# Conceptualizing Green Human Resource Management in Predicting Employees' Green Intention and Behaviour : A Conceptual Framework

*  Bidhan Mukherjee
** Bibhas Chandra

## Abstract

In the era of globalization, environmental concerns have become a great threat to the earth and its mankind. Within this realm, the need to integrate environmental management into HRM termed as green HRM has gained augmented attention. Green HRM (abbreviated as GHRM) is a pronunciamento which assists in creating green employees who can recognize and acknowledge green ethos in any organizational setup.  However, employees' behaviour is a significant facet that can enhance organizational productivity and performance, and GHRM has been conceptualized to influence employees' green behaviour. But how that behaviour is predicted or influenced through GHRM is not explored fully, and due to a dearth of a dominant model in understanding and predicting employees' behaviour in an organization, there are calls for further research to strengthen the existing knowledge. Literature has substantiated the importance of adopting GHRM practices and policies, but scholars have validated that the volume of scholarly work focusing on green HRM remains very small and needs further research to strengthen the field theoretically and empirically. Against this backdrop, a conceptualized framework was proposed in this study based on extant literature review to understand and predict employee behaviour in an organization as a whole or explicitly in a workplace.

Keywords :  green HRM, green behaviour, conceptual framework

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Industrial revolution is ear marked as a critical changing moment in Earth's natural balance and humans' rapport with their environment. This impelled human progression to startling levels, but with a detrimental effect on the environment and thereby, giving sharp rise to focus on the need for control and sustainability (Tara & Singh, 2014) because the cost of ecological degradation is massive (Saarangapani & Sripathi, 2015). Accordingly, the concept of GHRM was introduced. GHRM is the HRM activities which enhance positive environmental outcomes (Kramar, 2014) by deciphering green policies into practice (Renwick, Redman, & Maguire, 2013) and creating sustainable culture in the organization (Joel, Kent, & Jeena, 2010). Thus, the need for integrating environmental management into HRM termed as GHRM has been validated by many scholars (Fayyazia, Shahbazmoradi, Afshar, & Shahbazmoradi, 2015) to promote and elicit employee's green behaviour for achieving organisation's desired goal (Renwick et al., 2013). Each organisation has mixed employees with different physiognomies, concerns, passions, and perceptions, and they pursue varied practices in their daily

* Research Scholar (Corresponding Author), Department of Management Studies, IIT - ISM, Dhanbad - 826 004, Jharkhand.
E-mail : bidhan.mukherji@gmail.com
** Assistant Professor,  Department of Management Studies, IIT - ISM, Dhanbad - 826 004, Jharkhand.
E-mail : chandra_bibhas@yahoo.co.in

living, which have divergent effects on the earth's ecology. Businesses have started to focus on enhancing employees' green behaviour (Fang, Ng, Wang, & Hsu, 2017). The prime reason for failure of any organization is recognized to be the resistance of the employees to change their behaviour (Janssen, 2015). It is utmost important to predict, influence, and improve employees' behaviour towards environmental concerns, since employees spend most of their daily life in the workplace (Blok, Wesselink, Studynka, & Kemp, 2015), and behaviour differs in private life and at the workplace (Greaves, Zibarras, & Stride, 2013). Research has substantiated that if employees' behaviour can be predicted and influenced, it can contribute largely to enhance productivity and performance of an organization (Delmas & Pekovic, 2016).

As HR managers are employees' managers, they are in a significant position in influencing the proficiency, capabilities, and behaviour of employees in any organizational workplace (Prieto & Santana, 2014). However, in what ways and when GHRM influences employees' green behaviour at the workplace remains largely not known (Dumont, Shen, & Deng, 2016). Among others, the most widely used theory in predicting behaviour and intention is the theory of planned behaviour (abbreviated as TPB), which has recently been criticized for not including sufficient constructs in predicting intention and behaviour (Ajzen, 2016 as cited in Aziz, Mahadi, & Baskaran, 2017) and scholars have stated that the theory should retire (Sniehotta, Presseau, & Soares, 2014). However, scholars have argued that new constructs and relationships are continuously sought to improve the predictability of TPB (Baranowski & Lytle, 2015).

