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## Green human resource management: need of the modern era

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### Abstract

Recently, there has been observed an increasing awareness within business communities on the significance of going green and adopting various environment management techniques. As the corporate world is going global, the business is experiencing a shift from a conventional financial structure to a modern capacity-based economy which is ready to explore green economic facets of business. Today, Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) has become a key business strategy for the significant organizations where Human Resource Departments play an active part in going green at the office. It refers to using every employee to support sustainable practices and increase employee awareness, commitments and involvement on the issue of sustainability. This paper largely focuses upon the various Green Human Resource Practices pursued by the organizations all over the world and, explains the simplified meaning of GHRM. The review finds considerable evidence of the positive impact of EI in EM with evidence of an association with the key outcomes of efficient use of resources, reduced waste and pollution, and also some evidence of a positive impact on employee outcomes such as increased job satisfaction. The study also adds to the extant literature by discussing future direction of some GHRM functions. In the outcomes, the paper suggests some potentially prolific HR initiatives for Green organizations.

**Keywords:** Green human resource management, environment management, employee involvement

### 1. Introduction

Most recent interest has been paid to environment globally, whether arising from specific treaties to combat climate change, e.g. Kyoto 1997, Bali 2007 and Copenhagen 2009 (Victor 2001)<sup>[98]</sup>, or from harm/pollution resulting from high-profile industrial accidents such as at the BP Texas City Refinery in 2005, killing 15 and injuring over 100 people. In the management field, there is a growing research literature on Green marketing (Peattie 1992)<sup>[70]</sup>, Green accounting (Bebbington 2001; Owen 1992)<sup>[10, 68]</sup>, Green retailing (Keehung *et al.* 2010)<sup>[53]</sup> and Green management in general (McDonagh and Prothero 1997)<sup>[64]</sup>. However, in comparison, Green human resource management (Green Human Resource Management) research, defined as the Human Resource Management aspects of environmental management (EM), is relatively diverse and piecemeal. The contributions of this paper are threefold: first, to survey and draw together the HR elements of environmental management; second, to map the terrain of this field; and third to outline some avenues for potential further study in Green Human Resource Management. In doing so, we are responding to calls in the literature to integrate environmental management and Human Resource Management as a subject of research (Jabbour and Santos 2008; Jackson *et al.* 2011)<sup>[50, 51]</sup>, to expand the scope of strategic HRM (SHRM) to incorporate sustainability issues (Osland and Osland 2007; Wilkinson *et al.* 2001)<sup>[67, 100]</sup> and, more specifically, to answer a question posed by Bunge *et al.* (1996)<sup>[22]</sup>, namely: 'Is there a role for human resource management in pollution prevention? We begin with a discussion on the methodology adopted and then we present the theoretical frame- work used to structure the review. Next, we proceed by reviewing the literature on the HR aspects of EM. Last, we discuss the issues arising from our review of the literature and offer some general conclusions on the state of the field, before indicating some gaps for potential future study.

### 2. Research methodology

Given the aims of the paper, a systematic review (Tranfield *et al.* 2003)<sup>[94]</sup> using an archival method is adopted to build a reliable knowledge base of the Green Human Resource Management field.

Our analysis process includes categorizing and classifying the existing literature in EM and HRM (across the full range of HRM practices), using papers published across more than two decades plus (1988 until 2011). This periodization was chosen to track the development of the field from the time that Green Human Resource Management papers first appear in the published literature. Research papers were delimited from the review if they did not have a focus on EM and HRM, widely defined. This process produced over 200 books, journal articles, edited works and discussion papers that were available for analysis. In this review we focus only on those papers that report empirical findings or develop theoretical arguments for the environmental management and Human Resource Management relationship. We do not include papers that provide only unsupported prescription on what organizations should/should not do to develop Green Human Resource Management. This review draws on a range of Green Human Resource Management practices revealed through several types of papers, including case studies, business reports and survey findings.

In deciding what people management concerns to include in a review of Green Human Resource Management, we use Ability – Motivation – Opportunity (AMO) theory (Appelbaum *et al.* 2000) <sup>[4]</sup> to identify the key HRM areas that will have an impact on EM outcomes. This theory is one of the most commonly used conceptualizations of the impact of HRM practices on organizational performance in empirical studies (Boselie *et al.* 2005) <sup>[18]</sup>. Ability–Motivation–Opportunity theory (Appelbaum *et al.* 2000) <sup>[4]</sup> suggests that HRM practices that enhance the firm’s human capital via increased human capabilities translate into performance out-comes, such as higher productivity, reduced waste, higher quality and profit. According to ability– Motivation–Opportunity (AMO) theory, HRM works through increasing employees’ *Ability* through attracting and developing high-performing employees; enhancing employees’ *Motivation* and commitment through practices such as contingent rewards and effective performance management (PM); and providing employees with the *Opportunity* to engage in knowledge-sharing and problem- solving activities via employee involvement (EI) programmes. This review examines each of these three core components of Green Human Resource Management in turn.

