THE ROLE OF GREEN HR PRACTICES IN DRIVING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND FORECASTING GREEN BEHAVIOR : AN EMPIRICAL STUDY IN AN IT COMPANY

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of green human resource (HR) practices on employee engagement in eco-friendly behaviors in the IT sector, with a focus on the influence of employee gender and age. The research objectives were to assess employees' perceptions of the impact of green HR practices on their awareness and understanding of environmental issues, identify the most impactful green HR practice for promoting employee engagement, and determine the frequency of engagement in environmentally friendly behaviors outside of work as a result of green HR practices. A descriptive research design was adopted, and data were collected through a structured questionnaire from 396 IT employees in Chennai's Special Economic Zones using simple random sampling. The findings indicate that both male and female employees perceive green HR practices positively, with slight variations between genders. Green training and education and leadership support and commitment were identified as the most impactful practices across all age groups. Engagement in eco-friendly behaviors outside of work was found to be more frequent among younger employees, with occasional engagement being the most common frequency. These results highlight the need to consider gender and age-related factors when designing and implementing green HR practices to maximize their effectiveness in promoting sustainable behaviors among employees in the IT sector.

Keywords: Green HR practices, employee engagement, sustainable behaviors.

Introduction

In recent years, the concept of sustainability has gained significant attention across various industries. As organizations strive to become environmentally responsible, green human resource practices have emerged as an essential aspect of promoting sustainable behaviors within the workforce. This essay examines the influence of green human resource practices on employee green behavior, with a specific focus on the IT sector (Jackson, S. E., & Seo, J., 2010). It emphasizes the role of employee engagement as a catalyst for fostering sustainable practices, thereby contributing to a greener workplace and a more sustainable future.

Green human resource practices encompass policies and strategies aimed at integrating environmental concerns into an organization's HR functions. These practices extend beyond

compliance with environmental regulations and focus on proactive approaches to sustainability (Renwick, D. W., Redman, T., & Maguire, S., 2013). In the context of the IT sector, green HR practices may include initiatives such as: Green Training and Education, Green Recruitment and Selection, Green Performance Management and Green Communication and Transparency (Gaziulusoy, A. İ., 2015).

Employee engagement refers to the emotional commitment and involvement of employees towards their work and the organization. It plays a crucial role in influencing employee behavior, including their adoption of sustainable practices (Liu, D., Jiang, J., & Jiang, Y., 2020). Engaged employees are more likely to actively participate in sustainability efforts, as they perceive a sense of ownership and purpose. In the context of green human resource practices, employee engagement acts as a mediator between these practices and employee green behavior. Engaged employees are more receptive to sustainability messages, show higher motivation to contribute to environmental goals, and are more willing to embrace eco-friendly behaviors (Jiang, K., Lepak, D. P., Hu, J., & Baer, J. C., 2012).

The implementation of green human resource practices has a significant impact on employee green behavior within the IT sector. By integrating sustainability principles into various HR functions, organizations create an environment that fosters green attitudes and actions (Schuler, R. S., & Jackson, S. E., 2007). Green training programs enhance employees' awareness and understanding of sustainability issues, empowering them to make informed decisions and adopt environmentally friendly practices. When employees perceive that their organization values and supports sustainability, it triggers intrinsic motivation to contribute to environmental goals. They are more likely to engage in voluntary green activities and initiatives. Green HR practices set a positive example for employees, demonstrating the organization's commitment to sustainability. When employees observe leaders and colleagues engaging in eco-friendly behaviors, they are more inclined to emulate such behaviors themselves. Green performance management practices reinforce the importance of sustainability by aligning individual and team goals with environmental objectives. This creates a sense of responsibility among employees to act in environmentally responsible ways (Ahmed, M., & Hassan, M., 2018).

Review of Literatures

Green human resource practices play a pivotal role in enhancing employee engagement within organizations. By incorporating sustainability into HR strategies, organizations demonstrate their commitment to environmental responsibility, which resonates with employees who are increasingly seeking purpose and alignment with their values in the workplace. Green HR practices provide employees with a sense of meaning and fulfillment, as they recognize their contributions towards a greener future. When employees perceive that their organization values sustainability, they feel more engaged and motivated to actively participate in environmental initiatives (Paillé, P., Chen, Y., Boiral, O., & Jin, J., 2014).