Another theory in this domain that has gained importance is the model of goal directed behaviour (abbreviated as MGDB), which explains a greater amount of variance in intention and behaviour in comparison to TPB (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001 as cited in Esposito et al., 2016), but scholars have asserted that the extended model of goal directed behaviour (abbreviated as EMGDB) is the most powerful in predicting behavioural intention than TRA, TPB, and MGDB (Kim & Preis, 2015), though very few empirical studies have been conducted using EMGDB and its precursor MGDB in predicting behaviour (Thomson, Shaw, & Shiu, 2007). Despite criticism, scholars have posited that new constructs and relationships are continuously sought to extend, modify, and improve the predictability of TPB (Baranowski & Lytle, 2015).

Against this backdrop, keeping TPB as the base, the current study has proposed a conceptual framework that extends TPB by assimilating and adding the insights of different constructs as other predictor of behavior and intentions to strengthen the domain of behavioural theory by increasing the predictability of intention and behaviour through GHRM. This can be of great help for organizational managers, including HR managers, to improve and influence employees' green intention and green behaviour for a sustained source of competitive advantage, long-term success, and organizational performance.

## Originality/Value

The paper is an original work which can significantly contribute to the field of organisational behaviour, HRM/GHRM, any organizational workplace, and the overall society as a whole by modifying or improving employees' behavioural intentions in general or explicitly at the work place for sustained competitive advantage, since intention and behaviour are reliably correlated. Green behaviours, if predicted and thereby modified, can minimize the negative impact on the environment to attain sustainability.

## Research Gap

Most of the studies on predicting and influencing behaviour have been conducted in the private sphere or else the general society, and less attention has been given to employees' workplace, despite of its impending impact on environmental sustainability (Blok et al., 2015 ; Ones & Dilchert, 2012) and it has been validated that behaviour at

home and in the workplace may differ (Greaves et al., 2013). Furthermore, no study has yet established the mechanisms and circumstances that can influence employees' green behaviour (Inoue & Alfaro - Barrantes, 2015). There is a literature gap in predicting and influencing green behaviour explicitly in an organizational workplace (Aziz et al., 2017). Envisaging and regulating employee behaviour leads to enhanced productivity and organizational performance, but no dominant model can be traced in understanding and predicting behaviour in an organizational change (Janssen, 2015), even though the change process has attitudinal and behavioural components. There are calls for further research to improve the predictability of TPB (Baranowski & Lytle, 2015) and its applicability in organizational settings (Greaves et al., 2013).

## Objectives of the Study

Behaviour of employees is a complex domain acknowledged by managers, and GHRM has been conceptualized to influence employees' green behaviour. Against this backdrop, the study is carried out with manifold objectives. The primary objective is to provide a foundation upon which the researchers can gain knowledge of the subject matter, and carry out further research with an established level of authority and credibility. Secondly, a conceptual framework has been proposed with an objective to strengthen the behaviour and intention gaps in implementing environmental management through HRM in an organization. Furthermore, an honest attempt has been made with an objective to help the researchers in answering the question as to how and what influences employee behaviour, which can further strengthen the TPB by improving the predictability power. The last objective is to identify the research gaps in this field and propose future research agenda in the domain of GHRM to fill the research gaps.

## Significance of the Study

Sustainability is a global issue, and organizations have realized the negative impact of the environment on competitiveness and success of business (Paille, Chen, Boiral, & Jin, 2014). Despite realizing the indispensable implications of green HRM, GHRM initiatives are sporadic (Sawang & Kivits, 2014), and thus, there is a growing scope for research on GHRM. It has been validated that the volume of scholarly work focusing on GHRM is relatively very scanty, varied, and piecemeal (Renwick et al., 2013 ; Rani & Mishra, 2014) and gaps are still evident (Saraswat, 2015). The literature on GHRM is not only varied and fragmented, but also lacks strong analytical and theoretical frameworks, which need to be strengthened through scholarly works (Arulrajah & Opatha, 2016). It has been posited that the link between GHRM and employees' green behaviour has not yet been adequately and empirically explored (Kumari, 2012) and no studies have yet established the components and conditions that influence employee green behaviour (Inoue & Alfaro - Barrantes, 2015).

## Method

A systematic review of extant literature was made by adopting the archival method of literature review. In the course of this review, which is descriptive in nature, secondary sources were used. The types of secondary data used are research journals, theses, articles, and books on GHRM. Behavioural theories and other related papers published between 1992 and 2017 were also reviewed.