## 2.1 Developing Green abilities: attracting and developing talented staff

### Recruitment and selection

Attracting high-quality staff is a key HR challenge in the ‘war for talent’. It seems that some employers, particularly major multinational companies (Ehnert 2009), are adopting Green Human Resource Management practices as a form of ‘employer branding’ in order to improve their selection attractiveness for an increasingly environmentally aware younger generation. Job seekers prefer organizations that have a close fit between their and the organizations’ values, and a recruiting organizational environmental reputation and images are now increasingly prominent in recruitment efforts.

The move to more web-based recruitment activity has permitted recruiters to provide much more information, such as detail on their EM activities, compared with traditional media such as newspaper advertising or brochures. The

recruitment websites of major European employers provide considerable detail on the environmental activity of the organization (Ehnert 2009). Aiman-Smith *et al.*’s (2001) <sup>[1]</sup> study compared two types of corporate social performance – ecological ratings and lay-off policy – along with pay and promotional opportunities, to examine their relative importance in selection attractiveness. The findings, from a policy-capturing study using US business studies students, reports that a positive environmental image was the strongest predictor of an organizations’ overall selection attractiveness. However, for job pursuit intention, pay was most strongly predictive. One implication from this study is that organizations with good environmental practices should emphasize these in recruitment practices, but focus more on job characteristics, such as pay, when interviewing candidates.

Such developments are in line with signalling theory in recruitment and selection where, because of incomplete information in the recruitment process, candidates use organizational attributes, such as environmental image and reputation, to find clues about the firms’ future intentions and actions. Thus, studies in the US, using surveys and experimental designs by Behrend *et al.* (2009) <sup>[12]</sup>, Bauer and Aiman-Smith (1996) <sup>[9]</sup> and Backhaus *et al.* (2002) <sup>[5]</sup>, report university students as being attracted to working for organizations with pro-environmental images. Albinger and Freeman’s (2000) <sup>[2]</sup> study reports that a Corporate Social Performance index (including a ‘natural environment’ rating) was positively associated with selection attractiveness only for job-seeking individuals with high levels of job choice. Such individuals had high levels of skill and education, and thus firms with good reputations for EM may have a source of competitive advantage in their ability to hire potentially high-performing staff. Dolan’s (1997) <sup>[38]</sup> study of US MBA students found over half saying they would take a lower salary to work for an environmentally responsible organization.

UK survey data reports that high-achieving graduates judge the environmental performance and reputation of a company as a criterion for decision- making when applying for jobs (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) 2007) <sup>[27]</sup>. Human resource professionals also appear to believe that environmental reputation is important, especially for younger employees, with 39% of 757 CIPD members surveyed in UK organizations believing that a policy on EM is important in recruiting and retaining younger workers (Philpott and Davies 2007) <sup>[73]</sup>. A wider survey by the British Carbon Trust – an organization set up by the UK Government in 2001 to help organizations cut carbon emissions – shows over 75% of 1018 employees considering working for a firm see it as important that such firms have an active policy to reduce carbon emissions (Felgate 2006a) <sup>[40]</sup>.

Candidate preferences for Green organizations also seem to be impacting on organizational practice, with some employers increasingly influenced by ‘Green job candidate’ thinking in planning their recruitment strategies (Brockett 2006, p. 18) <sup>[21]</sup>. A CIPD/KPMG survey of 1000 HR professionals found 47% stating that they feel that employees would prefer working for firms that have a strong Green approach, and this would attract potential high-quality recruits (Phillips 2007) <sup>[72]</sup>. Comparative interview evidence from the UK and Japan (from 88 interviews among 53 companies) also indicates that it is

'easier to hire high-quality employees if a firm had a better environmental reputation' (Bansal and Roth 2000, p. 724)<sup>[6]</sup>.

Creating and sustaining a pro-environment organization also requires the organization to hire employees who are willing to engage with EM activities. The Green agenda appears to be impacting on the criteria that some employers require in new hires. For example, a survey of 94 Brazilian firms with ISO14001 certification found recruiters preferring candidates with environmental knowledge and motivation (Jabbour *et al.* 2010)<sup>[52]</sup>. Although there are as yet few systematic studies of 'Green-collar' recruitment practices, there is a growing advice industry of self-help guides on how to find a Green job that includes case study and employer interview evidence about their hiring practices (Cassio and Rush 2009; Llewellyn and Golden 2008; Parks and Helmer 2009)<sup>[25, 57, 69]</sup>. This literature reports the use of job descriptions and personnel specifications that emphasize environmental aspects of the job and interview protocols that probe applicant environmental knowledge, values and beliefs.

### 2.1.1 Employee training in environmental management

Training is widely seen in the literature as a key Green Human Resource Management intervention, not least in order to heighten staff awareness of the environmental impact of their organization's activities (Bansal and Roth 2000)<sup>[6]</sup>, to equip staff with core skills, such as how to collect relevant waste data (May and Flannery 1995)<sup>[63]</sup>, and to raise the level of 'eco-literacy' and environmental expertise in the firm (Roy and Therin 2008)<sup>[82]</sup>. Well-trained and environmentally aware frontline employees are ideally placed to identify and reduce waste, as they are closest to it.

