

Beyond Green Policies: How Green Psychological Climate Translates Green HRM into Environmental Performance: Evidence from an Emerging Economy's Banking Sector

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ABSTRACT: In view of the pressing social and regulatory demands of aligning banks' operational and strategic practices with environmental sustainability principles, this study examines the mediating role of green psychological climate in the relationship between green human resource practices and environmental performance, drawing evidence from the banking sector of Pakistan. Drawing on AMO theory, RBV, and climate theory, 359 conveniently selected banking sector professionals completed a survey questionnaire. The results of hierarchical regression analysis and Hayes' PROCESS revealed that GPC partially mediates the relationship between GHRMPs and environmental performance, such that some of the effect of GHRMPs is direct on EP. At the same time, some of it is channelized through GPC to translate environmental outcomes. This study also discusses the results in the light of previous studies, followed by implications and directions for further research.

KEYWORDS: Green Human Resource Practices, Environmental Performance, Green Psychological Climate, Banking Sector

Introduction

Modern organizations across the globe have started aligning their operational and strategic practices with principles of environmental sustainability to counter mounting challenges of environmental degradation, climate change, and resource depletion (Najam et al., 2025). Similar to other sectors, the banking sector has acquired substantial importance due to its crucial role through its indirect environmental footprint. Its energy-intensive branch operations and heavy reliance on paper have substantial environmental footprints. Hence, the banking sector, in general and especially in developing nations, is facing severe regulatory and social pressure to foster its environmental performance through sustainable internal systems and human resource practices (Obiora et al., 2020).

To effectively address this regulatory and social pressure, the banking sector has started adopting environmentally responsive human resource practices to embed environmental sustainability into its workforce's behaviours and performance outcomes (Zakriya & Chams, 2025). Green human resource practices (GHRP) encompass the fusion of traditional human resource functions with environmental objectives (Zafar & Suseno, 2024). These GHRM practices can shape an environmentally responsible attitude among employees, which in turn contributes positively

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to environmental outcomes. They engage in environmentally friendly initiatives as part of their non-discretionary environmental stewardship behaviour at the workplace (Sharif & Malik, 2025; Khan et al., 2025).

Recent studies demonstrate that the effectiveness of these GHR practices largely depends on how employees perceive and internalise them, giving rise to a shared green psychological climate (GPC). GPC refers to the collective beliefs of the workforce regarding the extent to which their organization values, supports, and rewards environmentally responsible behaviours. Extant research suggests that GHRM practices transform environmental outcomes such as environmental performance (EP) through psychological paths such as GPC. These psychological paths thus function as a mediating mechanism to channelize the influence of GHRM practices on EP (Naz et al., 2023). Studies also substantiate that the relationship between GHRM and environmental performance may be mediated by psychological mechanisms such as GPC. (Younis & Hussain, 2023) suggesting that employees' perceptions of organizational environmental commitment are a crucial explanatory mechanism linking HR practices to sustainability outcomes.

Evidence from the context of Pakistan substantiates the vitality of GPC in GHRM models. These studies demonstrate that GHRM practices foster a GPC, which further cultivates pro-environmental behaviour among employees and enhances environmental performance (Nasim et al., 2024). Studies also suggest that GPC mediates the interplay of GHRM practices and environmental performance in organizational environments where behavioural factors such as OCB toward the environment fail to yield significant effects (Li et al., 2023). Although GHRM practices have strong predictive ability for environmental performance, the literature suggests that they can also be linked to a pro-environmental psychological climate and behaviours (Asadullah et al., 2024). The combined effect of GHRMP and GPC further fosters environmental performance (Hameed et al., 2025). Literature from the context of Pakistan demonstrates that GHRMP enhances environmental performance through employee-driven capabilities (Sharif & Malik, 2025).

Despite substantial evidence on these procedural and psychological mechanisms in predicting environmental performance, there is a paucity of research in Pakistan's banking sector. We are unaware of the role of psychological mechanisms in achieving sustainability objectives. Further, there are notable inconsistencies in the results of existing studies that examined these variables using multiple theoretical perspectives in different sectors in developing countries like Pakistan (Khan et al., 2025). Hence, there is a pressing need to examine how GPC in banks is not only practically imperative but also theoretically meaningful (Syed, 2024). Our study bridges this gap by examining the mediating role of GPC in the interplay of GHRMP and EP in the banking sector of Pakistan. This study also extends GHRM theories beyond traditionally studied sectors. It contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how psychological mechanisms shape sustainability outcomes in service-oriented organizations such as the banking sector in Pakistan.

Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Our study draws upon three distinctive theories, i.e., the Resource-Based View (RBV), Ability–Motivation–Opportunity (AMO) theory, and Psychological Climate Theory, to explain the underlying mechanisms of GHRMP in predicting EP through the unique psychological pathway of GPC in the banking sector of Pakistan. From the Resource-Based View, Green HRM (GHRM) practices constitute strategic intangible resources capable of generating superior environmental performance (Younis & Hussain, 2023). However, RBV under-specifies the employee-level mechanisms through which such value is realized. The AMO perspective suggests that GHRM enhances green abilities, motivation, and participation, yet these translate into outcomes only when employees perceive credible organizational commitment (Khan et al., 2025). Psychological Climate Theory provides this micro-foundation by

positing that HR signals shape shared perceptions of environmental priority, forming a green psychological climate that directs behavior toward environmental goals (Naz et al., 2023; Li et al., 2023). This pathway is particularly salient in Pakistan's banking sector, where environmental performance hinges on employee alignment rather than production processes. Accordingly, GPC is theorized as the central mediator linking GHRM practices to environmental performance.

Green HRM Practices and Environmental Performance

Organizations adopt GHRMP as a strategic mechanism that can help elevate their environmental performance. GHRMP refers to the fusion of traditional human resource functions with environmental objectives. The literature demonstrates that these practices have predictive power for EP (Najam et al., 2025). EP is defined as a firm's endeavours to curtail its ecological footprint by making effective and efficient use of resources, conserving energy, and complying with environmental regulations. The resource-based view suggests that GHRMP are valuable resources of the firm that drive organisations to achieve environmental outcomes by integrating sustainability into human capital systems. These GHRM practices develop green competencies among the organisational workforce, helping organisations acquire sustained competitive advantage (Naz et al., 2023).

Existing literature has substantiated the predictive ability of GHRM practices for enhanced environmental performance (Naz et al., 2023). These practices foster environmental awareness and commitment among the workforce, which in turn largely enhance the firm's environmental performance (Younis & Hussain, 2023). GHRM practices play a strategic role in achieving sustainability objectives, thereby enhancing the firm's environmental performance (Raza & Khan, 2022; Sharif & Malik, 2025). This relationship may also be explained from the lens of AMO theory, which suggests that environmental performance can be improved by employees' green abilities (via training), motivation (via rewards and appraisal), and opportunities (via involvement in green initiatives). The literature has demonstrated that GHRMPs foster employees' innovative behaviour, which in turn increases the organisation's environmental outcomes. Regardless of the predictive ability of GHRMPs for environmental performance, the literature (Khan et al., 2025 & Sharif & Malik, 2025) suggests weaker evidence of intervening psychological mechanisms that explain how GHRM practices translate into environmental outcomes, especially in the financial sector. Thus, this study assumes that

H1: GHRMPs positively affect the environmental performance of the banking sector in Pakistan.

Green HRM Practices and Green Psychological Climate

Despite the predictive ability of GHRMPs for the environmental performance of the organization, literature suggests that it also influences employees' cognitive interpretations of management priorities such as the establishment of an environment-oriented psychological climate (Zameer et al., 2021). Employees perceive that their organization values and rewards environmentally responsible practices (Bhatti et al., 2022). These perceptions of employees about the organisation's environmental stewardship are termed the green psychological climate (GPC).

Existing literature substantiates a strong positive relationship between GHRMPs and GCP, demonstrating that these practices shape environmental stewardship among employees through reward and motivation (Naz et al., 2023). Employees demonstrating green organizational citizenship behavior are rewarded, which establishes GCP in the organization. This GCP enhances the firm's environmental performance in the longer run. These findings reinforce the notion that GHRMPs are central to shaping environmental perceptions. Drawing upon Psychological Climate Theory, we argue that a strong organizational signal of GHRMPs shapes employees' cognitive

interpretations of management priorities. Consequently, employees' perceived organizational commitment to environmental sustainability becomes stronger, which in turn fosters a GPC. Based on the assumptions of PCT, we assume that

H2: GHRMPs positively affect GPC in the banking sector in Pakistan.

