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Research article

GREEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND EMPLOYEE VOLUNTARY PRO-ENVIRONMENTAL BEHAVIOUR IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY IN CAMEROON

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ABSTRACT

The hospitality industry is increasingly adopting environmentally sustainable management practices in response to growing global concerns regarding climate change, resource depletion, and environmental degradation. This study examined the association between Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices and employees' voluntary pro-environmental behaviour in the hotel industry in Cameroon. A cross-sectional survey design was employed. Data were collected between January and March 2026 from employees working in 15 three-star, four-star and five-star hotels located in Douala, Yaoundé, Limbe and Buea. The sampling frame comprised full-time employees in the selected hotels. A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed, all of which were properly completed and returned, yielding a response rate of 100%. Content validity was established through expert review, while reliability coefficients ranged from 0.87 to 0.91 (Cronbach's Alpha). Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional authority, and informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage) were used to summarize respondents' characteristics, while simple linear regression analysis tested the hypothesis at the 0.05 significance level. The findings revealed that GHRM practices have a significant positive effect on employees' voluntary pro-environmental behaviour ($R = 0.701$, $R^2 = 0.491$, $\beta = 0.701$, $t = 16.944$, $p < 0.001$). The study concludes that integrating environmental sustainability into human resource management enhances employees' willingness to engage voluntarily in environmentally responsible behaviours, thereby improving organizational environmental performance. It recommends that hotel managers institutionalize comprehensive GHRM practices, strengthen environmental leadership, provide continuous environmental training, and incorporate environmental performance into employee appraisal and reward systems to foster sustainable hotel operations.

KEYWORDS

Green Human Resource Management, Employee Behaviour, Environmental Sustainability, Hotel Industry, Cameroon

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Introduction

The global hospitality industry has witnessed increasing pressure from governments, customers, environmental organizations, and international regulatory bodies to adopt environmentally sustainable management practices. Climate change, biodiversity loss, increasing waste generation, energy consumption, water scarcity, and carbon emissions have compelled organizations to integrate environmental sustainability into their operational and strategic management systems (United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP], 2023). Hotels are among the largest consumers of energy, water, and other natural resources within the tourism sector, making environmental sustainability an essential component of long-term organizational competitiveness (World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2023). In recent years, Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) has emerged as one of the most effective organizational strategies for promoting environmental sustainability through employee behaviour. GHRM refers to the integration of environmental management principles into human resource management functions such as recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, compensation, employee participation, and organizational culture (Renwick et al., 2013). Rather than relying solely on technological innovations or environmental policies, GHRM emphasizes the development of environmentally responsible employees who voluntarily engage in activities that support organizational sustainability.

Employee voluntary pro-environmental behaviour refers to discretionary actions undertaken by employees to protect and improve the natural environment beyond their prescribed job responsibilities (Paillé & Boiral, 2013). These behaviours include conserving electricity, reducing paper consumption, recycling waste materials, participating in environmental awareness campaigns, encouraging colleagues to adopt environmentally friendly practices, and voluntarily suggesting innovative environmental initiatives. Such behaviours contribute significantly to reducing organizational environmental impacts while simultaneously improving operational efficiency and corporate reputation. The relationship between Green Human Resource Management and

employee voluntary pro-environmental behaviour has received considerable scholarly attention over the past decade. Previous studies have consistently demonstrated that organizations implementing comprehensive Green Human Resource Management practices experience higher employee environmental commitment, improved organizational environmental performance, and stronger employee participation in environmental sustainability initiatives (Dumont et al., 2017; Pham et al., 2019; Saeed et al., 2019). Environmental training equips employees with the knowledge and competencies required to perform environmentally responsible activities, while green reward systems provide motivation for employees to participate actively in sustainability programmes.

Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) has increasingly been recognized as an important organizational approach for integrating environmental sustainability into hotel work practices and employee management systems. Evidence from the hospitality industry indicates that GHRM practices such as green recruitment, environmental training, green performance management, rewards, and employee involvement are associated with employees' eco-friendly behaviour and hotel environmental performance. For example, Kim et al. (2019) found that GHRM was associated with hotel employees' eco-friendly behaviour and environmental performance, while Pham et al. (2020) reported that GHRM practices, particularly environmental training and employee involvement, were linked to organizational citizenship behaviour toward the environment and hotel environmental performance. More recent evidence from hospitality research similarly shows positive associations between GHRM, employee green behaviour, and environmental performance (Comfort et al., 2026; Eneyo, 2026a, 2026b, 2026c, 2026d; Nisar et al., 2024).