Training in Green issues is widespread now in some countries. In the UK, a CIPD/KPMG survey reported 42% of UK organizations educating and training employees in business practices that are environmentally friendly (Phillips 2007)<sup>[72]</sup> and training employees to comprehend the threats that climate change may pose on firms (Felgate 2006b)<sup>[41]</sup>. In the US, £300m has been invested in training for Green jobs under the Obama administration (Barton 2009)<sup>[7]</sup>. Advanced EM approaches are seen to be 'people intensive' and dependent upon skill development through employee training (Brio *et al.* 2007, p. 494)<sup>[20]</sup>. Fernandez *et al.* (2003)<sup>[42]</sup> find that a pro-environmental approach requires increased employee awareness, knowledge and skills in both processes and materials, and that this requires integrated training in EM to create an emotional involvement in environmental concerns. Survey and interview data from 156 plant-level employees among 31 lean automobile assembly plants in North America and Japan reveals that HR practices 'encourage a higher level of environmental training', and the development of skills required for waste reduction (Rothenberg *et al.* 2001, p. 241)<sup>[81]</sup>.

Trade unions also have a role in environmental training initiatives, and this seems to be most developed in Europe (Madsen and Ulhoi 2001)<sup>[58]</sup>. In Britain, the Trades Union Congress (TUC) has established its own body on sustainability, the Trade Union Sustainable Development and Advisory Committee (TUSDAC), who call on all UK employers to develop employee training and skills in energy-efficient technologies (TUSDAC 2005)<sup>[96]</sup>. Although TUSDAC note that union representatives

sometimes face the problem of getting paid time off to attend Green development courses, a number of unions have included environmental issues in their activist training. Training opportunities include the development of a university diploma course, the TUC's own three-day EM course, and joint initiatives between Environment wise, TUSDAC and the Carbon Trust (TUSDAC 2005)<sup>[96]</sup>. British unions have also been pressing for sustainable development issues to be included in all Modern Apprenticeship training (TUSDAC 2005)<sup>[96]</sup>.

Several specific concerns arise in the literature regarding the use of training and development in EM (Milliman and Clair 1996)<sup>[65]</sup>, including the need to counter employee cynicism regarding the importance/relevance of the issues involved. In part, cynicism arises because such training is sometimes delivered in an overly 'politically correct way', with an over-emphasis on EM enforcement and in an authoritarian manner (Rees 1996)<sup>[78]</sup>. Hence organizations may need to not only develop more training in EM, but also, as in all training efforts, to carefully assess the general effectiveness of it (Perron *et al.* 2006)<sup>[71]</sup>.

Other training concerns in EM include the re-training of employees who have lost jobs in the 'polluter' industries, ensuring that managers release staff for training, and integrating training into appraisals and PM systems (Wehrmeyer and Vickerstaff 1996)<sup>[99]</sup>. To tackle training concerns, the Institute of Environmental Management (IEM) has established and delivered training workshops for environmental managers, including raising awareness and skills in EM (Bird 1996)<sup>[16]</sup>.

### Environmental knowledge

A key to the effectiveness of training is developing an environmental knowledge base. Rothenberg (2003)<sup>[80]</sup> reports that most environmental projects combine more than one category of knowledge. A self-report study of managers in China (Fryxell and Lo 2003, p. 57)<sup>[45]</sup> reveals that they have a 'strong disposition' towards taking environmental action, and that environmental knowledge and values are predictors of personal environmental behaviours. Issues in environmental knowledge generation in China include difficulties in confirming linkages between environmental education, knowledge and behaviours, the 'disproportional' and often 'negative impact' managers have on the natural environment, whether self-reported managerial behaviours in EM mirror actual ones in practice, and the environmental issues that Chinese companies face (Fryxell and Lo 2003)<sup>[45]</sup>. As controlling environmental impact is now seen to be a responsibility for all employees, taking their tacit knowledge (see below) into account in EM is important in identifying sources of pollution, managing emergency situations, and developing preventative solutions (Boiral 2002)<sup>[17]</sup>.

### Management development and leadership

Training for management staff is also important for Green Human Resource Management. As business schools are potentially seen as architects of a new 'evolutionary course' towards sustainability and environmental knowledge (Starkey and Crane 2003)<sup>[91]</sup>, they may play a key role in educating and developing environmental leaders in the future. Environmental management is also increasingly being included in MBA programme curriculum in countries such as China, and is seen to be the type of business



education that empowers managers to start projects in EM (Fryxell and Lo 2003) <sup>[45]</sup>. Management education in the past has historically not been seen to lead the way in EM, as it has often been an isolated and ‘non-essential component’ of business education (Ulhoi and Madsen 1996) <sup>[97]</sup>. There is more recent positive evidence with a small but growing number of ‘eco-MBAs’ and survey data reporting that more MBA programmes are incorporating environmental concerns into their curriculum (Beyond Grey Pinstripes 2010) <sup>[15]</sup>.