Green Psychological Climate and Environmental Performance

Extant literature suggests that human behaviour largely shapes organisational culture, which is a strong predictor of overall organisational performance. Drawing upon Psychological Climate Theory (PCT), when employees demonstrate pro-environmental behaviour, it positively affects the environmental performance of the financial firm (Bhatti et al., 2022). PCT suggests that organisational priorities of environmental stewardship establish a GPC that motivates employees to demonstrate pro-environmental green initiatives, leading to improved environmental performance. Existing literature also substantiates that GPC establishes a culture of innovation, sustainability, and environmental stewardship in the organisation, which in turn promotes organisational performance related to the environment. In the financial sector, employees demonstrate GOCB by advocating banks' green initiatives, such as loans for solar systems, green agriculture loans, and investment offers for pro-environmental business, thereby enhancing environmental performance.

This study also draws upon the resource-based view (RBV), demonstrating that GPC is an intangible resource of banks that enhances the effectiveness of GHRMPs by integrating organizational sustainability objectives with employees' values. In this context, when an organisation establishes a green culture, it becomes a crucial factor that makes the financial firm competitive in the financial market. Studies such as Nasim et al. (2024) substantiate that employees' perceptions of a supportive green climate drive them to engage in environmentally responsible actions, resulting in superior environmental outcomes. Based on the assumptions of PCT and RBV, we assume that:

H3: GPC positively affects the environmental performance of the banking sector in Pakistan.

Mediating Role of Green Psychological Climate

Although extant literature has demonstrated the predictive ability of GHRMPs for GPC and EP, as

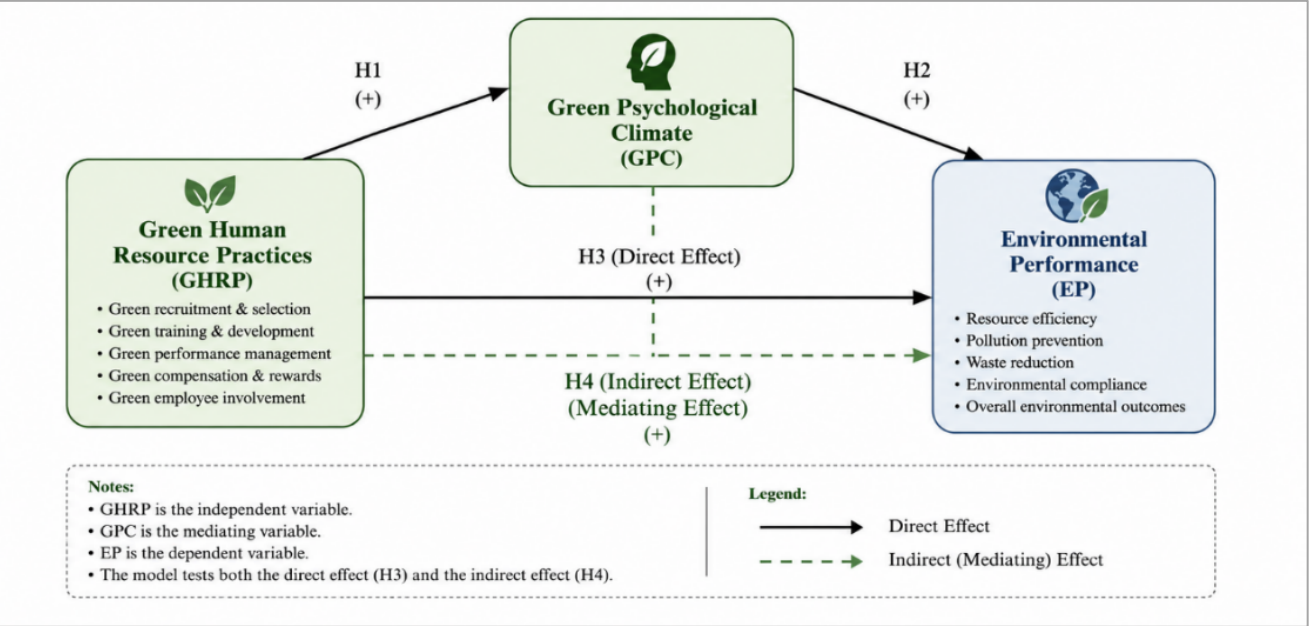
well as the predictive ability of GPC for EP, we are unclear about the mediating mechanisms through which GHRMPs translate their influence on environmental performance. More recently, Khan et al. (2025) and Nasim et al. (2024) reported that the influence of GHRMPs on environmental performance is not direct. Instead, it requires a psychological mechanism to translate environmental outcomes. We argue that green psychological climate, as a psychological mechanism, can bridge this missing connection by transforming the influence of GHRMPs on environmental performance through the establishment of a culture of environmental stewardship. In the context of financial institutions, the banking sector's reliance on human capital and psychological alignment requires a psychological climate that supports employees' environmentally responsive initiatives to achieve environmental sustainability. Drawing upon AMO theory, GPC fosters motivational and opportunity pathways through which GHRMPs operate. Employees who perceive a strong green climate are more motivated to apply their green abilities and seize opportunities to engage in environmentally responsible behaviors, thereby fostering EP. Integrating RBV, GPC functions as a socially complex and difficult-to-imitate resource that amplifies the effectiveness of GHRM practices. Based on the assumptions of AMO and RBV, we hypothesise that;

