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# Green HRM Practices as a Pathway Toward Environmental Sustainable Business: Examining Organizational Citizenship Behavior as Mediator

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## Abstract

*This research paper aims to investigate how Human Resource Management (HRM) practices and environmental sustainability connect within the framework of a business. Specifically, this study seeks to examine how Green Human Resource Management (HRM) practices might operate to achieve environmental sustainability in enterprises, with a specific emphasis on analyzing Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) as a mediator in this relationship. This study aims to investigate the processes responsible for the influence of human resource management practices that emphasize environmental concerns on employee behaviour, specifically regarding the amounts of voluntary contributions that employees make to environmental sustainability efforts inside the firm. By examining organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) 's role as a mediator, the research endeavours to provide light on the complex relationships between human resource management practices, employee behaviour, and environmental sustainability outcomes. Methodologically, this study considered a cross-sectional design due to the one-time data collection and casual design because of examining the relationship between the study variables. The findings provide a comprehensive understanding of how green HRM practices influence environmentally sustainable business in the presence of OCB as a mediator.*

**Keywords:** Green HR Practices, Environmentally Sustainable Businesses, OCB.

## 1. Introduction

Environmental sustainability within the business domain has become a crucial academic research subject. This reflects the growing realization of the requirement to address environmental concerns amid global socio-economic upheavals. Several recent studies have highlighted the crucial role of environmental sustainability in guaranteeing enterprises' long-term profitability and competitiveness (Han, 2021). According to Seroka-Stolka & Fijorek, 2020, enterprises face a rising number of environmental concerns, including climate change, the depletion of resources, and the loss of biodiversity. As a result, the necessity of adopting sustainable business practices is becoming increasingly urgent. In addition, the alignment between environmental sustainability and organizational strategy is stressed as a means to reduce risks, improve reputation, and encourage innovation, ultimately opening new doors for the production of value (Nath, Eweje & Sajjad, 2020). Consequently, understanding the multifaceted dimensions of environmentally sustainable business practices and their implications for

organizational performance has emerged as a central research endeavour. This has driven scholarly inquiry into the strategic integration of environmental concerns within businesses' operations and decision-making processes.

According to Jackson (2019), there is still a lack of understanding of how human resource management strategies contribute to environmental sustainability within firms, even though there is a growing corpus of research on green HRM practices and environmental sustainability in business. The importance of human resource management techniques is sometimes disregarded in research despite some studies investigating more general organizational strategies or operational features (Jabbour et al., 2020). In addition, a paucity of research investigates the role of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) as a mediator in the connection between green human resource management practices and environmental sustainability (Renwick et al., 2020). Despite theoretical frameworks, there is a dearth of empirical evidence that can validate the correlations between these variables (Su et al., 2021). As a result of resolving these gaps, businesses might establish more successful strategies for incorporating sustainability into their HRM policies, resulting in cost savings, an enhanced reputation, and higher employee morale (Zheng et al., 2020). The practical ramifications of bridging these gaps are enormous. In addition, there would be important theoretical breakthroughs, which would include refining existing frameworks and providing empirical insights (Paillé et al., 2021).

Additionally, the findings can potentially lead to the development of standards, rules, and incentives to encourage environmentally sustainable activities (Awan, Braathen & Hannola, 2023); this might significantly contribute to establishing corporate and societal policies. Recent research by authors such as Raza & Malik (2020) emphasizes the significance of aligning human resource management practices with environmental sustainability goals. On the other hand, other authors, such as Su, Wu, and Tseng (2021), highlight organizational citizenship behaviour's role in driving sustainable behaviours within organizations. In light of the literature review, it is clear that filling the gaps discovered in the existing body of literature is both timely and relevant.

This research aims to fill the gaps in understanding the precise processes by which green human resource management practices promote environmental sustainability within businesses, emphasizing organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) as a mediator. Specifically, this study aims to contribute to both theoretical developments and practical consequences in human resource management and environmental sustainability by studying the relationship between the two. From the Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Blau, 1964), which proposes that individuals engage in behaviours based on the principle of reciprocity, it is hypothesized that employees who perceive their organization as supportive through green HRM practices are more likely to reciprocate by engaging in organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB), which in turn leads to increased adoption of environmentally sustainable behaviours. This hypothesis is based on the idea that individuals engage in reciprocity-based behaviours. This research provides insights into how firms can leverage human resource management techniques to create environmental sustainability through employee behaviours and empirically validate the relationships between these two factors. The study seeks to inform organizational strategies and policy-making initiatives that foster sustainability inside enterprises (López-Gamero et al., 2021).