## Literature Review

'Being green' is a very comprehensive procedure and organizations are accountable for ecological degradation

(Haden, Oyler, & Humphreys, 2009). Realizing the adverse effect of ecological degradation on competitiveness and long term success of business, the need for going green has gained augmented importance to protect the earth from negative impacts (Tara & Singh, 2014). It has also been established that efficacious environmental management can be achieved through exceptional endeavours of HRM (Paille et al., 2014). The green activities of HRM is termed as GHRM, which enhances positive environmental outcomes (Kramar, 2014). GHR rehearses help with accomplishing green goals, all through the human asset administration process from enlistment to exit (Dutta, 2012). The outcomes of green HRM practices are manifold and encompass explicit human resource policies and practices associated with three pillars of sustainability - societal, environmental, and economic equilibrium (Yusoff, Ramayah, & Othman, 2015). A host of scholars have identified various green HR practices like green job design and analysis, green recruitment, green selection practices, green induction practices, green performance management and evaluation, green training and development, green reward and recognition, green employee involvement and participation, green workplace,  green discipline management (Renwick et al., 2013). Research and studies have emphasized the correlation of GHR practices and organizational outcomes like efficiency, adaptability, enhanced budgetary execution (Collins & Clark, 2003), and image branding (Verma, 2015).

However, the employees of any organization execute the green policies in real terms, and thus, organizations realised the necessity to encourage and eventually change the behaviour of employees to align with green objectives of the organisation (Ones & Dilchert, 2012). Increasingly, organizations are espousing GHRM practices to promote employee green behaviour in the place of work (Renwick et al., 2013), where green behaviour is the behaviour that minimizes harm to the environment as much as possible, or even benefits it (Steg & Vlek, 2009). There is accumulating evidence that the individual employee's behaviour acts as a fulcrum upon which the success of the organization's environmental sustainability (Unsworth, Dmitrieva, & Adriasola, 2013) and environmental performance (Delmas & Pekovic, 2016) depends on. The HR behavioural literature has posited that same employee behaviour may be influenced by different HRM practices through varied societal and psychological processes (Greaves et al., 2013). As such, in what way and when GHRM influences employee's green behaviour at the workplace remains largely not known (Dumont et al., 2016).

Several theories have been developed to understand and explain behavioural intention and behaviour. Popular among these developed theories are TRA (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980), TPB (Ajzen, 1991), MGDB (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001), and EMGDB (Perugini & Conner, 2000), which have been used very less in predicting behaviour than the other three theories. The principal variance amidst all these theories is in including a number of constructs in predicting behavioural intention and behaviour, though the theories developed later included more constructs and were proved with more predictability (Richetin et al., 2008 as cited in Setyobudi, Wiryono, Nasution, & Purwanegara, 2016).

**(1)  Theory of Reasoned Action :** For many years, TRA has been widely used in several fields of study, and mostly in social psychology as an attitudinal theory to understand what influences human actions in a better way (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001).

**(2)  Theory of Planned Behaviour :** TPB proposed by Icek Ajzen in 1985 was proposed to improve on the predictive power of the TRA by including perceived behavioural control. It is a theory explaining human behaviour.  TPB surpasses TRA in behaviour prediction and has been widely used in exploring different facets of green like green consumption, production, transportation, etc. (Hsu, Huang, Hsu, & Huang, 2016). Though TPB is subjected to criticism for not including sufficient constructs in predicting intention and behaviour (Ajzen, 2016 as cited in Aziz et al., 2017), scholars have argued that new constructs and relationships are sought continuously to improve the predictability (Baranowski & Lytle, 2015).

**(3) Model of Goal Directed Behaviour :** MGDB is a broadened theory of TPB wherein new constructs were added, which were neglected in TPB. Those new constructs are anticipated emotions (both positive and negative) and also included the concept of desire, which is presumed to mediate the relation between intentions and antecedents, which implies that desire is the immediate driver of intention, effects of frequency, and recency of past behaviour (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001). MGDB has more predictability power in comparison to TPB (Shiu, Hassan, Thomson, & Shaw, 2008).

**(4) Extended Model of Goal Directed Behaviour :** It is an extension of TPB and MGDB, which concentrated on amplifying behavioural decision by linking volition to a goal (Shiu et al., 2008). The model included goal desire and goal perceived feasibility to further strengthen the predictability. Though both the models - MGDB and EMGDB deliver superior performance in comparison to TPB, very limited studies have applied MGDB or its extended variant (Shiu et al., 2008).

