Reflecting environmental policy and strategies of the organization in its recruitment policy. Expressing certain environmental values in the job advertisements of the company. Becoming a Green employer or Green employer of choice
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2.3. Green Performance Management: Enhancing Sustainability Practices in Employee Performance

Green performance and appraisal are key aspects of Green HRM, focusing on evaluating employees' environmental contributions within Environmental Management (Jabbour & Santos, 2008). These systems assess employees' environmental responsibilities, influencing rewards such as promotions and compensation (Arulrajah et al., 2015; Ardiza & Nawangsari, 2019). Effective green performance management incorporates company policies, environmental issues, and responsibilities (Ahmad, 2015), with feedback being essential for motivating employees (Govindarajulu & Daily, 2004). Techniques in performance appraisal help HR managers evaluate critical success factors and incentivize improvements through rewards (Chen et al., 2015; Darvishmotevali & Altinay, 2022). By establishing green criteria, such as carbon emission reduction, organizations can assess and reward employees for their environmental efforts (Gupta, 2013; Saeed et al., 2019; Hermenn et al., 2007). A listing of the exciting and certain new HRM practices under the Green performance management is shown in Table 03.

Table 3 Green Performance Management Practices

Authors	Practices
Milliman & Clair (1996), Renwick et al (2008), Renwick et al (2013), Opatha (2013)	Establishing Environmental Management Information System and Environmental Audits. Incorporating corporate environmental management objectives and targets with the performance evaluation system of the organization. Installing corporate-wide environmental performance standards. Setting green targets, goals, and responsibilities. Providing regular feedback to the employees or teams to achieve environmental goals or improve their environmental performance.

2.4. Green Reward Management: Motivating Employees through Sustainable Incentives

Green rewards and compensation are systems that use both financial and non-financial incentives to encourage employees to meet organizational environmental objectives (Jabbour et al., 2013; Mandago, 2018). Non-financial rewards like recognition and praise can be more effective than financial incentives in motivating employees to improve environmental performance (Jabbour et al., 2008; Jackson et al., 2011). Green compensation systems support environmental priorities by offering rewards for skills, sustainable technology, and eco-friendly behavior (Ahmad, 2015). These incentives help employees engage in eco-friendly practices and improve overall environmental performance (Renwick et al., 2012; Arulrajah et al., 2015). Green reward management is essential for driving corporate environmental success (Arulrajah, 2015). A listing of the exciting and certain new HRM practices under the Green reward management is shown in Table 04.

Table 4 Green Reward Management Practices

Authors	Practices
Renwick et al (2008), Jackson et al (2011), Opatha (2013)	Rewarding employee environmental performance (financially – bonuses, cash, non-financially – leave, gifts, or recognition based – awards, dinners, publicity, daily praise) regarding recycling, and waste management. Support to reduce long-distance business travel Team excellence awards for better environmental performance Rewarding for green skills acquisition Introducing rewards for innovative environmental initiatives/performance. Communicating employee environmental excellence

2.5. Outcomes of Green HRM

2.5.1. Organizational Level Outcomes

Green HRM fosters environmentally friendly behaviors in employees, which helps achieve both financial and environmental goals (Rani & Mishra, 2014; Lakshmi & Battu, 2018). It enhances resource efficiency (Florida & Davison, 2001; Joyce & Vijay, 2020), promotes sustainability (Mehta & Chugan, 2015; Ragas et al., 2017), reduces environmental impacts (Siyambalapitiya et al., 2018), and lowers workplace waste and pollution (Phillips, 2007). By aligning HRM practices with environmental management, companies improve economic and environmental performance, gain a sustainable competitive advantage, and achieve environmental goals (Suharti & Sugiarto, 2020; Alhadid & Abu-Rumman, 2014; Joyce & Vijay, 2020). Green HRM also reduces costs, enhances employee engagement, fosters an eco-friendly organizational culture, and supports green workplace creation (Lakshmi & Battu, 2018; Joyce & Vijay, 2020; Saeed et al., 2019). Additionally, it helps organizations find cost-effective solutions without sacrificing top talent (Kumari, 2012).

