Green HRM and Workplace Behavior: Unveiling the Mediating Effect of Employee Green Advocacy

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ABSTRACT

Demonstrating desirable workplace behavior can positively influence an organization's success. Deviant activities that violate an organization's established standards can be detrimental, particularly in terms of operational costs, workplace relationships, and environmental concerns. Previous research has examined the influence of green human resources management (GHRM) and employee green advocacy (EGA) on the adoption of desirable workplace behavior, as well as the converse. Therefore, the objective of the study is to examine the role of EGA as a mediator in the relationship between GHRM and deviant behavior (DB). The inclusion of human resource personnel from a utility company can improve the organization's awareness of the importance of green practices and green advocacy in promoting desirable workplace behaviors that can improve work quality, strategic investment, and work performance. A lack of awareness of environmental concerns can adversely affect the workplace's demeanor and business operations. Simple random sampling was employed to disseminate the questionnaire to research participants, which was adapted from previous studies. The instruments are both valid and reliable, and the Hayes Process model conducted the hypothesis testing. GHRM exhibits a significant positive correlation with EGA ($\beta = 0.068$, $t = 4.775$, $p < .001$), whereas EGA had a significant negative impact on DB ($\beta = -1.180$, $t = -3.820$, $p < .005$). Furthermore, GHRM has had a significant effect on DB ($\beta = -.120$, $t = -2.971$, $p < .005$). The direct impact of GHRM on DB in the presence of a mediator was non-significant ($\beta = -.040$, $t = -.949$, $p < .005$); however, the effect is of a lesser magnitude. Consequently, EGA partially mediates the relationship between GHRM and DB. The results indicate that in order to regulate deviant behavior and cultivate the ethical personalities of employees, organizations must allocate resources to environmental assets that can enhance productivity and organizational stability.

Keywords: Deviant behavior, employees' green advocacy, green human resource management, mediation analysis

INTRODUCTION

Utility industry clients expect timely and efficient services. Continuous business process improvement projects have positively influenced overall business performance and sustainability by facilitating the establishment of strategies and policies that ensure accurate and efficient execution of essential responsibilities. Bakotic and Krnic's [6] research revealed that organizations that prioritized evaluating employees' behaviors, such as workplace conduct, communication skills, networking abilities, and information sharing, managed to maintain their organizational qualities over time. Organizations frequently identify individuals lacking ethical standards and discipline as the fundamental source of most organizational problems. As a result, it is critical to ensure that employees cultivate a positive attitude in order to address environmental issues and meet client expectations. The occurrence of deviant behaviors, including both personal and collective wrongdoing, is a major concern, especially within the corporate workforce. Workplace mobbing, physical intimidation,

dishonesty, and misappropriation of corporate resources have adverse consequences on the norms and culture of a business, as well as negatively damaging its financial and social reputation.

Therefore, it is critical to reduce negative behavior. Several variables contribute to this condition, including employee green advocacy, activities related to green human resource management (GHRM), an ethical climate, and engagement in corporate social responsibility [16]. GHRM, or pro-environmental behavior, encompasses all human resource management activities within an organizational setting, including sustainability, eco-civic, eco-initiative, and green behavior, as defined by Abbasi and Amran [1]. This has heightened employees' support for environmental sustainability, thereby serving as a human resource management tool that positively influences their behavior. However, there is a lack of extensive research on how employee green advocacy (EGA) and the adoption of green human resource management (GHRM) influence employees' behaviour in the service sector. Hence, the aim of this research is to examine the degree to which GHRM impacts behaviors and the role of EGA as a mediator in the relationship between GHRM and DB.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Deviant Behavior (DB)

Deviant behaviors have detrimental impacts on the entire organization, resulting in negative consequences in terms of economics, social dynamics, organizational functioning, and personal outcomes. Organizational deviance, which includes acts of production and property deviance such as work stoppage, bribery, theft, and the unauthorized exposure of secret information, has a negative influence on productivity, revenue, employee happiness, and overall organizational success. Interpersonal deviance refers to behaviors such as lying, prejudices, favoritism, workplace mobbing, and verbal and physical aggressiveness, which can cause psychological and physical issues in group members. They cause problems when perpetrators interact with victims. These habits ultimately impact the quality of services as well as employees' self-worth, assurance, and drive. Furthermore, the business may incur additional direct and indirect costs related to workplace health and surveillance as a result of counterproductive behaviors such as wastefulness and environmentally insensitive behavior. Therefore, it is crucial to implement preventive measures [2],[3]. Prior research has shown that internal practices within organizations, such as green human resources management and employee green advocacy, have a negative impact on deviant behavior. These activities also function as a means of control, helping to develop a disciplined culture and promote desired workplace norms.