Effective leadership is essential in driving employee engagement through green HR practices. Leaders serve as role models by embodying sustainability values and behaviors, inspiring employees to follow suit. When leaders prioritize and communicate the importance of sustainability, employees perceive it as a top organizational priority (Saeed, B. B., Afsar, B.,

Hafeez, S., & Shahjehan, A., 2019). This leadership support fosters a positive work climate where employees feel empowered and encouraged to engage in sustainable behaviors. Leaders can also create platforms for open dialogue and idea-sharing, allowing employees to contribute their insights and suggestions for green initiatives, further enhancing engagement (Chatterjee, D., & Sarkar, B., 2019).

Green HR practices empower employees to take ownership of sustainability efforts, contributing to higher levels of engagement. When employees are involved in decision-making processes related to environmental initiatives, they feel a greater sense of responsibility and belonging (Shukla, M., Bhargava, R., & Bhanawat, S., 2017). For example, organizations can establish green teams or committees that include employees from different departments, giving them the opportunity to collaborate and contribute their expertise to sustainability projects. This active involvement fosters a sense of pride and ownership, leading to increased engagement and commitment to green practices (Liao, C., Luo, J., & Zhao, X., 2017).

Clear and effective communication is vital for maximizing the impact of green HR practices on employee engagement. Organizations should communicate their sustainability goals, progress, and achievements to all employees regularly. This transparency cultivates trust and a shared sense of purpose, motivating employees to actively participate in achieving environmental targets (Ehnert, I., Parsa, S., Roper, I., Wagner, M., & Muller-Camen, M., 2016). Communication channels can include internal newsletters, company-wide meetings, or dedicated online platforms where employees can access information, share ideas, and celebrate green successes. Engaging and interactive communication platforms facilitate a sense of community and foster collaboration, further strengthening employee engagement (Wang, Q., & Geng, Y., 2019).

Recognizing and rewarding employees for their green behavior is an important driver of engagement within the context of green HR practices. Organizations can establish reward systems that acknowledge and celebrate employees who actively contribute to sustainability goals. These rewards can take the form of monetary incentives, public recognition, or career advancement opportunities (Wood, G., & Wall, T. D., 2002). Such recognition not only reinforces the importance of sustainability but also reinforces the positive behaviors, motivating employees to continue their eco-friendly practices and inspiring others to follow suit.

Objectives

- To assess the perception of employees regarding the influence of green HR practices on their awareness and understanding of environmental issues.
- To identify the most impactful green HR practice for promoting employee engagement in eco-friendly behaviors as perceived by the employees.
- To determine the frequency of engagement in environmentally friendly behaviors outside of work as a result of the organization's green HR practices.

Methodologies

For the purpose of study, descriptive research design was adopted. The data was collected usig the structured questionnaire from 396 IT employees working in Special economic zones in Chennai region. For the study the research had adopted simple rand sampling technique.

Analysis and Interpretation

Herein the table presents the demographic profile of the respondents participating in the study. It provides information on the distribution of respondents based on their gender and age.

Table No. 1: Percentage Analysis - Demographic Profile

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	277	69.9
	Female	119	30.1
	Total	396	100.0
Age	Less than 25	188	47.5
	25 - 35	177	44.7
	36 - 45	15	3.8
	Above 45	16	4.0
	Total	396	100.0

Source: (Primary data)

Gender:

- The table shows that out of the total 396 respondents, 277 (69.9%) identified as male, while 119 (30.1%) identified as female.
- This indicates that the sample has a higher representation of male respondents compared to female respondents.

Age:

- The table presents the distribution of respondents based on different age groups.
- The majority of respondents, 188 (47.5%), were under the age of 25.
- The next significant age group was 25-35, with 177 (44.7%) respondents falling within this range.
- A smaller proportion of respondents, 15 (3.8%), were between the ages of 36 and 45.
- Similarly, 16 (4.0%) respondents were above the age of 45.
- This indicates that the sample primarily consists of younger individuals, with a significant proportion falling within the age range of 25-35.

