

Environmental Sustainability Strategy, Creativity, Innovation and Organizational Performance: The Role of Green Human Resource Management

American Business Review
Nov. 2023, Vol.26(2) 475 - 502
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ISSN: 2689-8810 (Online)
ISSN: 0743-2348 (Print)

Jessica R. L. Good^a, Parbudyal Singh^b, and Souha Ezzedein^b

<https://doi.org/10.37625/abr.26.2.475-502>

ABSTRACT

This paper provides a theoretical explanation for the “black box” between “going green” and organizational performance and links individual-level behaviors with organizational-level outcomes. We argue that the adoption of an environmental sustainability strategy and high involvement green human resources management practices will have the intended impact of increasing employee green creativity and the unintended impact of increasing employee general creativity. As well, we suggest that employee green values moderate these relationships. Furthermore, the positive effects on employee creativity (green and general) are theorized to increase organizational innovation, which positively impacts organizational performance. This paper extends the research by providing a possible explanation for how the “black box” between “going green” and organizational performance is impacted by intended and unintended behaviors that are shaped by green human resources management practices.

KEY WORDS

Green Human Resource Management, Creativity, Innovation, Environmental Sustainability Strategy, Organizational Performance

INTRODUCTION

Organizations can no longer ignore the pressing need to adopt green practices. Changes to the physical environment as a result of organizational practices continue to be raised as a concern by activists, governments, consumers, and society (Guerci et al., 2016; Hailemariam and Erdiaw-Kwasie, 2022; Howard-Grenville et al., 2014; Vidal-Salazar et al., 2012). Other factors driving the organizations to “go green” include improving profitability, addressing a decline in resources, dealing with changes in regulations, and exercising ecological responsibility (Bansal and Roth, 2000; DuBois and Dubois, 2012; Obeidat, et al., 2020; Ren, et al., 2022; Zhang and Walton, 2017). As a result, organizations are increasingly adopting environmental sustainability practices (Dubois and Dubois, 2012; Guerci et al., 2016; Li et al., 2018; Orlitzky et al., 2011).

Research has begun to look at how “going green,” that is, implementing strategies that promote Environmental Sustainability (ES), i.e., business practices that attempt to find a balance between organizational growth and preservation of the environment (Zibarras and Coan, 2015) impact an organization’s performance. These findings have been confirmed in several meta-analyses that have reported that corporate social/environmental performance (CSP) is positively linked to corporate financial performance (CFP) (Dixon-Fowler et al., 2013; Orlitzky et al., 2003), suggesting that it does pay to be “green.” Furthermore, research has shown that companies that implement green

^a Athabasca University, Canada

^b York University, Canada

Corresponding Author:
Singh (singhp@yorku.ca)

innovations (i.e., processes, products or strategies aimed at reducing negative environmental consequences) have a positive effect on organizational performance (Huang and Li, 2017; Zhang and Walton, 2017).

While there is growing evidence indicating that going green will positively affect an organization's bottom line, the literature has focused primarily on the outcomes of the direct green practices-firm performance relationship, little attention to the mechanisms that are involved (Shu et al., 2016). Additional research is needed to elucidate the factors that contribute to this relationship (Ren et al., 2017), and to further explain the processes involved in the "black box" between green management and firm performance (Shu et al., 2016).

Indeed, the literature suggests that an executed strategy has intended and unintended effects (Balogun and Johnson, 2005; Baucus et al., 2008; Harris and Ogbonna, 2002). Therefore, when organizations adopt an ES strategy, the intended impact of the strategy is to decrease environmental impact; however, the implementation of this strategy may have unintended effects, including impacts on processes related to creativity. To further understand the "black box" between ES and organizational performance, this paper will investigate the intended and positive unintended effects that an ES strategy has on employee general creativity, meaning the generation of novel and useful ideas (Amabile, 1996) and green creativity, meaning the generation of novel and useful ideas for products, services, processes, and practices that are green (Song and Yu, 2018), and organizational innovation, meaning the successful implementation of new products and processes that benefit an organization (West and Anderson, 1996), when combined with green human resource management (GHRM) practices. We focus on these variables for several reasons.

First, employee creativity is seen as an essential component of an organization's transition towards ES (Ramus and Steger, 2000; Song and Yu, 2018). For employees to address an organization's ES strategy, employees must think of creative solutions to problems, that is, more environmentally sustainable ways to utilize materials and resources (intended impact). As employees further enhance their skills to address solutions to the ES strategy, it is likely that this creative thinking skill will be transferred to other issues as well (unintended impact). It is unlikely that an organization's ES strategy will be realized unless its procedures, services, practices, and/or products change. Second, creativity is the initial step in the innovation process. Thus, before any innovation occurs, it must begin with a creative idea (Amabile, 1983; Ramus and Steger, 2000). Consequently, increases in creativity should lead to increases in innovation (Bharadwaj and Menon, 2000; Mohamed and Rickards, 1996), which in turn drives organizational performance (Antonioli, 2009; Damanpour, 1991; Lööf and Heshmati, 2006). Thus, we contend that the missing links in the green management/GHRM-firm performance relationship are creativity and innovation. Third, research shows that GHRM practices are a key to ensuring the successful integration of ES strategy (Paillé et al., 2014; Song and Yu, 2018; Zibarras and Coan, 2015), and are essential in encouraging green creativity and innovation (Shu et al., 2016; Wong, 2012). Finally, this paper will investigate the boundary conditions of employee green values, as these will impact how ES strategy is realized and the effectiveness of GHRM practices in fostering green creativity and innovation. By drawing from value-belief-norm (VBN) theory (Stern et al., 1999) and supplies-values fit (SVF) theory (Edwards, 1996; Edwards and Shipp, 2007), we posit that when employee and organizational values are aligned, this strengthens the relationship between ES strategy and employee creativity both green and general. In this paper, we build a theoretical model to explain how and why these factors relate to an ES strategy in driving firm performance.