Green Human Resource Management (GHRM)

Previous research has demonstrated that GHRM, a commendable initiative, aims to promote pro-environmental behavior in human resource management activities such as personnel, training and development, performance management, compensation management, benefits and services management, and human relationships. These activities have the potential to positively influence the ecological lifestyles of employees. In turn, this can reduce the incidence of deviant behaviors. It cultivates a professional and ethically sound individual [4],[26]. Training and development are instrumental in the development of intellectual capital that can promote pro-environmental behaviors and aid managers in the cultivation of the intellectual capital required to generate desirable behaviors. Assessing employees' environmental performance throughout their tenure at a company and providing them with feedback on their performance prevents the development of negative attitudes and reinforces exemplary behavior [15],[27]. Additionally, green HRM enhances employee self-esteem, which encourages employees to maintain their positive self-image and prevent cognitive disorders. It also establishes career values that significantly influence future work attitudes and behaviors, as well as cultivates employee professional abilities [12].

Employee Green Advocacy (EGA)

Employee green advocacy can influence group norms within an organization, thereby shaping attitudes and behaviors related to environmental sustainability. If green advocacy receives widespread acceptance and

support, organizations can achieve sustainable development by fostering a pro-environmental culture and improving environmental performance [22]. Indirectly, it will decrease the incidence of environmentally detrimental deviant behavior, including disobedience to environmental regulations and wasteful activities [21]. Participating in green advocacy may enhance employees' dedication to their organization, demonstrating their alignment with the organization's sustainability objectives and values. This increased organizational commitment could, in turn, decrease the probability of engaging in deviant behavior that is inconsistent with organizational norms or expectations. Learning about their organization's implementation of environmental procedures and policies that promote environmental sustainability and green values will stimulate employees' green behaviors and establish a green psychological climate [11],[28]. Furthermore, employee green advocacy may contribute to psychological empowerment by offering employees a sense of autonomy, competence, and significance in their work. Empowered employees are less likely to engage in deviant behavior due to their increased sense of ownership and responsibility for upholding organizational norms and values, according to research [14]. Moreover, managers can provide their employees with the autonomy to engage in environmental issues and assist them in utilizing this autonomy to address environmental issues as part of GHRM's green engagement approach [23]. As a result, employees may feel more supportive of the company after receiving such helpful feedback and empowerment. Figure 1 indicates the relationship between the research variables
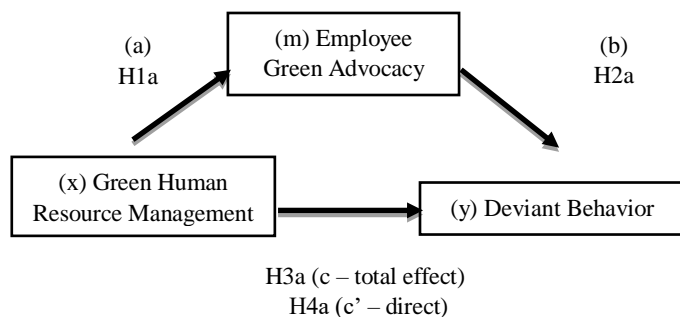

Figure1. Conceptual Framework

As such, the following hypotheses statements were developed,

H1a – There is a significant relationship between GHRM and EGA (path a)
H2a – There is a significant relationship between EGA and DB (path b)
H3a – There is a significant relationship between GHRM and DB (path c)
H4a – Employees' green advocacy significantly mediates the relationship between GHRM and DB (path c')