2.5.2. Outcomes of Green Recruitment, Green Performance Management, & Green Reward Management

Green recruitment helps organizations attract environmentally conscious employees, aligning with environmental policies and enhancing employer branding (Arulrajah et al., 2015; CIPD, 2007). By positioning themselves as a "green employer of choice," companies can attract eco-aware talent (Renwick et al., 2008; Jackson et al., 2011). The benefits include reduced agency costs, improved employer branding, lower paper and processing costs, enhanced candidate experience, and promoting ethical practices (Diana, 2016). Green performance management ensures environmental goals are met by monitoring pollution, resource use, and energy, ensuring regulatory compliance (Arulrajah et al., 2015). Additionally, green reward management practices motivate employees and support innovation, aiding in the achievement of environmental goals and fostering employee retention and engagement (Arulrajah et al., 2015; Kaur & Atwal, 2021).

2.6. Are Green Practices Creating Challenges?

2.6.1. Challenges of Green Recruitment, Green Performance Management, & Green Reward Management

Implementing Green HRM practices presents several challenges for organizations. Hiring candidates based solely on green attributes may result in unqualified applicants and an increased workload for HR staff (Diana, 2016). Green performance management faces difficulties such as incompetency, lack of integration, and insufficient leadership commitment (Rajendran, 2018). Moreover, measuring environmental performance across departments, setting corporate-wide environmental benchmarks, and conducting green audits can be challenging. The lack of employee involvement in environmental issues within Green Performance Appraisals and unclear Green Compensation and Rewards systems can lead to decreased employee motivation to engage in green behaviors (Ardiza et al., 2021).

2.6.2. Common Challenges under Green HRM Practices

The implementation of Green HRM practices faces several challenges due to its complexity and novelty. Key obstacles include a lack of understanding about the scope and depth of Green HRM (Arulrajah et al., 2015; Obaid & Alias, 2015) and difficulties in aligning it with organizational strategies and environmental goals (Khan et al., 2017). Other challenges include the need for employee education, measuring outcomes, and transitioning from traditional HRM practices (Khan et al., 2019). Financial concerns, such as high technology installation costs and uncertain financial benefits, are significant issues (Bohdanowicz, 2006; Guerci & Carollo, 2016). Additionally, the lack of managerial support, environmental management knowledge, and the costs of maintaining green initiatives pose barriers (Fayyazi et al., 2015; Jafri, 2012; Ren et al., 2018; Islam et al., 2019).

3. Research methods

Research philosophy is essential in shaping research paradigms, and guiding the discovery of new knowledge through various assumptions and structures (Saunders et al., 2016; Zulauskas et al., 2016). A research paradigm comprises four components: ontology (nature of reality), epistemology (how reality is explored), methodology (approaches to data collection), and axiology (ethical considerations). Ontology addresses whether reality is fixed or dynamic, while epistemology differentiates objective (positivism) and subjective (social constructivism) approaches. The methodology uses quantitative methods for fixed realities and qualitative methods for dynamic ones. This study adopts a subjective ontological stance and a social constructivist epistemology, using qualitative methods to explore Green HRM functions in Sri Lankan manufacturing. The research ensures quality through Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria, focusing on reliability, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

3.1. Sample and sampling technique

The study targeted HR managers and executives in Sri Lanka's manufacturing sector, using a purposive non-probability sampling method to select participants. This approach was deemed suitable for gaining in-depth insights, as it focused on individuals who could best address the research questions and objectives (Saunders et al., 2016). The sample consisted of HR managers at both executive and managerial levels across various manufacturing organizations. The interview participants had varying levels of experience in the relevant industry and a brief profile of each participant is shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5 Details of participants