## 2. Literature and Hypotheses Development

In the following section, we discussed the selected Green HRM practices and their relationship with business and employee outcomes based on the empirical literature, thus developing hypotheses guiding our study linked with social exchange theory (SET).

### Green Recruitment and Selection and Environmentally Sustainable Business

It is predicted that green recruiting and selection procedures, characterized by introducing environmental variables into the employment process, will positively influence the environmental sustainability of organizations. Drawing on Social Exchange Theory (SET), which proposes that individuals exchange favourable treatment with positive behaviours, it is theorized that when organizations demonstrate a commitment to environmental sustainability through their recruitment and selection processes, employees are more likely to reciprocate by engaging in environmentally responsible behaviours within the workplace. This is because SET suggests that individuals reciprocate favourable treatment with positive behaviours. According to Lopez-Gamero et al. (2021) and Blau (1964), firms can cultivate a culture of sustainability among their employees by matching their recruiting and selection methods with environmental ideals. Not only does this result in improved environmental performance, but it also provides a competitive edge.

*H1: Green recruitment and selection positively related to environmentally sustainable business.*

### Green Training and Development and Environmentally Sustainable Business

It is hypothesized that green training and development programs, centred on disseminating information and abilities linked to environmental sustainability, will substantially contribute to achieving environmentally sustainable corporate practices. The Social Exchange Theory (SET) proposes that individuals respond positively to favourable treatment by engaging in positively oriented actions. When it comes to green training and development, employees with opportunities for environmental education and skill development are more likely to perceive that the organization is supportive of their progress and invested in their development. Because of this, people are more likely to show their appreciation by participating in ecologically responsible activities and contributing to the organization's efforts to achieve its sustainability goals (López-Gamero et al., 2021). According to Jackson (2019), green training and development programs improve employees' environmental awareness and competence and generate a sense of organizational dedication and loyalty, ultimately leading to higher engagement in sustainable activities. Therefore, firms may nurture a staff that is aware, engaged, and actively committed to promoting environmental sustainability by investing in green training and development activities.

*H2: Green training and development positively related to environmentally sustainable business.*

### Green Performance Evaluation and Environmentally Sustainable Business

It has been claimed that green performance evaluation, which involves evaluating employees based on their contributions to environmental sustainability goals, could substantially impact the development of environmentally sustainable company practices. The Social Exchange Theory (SET) proposes that individuals respond to positive treatment with positive behaviours to return the experience. In green performance evaluation, employees who perceive their efforts to protect the environment are recognized and rewarded are more inclined to reciprocate by increasing their participation in sustainable behaviours and activities. By connecting performance

evaluation criteria with environmental sustainability targets, firms can convey a clear signal to their employees about the significance of sustainability and the value that is put on their contributions in this regard (López-Gamero et al., 2021). Green performance evaluation systems encourage workers to incorporate environmental considerations into their jobs and provide feedback and reinforcement, which helps promote desired behaviours and fosters a culture of sustainability (Jackson, 2019). Consequently, employees are incentivized to develop and implement environmentally friendly methods, resulting in enhanced environmental performance and long-term success for the organization (Hameed et al., 2020). Organizations can effectively drive the adoption of ecologically sustainable behaviours and contribute to a more sustainable future if they incorporate green performance evaluation into their processes for managing human resources.

**H3:** *Green performance management is positively related to environmentally sustainable business.*

### **Green Reward and Recognition and Environmentally Sustainable Business**

Employees are rewarded for their performance through the main HRM processes of rewards and compensation. The most effective way to connect a person's interests with those of the organization is through these HR strategies. Renwick et al. (2013) assert that rewards and incentives can influence workers' concentration levels and inspire them to do their best to meet corporate objectives. Rewards can be considered viable methods for promoting environmental initiatives in firms. Modern businesses are creating incentive programs to support their employees' environmental actions. This is corroborated by a survey done in the UK by CIPD/KPMG, which estimated that 8% of UK businesses reward environmentally friendly behaviour with various kinds of awards or financial incentives (Arulrajah & Opatha, 2016). These practices can effectively encourage employees to develop Eco initiatives (Singh & Pandey, 2020). In a related study on the value of employee involvement in environmental programs, Tang et al. (2018) found that when employees were compensated for accepting duties related to environmental responsibility, their commitment to environmental management programs increased. The result of other relevant empirical studies also supports this point of view (e.g. Garavan et al., 2023; Shah & Soomro, 2023; Tajdar, Ullah, Jahangir, & Ahmad, 2023; Vázquez-Brust et al., 2023). Thus, we propose the following research hypothesis:

**H4:** *Green rewards and recognition have a positive influence on environmentally sustainable business*

### **Green HR Practices and OCB**

Green human resource strategies, which include initiatives such as training, recruitment, and performance evaluation focused on the environment, are closely linked with Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), which reflects the voluntary efforts made by employees that contribute to the effectiveness of the business. Individuals are said to reciprocate favourable treatment with positive actions, according to Social Exchange Theory (SET), which suggests that there is a potential mechanism via which green HRM practices can influence organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) Blau (1964). According to research by Renwick et al. (2020), recent studies have shed light on the significant relationship between green HR practices and organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB). These studies have shown that when employees perceive that their organization is supporting environmental sustainability through HR initiatives, they are more likely to participate in OCB activities to promote sustainability. According to

Jackson (2019), green training programs can improve employees' environmental awareness and skills, which in turn may result in a greater propensity to engage in extra-role activities that contribute to sustainability efforts being undertaken by the organization.

Similarly, when firms incorporate environmental factors into recruiting procedures and performance evaluations, employees may feel appreciated and inspired to display citizenship behaviours that support environmental goals. This is accomplished by including environmental criteria in the evaluation of performance. Furthermore, the alignment of human resource policies with environmental principles has the potential to cultivate a sense of reciprocity among employees, which in turn encourages them to go above and beyond the specific requirements of their jobs in order to contribute to the organization's efforts to achieve its sustainability goals (López-Gamero et al., 2021). Consequently, by utilizing SET (Blue, 1964), businesses can comprehend and capitalize on the reciprocal relationship between green HR practices and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), which eventually results in the development of a culture of sustainability and the achievement of organizational success.

*H5:* Green recruitment and selection have significant effects on employee's OCB.

*H6:* Green training and development has significant effects on employee's OCB.

*H7:* Green performance management has significant effects on employee's OCB.

*H8:* Green rewards and incentive has significant effects on employee's OCB.

### **Mediating Role of Organizational Citizenship Behavior**

Within the connection between Green Human Resource Management Practices and ecologically sustainable business outcomes, Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) is an essential intermediary. Employees should be instilled with environmental values and behaviours by implementing green human resource management practices, including ecologically focused training, recruitment, and performance evaluation. In addition to providing a framework via which these environmentally conscious actions can be translated into actual environmental benefits, OCB reflects the voluntary efforts that employees make to contribute to the effectiveness of the business. Recent research reveals that when employees think their firm supports environmental sustainability through HR practices, they are more likely to engage in organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) that promotes sustainability within the organization (Renwick et al., 2020). These citizenship behaviours may include voluntarily conserving resources, advocating for sustainable practices, or participating in environmental improvement projects beyond their formal employment obligations (Jackson, 2019). These behaviours may also include actions such as advocating for sustainable practices. Employees contribute to the implementation and execution of environmentally sustainable policies within the organization through their proactive involvement in organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). This results in a reduction in the organization's impact on the environment, an improvement in resource efficiency, and an increase in the organization's commitment to corporate social responsibility. The Office of Corporate Behavior (OCB) plays a crucial role in translating the intents and efforts of green human resource management practices into concrete outcomes that contribute to attaining environmentally sustainable corporate goals. This is accomplished through the mediation it provides.

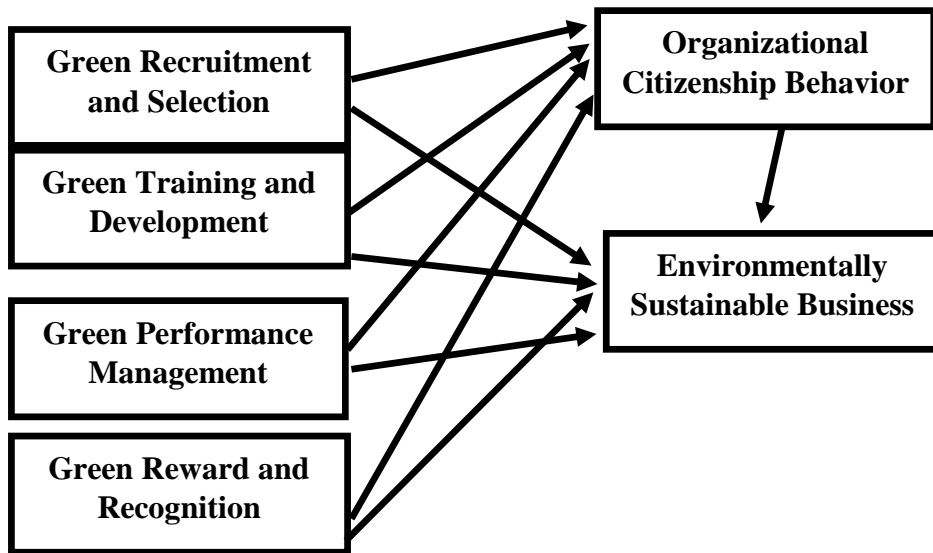
*H9:* OCB mediates the relationship between GR&S and environmental business sustainability