This paper makes several contributions to the literature. First, it provides an explanation of why organizations that "go green" are more profitable; that is, through an increase in creativity (green and general) and innovation (Shu et al., 2016). Second, the paper sheds light on green creativity, a construct that was first proposed by Chen and Chang (2013) and only recently investigated (Adomako and, Nguyen, 2023; Henriques et al., 2023; Lu 2023; Song and Yu, 2018). It is important to investigate

this because the research on green and non-green innovation has shown that they have distinctly different drivers (Cuerva et al. 2014; Foster and Green, 2000) and performance outcomes (Aguilera-Caracuel and Ortiz-de-Mandojana, 2013; Zhang and Walton, 2017). Some evidence suggests that green innovation may have a negative impact on organizations' financial performance (Aguilera-Caracuel and Ortiz-de-Mandojana, 2013; Zhang and Walton, 2017). As such, further research is required, that investigates how green innovation impacts organizational performance (Zhang and Walton, 2017). This paper seeks to determine if increases in green creativity have a spillover effect that enhances not only creativity but innovation as well. Thirdly, it addresses the call for research on how human resources management may impact green creativity (Song and Yu, 2018). This paper also provides a theoretical contribution by conceptualizing the impact that green human resource management (GHRM) has on employee behavior, through the lenses of ability, motivation, and opportunity (AMO) theory. Fourth, this paper contributes to the literature on employee green values, by illustrating the important role values play on whether employees will engage in green and general creative behavior. Finally, this paper addresses the practical concern of how GHRM practices can support an organization's ES strategy and increase the creative performance of its employees, which should, in turn, contribute to a firm's profitability.

In the sections to follow, we provide an overview of the variables that are included in the theoretical model and conduct a brief discussion of the literature surrounding these variables. We then provide an overview of the model and explain the related theoretical relationships and propositions. Finally, we discuss contributions to the literature and potential avenues for future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY (ES) STRATEGY

Environmental sustainability (ES) involves business practices and processes that seek a balance between organizational growth and preservation of the natural environment for future use (Zibarras and Coan, 2015). An ES strategy may include complementary strategies that are aimed at pollution prevention, reducing waste, optimizing consumption, using clean technology, sustainable development, and the creation of new environmentally safe products (Christmann, 2000; Vidal-Salazar et al., 2012). When organizations implement an ES strategy, they may not only decrease the negative effects that their activities have on the environment, but they may strengthen their competitive position as well (Christmann, 2000).

The adoption of an ES strategy within the organization requires an integrated and forward-looking approach, where ES is considered in all aspects of the organization's functioning. Embedding ES into an organization requires significant changes in the thought and behavior of all employees (DuBois and Dubois, 2012). Adopting an ES strategy will create a context, which requires employees to think differently about how they conduct their work, inspiring creative interventions targeting organizational products and processes.

CREATIVITY: GENERAL AND GREEN

Creativity is the generation of novel and useful ideas and represents the initial stage of the innovation process (Amabile, 1983; Oldham and Cummings, 1996), while innovation (i.e., the second stage) is the effective implementation of those ideas (Amabile, 1997). Amabile seminal theory (1983; 1996) identified the contextual factors that influence employees' creative behavior by looking specifically at how the social environment in organizations affects creativity. The central tenet of this theory is that

aspects of the work environment influence individuals' creativity; some contextual factors can positively influence an individual's degree of creativity, while others have a negative impact.

Most of the literature discusses creativity in the broader sense, which we refer to as "general creativity." However, we contend that general creativity is different from green creativity. For this paper, "general creativity" is defined as the generation of novel and useful ideas that target any area of organizational functioning. While "green creativity" a similar but distinct construct is defined as "... the development of original, novel, and useful ideas for green products, green services, green processes, and green practices." (Song and Yu, 2018, p. 140). An example of green creativity would be a new process that will decrease the amount of waste in the development of a product. Green creativity differs from general creativity as its focus on environmentally sustainable products, process, and services (Chen and Chang, 2013; Zhang et al., 2020).

There is limited research examining creativity in conjunction with ES issues. The research that has been completed has shown that green creativity is positively related to green innovation (Song and Yu, 2018; Ma et al. 2022) and green product development performance (Chen and Chang, 2013, Chen et al. 2016). There is more literature, albeit limited, that has focused on green innovation (Christmann, 2000; Foster and Green, 2000; Shu et al., 2016; Takalo and Tooranloo, 2021; Wong, 2012). This research has shown that green innovation helps organizations achieve greater efficiency, enhances their "green" image, contributes to firm profitability (Chen, 2008), strengthens their cost advantage (Christmann, 2000) and consequent organizational performance (Huang and Li, 2017; Zhang and Walton, 2017).

For this paper, we define how green innovation differs from conventional innovation and how it links to creativity (Song and Yu, 2018; Wong, 2012). Conventional innovation is open to all changes, while green innovation focuses on ES and is seen as a subset of conventional innovation (Wong, 2012). We define green innovation as "...innovation in technologies, products, services, organizational structures or management modes adopted by enterprises to achieve sustainable development" (Li et al., 2018. p. 463). Conventional innovation is defined as the effective application of new products and processes that are designed to benefit the organizations and their stakeholders (West and Anderson, 1996). Creativity (e.g., green and general) is the initial step in the process, while innovation (e.g., green or conventional) is the implementation of these creative ideas (Amabile, 1997). Accordingly green innovation is the implementation of green creative ideas.

HIGH INVOLVEMENT GREEN HR PRACTICES AND AMO THEORY

Creativity theory and research suggest a broad consensus that organizational creativity and innovation require the "proper" context (Cooke and Saini, 2010). The same can be said about ES; an organization seeking to meet its sustainability goals must be sensitive to the context of these efforts (Paillé et al., 2014; Zibarras and Coan, 2015). The HRM function can be viewed as a necessary partner that drives the organizational change that is required for an ES strategy to be realized (Dubois and Dubois, 2012; Jackson and Seo, 2010). This is supported by research by Dumont et al., (2017) who have shown that GHRM is positively related to employee green workplace behavior.

While many HR practices are linked to firm performance (Huselid, 1995; Messersmith et al., 2011), we focus on high involvement HR practices and processes because of their links to green and general creativity. We acknowledge the existence of a large body of literature on the effects of human resource management practices on firm performance, including those integrated in measures of high-performance work systems (Jiang K. et al., 2012; Subramony, 2009); however, we theorize on high-involvement practices and processes because they facilitate the context and employee behaviors required for creativity and innovation (Boxall and Macky, 2009; Ma Prieto and Pilar Perez-Santana, 2014).

The literature defines high-involvement HR practices as "... Management approaches that draw upon employee involvement" (Maden 2015, p.722). An example of high-involvement HR practices would be empowering employees to make decisions on how they should do their jobs day-to-day. High-involvement HR practices are focused on creating a supportive environment that encourages empowerment, competence development, information sharing, recognition, and fair rewards (Benson et al., 2006; Maden, 2015). These are similar to the practices that the literature suggests should be in place to support a GHRM strategy (Dubois and Dubois, 2012; Renwick et al., 2013).