Company Name	Type of Industry	Name of the Participants	Designation of the participants	Years of experience	Mode of data recording
Company A	Biscuit Manufacturer	Ms. Kanchani	HR Manager	12 Years	Note Book
Company B	Biscuit manufacturer	Mr. Geethaka	Head of HR	15 Years	Tape recorder
Company C	Apparel manufacturer	Mr. Priyantha	Head of CSR	08 Years	Tape recorder
Company D	Apparel manufacturer	Ms. Kulathunga	HR Executive	04 Years	Tape recorder
Company E	Vehicle Spare parts manufacturer	Ms. Priya	Manager(Sustainability)	09 Years	Tape recorder
Company F	Chocolate manufacturer	Mr. Nuwan	Head of HR	10 Years	Note pad
Company G	Matches box manufacturer	Ms. Kumari	HR Executive	07 Years	Note pad
Company H	Packaging & printing manufacturer	Mr. Gunathilake	HR Manager	11 Years	Tape recorder
Company I	Umbrella manufacturer	Ms. Serasinghe	HR Manager	10 Years	Tape recorder
Company J	Tyre manufacturer	Ms. Dulani	HR Executive	06 Years	Note pad
Company K	Spicy product manufacturer	Mr. Dimantha	HR Executive	04 Years	Tape Recorder

Interviews were conducted using phone calls, the Microsoft Teams platform & physical meetings. Each interview spanned between 30 minutes and one hour. The participants gave consent to record the interview, which was later used to transcribe the content. Eleven participants were determined after reaching the saturation point and data became repetitive.

3.2. Data Gathering Technique

This study follows a qualitative approach, with data collection methods aligned with the qualitative paradigm. In-depth interviews, guided by a semi-structured interview guide, were the primary data collection method. These methods aim to provide a comprehensive description of the research participants (Daniel, 2016).

3.2.1. Interviews as a Method of Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews are commonly used in qualitative research for exploring participants' experiences, opinions, and beliefs in-depth (Coughlan, 2009). While they can be challenging due to potential cultural differences that may affect communication (Qu & Dumay, 2011), they offer a rich source of data when properly planned. The flexibility of semi-structured interviews, which combine pre-prepared questions with opportunities for participants to elaborate, allows for a more exploratory conversation (Mathers, Fox, & Hunn, 2000; Coughlan, 2009). This adaptability makes them one of the most versatile and frequently used tools in qualitative research (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011).

3.3. Data Analysis Method

The study utilized thematic analysis to examine interview data, focusing on identifying and reporting patterns. According to Saldana (2012), a "code" is a word or phrase representing the core idea of a data piece. The process involves several stages: first, familiarizing oneself with the transcripts; second, generating a base code by identifying relevant features (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006); and third, analyzing the coded content to develop themes, refining, combining, or eliminating codes based on their contextual relevance.

4. Data presentation, analysis and discussion

4.1. Green Human Resource Management

Green Human Resource Management (Green HRM) is emerging in Sri Lanka, though it is still a relatively new concept (Opatha, 2013). The understanding of Green HRM varies across industries: a chocolate manufacturer's HR head views it as performing HR tasks in an environmentally friendly way, while a fire matches manufacturer's HR executive links it to sustainability. A vehicle spare parts manufacturer's manager emphasizes the interconnectedness of people, planet, and profit for long-term sustainability (Author's field interviews, 2023). The concept, first introduced by Wehrmeyer in 1996, is being gradually adopted in Sri Lanka, with companies like an umbrella manufacturer practicing it for two years and a biscuit manufacturer for over three years (Author's field interviews, 2023). Successful implementation typically requires an organizational environmental policy, with HR departments playing a crucial role. For example, a Tyre manufacturer's HR executive aligns practices with ISO 14001 standards, while an apparel manufacturer's CSR head highlights HR's role in executing the policy (Author's field interviews, 2023; Paille et al., 2014).