Table presents the results of the independent samples t-test conducted to compare the perception of employees regarding the influence of green HR practices on their awareness based on gender. The table provides information on the significance of the t-test for equality of means when assuming equal variances and when not assuming equal variances.

Table No. 2: Independent Sample T Test -The perception of employees regarding the influence of green HR practices on their awareness with Gender

Independent Samples Test					
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.

							(2-tailed)
Green HR practices, such as providing sustainability training and education, positively influence my awareness and understanding of environmental issues.	Equal variances assumed	4.377	.037	2.844	394		.005
	Equal variances not assumed			2.553	179.015		.011
The integration of sustainability goals in performance evaluations and reward systems motivates me to actively participate in eco-friendly initiatives at work.	Equal variances assumed	3.607	.058	2.678	394		.008
	Equal variances not assumed			2.354	172.290		.020
Believe that leadership support and commitment to sustainability influence engagement in green practices	Equal variances assumed	.644	.423	2.853	394		.005
	Equal variances not assumed			2.633	188.641		.009
Regular and transparent communication about the organization's green initiatives enhances my motivation to engage in environmentally responsible behaviors.	Equal variances assumed	9.814	.002	2.735	394		.007
	Equal variances not assumed			2.344	165.029		.020
Being recognized and rewarded for my eco-friendly behaviors at work encourages me to continue practicing sustainability.	Equal variances assumed	1.389	.239	3.941	394		.000
	Equal variances not assumed			3.500	175.520		.001

Source: (Primary data)

The interpretation of Table suggests that there are statistically significant differences in the perception of employees regarding the influence of green HR practices on awareness, motivation, engagement, and continuation of sustainable behaviors based on gender. These findings highlight the need to consider gender-related factors when designing and implementing green HR practices to maximize their effectiveness in promoting sustainable behaviors among employees in the IT sector.

Table presents the descriptive statistics for the perception of employees regarding the influence

of green HR practices on their awareness, motivation, engagement, and continuation of sustainable behaviors based on gender. The table provides information on the mean, standard deviation, and standard error mean for each gender group.

Table No. 3: Descriptive Statistics -The perception of employees regarding the influence of green HR practices on their awareness with Gender