H4: GPC mediates the relationship between GHRM practices and environmental performance.

Conceptual Framework

This study draws upon the assumptions of AMO theory and the Resource-Based View by connecting GHRMP and EP directly, as well as through the behavioural pathway of GPC. This study suggests that GHRMPs first influence GPC, which in turn positively affects EP of the baking sector. Thus, our study identifies direct as well as mediating pathways of GHRMPs to translate environmental performance through GPC. The relationships underlying the research model have been presented below.

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework



Methodology

The current study employed a cross-sectional design and a quantitative approach to conduct this causal-explanatory study. We collected data from the respondents of this study using a structured survey questionnaire.

Respondents

We recruited 385 banking sector professionals from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province to collect the data. Using a convenience sampling technique, bankers working at the top, middle, and operative levels were selected. The inclusion criteria were banking professionals with at least 5 years of banking experience in commercial banks. Further, these banks must offer green financial solutions to their customers.

Instrument

The current study used a combined survey questionnaire to collect data from respondents. The questionnaire measured main and demographic variables. The respondents reported their responses on a five-point rating scale ranging from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). We measured GHRMP using a 19-item scale developed by Saeed et al. (2018). Green PC was measured using a combined 5-item scale developed by Norton et al. (2014). In contrast, we used an 8-item scale developed by Zakariya & Chams (2025) to measure Environmental Performance.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

A total of 385 respondents from the banking sector completed survey questionnaires. However, we received 359 complete questionnaires, giving a response rate of 93%, which is quite satisfactory.

Table 1

Demographics

Description		Frequency	Percent
Age	18-30	131	36
	31-40	111	31
	41-50	83	23
	51 and above	34	9
	Total	359	100
Gender	Male	199	55
	Female	160	45
	Total	359	100
Education	Bachelor	104	29
	Master	135	38
	MPhil/MS/PhD	114	31
	Total	359	100
Position	Top Level	87	24
	Middle level	115	32
	Operative Level	157	44
	Total	359	100

Table 1 shows that the sample comprised 55% (199) of male respondents and 45% (160) female respondents, demonstrating balanced representation. The results also show that 36% of respondents were aged 18-40 years, 31% were aged 31-40 years, 23% were aged 41-50 years, and 9% were aged more than 50 years. The analysis of qualification revealed that 29% possessed undergraduate-level education, 37% had 16 years of education, while 34% possessed 18-21 years of education. Analysis of position level revealed that all levels of bankers were represented in the study sample.