4.2. Why did organizations choose to adopt Green HRM?

Several organizations in Sri Lanka are increasingly adopting Green Human Resource Management (Green HRM) due to its environmental and business benefits. A packaging and printing manufacturer's HR manager highlighted the negative environmental impact of businesses as a key motivator for implementing Green HRM, viewing environmental protection as vital for business survival (Author's field interview, 2023). Similarly, a spicy product manufacturer's HR executive noted that the rising customer preference for eco-friendly companies has prompted their firm to adopt Green HRM as a marketing strategy (Author's field interview, 2023). Green HRM also provides financial advantages, such as cost reduction and minimized environmental harm. A fire matches manufacturer's HR executive mentioned that Green HRM helped reduce carbon emissions and costs (Author's field interview, 2023), supporting the findings of Lakshmi and Battu (2018) that Green HRM can lower costs while mitigating environmental damage. Additionally, some organizations have been inspired by the success of others in adopting Green HRM, as seen in a vehicle manufacturer's sustainability manager who cited another company's successful implementation as a model (Author's field interview, 2023). These cases demonstrate the growing trend of Green HRM adoption in Sri Lanka, driven by both environmental responsibility and business advantages.

4.3. Green Recruitment

Green Recruitment practices are becoming popular among Sri Lankan manufacturing firms as part of broader Green HRM strategies aimed at minimizing environmental impact. Companies, such as biscuit, chocolate, apparel, fire match, spicy product, and tyre manufacturers, focus on reducing paper usage and utilizing online platforms for recruitment and interviews (Author's field interviews, 2023). These practices align with academic definitions that emphasize paper waste reduction and environmental consciousness (Opatha, 2013; Arulrajah, 2015). Best practices include posting job ads online, reusing paper, and evaluating candidates' environmental attitudes (Renwick et al., 2013; Diana, 2016; Author's field interviews, 2023). Firms strive to become "Green Employers of Choice" to attract environmentally conscious candidates (Opatha, 2013; Author's field interviews, 2023).

4.4. Green Performance Management

Green performance management, an essential element of Green HRM, focuses on evaluating employees' environmental performance through indicators like waste reduction, recycling, and carbon emission reduction (Arulrajah et al., 2015; Saeed et al., 2019). This assessment occurs both individually and as a team (Author's field interview, 2023), with some organizations opting for qualitative evaluations, such as supervisor opinions, instead of quantitative metrics (Author's field interview, 2023). The implementation of an Environmental Management Information System (EMIS) is vital for effective management (Renwick et al., 2008), with some organizations, like a tyre manufacturer, already investing in it, while others, such as a biscuit manufacturer, plan to implement it (Author's field interview, 2023). Environmental audits, providing feedback based on audit results, are also utilized (Renwick et al., 2008), highlighting how Sri Lankan organizations are incorporating green performance management into HR strategies to promote sustainability.

4.5. Green Reward Management

Green rewards and compensation, a key component of Green HRM, utilize both financial and non-financial incentives to motivate employees while supporting environmental goals (Jabbour et al., 2013; Mandago, 2018). Sri Lankan manufacturing organizations, such as apparel and packaging companies, implement these practices by rewarding employees for green performance, with incentives like salary increases, bonuses, recognition, and appreciation letters (Jackson et al., 2011; Author's field interviews, 2023). Some organizations also reduce long-distance travel or provide accommodations as part of their reward system (Author's field interview, 2023), demonstrating the alignment of Green HRM with sustainability objectives.

4.6. Benefits of practicing Green Recruitment

Green recruitment offers several benefits to organizations, including attracting environmentally conscious employees who align with sustainability goals and enhancing the company's eco-friendly reputation (Author's field interview, 2023). This approach improves employer branding by appealing to candidates with environmental values (Arulrajah et al., 2015). By promoting a company as a "green employer of choice," its image is further boosted (CIPD, 2007; Renwick et al., 2008; Jackson et al., 2011). Additional advantages include reduced agency costs, improved ethics, better candidate experiences, and enhanced interview performance (Diana, 2016). Green recruitment also strengthens a company's ethical and sustainability practices (Author's field interview, 2023).