### Green leadership

In a study designed to develop a preliminary model for environmental leadership, interview and questionnaire data from 73 Canadian and US leaders (of for-profit and non-profit product and service organizations) reveals that their personal values ‘were more eco-centric, open to change, and self-transcendent’ than other managers in different types of organizations (Egri and Herman 2000) <sup>[39]</sup>. The finding that personal values influence Green leadership behaviours is supported in Bansal and Roth’s study of 53 U.K and Japanese companies, which finds that single individuals tend to champion ecological responses, with their own values driving such decision processes rather than ‘a widely applied decision rule’ (Bansal and Roth 2000) <sup>[6]</sup>.

A study of how leaders’ cognition shapes their firm’s responses to deteriorating environmental circumstances in China finds that executives tend to ‘champion’ new initiatives following personal values and principles’ (Branzei *et al.* 2004, p. 1075) <sup>[19]</sup>. Managerial attitudes and norms are seen to act as strong drivers for undertaking active EM behaviours from a study of organizations in the US wine industry (Marshall *et al.* 2005) <sup>[62]</sup>. Observed learning processes of managers in medium-sized and large German and Dutch organizations reveals a participatory leadership style being used, with leaders active in involving employees in sustainability processes (Siebenhuner and Arnold 2007) <sup>[86]</sup>.

### 2.1.2 Motivating Green employees

#### Performance management and appraisal

Using PM in EM presents many challenges, not least here being how to measure environmental performance standards across different organizational departments/units, and gaining useable data on the environmental performance of these units and staff. Some firms have addressed this issue by installing corporate-wide environmental performance standards, and Green information systems/audits to gain useful data on environmental performance (Marcus and Fremeth 2009) <sup>[61]</sup>. One way in which Green PM systems can be successfully initiated is to develop performance indicators for each environmental risk area (TUSDAC 2005) <sup>[96]</sup>.

Green performance appraisal (PA) covers topics such as environmental incidents, use of environmental responsibilities and the communication of environmental concerns and policy. Issues involved in environmental PA concern the need for managers to be held accountable for EM performance in addition to wider performance objectives. One concern is that the PA systems with EM objectives appear to be limited largely to plant or division managers and executives only, rather than more broadly for other employees (Milliman and Clair 1996, p. 60) <sup>[65]</sup>.

It may also be that negative reinforcements (such as

suspensions, criticisms and warnings) are needed in PM systems to get employees to make environmental improvements, e.g. if employees lapse in following good EM practice. For example, Chan and Hawkins’s (2010) <sup>[26]</sup> study of Hong Kong hotel workers’ experience with EM systems reports their accounts of being ‘repeatedly reminded’ and ‘scolded’ if they did not fully implement the hotel’s environmental practices. However, using such negative reinforcements does not necessarily educate staff in good EM practice, and may result in workers failing to disclose environmental problems at source because they engage in self-protective behaviours.

### Pay and reward systems

In line with a strategic approach to reward management, defined as the aligning of pay practices and corporate objectives, there is some evidence for organizations developing reward systems to incentivize EM, especially for senior managers.

In Britain, for example, ICI have included environmental targets as part of their performance-related pay assessment for senior managers (Snape *et al.* 1994, p. 134) <sup>[89]</sup>. Early research findings from 186 US firms on the *Forbes* list reveal a strong relationship between CEO compensation (total compensation and salary) and firm environmental reputation, but that CEOs are not necessarily rewarded for their firms’ EM record and, moreover, are not stimulated towards doing so by the structure of such firm compensation systems (Stanwick and Stanwick 2001) <sup>[90]</sup>. More recent findings, such as Berrone and Gomez-Mejia’s (2009) <sup>[13]</sup> study on links between environmental performance and executive compensation in 469 US firms reveals stronger support for environmental performance being positively associated with CEO total pay. A study by Cordeiro and Sarkis (2008) <sup>[32]</sup> of 207 US firms from the Standard & Poor 500 finds that *only* in firms with an *explicit* linkage between environmental performance and executive contracts is there evidence for an impact of environmental performance on CEO compensation levels.

Thus, there is some developing evidence that paying for EM performance is effective from studies that report companies with contingent remuneration for senior managers having higher EM performance than those with fixed salaries (Fernandez *et al.* 2003, p. 647) <sup>[42]</sup>. However, the issue of causation is not resolved by these studies. It may be that firms are reacting to environmental performance concerns by implementing managerial rewards for EM performance. Indeed, a study of the US electronic industry across six Standard Industrial Classifications also finds a link between plant manager pay and EM performance, but subsequent analysis suggests that managerial pay results from rather than causes environmental performance, and thus firms remain reactive on environmental issues (Russo and Harrison 2005) <sup>[84]</sup>.

Pay and EM linkages for other staff are rarely reported in the literature. There are some examples of competence-based reward schemes for frontline staff acquiring specific designated environmental competencies (such as knowledge of environmental legislation), as they are seen to help organizations stop serious environmental accidents or illegal emissions occurring (Ramus 2002) <sup>[76]</sup>. Some 40% of UK employers are reported in a CIPD reward survey (Cotton 2008) <sup>[33]</sup> as reviewing their reward and employment conditions policies and practices to see whether they support

their environmental objectives. However, this has largely been concerned with benefits such as transport and travel rather than pay itself, and another survey reviewing the links between rewards and EM reports a 'dearth of activity' (Bashford 2008)<sup>[8]</sup>.

