Guest editorial: Green human resource management and the implications of culture on its practices in Asia

1. Introduction
Environmental, social and governance indicators are often used to assess an organization’s ethical and long-term sustainability and performance. Organizations with high environmental, social and governance scores tend to perform consistently and exceed market expectations (Rajesh and Rajendran, 2020). In particular, organizations that incorporate environmental welfare into their mission statement or core values not only achieve their organizational goals, but also achieve positive individual outcomes, such as employee engagement, willingness to take on organizational responsibilities and low turnover. Given the numerous environmental issues (e.g. pollution, global warming and waste management) that every industry faces directly or indirectly, there is an increased need and growing pressure for organizations to adopt sustainable strategies. As a result, the topic of green human resource management (GHRM) continues to attract the attention and interest of HRM scholars. A simple Google Scholar search (as of May 31, 2022) reveals 3,550,000 studies on this topic. Hence, GHRM is becoming one of the most important tasks for organizations, in addition to managing human resources from an economic perspective.

The notion behind GHRM revolves around the role of HRM-related aspects in successful environmental management (Renwick et al., 2013; Bahuguna et al., 2022). Therefore, GHRM is seen to have a significant association with environmental performance as well as a strong relationship with business performance (Ghouri et al., 2020). Effective implementation of GHRM can aid in developing the employee’s green skills and knowledge, which will, in turn, increase employees’ organizational commitment (Shoaib et al., 2021). At the organizational level, GHRM practices greatly improve the achievement of “green competitive advantage” by differentiation, reducing costs and building an environmental reputation (Muisyo et al., 2022). Moreover, GHRM strategies can have a positive impact on employees’ voluntary and collective pro-environmental behaviors, thus gearing the organizations and their business practices toward environmental sustainability (Hameed et al., 2020). These processes and outcomes highlight the pivotal role of HRM in ensuring the synergy between effective management of employees and the realization of sustainable development goals.

This special issue focuses on GHRM in the Asian context. In addition to broadening the understanding of GHRM in Asia, the influence of culture on GHRM practices in Asian organizations is also discussed. This issue contains a total of 14 articles covering various aspects of GHRM in the Asian context. Most of the articles published in this special issue are quantitative in terms of their research design, and they are mainly from countries such as China, Pakistan, Malaysia, India, Taiwan and Lebanon. These articles link GHRM to sustainability, green culture, green values, green organizational citizenship behavior (GOCB)
2. Overview of this special issue

In the first paper, Zahid Hameed, Rana Muhammad Naeem, Marria Hassan, Muhammad Naeem, Muhammad Nazim and Adnan Maqbool examined the link between GHRM practices, green perceived organizational support (GPOS), and green transformational leadership in terms of fostering green creativity among employees. The analysis was conducted using a multi-source sample of 201 supervisors and their 428 subordinates from Pakistan’s food and personal care industry. The results suggest that GPOS plays a mediating role between GHRM and employees' green creativity. Additionally, the study revealed that green transformational leadership moderates the relationship between GHRM practices and GPOS.

In the second paper, Muhammad Ali, Chin-Hong Puah, Anum Ali, Syed Ali Raza and Norazirah Ayob investigated how GHRM works in Islamic banking in Pakistan. In so doing, the authors examine how the utilization of green human capital, green structural capital and green relational capital in Islamic banks can lead to GHRM as well as it enhances various practices and conducts pertaining to employees and the ecological environment including organizational commitment, eco-friendly behavior and environmental performance. This study combined the conceptual approaches of intellectual capital-based perspective theory and social identity theory. The findings showed that GHRM is substantially affected by green relational capital, green human capital and green structural capital, which then shows that the implementation of such practices has proven beneficial for employees and the organization, along with the environment.

In the third paper, Jiaqi Yan and Wenan Hu address how long-term environmental sustainability necessitates the development of green products in China’s new energy sector. From the perspective of the HRM system, the aim of this research was to hypothesize and scientifically investigate how environmentally friendly leadership improves performance in green product development. The authors examined the function of HRM system adaptability as a mediating factor for the relationship between environmentally oriented leadership and green product development success. For a substantial explanation of the boundary condition, the authors investigated the moderating role of the GHRM on the relationship between environmentally specific transformational leadership and the strength of the HRM system. The results showed that environmental-specific leadership and strength of HRM system have a positive influence on the green product development performance. The study also revealed a significant mediating effect of the strength of the HRM system and the moderation effect of GHRM.