Despite cumulative research conceptualizing the relationships amidst GHRM and green behaviour of employees, this link has not yet been adequately and empirically explored (Kumari, 2012). Researchers have not given due focus in predicting and influencing behaviour explicitly in an organizational workplace (Blok et al., 2015). Against this backdrop, based on these behavioural theories, this current review paper proposes a conceptual model that will contextually dwell on the predictive ability of the constructs included in the proposed model, in understanding and explaining employees' green intention and green behaviour in an organization, and more explicitly in an organizational workplace through GHRM as there is a dearth of research in this area.

## Conceptual Framework

Same employee behaviour may be influenced by different HRM practices through varied societal and psychological processes (Greaves et al., 2013). In this regard, TPB (Ajzen, 1991) is a well-supported and widely used theoretical foundation by management researchers to predict employees' behavioural intention and behaviour (Greaves et al., 2013) in exploring different facets of green like, green consumption, production, transportation, etc. (Hsu et al., 2016). Ajzen (1991) posited that an individual conduct is persuaded by behavioural intentions, where behavioural intentions are a component of three determinants : a person's state of mind towards the conduct, subjective standards, and perceived behavioural control, where behavioural intention is an intermediary measure for conduct. Attitude towards a behaviour is believed to be a function of one's salient beliefs ; subjective norms are represented as a function of a person's normative beliefs (NB), and perceived behavioural control is determined to be a function of control beliefs (CBs).

Therefore, the conceptual framework - 1, in Figure 1, proposes for further research in GHRM ; predicting behavioural intention and behaviour are derived from TPB, which is a well-researched theory and has strong predictive utility for a wide range of human behaviours including environmentally concerned behaviour. It will contextually dwell on the predictive ability of the TPB construct in predicting employees' behavioural intention to go green in an organization through HRM aspects of green management, that is, GHRM.

Recently, TPB has been criticized for not including sufficient constructs in predicting intention and behaviour (Ajzen, 2016 as cited in Aziz et al., 2017) and it was stated that the theory should retire (Sniehotta et al., 2014). However, scholars have argued that new constructs and relationships are continuously sought to extend, modify, and improve the predictability of TPB (Baranowski & Lytle, 2015).

MGDB is the broadened theory of TPB, which has improved the efficacy of TPB by explaining considerably more prominent measures of variance in intention and conduct and in better comprehension of cognitive and affective decision making processes (Shiu et al., 2008). A recent report demonstrated that the main influential mediator of intention and behaviour relationship is the degree to which intentions depended on foreseen affective