**H10:** OCB mediates the relationship between GTD and environmental business sustainability

**H11:** OCB mediates the relationship between GPM and environmental business sustainability

**H12:** OCB mediates the relationship between GR and environmental business sustainability

**Figure 1**  
*Research Model*



Source: Created by the authors

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1 Research Design

This study was cross-sectional and causal. It is cross-sectional since data was collected only once from the participant. It is also causal since this study attempts to explain the relationship between the study variables. We considered all employees working in the plastic manufacturing of a selected economic zone of Kabul, Afghanistan. Since the population is very large and unknown, this study used a convenience non-random sampling technique. 348 questionnaires were distributed, and the researchers received 153 surveys, making a 43.96% response rate. We used primary data collected through a cross-sectional survey distributed physically and online with the help of data collection assistants. The questionnaire is adapted from previous sources. Accordingly, green recruitment and selection, green training and development, and green performance management are measured by 5 items each, while 3 items measure green reward. The overall construct of green HRM is adapted from Masri and Jaaron (2017). Organizational citizenship behaviour is adapted from Spector, Bauer, and Fox (2010) and consists of 10 items. Environmentally sustainable business is measured by a total of 5 items and adapted from Zhu, Sarkis, and Lai (2008), Laosirihongthong, Adebajo, and Choon-Tan (2013), and Paulraj (2011).

## 4. Results

**Table 1**

*Demographic Information*

		Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	Male	113	73.856
	Female	40	26.144
<b>Age</b>	18 to 30	59	38.562
	30 to 45	63	41.176
	45 to 60	23	15.033
	Above 60	8	5.229
<b>Work Experience</b>	Less than 1 Year	26	16.993
	1 to 5 Years	43	28.105
	5 to 15 Years	59	38.562
	Above 15 Years	25	16.340

Source: Survey  
Data, 2023, n=153

113 (73.85%) males and 40 (26.14%) females participated in the survey. In terms of age, there are 59 (38.56%) participants from the 18 to 30 years' age category; 63 (41.17%) participants belong to 30 to 45 years' age category; 23 (15.03%) participants belong to 45 to 60 years' age category; and 8 (5.22%) participants belong to above 60 years' age category. In terms of work experience, 26 (16.99%) participants had less than 1-year work experience; 43 (28.10%) had 1 to 5 years work experience; 59 (38.56%) participants had 5 to 15 years work experience; and 25 (16.34%) had above 15 years work experience.

### 4.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Confirmatory Factor Analysis is performed to establish the reliability and validity of the measures adopted. The CFA is performed using AMOS version 22. The initial model showed weak model fitness, so we applied model fitness indices and deleted items with low factor loadings. The revised model achieved the desired model fitness, and the results are as follows;

**Table 2**

*Reliability and Convergent Validity*

Items	Standardized Factor Loadings	AVE	CR	Cronbach Alpha
GRS1	.783			
GRS2	.726			
GRS3	.861	.645	.900	.862
GRS4	.810			
GRS5	.831			
GTD1	.770			
GTD2	.755			
GTD3	.773	.658	.905	.899
GTD4	.847			
GTD5	.902			
GPM1	.942			
GPM2	.791	.692	.896	.920



GPM3	.956			
GPM4	.584			
GPM5	Deleted			
GR1	.873			
GR2	.692	.640	.841	.890
GR3	.825			
OCB1	Deleted			
OCB2	.693			
OCB3	.759			
OCB4	.735			
OCB5	.638			
OCB6	.758	.598	.930	.887
OCB7	.816			
OCB8	.844			
OCB9	.826			
OCB10	.865			
ESB1	.808			
ESB2	.629			
ESB3	.862	.663	.906	.883
ESB4	.882			
ESB5	.865			