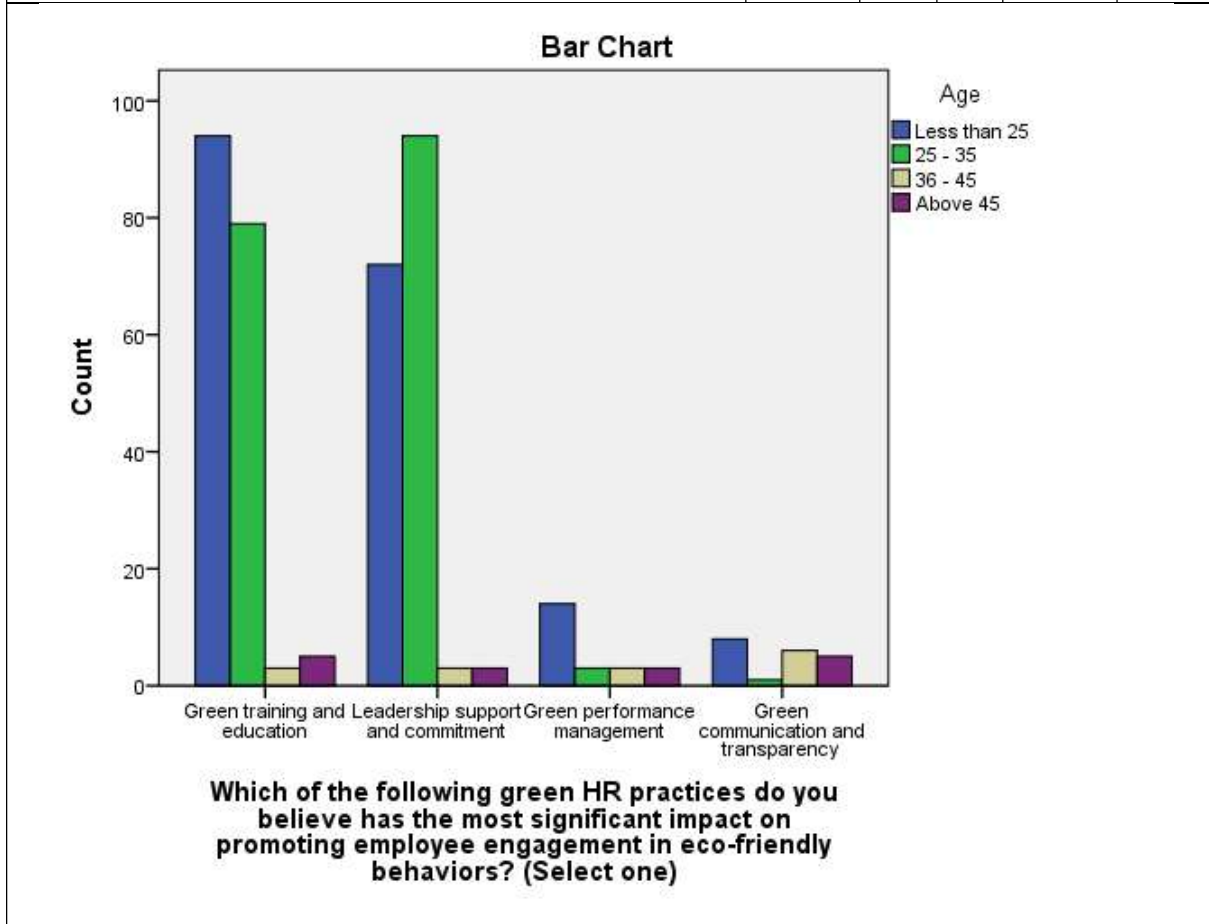| Group Statistics						
Gender			N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Green HR practices, such as providing sustainability training and education, positively influence my awareness and understanding of environmental issues.	Male		277	4.4440	.75273	.04523
	Female		119	4.1849	.99120	.09086
The integration of sustainability goals in performance evaluations and reward systems motivates me to actively participate in eco-friendly initiatives at work.	Male		277	4.3574	.69579	.04181
	Female		119	4.1261	.97036	.08895
Believe that leadership support and commitment to sustainability influence engagement in green practices	Male		277	4.3863	.75101	.04512
	Female		119	4.1345	.91988	.08433
Regular and transparent communication about the organization's green initiatives enhances my motivation to engage in environmentally responsible behaviors.	Male		277	4.4224	.65270	.03922
	Female		119	4.1933	.97665	.08953
Being recognized and rewarded for my eco-friendly behaviors at work encourages me to continue practicing sustainability.	Male		277	4.3935	.72758	.04372
	Female		119	4.0420	.98630	.09041

Source: (Primary data)

Overall, the interpretation of Table suggests that both male and female employees perceive green HR practices to have a positive influence on their awareness, motivation, engagement, and continuation of sustainable behaviors. Although there are slight variations in perception scores between genders, the overall trend indicates a positive perception of the impact of green HR practices on employees' attitudes and behaviors related to sustainability in the IT sector.

The crosstab table provides the distribution of responses based on different age groups and the perception of employees regarding the green HR practice that has the most significant impact on promoting employee engagement in eco-friendly behaviors. The Chi-Square Tests further analyze the relationship between the variables.

Table No. 4: Cross Tabulation - Green HR practice for promoting employee engagement

Crosstab					
		Age			
	Less	25	36	Above	Total

		than 25	- 35	- 45	45	
Which of the following green HR practices do you believe has the most significant impact on promoting employee engagement in eco-friendly behaviors? (Select one)	Green training and education	94	79	3	5	181
	Leadership support and commitment	72	94	3	3	172
	Green performance management	14	3	3	3	23
	Green communication and transparency	8	1	6	5	20
Total		188	177	15	16	396

Bar Chart

Which of the following green HR practices do you believe has the most significant impact on promoting employee engagement in eco-friendly behaviors? (Select one)