**Figure 1. Proposed Theoretical Framework - 1**
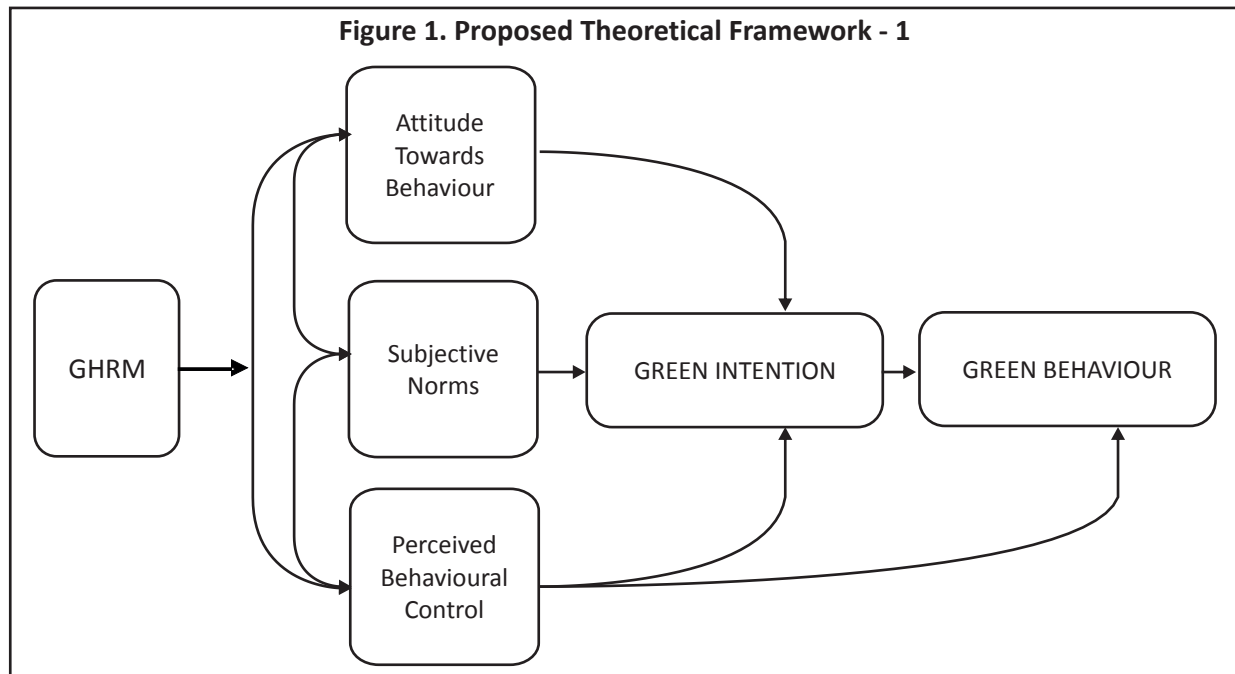
reactions (Conner, McEachan, Lawton, & Gardner, 2015). The MGDB included the constructs of anticipated emotions of success and anticipated emotions of failure, along with the concept of desire, which is assumed to mediate the relation between antecedents and intentions. The effects of frequency and recency of past behaviour was also included in MGDB (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001, 2004). However, th construct : attitude in MGDB does not affect an individual's intention to perform a behaviour directly ; rather, intention is affected indirectly through desire, and desire plays a vital role in MGDB, since it is perceived to be a stronger predictor in comparison to attitude and subjective norms (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001, 2004). Generally, anticipated emotions are assumed to predict desire, since emotions lead to a self- controlled procedure implied by the evaluation of success or failure. Past conduct is viewed as an intermediary of habit and thereby, it is anticipated to impact both desire and intention, and recurrence of past conduct is thought to be a forecaster of desire, intention, and behaviour, while recency of past conduct forecasts behaviour. The inclusion of foreseen emotions in MGDB has widened the TPB by incorporating new choice criteria concerning an individual's objectives (Perugini, 2001, as cited in Shiu et al., 2008).

Despite its greater predictability than TRA and TPB, scholars have identified limitations in MGDB by not including passion as a construct (Tong, 2016). In this regard, scholars have validated that the extended model of goal directed behavior is the most powerful in predicting behavioural intention than TRA, TPB, and MGDB (Kim & Preis, 2015), though very few empirical studies have been conducted using EMGDB and its precursor MGDB in predicting behaviour (Thomson et al., 2007). EMGDB included two additional constructs : goal desire and goal perceived feasibility. Reviewing the environmental psychology literature as a source of idea, two other important constructs are descriptive norms & injunctive norms, which contribute largely in predicting behavioural intentions (Bamberg & Moser, 2007). Norms are a social expectation that guide appropriate behaviour (Thogersen, 2006). Research proposes that descriptive standards have essentially more robust correlation with behaviour than injunctive standards (Thogersen, 2006), but still, it is counseled to couple it with a positive injunctive standard to avert a phenomenon termed boomerang effect (Schultz, Nolan, Cialdini, Goldstein, & Griskevicius, 2007). It has been validated that descriptive norms and injunctive norms have an interactive effect