Statement of the problem

Despite the growing global interest in Green Human Resource Management, empirical evidence remains limited within many African countries, particularly Cameroon. Most existing studies have been conducted in developed and emerging economies such as China, Vietnam, Malaysia, South Korea, Australia, and European countries. The socio-economic, institutional, and environmental conditions prevailing in Cameroon differ considerably from those contexts, making it inappropriate to generalize previous findings without empirical verification. The hotel industry in Cameroon has experienced substantial growth over the past decade due to increasing domestic tourism, international business travel, regional conferences, and cultural tourism. However, this expansion has also increased environmental challenges, including high energy consumption, waste generation, excessive water usage, and growing carbon emissions. Many hotels continue to focus primarily on operational efficiency and customer satisfaction while paying relatively less attention to environmental sustainability through human resource management practices.

Although studies conducted in China (Dumont et al., 2017), Vietnam (Pham et al., 2019), South Korea (Kim et al., 2019) and Malaysia (Roscoe et al., 2019) consistently demonstrate positive associations between Green Human Resource Management and employees' environmental behaviour, empirical evidence from Africa remains comparatively limited. Existing African studies have largely concentrated on environmental management systems, corporate sustainability and green innovation with relatively little attention devoted to employee-level behavioural outcomes in hospitality organisations. In Cameroon, available studies have primarily examined sustainable tourism development, environmental conservation and corporate social responsibility, leaving the relationship between Green Human Resource Management, psychological green climate and employees' voluntary pro-environmental behaviour largely unexplored. This study addresses this empirical gap by providing evidence from Cameroon's hotel industry.

Literature review

Concept of Green Human Resource Management

Green Human Resource Management refers to the integration of environmental management objectives into conventional human resource management functions with the aim of promoting environmental sustainability and improving organizational environmental performance (Renwick et al., 2013). It encompasses environmentally responsible recruitment and selection, environmental education and training, green performance appraisal, environmental reward systems, employee participation, and organizational environmental culture. According to Dumont et al. (2017), Green Human Resource Management enables organizations to develop environmentally responsible employees who voluntarily contribute to environmental sustainability. Environmental training improves employees' environmental knowledge and competencies, while environmental performance appraisal ensures that sustainability becomes part of employees' daily responsibilities. Similarly, Pham et al. (2019) argue that Green Human Resource Management encourages employees to internalize organizational environmental values, thereby increasing their commitment to environmental conservation. Organizations that integrate environmental concerns into human resource management experience stronger employee participation in sustainability initiatives and improved environmental performance.

Voluntary Pro-Environmental Behaviour

Voluntary pro-environmental behaviour refers to discretionary environmental actions undertaken by employees beyond their formal job responsibilities to improve organizational environmental performance (Paillé & Boiral, 2013). Such behaviours include conserving electricity, minimizing waste, recycling materials, reducing paper consumption, encouraging colleagues to adopt environmentally friendly practices, and participating voluntarily in environmental awareness campaigns. According to Robertson and Barling (2013), voluntary environmental behaviour represents a form of organizational citizenship behaviour directed toward environmental sustainability. Employees engage in these behaviours because they identify with organizational environmental values rather than because such behaviours are formally required.

A study by Dumont et al. (2017) examined Green Human Resource Management and employee workplace green behaviour using 357 employees in Chinese organizations. Structural Equation Modelling revealed that Green Human Resource Management significantly influenced employees' voluntary environmental behaviour through psychological green climate and employee green values. Pham et al. (2019) investigated Green Human Resource Management practices within Vietnamese hotels and found that environmental recruitment, green training, employee participation, and environmental rewards significantly improved employees' organizational citizenship behaviour toward the environment. Kim et al. (2019) reported that Green Human Resource Management positively influenced hotel employees' environmentally responsible behaviour in South Korea through increased environmental commitment and organizational support.

Again, Roscoe et al. (2019) similarly found that Green Human Resource Management strengthened organizational environmental culture and significantly improved environmental performance among Malaysian organizations. Amankwah-Amoah (2022) established that hospitality organizations implementing sustainable human resource management practices recorded significantly higher employee environmental commitment and greater participation in organizational sustainability initiatives. Collectively, these studies demonstrate that Green Human Resource Management plays a significant role in promoting voluntary employee pro-environmental behaviour. However, empirical evidence from Cameroon remains limited, thereby providing the justification for the present study.