X<sup>2</sup>= 901, 42, df=1.99, GFI=.913, CFI=.914, RMSEA=.074, RMR=.034

Source: Created by the authors

The result of CFA shows that our revised model achieved suitable model fitness as all model fitness indicators, including GFI and CFI, are greater than 0.90 and RMSEA and RMR are less than 0.08, which are within acceptable limits as per the guidelines set by Hu and Bentler (1999). Furthermore, all standardized factor loadings are above 0.50, and AVE is also above 0.50, indicating satisfactory convergent validity. Similarly, Cronbach alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) are also above 0.70, which shows satisfactory reliability for the measures adopted.

**Table 3**

*Discriminant Validity*

	1	2	3	4	5	6
GRS	<b>.803</b>	.684**	.710**	.677**	.420**	.770**
GTD	.684**	<b>.811</b>	.709**	.692**	.561**	.599**
GPM	.710**	.709**	<b>.831</b>	.698**	.505**	.610**
GR	.677**	.692**	.698**	<b>.800</b>	.521**	.700**
OCB	.420**	.561**	.505**	.521**	<b>.773</b>	.482**
ES	.770**	.599**	.610**	.700**	.482**	<b>.814</b>

Source: Created by the authors

Fornell and Larcker's (1981) criteria is used for testing the discriminant validity. The diagonal bold values are the square root of AVE, and the other values are inter-variable correlation, which shows that discriminant validity is established in our data.

*4.2 Structural Model- Hypotheses Testing*

After performing the CFA, we imputed the factor score based on the CFA result and used the score for hypotheses testing purposes in the structural model. The results are as follows:

**Table 4**  
*Regression Weights*

H. NO.	Path	Estimate	SE.	CR.	P	Remarks
H1	GR&S > ES	.119	0.06	1.983	*	Supported
H2	GTD > ES	.447	0.076	5.881	***	Supported
H3	GPM > ES	.325	0.077	4.221	***	Supported
H4	GR > ES	.426	0.095	4.484	***	Supported
H5	GRS > OCB	.068	0.074	0.918	.487	Not Supported
H6	GTD > OCB	.288	0.126	2.285	***	Supported
H7	GPM > OCB	.257	0.013	4.230	***	Supported
H8	GR > OCB	.156	0.141	1.106	.071	Not Supported

Source: Created by the authors

The result shows that green HR practices have positive and significant effects on environmentally sustainable business, including green recruitment and selection ( $\beta=.119$ ,  $P<.05$ ); green training and development ( $\beta=.447$ ,  $P<.05$ ); green performance management ( $\beta=.325$ ,  $P<.05$ ); and green performance management ( $\beta=.426$ ,  $P<.05$ ). Similarly, two green HR practices have positive and significant effects on employee OCB including green training & development ( $\beta=.288$ ,  $P<.05$ ); and green performance management ( $\beta=.257$ ,  $P<.05$ ). While, the result for green recruitment & selection ( $\beta=.068$ ,  $P>.05$ ); and green reward ( $\beta=.156$ ,  $P>.05$ ) turned out to be insignificant. The result shows that we accept H1, H2, H3, H4, H6, and H7 while rejecting H5 and H8.

#### 4.3 Mediation Testing

We performed the mediation analysis by treating green HR practices as an independent variable, environmental sustainability as the dependent variable, and OCB as a mediator. Our mediation approach is based on Baron and Kenny's (1986) classic approach. The procedure involves analyzing direct and indirect effects using the AMOS-based Bootstrap procedure on a sample of 5000, along with a Bias-corrected Bootstrap confidence interval of 95%. The results are given as follows:

**Table 5**  
*Mediation Analysis*

H. No.	Path	Total Effects	Direct Effects	Indirect Effects	Remarks
H9	GR&S > OCB > ESB	.224***	.119*	.105*	Supported
H10	GTD > OCB > ESB	.572***	.447***	.125*	Supported
H11	GPM > OCB > ESB	.522***	.325***	.197*	Supported
H12	GR > OCB > ESB	.513***	.426***	.087	Not Supported

\*\*\*<.05, \*\*<.01, \*<.001

Source: Created by the authors

The result indicates that OCB mediates green HR practices and environmental sustainability on three out of four paths. Thus, the significant indirect effect shows that green recruitment and selection ( $\beta=.105$ ,  $P<.05$ ), green training and development ( $\beta=.125$ ,  $P<.05$ ), and green performance management ( $\beta=.197$ ,  $P<.05$ ) are mediated by OCB. At the same time, the result for green reward ( $\beta=.087$ ,  $P<.05$ ) turned out to be insignificant.