In the fourth paper, Hussein Ismail, Miriam El Irani and Kevin Sevag Kertechian examined whether GHRM techniques influence employees’ non-green outcomes (e.g. organizational trust, turnover intentions, organizational pride, job performance and citizenship behavior) through the role of perceived visionary leadership. For this research, they enlisted the help of 144 Lebanese construction workers to evaluate the model. The results showed that GHRM having a positive impact on organizational pride and citizenship behavior via visionary leadership. These findings underscore the relevance of using GHRM as an approach to promote environmental sustainability and improve employee behaviors.

In the fifth paper, drawing on attribution theory and conservation of resources theory, Gabriel C.W. Gim, Say Keat Ooi, Siau Teng Teoh, Hui Ling Lim and Jasmine A.L. Yeap examined how job engagement of an employee is linked to their core self-evaluations, GHRM and leader–member exchange through the HRM performance attributions in ISO 14001-certified firms in Malaysia. The findings showed that employee performance improved when
GHRM and leader–member exchange were positively linked to human resource management attributions.

In the sixth paper, Jun Wen, Hadi Hussain, Junaid Waheed, Waheed Ali and Ihsan Jamil examined both direct and indirect links between GHRM practices and environmental sustainability in Pakistani small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the manufacturing sector through the lens of corporate social responsibility. Few studies claim that GHRM and corporate social responsibility (CSR) play a significant role, especially in emerging economies. The results show that GHRM practices have a positive impact on environmental sustainability via CSR. Therefore, the results suggest how a green economy can emerge as a result of GHRM.

In the seventh paper, Paul Kivinda Muisiyo, Su Qin, Thu Hau Ho, Mercy Muthuni Julius and Tsirinirinantenaina Barisoava Andriamandresy investigated how GHRM practices might help companies develop a collaborative organizational citizenship behavior toward the environment in Taiwanese manufacturing companies. Specifically, the research examines how the three primary parts of GHRM, notably green opportunity, green talents and green motivation, contribute to green culture enablers. At the organizational level of analysis, the authors explored how each of the enablers of green culture, namely leadership focus, peer engagement, message credibility and employee empowerment contributed to the development of organizational citizenship behavior toward the environment. The findings of the study imply that GHRM functions such as creating green talents, green motivation and green opportunities aid enablers of green culture growth.

In the eighth paper, Sabeen Hussain Bhatti, Farida Saleem, Ghulam Murtaza and Tazeem Ul Haq focused on investigating the relationship between GHRM measures and environmental performance of companies in sectors prone to pollution, such as oil and natural gas. The study empirically tested a serial mediation framework based on organizational and individual factors that act as instructive paths with the underlying arrangement of the framework. The results suggest that individual factors such as innovative environmental behavior and organizational factors such as perceived organizational support provide the link between GHRM and environmental performance in Pakistan's oil and gas sector.

In the ninth paper, using AMO theory, Lai Wan Hooi, Min-Shi Liu and Joe Lin studied the influence of GHRM on GOCB in Taiwanese organizations. The study also conceptualized and empirically tested the green culture as the mediator and green values as the moderator between GHRM and GOCB. The results highlighted that GHRM significantly influenced the GOCB and green culture, and green culture is significantly related to GOCB. The mediating effect of green culture and the moderating effect of green values between GHRM and GOCB were also significant.

In the tenth paper, Ishtiaq Hussain Qureshi and Danish Mehraj conducted a psychometric analysis of the internal green marketing scale. Participants were selected from the consumer and service industries in Jammu and Kashmir, India. The results showed that the internal green marketing scale is a useful and accurate scale to assess the perception of green internal marketing of an organization on an interpersonal basis.

In the eleventh paper, Aaisha Khatoon, Nawab Ali Khan, Farhana Parvin, Mohammad Salman Wahid, Mohd Tariq Jamal and Saad Azhar focused on gaining an understanding of the current notion of greening the enterprise through human resource management practices and attempting to act as a facilitator towards environmental awareness, as well as exploring the dimensions of GHRM practices and their impact on environmental protection. Interestingly, the study employed the analytical hierarchy process (AHP) and fuzzy analytical hierarchy process (FAHP) to achieve the research objectives. The results showed that green wages and awards have the greatest impact on the use of environmental sustainability.