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study used a quantitative cross-sectional survey design to investigate the direct and mediator relationship between GHRM, employee green advocacy, and deviant behavior. The survey forms were distributed to the human resource (HR) personnel using self-administered questionnaires via Google Forms and a simple random sampling procedure. 74 HR personnel participated in the survey, a number deemed adequate by Roscoe's model, which suggests that the sample size should be greater than 30 or less than 500 [20]. The involvement of HR personnel from the utility company is significant because green initiatives can contribute to the sustainability of the business, encourage pro-environment behavior, and play a crucial role in identifying the organization's green initiatives, policies, green behaviors, and ethics policy. The questionnaires, which consist of 27 items, were adopted based on previous studies. Respondents were granted an abundance of time to respond without any form of pressure, which enabled them to provide candid and sincere responses. Furthermore, the design of the questionnaire facilitates the completion of all items in two languages: Malay and English. The questionnaires were categorized into three segments: the demographic profile, perceived deviant behavior [4], green human resource management, and employee green advocacy [8]. The respondents were required to indicate their level of agreement on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) strongly

disagree to (5) strongly agree. The descriptive and Hayes PROCESS models were employed to conduct the analysis.

RESULT

74 respondents participated in the study. According to Table 1, the study has been actively involved by non-executive employees (73%), respondents between the ages of 41 and 50 (35%), female participants (65%), and married respondents (84%).

Table 1 Demographic Profile Of Repondents

No	Profile	Description	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Age	≤ 30 years old	6	8.1
		31 – 40 years old	20	27.0
		41 – 50 years old	26	35.1
		≥ 51 years old	22	29.7
2.	Gender	Male	26	35.1
		Female	48	64.9
4.	Marital status	Married	62	83.8
		Single	8	10.8
		Divorced	4	5.4
5.	Job Position	Executive	20	27
		Non-executive	54	73

Table 2 shows the mean values obtained at the higher level for all research variables, except for behavioral outcomes. A small standard deviation suggests that the responses are near the mean value. The results also show that the items used for the final analysis achieved excellent reliability values. Analysis of the normality tests (Skewness ±2 and Kurtosis ±7) also indicates that the data is normal and permitted for hypothesis testing. The validity of the measure used where unidimensionality exists is determined by the value of the Pearson correlation obtained for the dependent and independent variables being less than 0.85.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Cronbach Alpha	Skewness	Kurtosis	Behavioral Outcomes	GRHM	Employee Green Advoc
DB	1.49	.764	.920	2.14	4.24	1.000		
GHRM	4.14	.700	.962	-1.68	5.41	-.330	1.000	
EGA	4.45	.579	.924	-.604	-.511	-.502	.491	1.000

The study assessed the mediating role of EGA in the relationship between GHRM and DB. Tables 3 and 4 present the mediation analysis. GHRM has a significant relationship with EGA as explained in path a (β = 0.068, t = 4.775, p <.001), while EGA was found to have a significant impact on DB as explained in path b (β = -1.180, t = -3.820, p <.005). As indicated in path c, GHRM has significantly influenced DB (β = -.120, t = -2.971, p <.005). Furthermore, the direct effect of GHRM on DB in the presence of a mediator was found to be insignificant (β = -.040, t = -.949, p <.005); however, the effect is of a smaller magnitude; thus, EGA partially mediates the relationship between GHRM and DB.

Table 3 Regression Results For The Mediation Of Ega On The Relationship Between Ghrm And Db

Model	Estimate	*SE*	*P*	LLCI	ULCI
Model without Mediator					
Intercept	17.878	3.058	.000	11.783	23.975
GHRM → DB (c)	-.120	.041	.004	-.201	-.040
R_{YX}	.109				
Model with Mediator					
Intercept	27.669	3.799	.000	20.094	35.245
GHRM → EGA (a)	.068	.014	.000	.039	.096
EGA → DB (b)	-1.180	.309	.003	-1.796	-.564
GHRM → DB (c')	-.040	.043	.346	-.125	.045
Indirect Effect (a x b)	-0.080			-.230	-.018
$R^2_{M, X}$	.241				
$R^2_{Y, MX}$	.261				

Table 4 Mediation Analysis Summary

Effect	Estimate	SE	*T*	*p*	LLCI	ULCI
Direct	-.040	.043	-.949	.346	-.125	-.045
Indirect	-.079	.057			-.230	-.018
Total	-.120	.041	-2.971	.004	-.201	-.040