Reliability Analysis and Factor Loading

Table 2

Reliability Analysis and Factor Loading

Constructs	Items	Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
GHRM Practices (19×items)	GHRMP1	.836	0.95	0.94	0.77
	GHRMP2	.816			
	GHRMP3	.892			
	GHRMP4	.840			
	GHRMP5	.868			
	GHRMP6	.887			
	GHRMP7	.784			
	GHRMP8	.794			
	GHRMP9	.831			
	GHRMP10	.881			
	GHRMP11	.889			

	GHRMP12	.932			
	GHRMP13	.797			
	GHRMP14	.876			
	GHRMP15	.948			
	GHRMP16	.881			
	GHRMP17	.773			
	GHRMP18	.957			
	GHRMP19	.887			
Environmental Performance (8×items)	EP1	.941	0.93	0.94	0.87
	EP2	.978			
	EP3	.816			
	EP4	.875			
	EP5	.883			
	EP6	.957			
	EP7	.813			
	EP8	.867			
Green PC (5×items)	GOCB1	.858	0.92	0.91	0.76
	GOCB2	.914			
	GOCB3	.856			
	GOCB4	.923			
	GOCB5	.893			

Table 2 above demonstrates that all the items represented respective constructs, showing good factorability. A further analysis of each construct revealed that factor loadings of all the variables exceeded the threshold of .60 (Hair et al., 2019). Further, Table 2 also shows that reliabilities of all the variables ranged from 0.91 to 0.95, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. These results show excellent reliability for all constructs in this study. We also measured the convergent validity using Average Variance Extracted (AVEs). Results in Table 2 demonstrate that AVE values ranged from 0.76 to 0.87, confirming convergent validity, as these values exceeded the desired threshold of 0.50.

Correlation Analysis

Table 3

Correlation Matrix

	Age	Gender	Education	Position	Experience	GHRMP	GPC	EP
Age	1							
Gender	-0.031	1						
Education	.324**	-0.045	1					
Position	.283**	0.017	0.051	1				
Experience	.152**	-0.052	0.032	-.299**	1			
GHRMP	-0.095	0.067	-0.017	-0.024	0.027	1		
GPC	-0.054	-0.045	0.034	0.025	0.052	.645**	1	
EP	-0.018	0.038	-0.075	-0.05	0.002	.743**	.652**	1

The correlation matrix presented in Table 3 shows no significant interplay between respondents' demographics and the main variables of the study, suggesting no confounding effect. Further, this matrix shows a significant positive relationship between GHRMPs and GPC (0.645**) as well as between GHRMPs and EP ($r = .743^{**}$).