In the twelfth paper of this special issue, Zuhair Abbas, Shagufta Sarwar, Mohsin Abdur Rehman, Roman Zamecnik and Muhammad Shoaib examine the influence of GHRM strategies on sustainability in higher education in Pakistan. Drawing on the resource-based view theory,
this quantitative research reveals that green training and development, and top management commitment and contribution toward greening the workforce have a significant connection with sustainability, while green recruitment and selection does not. In addition, this research contributes to the discussion of green training and development and sustainability through the moderating impact of gender, fundamentally showing that the GHRM policies encourage green behavior and sustainability among employees in a developing country like Pakistan.

In the thirteenth paper, Jing Ye, Xufan Zhang, Lulu Zhou, Decai Wang and Feng Tian used AMO theory to investigate the psychological mechanism linking GHRM with new employees’ green behaviors inside and outside their roles. The study employed three waves of surveys to collect data from 399 new-comers and 103 superiors working in five large high-tech industry groups located in China. Results showed that GHRM had a significant impact on new employees’ pro-environmental behaviors inside and outside their roles as did the mediating effects of perceived insider status and perceived external prestige.

In the final paper, Anuradha Mukherji et al. focus on the conceptualization and theorization of GHRM and examined its connections to the sustainability literature. Based on a review of 38 recent empirical studies on GHRM, the study found support in the literature for the impact of environmental human resource initiatives on building long-term capabilities and improving firm-specific social outcomes. In addition, the study showed that the different perspectives used in conceptualizing GHRM reveal the different implications for organizational and environmental sustainability that underlie the growing recognition of GHRM as an important tool for organizations to demonstrate their commitment as responsible actors in the socioeconomic system.

3. Future research directions

This special issue aims to enrich our knowledge and capture the nuances of GHRM in the Asian environment, such as how organizations develop strategies to be more environmentally friendly and implement practices that ensure environmental sustainability. These articles have allowed us to dive deeper into the topic and navigate through the various issues surrounding GHRM and the profound impact of culture on HR functions in Asia. The articles cover a wide range of research topics, use multiple data sources and relate to different geographic regions in Asia. Suggestions for future research are made in each article. Some general conclusions can be drawn from the summary of the articles, which are discussed below:

First, there are few to no qualitative studies in this special issue, with the exception of a narrative review by Anuradha Mukherji et al. Thus, there is a need for qualitative design and even critical studies. Qualitative approaches to GHRM allow researchers to challenge existing theories and develop new ones, as well as gain more insights from diverse populations. Qualitative research is useful when addressing complex issues because it provides a deeper understanding of perspectives, realities and contextual circumstances (Hennink et al., 2020; Turner et al., 2021). It also helps to explore concepts that are difficult to quantify. Therefore, it is recommended that qualitative approaches should be used in future studies as this will help researchers better understand and address current GHRM issues.

Second, most studies are single-level studies that focus on either workers or managers. Future researchers are recommended to shift their focus to multi-level studies. The importance of multi-level studies could be underpinned by the fact that elements of GHRM such as sustainability, green culture and green values can only be adhered to if all stakeholders involved work together. The multi-level approach helps in studying the phenomenon at different levels within the hierarchical structure of the organization. Therefore, such an approach will help future researchers to study the aspects related to GHRM in a holistic way rather than having a tunnel vision.
Third, the focus of this special issue was mainly on the Asian context. The 14 articles show that a lot of research has already been done in the Asian context. Future researchers should focus on replicating the models used in these studies. Replicating the models in other countries, contexts, geographic regions and sectors outside Asia would help researchers assess the credibility of these models to know whether they can work. This will help to provide a comparative analysis of the performance of each model outside the Asian region.

Finally, COVID-19 has changed the way companies in this industry operate. A number of articles were written at the beginning of the pandemic. This highlights the gap that needs to be filled in terms of the impact of the pandemic on businesses and health and social care strategies. As we now enter the final phase of the pandemic, it remains to be seen whether this situation will force companies to make changes in human resource management. The pandemic forced employees to work from home, so offices could not be used or could only be used by part of the workforce. Now that the situation has improved significantly and life is gradually returning to normal, the question is how downsizing will affect the environment in the future. This also opens up opportunities for researchers to look at GHRM in a new light, including the incorporation of sustainable development goals into human resource strategy and functions, the awareness of organizations and workers of environmental issues and the attitudes and behaviors of managers and workers toward environmental sustainability in their workplace, including a sense of responsibility or mindfulness toward the environment.

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