The study is anchored on the Ability–Motivation–Opportunity (AMO) Theory, Social Exchange Theory, and Social Identity Theory, which together provide a complementary explanation of the association between Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices and employees' voluntary pro-environmental behaviour. The Ability–Motivation–Opportunity (AMO) Theory, developed by Appelbaum et al. (2000), proposes that employee behaviour and performance are shaped by the extent to which organizations develop employees' abilities, motivate them to perform desired behaviours, and provide opportunities for them to participate. In the context of GHRM, green recruitment and selection and environmental training can enhance employees' ability to engage in environmentally responsible practices, while green performance management and rewards can provide motivation, and employee involvement can create opportunities for participation in environmental initiatives. Social Exchange Theory, developed by Blau (1964), explains that relationships between employees and organizations are based on reciprocal exchanges. Employees who perceive that their organization demonstrates genuine commitment to environmental sustainability through GHRM practices may reciprocate by engaging in discretionary environmental behaviours that extend beyond their formal job responsibilities, such as conserving resources, reducing waste, recycling and supporting organizational environmental programmes. Social Identity Theory, developed by Tajfel and Turner (1979), further suggests that individuals derive part of their identity from their membership in social groups and tend to behave consistently with the values associated with those groups. Thus, when hotel employees perceive environmental sustainability as an important organizational value, they may develop stronger identification with the hotel's environmental orientation and consequently demonstrate voluntary behaviours that are consistent with that identity. Collectively, the three theories suggest that GHRM practices can provide employees with the ability and motivation to behave environmentally responsibly, create opportunities for environmental participation, establish reciprocal relationships between employees and their organizations, and strengthen employees' identification with organizational environmental values. These mechanisms provide a theoretical basis for examining the observed association between GHRM practices and voluntary employee pro-environmental behaviour in the hotel industry in Cameroon.

Methodology

The study was conducted in selected hotels operating in Cameroon. Cameroon possesses one of the fastest-growing hospitality industries in Central Africa due to increasing business travel, cultural tourism, conferences, and ecotourism activities. The hotel industry comprises international hotel chains, national hotels, and independently owned establishments that provide accommodation and other hospitality services. The industry's expansion has increased the need for sustainable environmental management practices because hotels consume substantial quantities of electricity, water, cleaning chemicals, and other natural resources while generating

considerable solid and liquid waste. Consequently, the adoption of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices has become increasingly important for improving environmental sustainability within the sector.

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey design because data were collected from respondents at one point in time to examine statistical associations among Green Human Resource Management, psychological green climate and employees' voluntary pro-environmental behaviour. The design is appropriate for examining relationships among variables across a relatively large population in a cost-effective manner. However, because the data were collected at a single point in time, the design cannot establish temporal ordering or causal relationships. Consequently, the findings should be interpreted as associations rather than causal effects.

The target population comprised 1,215 full-time employees working in 15 registered three-star, four-star, and five-star hotels located in Douala, Yaoundé, Limbe, and Buea. A sample size of approximately 300 employees was obtained using Yamane (1967). Employees were drawn from the front office, housekeeping, food and beverage, maintenance, administration, marketing, and management departments because these units directly influence environmental sustainability through their daily operations. The hotel sampling frame consisted of registered hotels classified by the Ministry of Tourism. The employee sampling frame comprised permanent employees who had worked for at least six months. Hotels were selected from different ownership structures and hotel classifications irrespective of the maturity of their environmental management programmes. Existing environmental initiatives were documented during analysis rather than used as selection criteria, thereby minimizing selection bias.

Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were used to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics and responses to questionnaire items. Inferential statistics were employed to test the study hypothesis. Specifically, Simple Linear Regression Analysis was used to determine the effect of Green Human Resource Management practices on employees' voluntary pro-environmental behaviour. Statistical significance was determined at the 5% (0.05) significance level using SPSS Version 26.

Results and discussion

The demographic results in table 1 show that male respondents constituted the majority (57.7%), while females accounted for 42.3% of the sample. The largest age group was respondents aged 26–35 years (40.3%), followed by those aged 36–45 years (22.3%). Respondents aged 18–25 years represented 19.7%, while those aged 46–55 years and above 55 years accounted for 11.7% and 6.0%, respectively. Regarding educational qualifications, B.Sc holders constituted the largest proportion (43.0%), followed by Diploma holders (19.3%) and M.Sc holders (18.0%). Overall, the respondents possessed diverse demographic and educational characteristics suitable for providing information relevant to the study.