In this paper, we argue that high-involvement HR practices and processes consist of different bundles that influence employees' skills and abilities, employee motivation, and opportunities to contribute. Indeed, the management strategy that emphasizes high-involvement HR practices is founded on a philosophy that sees employees as a source of competitive advantage (Benson et al., 2006; Maden, 2015), and can be viewed through Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) theory. According to this theory, ability, motivation, and opportunity are the "building blocks" of successful task performance (Chang et al., 2012). As mentioned, creativity and innovation require three contextual factors in place: motivation, resources, and appropriate management practices (Amabile, 1983; 1996). These are very similar to the main elements of AMO theory. The theoretical reasoning behind motivation and resources in the creativity and innovation literature are similar to that of motivation and opportunity in AMO theory, while the management practices and processes in the creativity literature parallel those emphasized in the high involvement area, such as competence development, rewards, and information sharing. As such, AMO is an optimal theoretical lens to explain our model. Furthermore, other studies have used AMO as a theoretical model to explain green employee behavior (Sibian and Ispas, 2021; Sidney et al., 2022).

AMO theory is a theoretical paradigm that explains how the characteristics of human resource systems impact employee attitudes, effectiveness, and performance (Boxall et al., 2007; Sidney et al., 2022). Employees, regardless of their skill, may not always target their efforts to ensure environmental sustainability in the tasks and processes they work on (Boselie et al., 2005). As such, if an organization wants to encourage environmental sustainability, it must create the structure that provides employees with the ability, training, and opportunity to do so (Bos-Nehles et al., 2017).

In AMO theory, ability refers to the knowledge, skills, and experience required to perform a task (Chang et al., 2012). Renwick et al., (2013) suggest GHRM can develop green abilities in employees through initiatives such as training in environmental management. This is supported by research that finds environmental training is positively related to individual environmental performance (Paillé et al., 2020). Motivation is one's willingness or inclination to perform a task (Chang et al., 2012). Performance management and reward systems, for instance, can increase employee motivation and, in turn, impact an organization's ES strategy (Renwick et al., 2013). For instance, organizations can implement green performance appraisals that measure environmental performance standards for individuals and teams (e.g., waste production) and reward them accordingly (Renwick et al., 2013). Similarly, research has shown that when employees are rewarded for ES ideas, they generate more ES ideas (Denton, 1999). Finally, opportunity refers to the resources and support systems in the work environment that would enable the task being performed (Chang et al., 2012). One of the key factors in implementing GHRM initiatives is encouraging employee involvement. This can be done through empowering employees, sharing knowledge, and providing a supportive culture (Renwick et al., 2013). For example, organizations can implement environmental action teams or programs that generate green improvement ideas, which should in turn foster ES behavior. High-involvement green HR practices can thus be utilized to support an organization's environmental sustainability goals.

In the following section, we illustrate how the implementation of an ES strategy and GHRM practices will have a positive impact on employee green and general creativity. As well, we propose that GHRM practices targeted at enhancing ability, motivation, and opportunity will not only increase

employees' green creative behaviors (intended) but also their general creativity (unintended) as well. That is, we contend that implementation of a given HRM practice will have an impact on a host of other employee behaviors, including creativity.

PROPOSITION DEVELOPMENT

OVERVIEW AND MODEL

The notion that management actions may result in intended and unintended outcomes is well documented in the literature (Balogun and Johnson, 2005; Baucus et al., 2008; Harris and Ogbonna, 2002). Mintzberg and Waters (1985) posited that organizations have deliberate strategies (realized and intended) and emergent strategies (strategies that occur in the absence of, or despite, the intended strategy). In the extant literature, most research on unintended consequences looks at how well-intentioned management practices have resulted in negative effects on organizations (Harris and Ogbonna, 2002). For instance, management practices that allow for breaking rules, challenging authority, competition, and risk-taking have been used to encourage creativity and innovation in employees (Baucus et al., 2008; Petrou et al., 2020).

Management practices have intended and unintended outcomes because organizational members are not passive recipients of management interventions. Rather, organizational members actively take part in a sense-making process through their interaction with others and their interpretation of the desired organizational outcomes in a dynamic way that shapes their behavior (Holten and Bøllingtoft, 2015). In short, employees regularly interact with other players within the organization to determine how they should behave. While much of the research has looked at the negative consequences of unintended behaviors; we contend that positive unintended behaviors may occur as well.

When an ES strategy is implemented, an organization will logically expect its employees to display a number of behaviors such as, among others, decreasing their energy use, increasing recycling efforts, and suggesting new ways of becoming more energy/resource-conscious (DuBois and Dubois, 2012; Zacher et al., 2023). However, in order to do this, employees must think of ways to change existing processes and procedures, and they must be supported and encouraged to do so. It is this act of looking at the way one does something and affording them the opportunity to think of a different way in which to do that activity, that sparks creativity (Hülshager et al., 2009). For example, an organization's ES strategy might encourage its engineers to develop more ES ways to use materials. This will, in turn, push engineers to think of different ways to improve material usage, thereby encouraging "out of the box" thinking. If the engineer is successful, they may be rewarded. The act of rewarding them, broadly defined, will support the ES behavior (intended outcome) and their creative thinking (unintended outcome). This should encourage them to use this "out of the box" thinking when faced with other issues regardless of whether they are directly relevant to the ES strategy (i.e., increasing the employee's green and general creativity). This increase in creativity should lead to increases in innovation, which should result, *ceteris paribus*, in an increase in organizational performance. Furthermore, we posit that this behavior will be more likely to occur if high-involvement green HRM practices are implemented.