Thus, organizational practice on linking EM and rewards for those below senior management largely focuses on giving employees non-monetary recognition rewards for EM (Govindarajulu and Daily 2004)<sup>[46]</sup>. Recognition-based rewards for staff in EM (such as company-wide public recognition) are used in large US companies, and are offered at different levels: for example, by CEOs annually for individual, team and divisional contributions to reducing waste, company-wide team excellence awards, and in non-traditional forms, such as giving employees opportunities to attend Green events/rallies. Other such innovative non-monetary rewards for employee EM actions include paid vacations, time off and gift certificates (Govindarajulu and Daily 2004)<sup>[46]</sup>.

The use of environmental rewards and recognition (such as daily praise and company awards) are seen to have a significant impact on employee willingness to generate eco-initiatives. Such initiatives are seen to produce an open style of communication which encourages employees to discuss their environmental ideas 'in an honest and unrestrained manner' (Ramus 2001, p. 93)<sup>[75]</sup>. In Britain, some examples of company practice include the use of a 'carbon credit card' and cash incentives for staff to purchase hybrid cars (Brockett 2006; Davies and Smith 2007)<sup>[21, 35]</sup>, incentive schemes rewarding good attendance/performance with a 'Green benefit card' enabling staff purchases of Green products (CIPD 2009, p. 4), and annual awards dinners to recognize exemplary behaviour in EM (Simms 2007, p. 39)<sup>[87]</sup>. Additionally, financial incentives have been introduced into company EM reward strategies in the UK, such as tax incentives and exemptions to promote loaning bicycles to employees, and the use of a less polluting car fleet (Davies and Smith 2007)<sup>[35]</sup>.

### 2.1.3 Providing Green opportunities: employee involvement

Wider employee participation in EM rather than restricting involvement to managers and specialists is often seen as crucial to successful outcomes (Bunge *et al.* 1996; Hanna *et al.* 2000; Remmen and Lorentzen 2000)<sup>[22, 48, 79]</sup>. Although market, business and regulatory demands remain as the key drivers of EM, employees themselves are often reported as a source of pressure for organizations to address environmental issues (Berry and Rondinelli 1998)<sup>[14]</sup>. Henriques and Sadorsky's (1999)<sup>[49]</sup> study of 400 Canadian firms finds organizations with more proactive environmental commitment profiles being positively associated with employees as a pressure source. A Belgian study of high-level polluters (as measured by environmental taxes paid) also finds a significant relationship between firms identifying themselves as practicing environmental leadership and attaching a high importance to their employee stakeholders (Buysse and Verbeke 2003)<sup>[23]</sup>.

Involving employees in EM has been reported as improving the key outcomes of EM systems, including: efficient resource usage (Florida and Davison 2001)<sup>[43]</sup>; reducing waste (May and Flannery 1995)<sup>[63]</sup>; and reducing pollution from workplaces (Denton 1999; Kitazawa and Sarkis 2000)<sup>[36, 54]</sup>. A study of EI in 110 Spanish ISO 14001 registered

factories found EI in EM to be positively correlated with manager-rated environmental outcome measures (Brio *et al.* 2007)<sup>[20]</sup>. There are a wide range of practices to increase employee involvement in environmental management, in addition to more traditional ones such as newsletters, suggestion schemes and problem-solving groups.

For example, 'low carbon champions' (Clarke 2006)<sup>[30]</sup>, work-based recycling schemes (CIPD2009), establishing specific Green/ Environmental action teams to discuss how to involve staff in helping firms become more environmentally friendly (Carbon Trust 2006; Felgate 2006a)<sup>[24, 40]</sup> and encouraging employees to use tele/ videoconferencing, car-sharing and home-working (Philpott and Davies 2007)<sup>[73]</sup> are all recent developments aimed at engaging employees in environmental initiatives.

Employee involvement in EM seems to have its effects through three core processes: First, through tapping employees' tacit knowledge gained through their close links to the production process (Boiral 2002)<sup>[17]</sup>; second, through engaging and empowering employees to make suggestions for environmental improvements (Govindarajulu and Daily 2004)<sup>[46]</sup>; and third, through developing a culture in the workplace which supports EM improvement efforts.

### Empowerment and engagement

Commitment from senior management to EM systems is seen as providing the underpinning framework for EM, but without wider employee engagement the success of EM may be limited. As Denton (1999)<sup>[36]</sup> plainly puts it: 'Good EI planning and activities are the key to pollution management. A Management initiative without employee involvement is useless.' Rather than management seeking to ensure mere employee compliance with EM systems, the need is to win their 'hearts and minds' to the environmental cause, including involving employees in EM to motivate them to 'buy-in' to taking ownership of energy management use (Carbon Trust 2006)<sup>[24]</sup>. Comparative case studies of UK and US companies report that increasing employee feelings of psychological empowerment, because it increases their willingness to make suggestions for environmental improvements, is critical to EM (Kitazawa and Sarkis 2000)<sup>[54]</sup>. Survey data from 232 Australian manufacturing firms reports a positive association between the level of employee empowerment in EM and environmental performance (Simpson and Samson 2008)<sup>[88]</sup>.