**Figure 2. Proposed Theoretical Framework - 2**
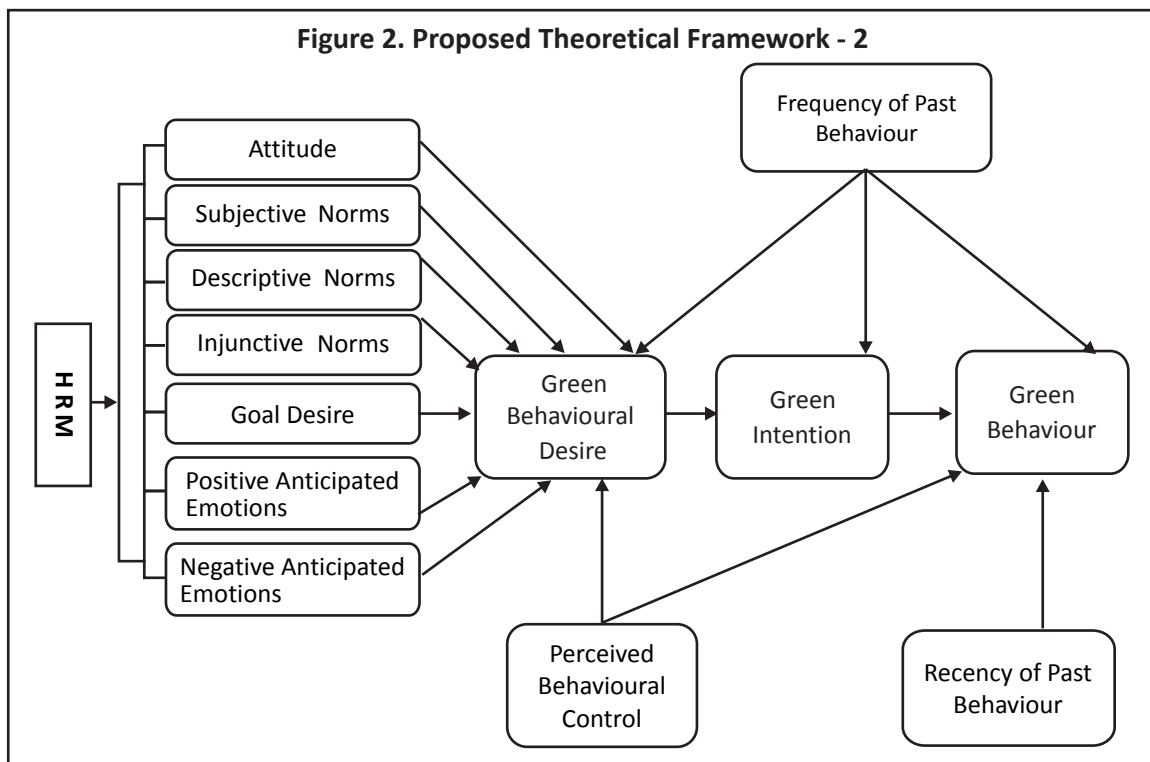


on behavioural intentions (Fang et al., 2017). Literature has substantiated that various researchers are calling to carry out further research on descriptive and injunctive norms together to investigate the key variables influencing green behaviour (Fang et al., 2017). Descriptive norms have been included as part of the model in very few studies, but if included, it accounts for an additional variance in behavioural intention (Rivis & Sheeran, 2003). Therefore, the conceptual framework -1 proposed is further modified by adding the constructs neglected in TPB for achieving additional variance in predicting green intention and green in any organization or exclusively in an organizational workplace, as proposed in the theoretical framework - 2 (Figure 2).

The human - environment relation is a complex one, in which behaviour is a function of the person and his/her environment. There is even more complexity to deal with if one tries to define more specifically what factors influence employee behaviour in the person and the environment. Literature has suggested that different constructs engender the shape of human behaviour. The proposed conceptual framework has considered both social and non-volitional components. Moreover, predictive ability improves significantly when there is a direct path from descriptive norms to behaviour, since norms are social expectations that guide appropriate behaviour.

Thus, the proposed model includes descriptive norms, which are paired with positive injunctive norm as both the norms have an interactive effect on behavioural intention and ,therefore, can improve the predictive ability. Since past behaviour is expected to influence both desire and intentions as it is regarded as a proxy of habit, the construct recurrence of past conduct is incorporated, which is assumed to forecast desire, intentions, and behaviour, while the construct recency of past conduct is expected to forecast just behaviour. Expected emotion is incorporated on the grounds that emotions prompt to the dynamic self-administrative process inferred by the evaluation of achievement or disappointment, which is expected to forecast desire. The present conceptual framework seeks to understand and explain employee green intention and green behaviour through GHRM in an organization or else explicitly in any workplace by offering new theoretical insights into TPB conception by adding constructs of MGDB along with descriptive norms and injunctive norms, which can contribute significantly to the predictive ability.

## Future Research Agenda

The mediating role of temporal rapport between the constructs of different behavioural theories can be tested as the views, perceptions, and thoughts may change over the course of time. Furthermore, different GHRM practices can be initiated as a moderator for testing the rapport between GHRM and behavioural changes. Since employees' green competencies is a significant moderating variable in adopting and implementing GHRM practices, explicit green competencies to be possessed by the employees can be explored. The vital conceptions relating to GHRM can be reconnoitred in light of prevailing pertinent theories, like institutional theory, system theory, process theory, stakeholder theory, resource based theory, ability-motivation-opportunity (AMO) theory, moral development theory, field theory, self-determination theory, social exchange theory, normative theory, theory of normative conduct, and goal theory to enhance existing knowledge and understanding in the field of GHRM.