By drawing on AMO theory, this paper provides a plausible explanation of the "black box" between green management and firm performance (Shu et al., 2016). While the research suggests that "going green" increases profitability (Dzomonda and Fatoki, 2020; Russo and Fouts, 1997), this paper argues that it does so through enhanced green creativity (intended) and general creativity (unintended) effects that lead to green innovation (intended) and conventional innovation (unintended). By drawing on AMO theory, we suggest that this occurs by implementing high-involvement GHRM practices. We posit that high-involvement GHRM that focus on ability, motivation and opportunity

creates the structure and support to enhance green creativity, which has the unintended impact on increasing general creativity. We focus on high-involvement GHRM activities as the research has shown that GHRM is integral to enhancing green employee behaviors (Zacher et al., 2023). This paper explores creativity (i.e., green, and general) through the lens of AMO theory because this framework captures the key constructs that are required for creativity and innovation (Amabile, 1983; 1996). Furthermore, we argue that to support an ES strategy, one must implement novel and useful green ideas. Also, this model investigates innovation as it is the final step in implementing creative ideas, and research has shown that it leads to increased firm performance (Antonioli, 2009; Damanpour, 1991; Lööf and Heshmati, 2006).

In summary, in this paper we explore how ES strategy impacts: 1) green creative performance (intended); 2) general creative performance (unintended); and 3) how the selected outcomes are enhanced through the implementation of high-involvement GHRM practices (see Figure 1 for the theoretical model) and influence by green personal values. Finally, we take this one step further by proposing that green management practices increase employee creativity (green and general), which results in increased organizational innovation and organizational performance. We explain the theoretical relationships below.

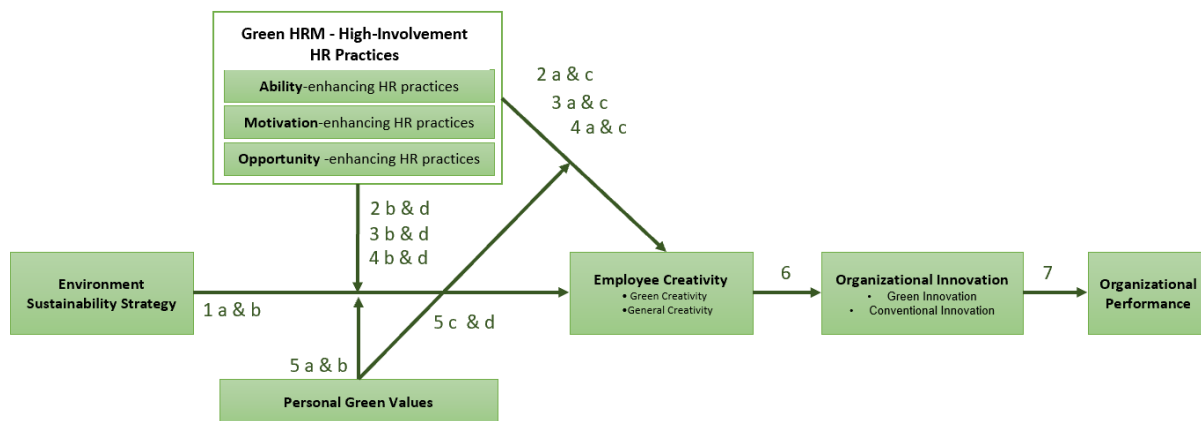


Figure 1. Theoretical Model

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY AND EMPLOYEE CREATIVITY

For an ES strategy to be embedded in an organization, it requires a different mindset and behaviors throughout the entire organization (DuBois and Dubois, 2012). It requires the entire system to change, not just teams or parts of an organization (Bertalanffy, 1968; DuBois and Dubois, 2012). To ensure the effective implementation of a strategy, the literature has recognized human resource management as having a key role (Buller and McEvoy, 2012; Porter, 1985). AMO theory highlights the importance of ability, opportunities, and motivations (Boxall et al., 2007) as fundamental areas that are required to support the desired behavior of employees, to realize an organization’s strategy. If organizations desire a more environmentally friendly organization, they must do so by not only communicating the strategy but by empowering and supporting employees, through a structure that will help them realize this strategy (i.e., AMO framework; see Sidney et al., 2022).

If employees are required to support an ES strategy, they must find creative solutions to address the ES issues (Ramus and Steger, 2000; Song and Yu, 2018), and they must be supported to do so through the programs, practices and rewards an organization implements (Zacher et al., 2023). In short, the strategy will dictate the behavior that will be rewarded in an organization. Research has found that employees were more willing to implement creative ideas that would impact the

environment when they perceived that there was strong organizational and supervisory encouragement for these ideas (Ramus and Steger, 2000) and support for the ES strategy (Ramus, 2001). Shu et al., (2016) found that green management practices led to more radical product innovation. They attributed part of this increase to the support for “out of the box” thinking that occurs because employees need to re-think their operational processes and how they develop new products to support the ES strategy. The literature has shown that the implementation of an ES strategy is positively related to green creativity and innovation. This is because an ES strategy requires employees to approach their work with a different mindset to come up with creative solutions for change. This would be an intended effect of an ES strategy. That is, the implementation of ES strategy will increase employees’ green creativity.

Proposition 1a: An ES strategy is positively associated with employee green creativity.

As discussed by Shu et al., (2016), the implementation of an ES strategy will encourage employees to think more creatively, affording them more opportunities for “out of the box” thinking. This is because doing so (e.g., being creative) will be encouraged by the organization and as such rewarded, further motivating this behavior. By developing this skill in order to address ES initiatives, employees will have the capability to apply this skill to other realms as well, thus creating a greater capacity for creativity within the organization. In short, an ES strategy that focuses on generating new ideas to support the ES provides employees with another opportunity to practice being creative. This practice should lead to enhanced creativity (Kim, 2018). Furthermore, exposure to common problems decreases innovativeness (Perttula and Sipilä, 2007). Thus, giving employees the opportunity to address problems in different realms (e.g., green and non-green), should provide a better opportunity to spark idea generation. Following the above reasoning, creating a space to practice creativity in another realm should enhance one’s general creativity. Subsequently, the implementation of an ES strategy will have the positive unintended impact of increasing employee general creativity. Based on the foregoing discussion, we propose that:

Proposition 1b: An ES strategy is positively associated with employee general creativity.

HIGH-INVOLVEMENT GREEN HRM AND CREATIVITY

HRM is a critical function that drives the organizational changes required for ES (Dubois and Dubois, 2012; Jackson and Seo, 2010; Zacher et al., 2023). Research has shown that different HR practices can drive employee behaviors and impact organizational culture (Dubois and Dubois, 2012; Jackson and Seo, 2010; Maden, 2015; Paré and Tremblay, 2007). For instance, HR implementation of high-involvement work practices has been shown to increase organizational citizenship behavior, organizational attachment, and work engagement (Maden 2015; Paré and Tremblay, 2007). Research has also shown that HR is a critical partner in shaping organizational culture to encourage creativity (Binyamin and Carmeli, 2010; Cooke and Saini, 2010; Song et al. 2019).