There is considerable evidence that supportive managerial and supervisor behaviours in environment initiatives are important in developing employee engagement in EM. Ramus and Steger's (2000)<sup>[77]</sup> study of employee 'eco-initiatives', defined as any action taken by an employee that she or he thought would improve the environmental performance of the company, found a strong relationship between managerial behaviours such as competence-building, communication, rewarding and recognizing employees and their engagement with innovative environmental activities.

### Supportive cultures for Environmental Management

A strong theme in the EM literature is that effective outcomes are achieved not just by making changes to production processes, products or raw material, but also by changing the corporate culture such that organizations have deeply embedded values which support long-term sustainability (Kitazawa and Sarkis 2000; Stone 2000)<sup>[54, 92]</sup>.

An organizational culture that supports EM is one that encourages employees to make suggestions for and the freedom to engage in, activities that improve the environment. In particular, employees must be well informed about environmental issues that affect their workplace (Madsen and Ulhoi 2001) <sup>[58]</sup>, and wider employee participation in EM is found to underpin such supportive cultures. Fernandez *et al.* (2003) <sup>[42]</sup> argue that EI forms a core element of an advanced environmental approach because it supports a work culture 'based on ecological values'. Antecedents of such cultures derive from managers showing commitment to environmental issues, and the eco-centric values of employees and their involvement in EM activities are all viewed as 'indispensable' for EM to be successful (Fernandez *et al.* 2003) <sup>[42]</sup>.

Findings from a survey of 472 workers in seven Chinese energy companies reveal that employee personal values, such as openness to change, are positively correlated with positive attitudes towards the environment (Chun 2009) <sup>[29]</sup>. However, case study research in two Danish organizations (railways and slaughterhouses) also report the problems of sustaining pro-environmental cultures over the longer term, with changes in managerial personnel and organizational priorities damaging employee commitment to EM initiatives (Forman and Jorgensen 2001) <sup>[44]</sup>. Employee involvement is seen to be a very effective approach to developing a strong pro-environment culture in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), a sector especially difficult to reach in environmental terms, with findings from a Netherlands survey of 194 employees in eight metal businesses reporting that EI campaigns in EM (which put information at the centre of joint management and employee decision-making) have the greatest influence in reducing the costs of waste processing (Klinkers and Nelissen 1996) <sup>[55]</sup>.

### The union role in EI and EM

Trade unions generally have a long history of action on environmental issues, not least because seeking to ensure a safer and healthier workplace for their members and job protection are key traditional union concerns, but, more recently, in order to encourage employers to create new Green jobs and to extend their sphere of influence in the workplace. In Britain, the TUSDAC recommends that unions take a key role in negotiating a 'Sustainable Workplace Framework Agreement' with employers to strengthen workplace employee engagement in EM (TUSDAC 2005) <sup>[96]</sup>. For TUSDAC, a sustainable workplace needs to broaden shop stewards' responsibilities to take in EM concerns.

Some recent developments in the UK include environmental education programmes for rank and file union members, joint management and union training programmes in EM, and the development of workplace environmental representatives, the so-called 'union Green representatives' (TUC 2009) <sup>[95]</sup>. Currently the TUC is campaigning for legal rights for such union Green reps to take reasonable time off during working hours to promote sustainable work practices, carry out audits, consult on EM policies and receive training. As yet, there have been no systematic analyses of the achievements of trade union Green initiatives but there has been a general reluctance by some employers to involve unions in EM, as such employers still seem to consider it an area of management prerogative.

Case study evidence from 43 European organizations finds that, despite some good practice, the strategic nature of EM 'constrains the development of an essential role for workers and trade unions' (Le Blansch and Lorentzen 1996) <sup>[56]</sup>.

### 3. Discussion and conclusions

The literature on environmental management often makes the point that, because organizations are the main cause of environmental problems, they should therefore play a large part in addressing EM issues (Bebbington 2001) <sup>[10]</sup>. Consequently, there are now a very wide range of eco-initiatives being launched by organizations and managers to address EM concerns. From the above review, it is clear that there is a developing Green Human Resource Management model of employee - management practice, which is emerging as one organizational response to environmental degradation. This paper has identified a wide range of Green Human Resource Management practices, and Table 1 summarizes the main ones in the core areas of the AMO model - namely skill development, motivation and involvement of employees.

From this review of Green Human Resource Management, it is clear that some parts of the model are much more comprehensively researched than others. The area with the most developed empirical literature base is that of involving employees in EM initiatives. Perhaps this should not come as too much of a surprise, as EI is in general one of the most longstanding, (e.g. Munsterberg 1913) <sup>[66]</sup> and most researched areas of HRM (Dietz *et al.* 2009) <sup>[37]</sup>. It is also the area of HRM in which managers have most experimented, and the research reports continuing 'waves' of new EI initiatives (Marchington and Wilkinson 2005) <sup>[60]</sup>. Green EI, it seems, is the latest variant of these waves of managerial interest in EI. It is thus now almost a 'natural' first step when organizations introduce new initiatives, such as environmental Management, to attempt to involve the wider workforce.