DISCUSSION

In this paper, we suggest that the relationship between deviant behavior among executives and non-executive employees of a utility company situated in Malaysia is mediated by employee green advocacy. The study supported all research hypotheses (H1a, H2a, and H3b), with the exception of H4a. The investigation yielded numerous observations, including the following: The findings indicate that the presence of GHRM sends a clear message to corporate organizations that investing in green practices is essential for the protection of relationships with organizational stakeholders, the encouragement of employees' green behaviors, and the demonstration of organizational dedication to environmental protection. Extensive discussions have explored

the unique relationship between GRHM and deviant behavior among corporate sector employees. Employees who are cognizant of GHRM initiatives adhere to green policies and procedures [5]. This may include behaviors such as adhering to recycling guidelines, avoiding resource waste, and following environmental safety measures that foster employee green advocacy. Ye, Su, Tsai, and Hung's [25] research suggests that an eco-friendly environment can motivate the establishment of a disciplined culture and reduce unnecessary absences.

Green advocacy, which includes sharing knowledge about the environment and talking about problems, can be encouraged through corporate social responsibility and environmental support at work. This leads to green behavior among employees [9],[13]. Consequently, employee green advocacy is positively correlated with affective commitment, which safeguards employees from emotional exhaustion and enhances their sense of moral credit and warm radiance [18]. Furthermore, improved communication and the establishment of defined objectives for GHRM initiatives can facilitate the establishment of trust among employees toward management [19].

Even though Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) is designed to promote environmental awareness and introduce green practices, it may inadvertently result in employee deviant behavior. Furthermore, research suggests that corporate environmental irresponsibility positively influences deviant behavior [1]. Employees frequently experience feelings of tension and job dissatisfaction as a result of GHRM initiatives that impose additional responsibilities. Employees compelled to adhere to abrupt modifications in attitudes or practices may demonstrate dissatisfaction through deviant behavior [10]. In response to perceived management failures, employees who are uncertain or require clarification regarding the organization's green objectives may engage in deviant behaviour [19].

Furthermore, Tariq and friends, [24] contend that not all employees may possess identical values or convictions regarding environmental sustainability. Individuals who oppose or do not prioritize green practices may intentionally violate green directives or indulge in behaviors inconsistent with GHRM principles. The implementation of GHRM practices may result in disputes among employees who hold disparate perspectives regarding environmental concerns. This conflict has the potential to result in deviant behavior, including the failure to collaborate with colleagues who support or implement green initiatives, slander, or sabotage. Lastly, GHRM initiatives can diminish team cohesion by dividing employees based on their attitudes toward green practices [7]. Employees who feel marginalized or alienated for not adhering to green initiatives may exhibit deviant behavior to assert their identity or reject perceived exclusion.

Employees may exhibit a variety of deviant behaviors as a result of GHRM implementation, which aims to promote green practices in the workplace. Organizations must confront these obstacles by fostering a positive organizational culture that encourages employee engagement in green initiatives, providing sufficient support, and facilitating straightforward communication. Organizations can effectively integrate GHRM practices while minimizing the risk of adverse outcomes by addressing the root causes of deviant behavior and fostering a supportive work environment. Employee green advocacy partially mediates the impact of green human resource practices on utility employees' behavior and offers support for cognitive, effective, and behavioral responses [12].

The study has certain limitations, such as the use of a single method that resulted in common method variance (CMV). Consequently, a longitudinal study and qualitative measures could provide a broader understanding of the factors that influence employees' behavior. Executive and non-executive officers at a utility company in Malaysia participated in the research. Extending the research to a private utility provider could increase the sample size and diverse profiles of respondents, facilitate the integration of information from numerous individuals and data sources, and yield more reliable results [17].

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATION

We have determined that there is a substantial correlation between GHRM and the deviant behavior and green advocacy of employees. Consequently, it is highly advisable to invest in green initiatives to increase awareness

and practice of green issues, and organizations must make an effort to recognize the importance of green initiatives. Employees are motivated to adopt environmentally friendly behaviors and cultivate favorable attitudes and behaviors in the workplace when there is a significant perceived presence of green initiatives.

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