Recent research has shown a link between HRM and creative performance in organizations (Binyamin and Carmeli, 2010; Cooke and Saini, 2010; Song et al. 2019). HR practices that support the social-organizational work environment (i.e., perceived support, autonomy, teamwork, rewards, and recognition, etc.), enhance empowerment, increase involvement in decision-making (Cooke and Saini, 2010), and therefore have positive effects on employee creative and innovative behavior. This suggests that the most effective HRM bundles for nurturing creativity are founded on employee involvement and support, i.e., high-involvement HR bundles.

In the creativity/innovation literature, research on the high-involvement model suggests that there are five distinct HR practices that may influence employees' work-related attitudes and performance behaviors: empowerment, competence development, information sharing, recognition, and fair rewards (Maden, 2015; Paré and Tremblay, 2007). Ma Prieto and Pilar Perez-Santana (2014) bundled the high-involvement practices according to AMO theory and found that ability-enhancing and opportunity-enhancing human resource practices were positively related to innovative work behaviors, while motivation-enhancing practices were not. Jiang, J., et al., (2012) found that hiring and selection, rewards, job design, and teamwork were positively related to creativity; however, training and performance appraisals were not. To understand the influence that high-involvement HR practices have on creativity, it is important to assess the different HRM practices separately.

We posit that high-involvement green HR practices directly enhance employee green creativity (intended) and indirectly enhance general creativity (unintended); however, they may do so differently. For this paper, we view high-involvement green HR practices as management approaches that draw upon employee involvement to increase an organization's ES strategy. AMO theory can be used to explain how high-involvement green HR practices influence green and general creativity.

The ability component of the theory focuses on the knowledge, skills, and expertise that employees need to perform their jobs (Chang et al., 2012). Green training is one of the most common GHRM practices that organizations implement (Pinzone et al., 2019). The goal of green training is to increase employee's knowledge, skills, and awareness of ES activities, to achieve organizational environmental targets and objectives (i.e., the elements of ability) (Daily and Huang, 2001; Sammalisto and Brorson, 2008). Research shows that training and development have positive effects on employees' ES behaviors (Vidal-Salazar et al., 2012). Guerci et al., (2016) showed that green training was positively related to organizational environmental performance. This may be because ES training increases employee's commitment to organizational goals (Vidal-Salazar et al., 2012). Environmental training also increases employees' ability to develop creative initiatives that minimize environmental impact (Vidal-Salazar et al., 2012) and has a positive impact on green innovation (Galia et al., 2015). Finally, Joshi and Dhar (2020) found that green training is positively related to green creativity. In summary, ability-enhancing activities directly provide employees with the knowledge and skills required to demonstrate green creativity, i.e., the ability to propose ideas to solve issues related to the ES strategy.

Proposition 2a: Ability enhancing high-involvement HR practices are positively related to employee green creativity.

Secondly ability-enhancing initiatives enhance the link between ES strategy and creativity by strengthening the commitment employees have to ES strategy and by communicating the commitment and support the organization has to the ES strategy. Amabile (1983; 1996) states that communicating organizational support and commitment is essential for enhancing creativity and innovation in organizations. O'Donohue and Torugsa (2016) found that GHRM practices that increase employee commitment to the ES strategy moderate the relationship between ES and firm performance. Thus, if ability-enhancing mechanisms compound the importance of organizations' commitment to ES strategy, these should enhance employees' green creativity by enhancing their commitment to the ES strategy. This is consistent with evidence that ES training leads to increases in employee commitment to the ES strategy (Vidal-Salazar et al., 2012). Based on the foregoing, we propose that:

Proposition 2b: Ability enhancing high-involvement HR practices moderate the relationship between ES and employee green creativity, such that the relationship is stronger in contexts with more ability-enhancing high-involvement HR practices.

Ability enhancing practices such as training motivate employees to identify previously undetected problems and propose solutions to impact environmental performance (Vidal-Salazar et al., 2012). This creates an environment where employees will look at real-life problems differently. Research has found that training programs that encourage divergent thinking skills have a positive impact on creativity (Basadur et al., 2002; Sun et al., 2020; Ritter and Mostert, 2017). Environmental training creates a different lens with which employees will view a problem, sparking creative thinking. Furthermore, training can impact the learning process and create an atmosphere where knowledge and ideas are exchanged (Manresa et al., 2018). When employees share knowledge freely it increases their creativity (Dong et al., 2017). We posit that environmental training will have the unintended effect of enhancing employees' divergent thinking skills and knowledge sharing. As a result, employees will not only have the ability to apply this creative thinking skill to ES issues (intended) but to other organizational problems as well (unintended).

Proposition 2c: Ability enhancing high-involvement HR practices are positively related to general employee creativity.

The literature suggests that HR practices help facilitate the link between and organizations strategy, employee behaviors, and organizational performance (Tharenou et al., 2007). Buller and McEvoy (2012), suggest that vertical alignment of strategy and training can act as a conduit to organization performance through enhancing employee knowledge, skills, and abilities. Training is often used to communicate an organization's ES goals and values (Dubois and Dubois, 2012). When there is alignment between strategy and HR training practices, training can illicit behaviors that will support an organization's strategy. As such ability enhancing practices enhance the link between ES strategy and creativity by further communicating that creativity is important skill to apply when trying to develop solutions in order to solve other issues. Research has shown that a key element of creating a climate for creativity in organizations is communicating to employees the importance of and respect for individuals who demonstrate their creative skills (Heffernan et al., 2016). Furthermore, training can provide employees with the tools to enhance their creativity. Based on the above reasoning, when organizations nurture an environment that is supportive of green creativity, they indirectly create a climate that supports general creativity. Based on the above discussion, we propose that:

Proposition 2d: Ability enhancing high-involvement HR practices moderate the relationship between ES and general employee creativity, such that the relationship is stronger in contexts with more ability-enhancing high-involvement HR practices.