The review finds considerable evidence of the positive impact of EI in EM with evidence of an association with the key outcomes of efficient use of resources, reduced waste and pollution, and also some evidence of a positive impact on employee outcomes such as increased job satisfaction. Thus, the key questions in this research area are not so much now about the effects of Green EI, but the rather less explored one of what distinguishes effective Green EI initiatives from ineffective ones? Empirical research that identifies the key design variables of effective Green EI initiatives would be most useful. A related research question is how to understand better the theoretical basis of the linking mechanisms between employee participation in EI schemes and positive organizational and employee outcomes. The above review of the existing research suggests three possible mediators: tapping the tacit knowledge of employees; empowering and engaging employees; and developing supportive work cultures for environmental Management. A programme of theoretically informed research formally testing mediators of the Green EI-outcomes relationship would be valuable.

The Green Human Resource Management area of attracting and developing staff is also increasingly researched in the literature. Here, researchers have used signalling theory to examine how candidates use the environmental image and reputation of the recruiter to make inferences about the firm's future intentions. In sum, being seen as pro-



environment is important in attracting high- quality talent, not least because such firms generally receive better qualified and motivated job applicants. In addition, it seems that some applicants will also be prepared to sacrifice salary potential to work for an environmentally responsible organization. However, we know rather less about how

organizations are selecting candidates in line with a pro-environment stance. There is little research examining the impact of the EM movement on selection criteria and the selection processes used. A research programme examining this area would help to complete our understanding of pro-environment recruitment and selection practices.

**Table 1:** Summary of Green Human Resource Management Practices

Developing Green Abilities	Motivating Green Employees		Providing Green Opportunities
<p><b>Attracting/selecting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Green issues specified in job descriptions</li> <li>▪ Green job candidates, applicants use Green criteria to select organizations</li> <li>▪ Green employer branding (Green employer of choice)</li> <li>▪ Firms recruit employees who are ‘Green aware’</li> <li>▪ Green issues in induction/socialization processes</li> </ul>	<p><b>Performance management/ appraisal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Green performance indicators included in PM system and appraisals</li> <li>▪ Communication of Green schemes to all levels of staff through PMA scheme, establishing firm-wide dialogue on Green matters</li> <li>▪ Managers/employees are set Green targets, goals and responsibilities</li> <li>▪ Managers are set objectives on achieving Green outcomes included in appraisals</li> <li>▪ Dis-benefits in PM system for non-compliance/not meeting EM goals</li> </ul>	<p><b>Pay and reward systems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Staff suggestions in EM rewarded</li> <li>▪ Reward schemes linked to staff gaining EM skills via skill-based pay</li> <li>▪ Green benefits (transport/travel) rather than pay benefits cards to gain Green products</li> <li>▪ Financial/tax incentives (bicycle loans, use of less polluting cars)</li> <li>▪ Monetary-based EM reward system</li> <li>▪ Monthly managerial bonuses for good EM</li> <li>▪ Including Green targets as part of PRP for senior staff</li> <li>▪ Executive compensation for managers partly based on EM stewardship</li> <li>▪ Recognition-based rewards in EM for staff (public recognition, awards, paid vacations, time off, gift certificates)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Employee involvement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ EI practices in EM including newsletters, suggestion schemes, problem-solving groups, low-carbon champions and Green action teams</li> </ul> <p>Empowerment and engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encouraging employees to make suggestions for EM improvements</li> <li>▪ Increasing employees’ psychological empowerment enhances their willingness to make suggestions for EM improvements</li> <li>▪ Supportive managerial and supervisor behaviours develop employee engagement in EM</li> </ul>
<p><b>Training &amp; Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Employee training in EM to increase awareness, skills and expertise</li> <li>▪ Training for Green jobs, and integrated training to create an emotional involvement in EM</li> <li>▪ Trade union reps get information on EM, and union activist EM training</li> </ul>			<p>Supportive climate/culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Wider EI in EM underpins pro-environment culture</li> <li>▪ Union role in EI and EM</li> <li>▪ EM education programmes for union members</li> <li>▪ Joint management/union training programmes in EM</li> <li>▪ Green union representatives</li> </ul>

In terms of developing staff for environmental Management, there is clear evidence of the widespread use of environmental training, of firms spending a considerable effort on developing environmental knowledge bases, and developing pro-environment managers and leaders of the future. What is lacking in this body of work is a careful assessment of the general effectiveness of these developmental efforts. There is also a need to broaden the theoretical basis of Green leadership research away from a concentration on managerial values, personality and cognition and to consider other potential antecedents of Green leadership.

Here, one potentially interesting line of research is to examine the neglected role of emotions in environmental management. Russell and Griffiths (2008) <sup>[83]</sup> draw on the theory of issue ownership (Pratt and Dutton 2000) <sup>[74]</sup>, identification theory (Mael and Ashforth 1992) <sup>[59]</sup> and affective theory to make the case that an individual’s emotional reaction to environmental Management is a strong predictor of their ownership of pro-environment initiatives. Empirical research that addresses this agenda has high potential to explain the relatively patchy uptake of eco-initiatives in some organizations, and help shape training initiatives such that they result in a wider ownership of

environmental Management by employees.