## 5. Discussion

The primary goal of this study was to examine how green HRM affects environmentally sustainable business. The study's findings indicate a positive and significant relationship between the independent variable (GHRM) and the dependent variable (environmentally sustainable business). The current study also statistically explained that there was a supportive mediating role of H9 (GR&S > OCB > ESB), H10 (GTD > OCB > ESB), and H11 (GPM > OCB > ESB). In contrast, there was no mediating support of OCB between GR and ESB. The literature also supports our first major result about green HR practices and environmental sustainable business, as previous studies also supported a similar relationship, including Grolleau et al. (2012) and Jabbour and Renwick (2018). Our result also shows that green HR practices positively affect employee OCB, similar to previous studies, including An et al. (2018) Alnajdawi, Emeagwali, & Elrehail (2019). We also found partial support for the OCB as a mediator in the relationship between Green HRM practices and environmentally sustainable business. The findings of this study are further strengthened by the OCB environmental dimension, which incorporates the voluntary adoption of environmentally friendly behaviour by employees (Boiral & Paillé, 2012; Koopman et al., 2016). This factor makes the conclusions of this study even more compelling. When promoting environmental sustainability within firms, this aspect highlights the significance of the voluntary efforts of those organizations' employees. According to the Social Exchange Theory (SET), these findings indicate that when companies invest in green human resource management practices, employees respond by engaging in organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB), which includes activities favourable to the environment, as a kind of mutual exchange. By implementing these practices, employees can perceive the organization's commitment to sustainability. In return, they contribute to environmental activities that go beyond the requirements of their formal job responsibilities. Therefore, by incorporating SET (Blau (1964) into the interpretation of the results, it becomes clear that the relationship between green HRM Practices and environmentally sustainable company outcomes is mediated by the voluntary adoption of environmentally friendly behaviours by employees, as evidenced through OCB. This is the case because SET is incorporated into interpreting the results.

### 5.1 Implications

The current research results have essential ramifications, especially for business managers who encourage environmental business sustainability. Our study suggests that green HRM practices should first be incorporated into an organization's long-term growth strategy. Employing HR techniques with an environmental focus may help and provide significant support to the business promotion of environmentally conscious green behaviour of individuals. Similar to this study, most of the previous research findings also suggest that organizations should implement green HRM practices to ensure business sustainability, environmental performance, and pro-environmental behaviour (Dumont, Shen, & Deng, 2017; Guerci, Longoni, & Luzzini, 2016; Khan, Rasli, & Qureshi, 2017; Nejati, Rabiei, & Jabbour, 2017). Businesses can improve and enhance their environmental performance by integrating corporate environmental management objectives and targets with the performance management system, giving individuals regular feedback to help them meet all environmental goals or enhance their environmental sensitivity, green recruitment and selection, and green training and development are another key green HRM practices that could be taken into account. As a result of this study, we also suggest implementing an employee's green reward system. Rewards should be monetary and non-monetary for employees who perform at their best. Further encouraging employees to get involved in green suggestions and

collaborative problem-solving for environmental business sustainability concerns can also be a good way to motivate and encourage the implementation of green practices.

### 5.2 Limitation and Future Direction

The study in hand is not without its limitations. Therefore, we highlighted the limitations and future direction as follows;

This study focused on green HRM practice's influence on environmental business sustainability as an outcome variable. Future research should look into other outcome variables. The study employed OCB as the mediator between study IV and DV. Future research studies may look into other mediators (e.g. green commitment, green lifestyle, and job satisfaction). Furthermore, we did not employ any moderator. Thus, future researchers are encouraged to entertain any moderators between the study variables (e.g. environmental consciousness and green self-efficacy).

### 5.3 Conclusion

The key aim of the study was to investigate the role of green HRM toward environmentally sustainable business with the mediating role of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). The study entertained (GR&S, GT&D, GPM, and GR) as the main GHRM, which further explained the positive significant influence over environmentally sustainable business. The study's results generated affirmative statistical evidence in favour of the hypothesis that GHRM practices positively impact environmentally sustainable business. Furthermore, organizational citizenship behaviour positively mediates the relationship between GR&S and EBS, GT&D and EBS, GPM and EBS. The statistical results revealed no mediating support for OCB between GR and EBS.

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