TABLE 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	173	57.7
Female	127	42.3
Total	300	100
Age		
18–25 years	59	19.7
26–35 years	121	40.3
36–45 years	67	22.3
46–55 years	35	11.7
Above 55	18	6.0
Total	300	100
Educational qualifications		
SSCE	42	14.0
Diploma	58	19.3
B.Sc	129	43.0
M.Sc	54	18.0
Ph.D	11	3.7
Others	6	2.0
Total	300	100.0

Source: Researchers' fieldwork, (2026).

The results presented in Table 2 indicate that Respondents most frequently identified environmental training as the Green Human Resource Management practice they perceived to contribute most to environmental sustainability by 87 respondents representing (29.0%). This was followed by green recruitment (21.3%), green performance evaluation (19.3%), green reward systems (16.4%), while 42 respondents (14.0%) indicated that none of these practices were commonly implemented within their hotels. These findings demonstrate that environmental training remains the most visible and widely implemented GHRM practice in the hotel industry.

TABLE 2: Most Common Green HRM Practice

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Environmental Training	87	29.0
Green Recruitment	64	21.3
Green Performance Evaluation	58	19.3
Green Reward System	49	16.4
None of the Above	42	14.0
Total	300	100.0

Source: Researchers' fieldwork, (2026).

Finding presented in table 3 The findings reveal that 118 respondents (39.3%) identified environmental training as the Green Human Resource Management practice with the greatest influence on employees' environmental behaviour. This was followed by green reward systems (24.3%), green recruitment (15.4%), green performance evaluation (13.7%), while 22 respondents (7.3%) believed that all Green Human Resource Management practices collectively influence employees' environmental behaviour. The dominance of environmental training demonstrates that employees perceive knowledge acquisition as the primary mechanism through which environmental attitudes and behaviours are developed.

TABLE 3: Green HRM Practice Perceived to Have the Greatest Influence on Employees' Environmental Behaviour

GHRM practice	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Environmental Training	118	39.3
Green Reward System	73	24.3
Green Recruitment	46	15.4
Green Performance Evaluation	41	13.7
Combination of all Practices	22	7.3
Total	300	100.0

Source: Researchers' fieldwork, (2026).

The regression coefficient results in Table 4, 5, 6 showed that Green Human Resource Management practices recorded a standardized regression coefficient of $\beta = 0.701$, with an unstandardized coefficient of $B = 0.673$, a t-value of 16.944, and a significance level of $p = 0.000$. The positive beta coefficient indicates that Green Human Resource Management practices exert a positive influence on employees' voluntary pro-environmental behaviour. Specifically, improvements in Green Human Resource Management practices are associated with corresponding increases in employees' willingness to voluntarily conserve energy, reduce waste, recycle materials, participate in environmental programmes, encourage colleagues to adopt environmentally responsible practices, and suggest innovative environmental improvement initiatives. The relatively high t-value (16.944) indicates that Green Human Resource Management practices make a substantial contribution to explaining employees' voluntary environmental behaviour. The probability value of 0.000, being less than the predetermined significance level of 0.05, provides sufficient statistical evidence to reject the null hypothesis. Consequently, the study concludes that Green Human Resource Management practices have a statistically significant and positive effect on employees' voluntary pro-environmental behaviour in the hotel industry in Cameroon.

TABLE 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error
1	0.701	0.491	0.489	0.503

TABLE 5: ANOVA

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	72.641	1	72.641	287.116	0.000
Residual	75.459	298	0.253		
Total	148.100	299			

TABLE 6: Regression Coefficients

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
Constant	1.246	0.189		6.593	0.000
GHRM Practices	0.673	0.040	0.701	16.944	0.000

Source: Researchers' fieldwork, (2026).

The findings of the study revealed a statistically significant positive association between Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices and employees' voluntary pro-environmental behaviour in the hotel industry in Cameroon, with the composite GHRM construct showing a strong positive relationship with voluntary pro-environmental behaviour ($R = 0.701$, $R^2 = 0.491$, $\beta = 0.701$, $t = 16.944$, $p < .001$). The coefficient of determination indicates that approximately 49.1% of the observed variation in employees' self-reported voluntary pro-environmental behaviour was statistically associated with the composite GHRM construct, while the remaining variation may be attributable to other organizational and individual factors not examined in the study. The finding can be interpreted through the Ability–Motivation–Opportunity (AMO) Theory of Appelbaum et al. (2000), which suggests that employee behaviour is shaped by their abilities, motivation and opportunities to participate: green recruitment and environmental training can provide employees with the knowledge and capabilities required for responsible environmental practices, green performance management and rewards can strengthen motivation, while employee involvement can provide opportunities to participate in environmental initiatives.