Motivation is the desire that employees have to perform certain behaviors (Chang et al., 2012). This can be strengthened by implementing performance management (i.e., ES performance standards) approach that rewards employee ES behaviors (Jabbour et al., 2010; Renwick et al., 2013). Doing so creates green performance expectations, which provides guidance and feedback to employees on the green behavior that they should engage in to be rewarded (Tang et al., 2018). This in turn should motivate employees to participate in green practices. Environmental rewards and recognition have a positive impact on motivating employees' willingness to initiate eco-initiatives (Renwick et al., 2013). Guerci et al., (2016) showed that green performance management and compensation are positively related to an organization's environmental performance. For example, environmental performance has a positive relationship with CEO pay (Berrone and Gomez-Mejia, 2009), and monetary incentives encouraged managers to focus on environmental initiatives (Merriman and Sen, 2012). Also, Denton (1999) found that employees developed more innovative waste reduction ideas when they were rewarded for these ideas.

Similarly, much of the research on high-involvement management in the creativity literature focuses on motivating employees through performance management and rewards. For instance, research suggests that rewards enhance intrinsic motivation leading to creativity (Byron and Khazanchi, 2012; Hennessey and Amabile, 2010). Based on the above reasoning, we posit that motivation-enhancing initiatives increase employees' green creativity as an intended impact of ES strategy. In short, these initiatives directly motivate employees to come up with creative ideas targeted at green initiatives through rewards and effective performance management. Rewards and recognition for creative work are essential in encouraging creativity and innovation in organizations (Amabile, 1996). It is expected that directly rewarding green creative ideas would result in increased creativity.

Proposition 3a: Motivation enhancing high-involvement HR practices are positively related to employee green creativity.

Strategic approaches to rewards management suggest that performance management and pay practices be aligned to corporate strategic objectives, to motivate the desired employee behavior that will support the strategy (Bagga and Srivastava, 2014; Balkin and Gomez-Mejia, 1990; Renwick et al., 2013). Motivation enhancing high-involvement initiatives enhance the link between ES strategy and creativity by creating a supportive work environment that encourages, recognizes, respects, and rewards those who exhibit creative behaviors aimed at supporting ES (Shalley et al., 2009). Research has shown that work environments that reward creative behavior foster an organizational climate that enhances creativity (Heffernan et al., 2016). This is because employees are more likely to display behavior that is rewarded time and time again. Rewarding green creativity will signal to employees and leaders that the organization is encouraging of green creative ideas, which should lead to a more supportive environment that motivates employees to demonstrate green creativity. This further communicates the importance of the ES strategy. Hence, we propose that:

Proposition 3b: Motivation enhancing high-involvement HR practices moderate the relationship between ES and employee green creativity, such that the relationship is stronger in contexts with more motivation enhancing high-involvement HR practices.

We contend that rewarding the outcome (for example, a creative way to reduce waste) also rewards the behavior that led to the outcome. What is important to consider is that these programs are rewarding the creation of new ideas that are targeted at green initiatives. However, even though the programs are not targeted specifically at rewarding creative ideas, they serve to reward thinking "outside of the box" by positively recognizing these green creative solutions. Also, they reward the process that employees go through to generate the "out of the box" thinking. Rewarding creative behavior is linked to increased creative performance (Byron and Khazanchi, 2012; Eisenberger and Armeli, 1997; Eisenberger et al., 1998). Consequently, the implementation of programs that motivate employees' green creativity will have the unintended impact of increasing employees' general creativity because programs that motivate employees to display green creativity will reward general creative behaviors as well (unintended impact).

Proposition 3c: Motivation enhancing high-involvement HR practices are positively related to general employee creativity.

Furthermore, these motivational practices will create a supportive context that recognizes and rewards creative action. This will further communicate that the organization values creative activities,

which will support the ES strategy by encouraging employees to use creative ideas to solve other issues. By rewarding green creativity, employees will also be motivated to develop other creative solutions to address organizational issues, as the organization will now have provided a more supportive environment in which these ideas can be nurtured. Therefore, we advance the following proposition:

Proposition 3d: Motivation enhancing high-involvement HR practices moderate the relationship between environmental sustainability and general employee creativity, such that the relationship is stronger in contexts with more motivation-enhancing high-involvement HR practices.

While employees may have the motivation, knowledge, and ability to perform ES behavior, they must also have the opportunity to use their skill. Opportunities are the contextual mechanisms that allow for action (Siemsen et al., 2008), while the organizational environment provides the support for the required ES behavior (i.e., green creativity; Boxall and Purcell, 2003). Opportunity involves boosting employee empowerment and responsibility (Ma Prieto and Pilar Perez-Santana, 2014). This can be done through empowering employees, sharing knowledge, and providing a supportive culture (Renwick et al., 2013), which are also key elements of high-involvement HR practices (Maden 2015; Paré and Tremblay, 2007). Increased employee involvement in EM is positively related to improved environmental performance (Florida and Davison, 2001). Environmental initiatives that involve employees by encouraging them to give feedback and take part in problem-solving groups have been shown to increase knowledge sharing, which in turn improves ES (Rothenberg, 2003). The act of empowering employees and supporting their involvement in green initiatives increases their green creativity because employees are given the freedom to suggest new ES ideas and provided with the support systems to do so (Ahmad et al., 2022; Cooke and Saini, 2010; Tariq et al., 2016). In line with this thinking, the literature has shown that green knowledge sharing is positively related to green creativity (Ma et al., 2022; Chang and Hung, 2021). Based on the above arguments, we posit that opportunities enhancing high-involvement HR practices are integral to increasing employee green creativity.

Proposition 4a: Opportunity enhancing high-involvement HR practices are positively related to employee green creativity.

Initiatives that empower employees to come up with new ideas to support the ES strategy will also further communicate the organization's commitment to ES. Additionally, it will provide a context that is more supportive of the ES strategy, which will strengthen the link between ES and green creative behavior. Relatedly, the literature suggests that employee involvement in environmental management creates an organizational culture which supports ES behavior (Renwick et al., 2013), such as green creativity. For instance, if organizations allow employees to recommend solutions to achieve their green strategic objectives, it should signal to employees that the organization is committed to the ES strategy. Also, it provides employees with the opportunity and support to implement their creative green ideas. As an organization adopts opportunity enhancing HR practices, it creates an environment that is supportive of green creativity. This leads us to the following proposition:

Proposition 4b: Opportunity enhancing high-involvement HR practices moderate the relationship between ES and employee green creativity, such that the relationship is stronger in contexts with more opportunity enhancing high-involvement HR practices.