The area of Green Human Resource Management that we have the least know- ledge on is the motivation of employees to become involved in environmental management via PA and reward-management practices. Here, the empirical research base is especially thin, despite there being a large literature offering prescription (e.g. Cotton 2008; Govindarajulu and Daily 2004) <sup>[33, 46]</sup> on how organizations should incorporate environmental objectives in formal PA and staff incentive schemes. It seems that employers at best incentivize environmental Management activities via a range of Green benefits and recognition devices rather than hard cash. This neglect of reward management in Green Human Resource Management rather limits the implementation tools available to an organization in their pro-environment activities. It seems that rewards are considered as appropriate for incentivizing environmental Management activities but, interestingly, mainly for encouraging consumers to engage in recycling efforts (Bashford 2008) <sup>[8]</sup> and compensating countries in the developing world to support their eco-systems (Swallow *et al.* 2009) <sup>[93]</sup>. Researching why organizations are reluctant to use reward management in incentivizing staff involvement in environmental Management would be a useful endeavor.

As yet, there are no reported studies of the impact of Green Human Resource Management systems as a whole on either environmental outcomes, such as waste reduction, or on wider organizational performance metrics. The individual Green Human Resource Management activities discussed in this review may be better viewed as interdependent and reinforcing ‘bundles’ of activities with a synergistic link between practices so that the impact of each element is enhanced when the others are also implemented (Becker and Huselid 1998; Combs *et al.* 2006) [11, 31]. Studies that examine the impact of Green Human Resource Management systems rather than individual practices would be especially useful in this respect.

We suggest that Green Human Resource Management has considerable potential as a management research area, but that academic research is rather lagging behind practice

here, given the imbalance between practitioner and academic publications found in this review. This is not unusual in HRM research, with managers and academics often occupying ‘separate worlds’ (Guest 2007; Rynes *et al.* 2007) [47, 85]. We provide this review and suggestions for further research in the hope that researchers will reduce the practice–research gap in Green Human Resource Management. Table 2 summarizes an AMO-based research agenda in Green HRM.

In addition, we note a further limitation in that, with some notable exceptions (e.g. Branzei *et al.* 2004; Chun 2009; Fryxell and Lo 2003) [19, 29, 45], the Green Human Resource Management literature is largely a Western one and, given the importance of Asian economic development for EM, this is an important gap for future studies to reduce.

**Table 2:** Summary of an AMO-based research agenda in GHRM

Research Gaps	Research Needs
<p><i>Attracting and developing staff</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How organizations select candidates in line with pro-EM stances/The impact of the EM movement on selection criteria and processes</li> </ul> <p>Assessing the effectiveness of developmental efforts</p> <p><i>Employee motivation</i></p> <p>Motivations of employees to be involved in EM via PA/reward practices</p> <p><i>Green opportunities</i></p> <p>What distinguishes effective Green Employee Involvement EI initiatives from ineffective ones? Identifying key design variables of effective Green EI initiatives.</p> <p>Understanding the linking mechanisms between employee participation in Green EI schemes and positive organizational/employee outcomes</p> <p><i>GHRM systems</i></p> <p>Impact of GHRM systems on environmental outcomes/wider firm performance metrics</p>	<p>Organizational level surveys of Green recruiters to research the criteria used and selection processes involved in selecting environmentally aware staff.</p> <p>There is a considerable general body of work on whether ‘training pays’; research could now focus on whether Green training pays.</p> <p>There is a need to understand more fully the causality of relationships between senior manager pay and firm environmental performance using longitudinal research designs.</p> <p>A need for exploratory research to examine why organizations are reluctant to use pay to incentivize EM performance below senior levels.</p> <p>Green EI is the most developed area of GRHM practice, with a growing number of studies. We have a number of meta-analytic studies of EI in general, a meta-analysis of the Green EI literature would add to our understanding.</p> <p>Testing potential mediators of staff tacit knowledge, employee empowerment, supportive work cultures.</p> <p>Organizational level research examining the relationship between GHRM ‘bundles’, environmental performance and organizational performance.</p>

We suggest that the notion of sustainability also applies to HRM itself. All too often, accounts of strategic HRM assume that human resources are there to be consumed and exploited rather than developed and maintained (Ehnert 2009), and a wider Green Human Resource Management practice would help place sustainability at the heart of people management. We also believe that Green Human Resource Management promises potential benefits for both organizations and those employed by them. For the organization, there is some evidence that better environmental performance is also associated with improved financial performance outcomes – the so-called ‘Green pays’ argument (Ambec & Lanoie 2008; Crotty and Rodgers 2011) [3, 34]. Such findings, when coupled with the well-established research reporting a strong association between HRM in general and organizational performance, suggest that the Green Human Resource Management practices identified in this review may have a role to play in improving not only the environmental performance, but also the financial performance of the organization. Equally, the Green Human Resource Management practices analysed

here are likely to improve employee well-being in the workplace, not least through improving the working environment and satisfying the needs of an increasingly environmentally aware workforce. In sum, we believe that Green Human Resource Management has potential to contribute positively to both employee well-being and improved organizational performance.

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