The finding is also consistent with Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), which suggests that employees may reciprocate favourable organizational practices with discretionary behaviours; employees who perceive their hotels as supporting environmental responsibility through GHRM may therefore respond through voluntary activities such as conserving resources, reducing waste and supporting environmental programmes. Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) provides a complementary explanation, as employees may internalize environmental values communicated by their organizations and behave consistently with an environmentally responsible organizational identity. Empirically, the result is consistent with Kim et al. (2019), who reported a positive relationship between GHRM, hotel employees' eco-friendly behaviour and environmental performance, and with Pham et al. (2019), who found that GHRM practices were associated with organizational citizenship behaviour toward the environment in the hospitality sector. It also corresponds with Nisar et al. (2024), who reported relationships among GHRM, employee green behaviour and hotel environmental performance. However, these studies were conducted in different institutional and socio-economic contexts, including South Korea and Vietnam, where environmental regulations, organizational resources, technological capacity and hospitality management systems may differ from those of Cameroon.

The present finding therefore extends the existing literature by providing evidence from the Cameroonian hotel industry, while recognizing that contextual differences may influence how GHRM practices are perceived and implemented. The observed association may also have alternative explanations because employees' voluntary environmental behaviour can be influenced by factors such as personal environmental values, environmental knowledge, leadership style, perceived organizational support, organizational identification, environmental facilities and job autonomy, none of which were fully controlled in the present analysis. In addition, the finding should be interpreted cautiously because both GHRM and voluntary pro-environmental behaviour were measured through employees' self-reports using the same questionnaire, creating the possibility of common-method variance and social-desirability bias. Employees may have reported more favourable GHRM practices or environmentally responsible behaviours because such responses are socially desirable. Furthermore, because the analysis used an aggregate GHRM construct, the result does not establish whether green recruitment, green training, green performance management, green rewards and employee involvement have equal or distinct associations with voluntary pro-environmental behaviour. Overall, the evidence indicates that higher reported levels of GHRM practices are associated with higher reported levels of voluntary pro-environmental behaviour among hotel employees in Cameroon, but the cross-sectional design does not permit causal inference. The finding therefore supports the relevance of environmentally oriented human resource practices as an organizational factor associated with employee environmental behaviour while highlighting the need for longitudinal, multi-source and dimension-specific research to establish temporal relationships and better explain the mechanisms underlying employee pro-environmental behaviour in Cameroonian hotels.

Conclusion

The study concludes that Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices are significantly and positively associated with employees' voluntary pro-environmental behaviour in the hotel industry in Cameroon. The findings indicate that employees who reported higher levels of GHRM practices also reported higher levels of voluntary environmental behaviours, including energy conservation, waste reduction, recycling, responsible use of organizational resources, and voluntary participation in environmental activities. The regression result further indicates that the composite GHRM construct accounted for a substantial proportion of the observed

variation in employees' voluntary pro-environmental behaviour. The findings suggest that environmentally oriented human resource practices provide an important organizational context within which employees can demonstrate voluntary environmental responsibility. In particular, the integration of environmental considerations into human resource activities such as recruitment, training, performance management, rewards, and employee involvement appears to be associated with stronger employee engagement in discretionary pro-environmental behaviours. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

Recommendations

1. Hotel management should institutionalize comprehensive Green Human Resource Management practices by integrating environmental sustainability into recruitment, employee orientation, training, performance appraisal, promotion, and reward systems.
2. Hotels should organize regular environmental education and capacity-building programmes to improve employees' environmental knowledge, skills, and competencies.
3. Environmental performance should be incorporated into employee appraisal and reward systems to motivate employees toward greater participation in sustainability initiatives.

Study limitations and directions for further research

This study relied on self-reported cross-sectional data, which may be affected by common-method variance and social desirability bias. Data were collected from selected hotels in Cameroon, limiting generalizability to other hospitality contexts. Furthermore, the study measured employees' perceptions rather than objective environmental performance indicators. Future studies should employ longitudinal designs, include objective environmental performance indicators, examine individual Green Human Resource Management dimensions using structural equation modelling, and compare hotels across different African countries to strengthen external validity.

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