The implementation of initiatives that encourage employee involvement will also have the unintended impact of enhancing other behaviors, such as knowledge sharing (Rothenberg, 2003). Knowledge sharing has a positive impact on general creativity (e.g., Carmeli and Paulus, 2015; Perry-Smith, 2006; Perry-Smith and Shalley, 2003). Research has found a positive relationship between creativity and tacit knowledge sharing (Huang et al., 2014). We posit that high-involvement green HRM initiatives that afford employees the opportunity to share knowledge will enhance employee general creative behavior.

Another key factor in promoting GHRM is the creation of a supportive culture. This can be done by empowering and encouraging employees to make suggestions for improvements and developing an organizational culture that supports change (Govindarajulu and Daily, 2004). Simpson and Samson (2010) found that employee empowerment practices are positively linked to environmental performance. A culture that is supportive and encourages employees to make suggestions decreases the risk involved in taking the chance with new and creative ideas. A growing number of studies have linked an employee's willingness to take risks to increases in creativity (Dewett, 2004; Dewett, 2006; Madjar et al., 2011; Tyagi et al., 2017). Dewett (2006) and Madjar et al. (2011) found that an employee's willingness to take risks was positively related to creativity. Based on the extant literature, we propose that opportunity-enhancing initiatives will increase general creativity; this is a result of increasing knowledge sharing and decreasing the risks associated with coming up with new ideas.

Proposition 4c: Opportunity enhancing high-involvement HR practices are positively related to employee general creativity.

Finally, opportunity-enhancing initiatives will further enhance the relationship between ES and general creativity because they will create an organizational context that is supportive of knowledge sharing and risk-taking. As individuals feel free to share more knowledge, their ability to develop creative solutions will be enhanced (Huang et al., 2014). Also, a supportive environment that is open to taking risks will create a context where employees feel safe to bring these new ideas forward. Both elements will, in turn, enhance general creativity. An ES strategy that is supported with opportunity enhancing HR practices and processes will drive general employee creativity. This leads us to the following propositions:

Proposition 4d: Opportunity enhancing high-involvement HR practices moderate the relationship between environmental sustainability and employee general creativity, such that the relationship is stronger in contexts with more opportunity enhancing high-involvement HR practices.

MODERATING EFFECT OF INDIVIDUAL GREEN VALUES

The literature has highlighted the importance of individual values in explaining employees' behaviors (Chou, 2014; Davidov et al., 2008; Hameed et al., 2020; Low, 2013). While there is no consensus on the definition of green values, it typically refers to an employees' attitudes, and behaviors focused on sustainability (Zhou et al., 2018). Studies have shown that green values are a crucial moderator in the relationship between GHRM and employee behaviors (Islam et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2020). We extend these findings to suggest that green values moderate the relationship between ES strategy and employee creativity (i.e., general, and green).

The value-belief-norm (VBN) theory (Stern, et al. 1999) and the supplies-values fit (SVF) theory (Edwards, 1996; Edwards and Shipp, 2007) are the two leading theories that explain how values affect employee behaviors. In short, VBN theory states that personal values, beliefs, and norms impact how

employees behave at work (Stern et al., 1999). This relationship is supported by research showing that environmental values impact environmental behaviors (Anderson et al., 2005; Chou, 2014). SVF theory extends this relationship by stating that when individual and organizational values are congruent, it will positively impact employees' attitudes and behaviors (Edwards, 1996; Edwards and Shipp, 2007). The more aligned employees are to an organization's values, the more likely they will commit to the organizational goals and objectives (Cohen & Liu, 2011). When employees' values are aligned, they display higher organizational identity, work significance, and positive behavior (Edwards & Shipp, 2007; Paarlberg & Perry, 2007). As such, employee behavior may be seen as the interchange between employees' values and their environment (Day and Bedeian, 1991).

We posit that employee green values moderate the relationship between ES and employee creativity (i.e., general, and green). Employee values impact the amount of effort they will extend to achieve an organization's goal (Ramus and Killmer, 2007). When employees experience value congruence with the organization, it will strengthen their desire to engage in behavior that will support the organization's strategy. As a result, when an organization creates an environment aligned with an employees' green values, the employee will be more likely to exhibit green workplace behavior (Dumont et al., 2017, Islam et al., 2020, Liu et al., 2020). When an employee and their organization's values are congruent' the employees will be more likely to focus their effort on green creative behavior to support the organization's ES. This is supported by research that shows green values are positively related to green creativity (Al-Hawari et al. 2021; Wu et al. 2021). Thus, considering this, one could expect that employees will generate more novel and useful ideas that target green services, products, and processes. In doing so, employees will be pursuing ideas that are in line with their values and the organizations (Farooq et al., 2022). This leads us to the following proposition:

Proposition 5a: Individual green values will moderate the effects of ES on employee green creativity, such that the effects will be stronger when individual green values are high and weaker when low.

Furthermore, when employees and the organizations values are aligned, employees are more committed to the organizations goals and objectives (Cohen and Liu, 2011) and, as a result, are more likely to display general creative behavior in hopes of supporting the organizations other objectives. General creativity differs from green creativity in that it is not focused on sustainability. In fact, general creativity may at times be at odds with green creativity as some creative ideas may be far from sustainable. However, if individuals are motivated to support their organization, they are likely to generate other creative ideas, that are not solely focused on green initiatives (Cohen and Liu, 2011). These ideas may have no impact on the green agenda, but help the organization run more effectively, efficiently, which will in turn, contributes to the organization's performance and longer-term survival (Anderson et al., 2014), allowing the organization to continue their green agenda in the future. As such, we posit when employee and organizational values are aligned it will strengthen the relationship between ES and general creativity.

Proposition 5b: Individual green values will moderate the effects of ES on employee general creativity, such that the effects will be stronger when individual green values are high and weaker when low.

The literature underscores that when values between the individual and organization are congruent, it will positively impact employees' attitudes and behaviors (Edwards, 1996; Edwards and Shipp, 2007). For example, when employees engage in work aligned with their green values, they believe it is more meaningful, increasing their green creativity (Al-Hawari et al., 2021). We suggest that

green values moderate the relationship between GHRM (i.e., ability, motivation, and opportunity) and employee green creativity and general creativity.