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	93.950ᵃ	9	2.62E-16
Likelihood Ratio	64.297	9	1.98E-10

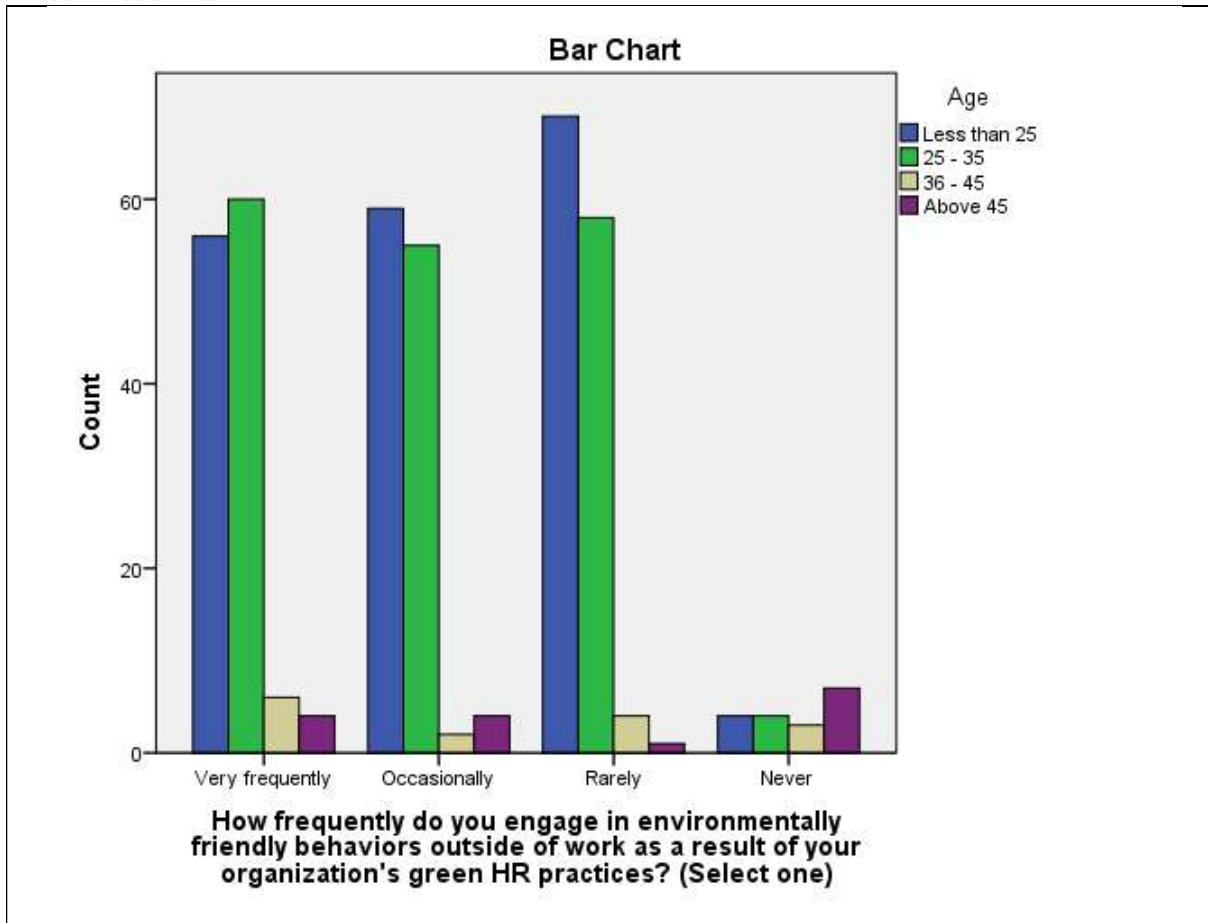|			
Linear-by-Linear Association	18.294	1	1.89E-05
N of Valid Cases	396		

Source: (Primary data)

- The significant p-values obtained from the Chi-Square Tests indicate that there is a strong association between age groups and the chosen green HR practice that employees believe has the most significant impact on promoting engagement in eco-friendly behaviors.
- The results suggest that the preference for a specific green HR practice varies across different age groups.
- It appears that Green training and education and Leadership support and commitment are perceived as the most impactful practices across all age groups, with relatively higher frequencies in their respective cells.
- Green performance management and Green communication and transparency are chosen less frequently by employees across all age groups.