## Research Implications

**(1) General Implications :** Since TPB has been widely used in the field of social psychology, which is limited to the individual level, this study can contribute to organizational behaviour and HRM by testing the relationship between the constructs proposed in the model and green adoption behaviour of employees with TPB as a base. The model can contribute in strengthening TPB in predicting behaviour, which has been subject to criticism for not including sufficient constructs. This can contribute in modifying or improving employees' green behavioural intention in general or explicitly at the work place for sustained competitive advantage, since intention and behaviour are reliably correlated. HR managers and line managers in any organizational workplace can have better understanding of employees' behaviour and can accordingly develop green strategies and effective implementation strategies. Organizational change comprises of behavioural components, and predicting behaviour can contribute in adopting the change by the employees. The basic assumption of this study is that employees' behavioural intention at work may be modified through this conceptual framework.

**(2) Managerial Implications :** Since human behaviour is a function of the person and the environment, the current model will contextually dwell on the predictive ability of the constructs proposed in the model in predicting employees' behavioural intention to go green in an organization through HRM aspects of green management, that is, GHRM. Predictive analytics may be brought into use by HR managers, giving due consideration to the constructs proposed in the model to predict the employee behaviour in adopting green. Predictive analytics involves a set of various statistical (data mining) techniques used to predict uncertain outcomes. Human resource functions already own the data through HRIS, employee surveys, 360-degree feedback, employees' data, performance management ratings, etc., and the additional data by adjudging the parameters proposed in the model by way of constructs can be acquired through a questionnaire and interviews, followed by content analysis. For example, HR managers of an organization can capture employees' perceptions through a well-designed tricky questionnaire either at the time of recruitment or in training sessions by incorporating all the constructs proposed in the model like - descriptive norms, subjective norms, injunctive norms, frequency of past behaviour, negative and positive anticipated emotions, recency of past behaviour, and goal desire to adjudge the intention of the employee, either to adopt green practices or not, which can ultimately predict his/her green behaviour, as behavioural intentions are instructions that individuals provide to themselves to act in certain ways.

Again, if suppose a group of green employees are attached to few non-green employees by way of job rotation, the non-green behaviours of the employees can be influenced to change since descriptive norms get activated. Another example is the perception of employees regarding the green behaviours that are expected by their company leaders, which has a high impact on their intention to behave in a certain way which forms the subjective

norms included in the study. In a similar way, by asking detailed past behaviour questions and follow-up probing questions in a structured interview during selection, or through a questionnaire for existing employees, the managements can gain valuable insights into the employee's past behaviour, which can predict how an employee will behave.

## Conclusion

Behavior of employees is one of the challenging domains confronted by managers since employees possess diverse physiognomies, interests, and perceptions. Employees follow various rehearses in their daily life, impacting nature differently by way of both negative and positive effects. The prime reason for failure of any organization is recognized to be the resistance of the employees to change their behaviour. However, studies have not yet established the mechanisms and circumstances that can influence employee green behaviour, and more explicitly, employee green behaviour in an organizational workplace. Understanding, explaining, and predicting employee's green intention and green behaviour is significant for positive effects on the environment, enhanced productivity, sales growth, larger financial returns, and for a sustained source of competitive advantage for any organization irrespective of size. Moreover, employee's behaviour is believed to affect the environment negatively, so the same is to be tackled by influencing behaviour.

## Limitations of the Study and Directions for Future Research

This paper is fundamentally based on literature review. Moreover, the reasonable utility of the proposed conceptual model remains untested. Thus, in line with all theories, it is required to be tested. Furthermore, future research on the practical utilization of the proposed framework is acclaimed. Detail on every component in the model should be elucidated with the goal that all components are communally focused towards a shared objective - to advance green behaviour in the organization or explicitly in any workplace irrespective of size and other features.

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## About the Authors

**Bidhan Mukherjee has been working with the public sector since the last 12 years in Core HR at Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCL), a Mini - Ratna company in India. His research work focuses specifically on the Prospects and Challenges of Modern Human Resource Management.**

**Bibhas Chandra (Ph.D.), is an Assistant Professor at IIT-ISM, Dhanbad, Jharkhand with a vast experience in academia and other industries. His contribution to the field of research can be gauged from his several research articles published in reputed international and national journals.**