Linear Regression Analysis

Table 4

Linear Regression

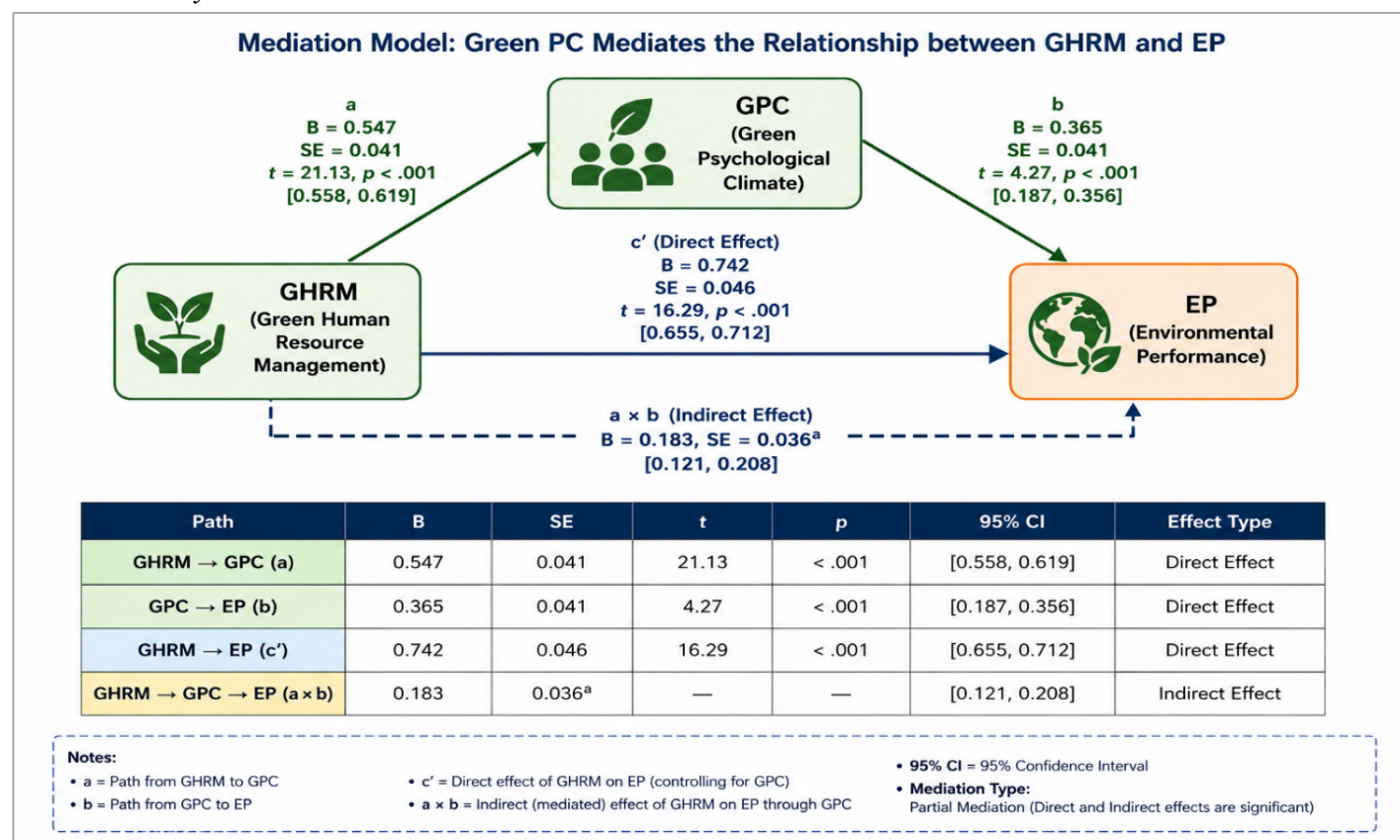
Predictors	B	SE B	β	t	p-value	R ²	ΔR^2	F
Model 1						0.695	—	857.31***
Constant	0.561	0.132	—	3.24	< .001			
GHRM Practices	0.881	0.041	0.86	28.51	< .001			
Model 2						0.727	0.021	485.78***
Constant	0.041	0.173	—	0.18	0.856			
GHRM Practices	0.622	0.032	0.597	15.13	< .001			
Green PC	0.346	0.065	0.312	4.27	< .001			

The effect of GHRMPs on GPC and EP and the explanatory power of GPC was examined through a hierarchical multiple regression analysis. Results of Model 1 in Table 4 depict that EP was significantly predicted by GHRMPs ($B = 0.881$, $SE = 0.041$, $\beta = .86$, $t = 28.51$, $p < .001$), explaining 69.5% of the variance in EP, confirming the 1st hypothesis. We entered GPC along with GHRMPs into the regression model in Model 2. Results demonstrated that the model was statistically significant ($F = 485.78$, $p < .001$), explaining 72.7% of the variance in EP. These results also suggest that inclusion of GPC accounted for an additional 2.1% of the variance beyond GHRMPs. In support of the 2nd hypothesis of the study, these results clearly suggest that while GHRMPs are a strong predictor of EP, GPC contributes additional explanatory power, indicating its incremental validity within the regression model.

Mediation Analysis

Table 5

Mediation Analysis



We performed mediation analysis using Hayes' PROCESS to examine the mediating role of GPC in the interplay of GHRMPs and EP. It is evident in Table 5 that GPC (Path a) was significantly predicted by GHRMPs ($B = 0.547$, $SE = 0.041$, $t = 21.13$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.558, 0.619]), suggesting that higher GHRMPs establish a stronger GPC. The results also confirm the 3rd hypothesis of the study. We further found that EP (Path b) was significantly predicted by GPC ($B = 0.365$, $SE = 0.041$, $t = 4.27$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.187, 0.356]), suggesting that a stronger GPC is positively connected with higher EP. Table 5 also depicted a statistically significant influence of GHRMPs on EP (Path c') even after including GPC in the model ($B = 0.742$, $SE = 0.046$, $t = 16.29$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.655, 0.712]), demonstrating that GHRMPs continues to exert a strong positive effect on EP independent of GPC. The indirect effect of GHRMPs on EP through GPC (Path $a \times b$) was statistically significant ($B = 0.183$, $SE = 0.036$, 95% CI [0.121, 0.208]), confirming the presence of partial mediation. These results demonstrate that the influence of GHRMPs on EP was direct as well as channelized through GPC, confirming the 4th hypothesis.