The crosstab table provides the distribution of responses based on different age groups and the frequency of engaging in environmentally friendly behaviors outside of work as a result of the organization's green HR practices. The Chi-Square Tests further analyze the relationship between the variables.

Table No. 5: Cross Tabulation - Frequency of engagement in environmentally friendly behaviors outside of work

Crosstab						
Count						
		Age				Total
		Less than 25	25 - 35	36 - 45	Above 45	
How frequently do you engage in environmentally friendly behaviors outside of work as a result of your organization's green HR practices? (Select one)	Very frequently	56	60	6	4	126
	Occasionally	59	55	2	4	120
	Rarely	69	58	4	1	132
	Never	4	4	3	7	18
Total		188	177	15	16	396

Bar Chart

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	73.529ᵃ	9	3.08E-12
Likelihood Ratio	38.197	9	1.61E-05
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.229	1	1.35E-01
N of Valid Cases	396		

Source: (Primary data)

- The significant p-values obtained from the Chi-Square Tests indicate that there is a strong association between age groups and the frequency of engaging in environmentally friendly behaviors outside of work as a result of the organization's green HR practices.
- The results suggest that the frequency of engagement in environmentally friendly behaviors varies across different age groups.
- It appears that the majority of respondents across all age groups engage in environmentally friendly behaviors outside of work occasionally, with relatively higher frequencies in their respective cells.
- There is a decreasing trend in the frequencies of engaging very frequently and rarely as age increases.

- The number of respondents who never engage in environmentally friendly behaviors outside of work is relatively small across all age groups.
- The Linear-by-Linear Association test results indicate that there is no significant linear relationship between age and the frequency of engagement in environmentally friendly behaviors outside of work.

Findings and Conclusion

The findings from the demographic profile indicate that the sample of respondents in the study is predominantly male, with 69.9% identifying as male and 30.1% identifying as female. This suggests that there is a higher representation of male employees in the IT sector in relation to the study population. In terms of age, the majority of respondents fall within the younger age groups, with 47.5% being under the age of 25 and 44.7% falling within the 25-35 age range. A smaller proportion of respondents were in the 36-45 age group (3.8%) and above the age of 45 (4.0%). These results indicate that the sample is skewed towards younger individuals, with a significant proportion falling within the age range of 25-35.

The perception of employees regarding the influence of green HR practices on their awareness, motivation, engagement, and continuation of sustainable behaviors shows statistically significant differences based on gender. Both male and female employees perceive green HR practices positively in terms of their impact on environmental awareness and understanding. While there are slight variations in perception scores between genders, the overall trend suggests a positive perception of the influence of green HR practices on employees' attitudes and behaviors related to sustainability in the IT sector.

Regarding the chosen green HR practice with the most significant impact on promoting employee engagement in eco-friendly behaviors, the analysis shows a significant association between age groups and the preference for specific practices. Green training and education, as well as leadership support and commitment, are perceived as the most impactful practices across all age groups. On the other hand, green performance management and green communication and transparency are chosen less frequently by employees across all age groups. These findings underscore the importance of tailoring green HR practices to different age groups to maximize their effectiveness in promoting employee engagement in eco-friendly behaviors.

Furthermore, the analysis of the frequency of engaging in environmentally friendly behaviors outside of work as a result of green HR practices reveals significant differences across age groups. The majority of respondents across all age groups engage in environmentally friendly behaviors outside of work occasionally, indicating a positive impact of green HR practices on promoting such behaviors. However, there is a decreasing trend in the frequencies of engaging very frequently and rarely as age increases. This suggests that younger employees may be more actively involved in eco-friendly behaviors outside of work, whereas older employees exhibit a less extreme pattern of engagement. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the association between age and the frequency of engagement does not follow a linear relationship.

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