4.7. Benefits of Practicing Green Performance Management

Mr. Dimantha highlighted that measuring environmental performance fosters employee engagement in green activities and that Green Performance Management (GPM) aids long-term environmental success by tracking pollution, resource usage, energy, and regulatory compliance (Author's field interview, 2023), consistent with Arulrajah et al. (2015). Similarly, Ms. Priya emphasized that GPM helps ensure adherence to environmental policies and programs while monitoring staff contributions toward environmental goals (Author's field interview, 2023), aligning with Kaur & Atwal (2021).

4.8. Benefits of Practicing Green Reward Management

Field interviews highlight the benefits of Green Reward Management practices. Ms. Priya noted that rewarding green initiatives encourages employees to engage in continuous green innovation (Author's field interview, 2023). Mr. Nuwan emphasized that non-monetary rewards like recognition boost job satisfaction, especially among younger staff, and encourage active participation in green practices (Author's field interview, 2023). These insights align with Arulrajah et al. (2015), who argue that Green Reward Management motivates employees to contribute to corporate environmental systems, fostering creativity. Kaur & Atwal (2021) also stress that green rewards sustain employee interest in sustainability, driving honesty, loyalty, and goal achievement.

4.9. Further intention to engage with more Green HRM practices

The selected organizations have not yet fully converted all 18 HR functions into Green HR practices, though they are committed to moving forward with the transformation. All 11 participants emphasized this intention. For instance, Ms. Priya stated that while only a limited number of HR functions have been greened, the company plans to convert additional HR practices into Green HRM in the future (Author's field interview, 2023). Similarly, Mr. Geethaka mentioned that the organization recognizes the importance of transitioning all HR functions to Green HRM and has already made investments to facilitate this change (Author's field interview, 2023). Ms. Serasinghe, echoed this sentiment, noting that the organization has recognized the numerous benefits of Green HRM and is committed to increasing its engagement with these practices (Author's field interview, 2023).

4.10. Challenges in Implementing Green HRM

Challenges in Green HRM practices include difficulties in Green Recruitment, Green Performance Management, and Green Reward Management. In Green Recruitment, generational differences in document preferences and a focus on qualifications over eco-values hinder the recruitment of green talent (Author's field interview, 2023). In Green Performance Management, challenges include the absence of quantitative methods to measure green performance, leading to issues like loyalty and supervisor bias (Author's field interview, 2023). Additionally, some employees are resistant to non-financial rewards (Author's field interview, 2023), and establishing clear performance metrics proves difficult (Author's field interview, 2023). In Green Reward Management, older employees are less receptive to non-monetary rewards, and transparency in justifying rewards for green initiatives remains a challenge (Author's field interview, 2023).

5. Conclusion and implications

5.1. Limitation of the study

This qualitative study acknowledges that the validity of participant responses may be questioned, and the inclusion of subjective interpretations is inevitable. The findings cannot be generalized to all Sri Lankan manufacturing firms, as the study excluded others. Additionally, the research focused solely on three Green HRM functions and emphasized the positive outcomes of GHRM in Sri Lankan manufacturing companies, excluding the service sector. Future research could explore green practices in the Sri Lankan service sector and expand on other HRM functions.

5.2. Conclusion and Implications

This study examined the definition and application of Green HRM (GHRM) in Sri Lankan manufacturing firms, finding that awareness and implementation of GHRM are gradually increasing, with firms recognizing the need for an environmental policy. Participants noted that organizations often adopt green practices by observing role models and that non-monetary incentives are effective for motivating younger employees toward green initiatives. The research also confirmed the value of both monetary and non-monetary rewards for green achievements.

The study emphasizes the importance of designing reward systems that align individual and organizational goals to promote environmental sustainability. Practical implications include assisting managers in understanding the challenges of applying GHRM, guiding industry and government planners to address these challenges, and encouraging universities to offer courses on Green HRM to prepare students for sustainable workplace practices

Compliance with ethical standards

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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