Discussion of Findings

The results of the current study have been discussed in the light of the previous studies. Our results offer empirical support for all four hypotheses of the study and are consistent with existing theoretical and empirical research in the green management literature.

First, our results supported the assumption that EP was significantly and positively influenced by GHRMPs (H1), suggesting that GHRMPs play a critical role in enhancing banks' environmental outcomes. Similarly, these findings also support the Resource-Based View (RBV), suggesting that GHRMPs are a resource for banks, demonstrating that when banks institutionalise environmentally oriented HR systems, they are better able to translate sustainability commitments into measurable environmental performance.

Our results demonstrated that GP is significantly and positively predicted by GHRMPs, indicating that human resource practices largely shape employees' perceptions of their financial firms. Hence 2nd hypothesis (H2) was confirmed. Our findings resonate with existing literature (Najam et al., 2025), suggesting that GHRMPs foster environmental stewardship, helping employees to propose pro-environmental initiatives, thereby promoting EP. Further, drawing on AMO theory and climate theory, GHRMPs function as signals communicating environmental values, thereby fostering a shared perception that sustainability is genuinely supported (Khan et al., 2025).

In support of the third hypothesis (H3) of the study, our results suggest that perception of environmental responsiveness by the firm (GPC) significantly and positively predicts environmental performance (Naz et al., 2023). Existing literature (Hameed et al., 2025; Naz et al., 2023) supports these results, suggesting that employees' shared perceptions of environmental responsibility encourage behaviours that contribute to improved environmental outcomes, such as environmental performance in the banking sector (Zafar et al., 2025).

In support of the fourth hypothesis (H4), the results of this study confirmed that GPC is a unique psychological mechanism that channels the influence of GHRMPs on the environmental performance of the financial institutions. The indirect effect was significant, indicating that GHRMPs enhance environmental performance not only directly but also indirectly by fostering a supportive green psychological climate. The results of existing studies (Khan et al., 2023; Asadullah et al., 2023) also support these results, suggesting that environmental outcomes require direct as well as mediating mechanisms to translate the influence of GHRMPs.

Conclusion

The results of our study are unique in nature as they integrate RBV, AMO theory, and climate theory to explain the influence of GHRMPs on EP. The findings also suggest that not only the policies and technologies but also the strategic HR interventions influence environmental performance. Hence, GHRMPs emerge as a central mechanism through which banks can cultivate a green climate and achieve superior environmental performance. The results further suggest that GHRMPs foster environmental stewardship, helping employees propose pro-environmental initiatives and thereby promoting EP. Further, this study also confirms that the effect of GHRMPs on environmental outcomes is direct as well as through the unique pathway of GPC, especially in the banking sector.

Implications

This study offers valuable theoretical, managerial, and policy implications for Pakistan's banking sector. At theoretical frontiers, the findings that GHRMPs function as strategic organisational resources to foster environmental performance through GPC strengthen the integration of the AMO theory, RBV, and climate theory. This study also advances our understanding and empirically validates the mediating role of GPC in translating sustainability outcomes.

This study also offers significant managerial implications, demonstrating that financial institutions should move beyond symbolic environmental policies and embed sustainability into their human resource systems by systematically aligning with environmental objectives to create a strong GPC. Perceived GPC drives employees in the banking sector to engage in pro-environmental behaviors, thereby enhancing overall EP of the organizations. Further, our findings have implications for banking sector policymakers and financial regulators, underscoring the importance of GHRMPs in realizing national sustainability goals.

Limitations and Agenda for Future Research

This study has certain limitations despite its valuable theoretical and practical contributions. First, the use of self-report data may cause common method bias, affecting the generalizability of the results. It is therefore desirable for future researchers to incorporate multi-source data to enhance robustness. Second, the use of a cross-sectional design may also restrict causal inferences and generalizability of the results. Future researchers may address this issue by undertaking longitudinal or time-lagged studies to seek stronger evidence of causality. Similarly, undertaking the study in the banking sector of Pakistan may also restrict the generalizability of results. Future researchers may replicate this study in the manufacturing or other services sector to have more robust results. Last but not least, while partial mediation of GPC demands examination of other mediators such as green leadership in the relationship between GHRMPs and environmental performance.

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