First, Green HRM activities are committed to encouraging ES behavior through training, rewards and providing employees with opportunities (Chang et al., 2012; Jia et al., 2018; Renwick et al., 2013). Green HRM serves as a conduit to confirm if employees' values align with the organization. For instance, green training reinforces that an organization is committed to its ES strategy by communicating the organizations ES values and goals (Dubois and Dubois, 2012). Training will provide employees with an opportunity to see that their values are aligned with the organizations. When employees are rewarded and recognized for meeting their green goals this will further cement the alignment between the employee green values and organizations green values. When an employee's values are aligned with their organization, it should strengthen their motivation and organizational commitment due to value congruence (Cohen & Liu, 2011). When employees work on tasks related to their values, they will be more motivated to engage in green creative behavior, as they can work on something they find meaningful (Al-Hawari et al., 2021). Meaningful work increases employees' energy and vigor toward the task at hand (Al-Hawari et al., 2021), which research has shown increases creativity (Atwater and Carmeli, 2009). Accordingly, we posit that when employees' green values are aligned with Green HRM, that employees will demonstrate more green creativity, in that they will generate more ideas to transform products and processes to be more sustainable.

Proposition 5c: Individual green values will moderate the effects of Green HRM on employee green creativity.

Secondly, we suggest that there is an unintended effect of value congruence, which increases employees' general creativity. As discussed earlier, green HRM training, rewards and opportunity enhancing initiatives can serve as a conduit to communicate that an employees' green values are aligned to an organization's green values. When employees' values are congruent with the organization, it will positively impact employees' attitudes and behaviors (Edwards, 1996; Edwards and Shipp, 2007). We propose that employees who experience value congruence will have greater motivation to engage in general creativity to support the organizations' other initiatives. This is because they have enhanced commitment to the organization due to their value alignment (Cohen & Liu, 2011). As such, employees will be motivated to engage in other creative behavior that will help support the organization, to think of new creative products and processes which should contribute to the organization's success (Anderson et al, 2014). Furthermore, if employees are engaging in work, they feel is meaningful, and it increases their positive energy and vigor (Al-Hawari et al., 2021), we expect that there will be a spillover effect to general creativity as well. As positive affective emotions in one domain can spill over other domains (Sonnentag and Binnewies, 2013) and tasks (Isen and Reeve, 2005). Furthermore, positive affect is positively related to creative behavior (Amabile et al. 2005; Lai et al., 2021). Subsequently, we propose that personal green values moderate the relationship between employee green creativity and general creativity.

Proposition 5d: Individual green values will moderate the effects of Green HRM on employee general employee creativity.

EMPLOYEE CREATIVITY AND ORGANIZATIONAL INNOVATION

From a theoretical perspective, scholars have accepted the notion that creativity is the key ingredient to innovation (Amabile, 1996; 1983; West, 2002; Woodman et al., 1993). However, some findings remain mixed. Mohamed and Rickards (1996) and Bharadwaj and Menon (2000) found that individual

and organizational creativity were positively related to organizational innovative performance, while Gumusluoglu and Ilsev (2009), and Sohn and Jung (2010) found no significant relationship between individual creativity and organizational innovation. Çokpekin and Knudsen (2012) further investigated this relationship and found that creativity was positively related to product innovation but not process innovation. They suggest that creativity does not have a positive relationship with process innovation because it may be negatively impacted by changes to product innovation (Çokpekin and Knudsen, 2012). However, if an organization is focused on green creativity, we posit that the creation of new products will be as important as creating them in a resourceful and cost-efficient way (process innovation). We argue that both general creativity and green creativity are both required to create a positive relationship with conventional innovation.

Song and Yu (2018) suggest that organizations should focus their attention on green creativity if they want to increase green innovation for two reasons. First, when organizations focus on green creativity, they increase their generation of more novel, and useful ideas that are aimed at improving green products, services or processes (Chen and Chang, 2013; Ramus and Steger, 2000; Song and Yu, 2018). Secondly, once the ideas are implemented, it enhances the organizations' ability to make these changes and future changes (Chen and Chang, 2013; Song and Yu, 2018). The process of learning how to overcome these challenges, in turn, enhances their skills and abilities to make future changes. Subsequently, the increase in more green creativity to address ES issues (intended impact) and the further development of employee's general creativity (unintended impact) will result in increases in green and conventional innovation, leading us to the following proposition:

Proposition 6: Employee green and general creativity are positively related to green and conventional organizational innovation.

ORGANIZATIONAL INNOVATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

There is considerable amount of research showing that Green HRM practices impact organizational environmental performances through green innovation (Awan et al, 2023; Rehman et al. 2021; Singh et al., 2020). The literature has also investigated HRM practices on non-green organizational performance. Such that, the AMO framework, Chowan (2016) found that skill-enhancing practices lead to enhanced organizational performance through innovation. This suggests that HRM practices can provide employees with the tools to be innovative which leads to organizational performance. Accordingly, we posit that innovation (e.g., green, and conventional) leads to organizational performance.

Not surprisingly research that shows that green innovation has a positive effect on organizational performance (Chen et al., 2006; Huang and Li, 2017; Lee and Kim, 2011; Lin et al., 2013; Porter and van der Linde, 1995; Tang et al., 2018; Zhang and Walton, 2017). Chen et al., (2006) found that green innovation increases an organization's competitive advantage in two ways. First, green process innovation can increase an organization's productivity by enabling them to use their resources more efficiently. Secondly, green product innovation may allow them to ask for higher profits and improve their corporate image. These findings were echoed by Huang and Li (2017), who found that green innovation was positively related to organizational performance. In light of these findings we posit that green innovation will have a positive relationship with organizational performance, as a result of green process improvement and green product innovation.

The literature has also shown that conventional innovation has a positive impact on organizational performance (Antonioli, 2009; Damanpour, 1991; Löf and Heshmati, 2006). Bowen et al., (2010) meta-analysis found that there is a positive relationship between innovation and organizational performance. Innovation propels organizational performance through, changes and cost savings in

technology, new product development, and market penetration of new products; the overall effect is an increase in competitive advantage (Bowen et al., 2010; Damanpour et al., 2009). We argue that conventional innovation will have a positive relationship with organizational performance. Based on the literature that shows that innovation (e.g., green and conventional) is positively linked to organizational performance (Chen et al., 2006; Huang and Li, 2017; Lee and Kim, 2011; Lin et al., 2013; Porter and van der Linde, 1995; Tang et al., 2018; Zhang and Walton, 2017), we propose that:

Proposition 7: Organizational innovation (green and conventional) is positively related to organizational performance.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

A key objective of this paper was to explain how organizations that “go green” enjoy better organizational performance than organizations that do not. This paper provides a theoretical explanation of the “black box” between corporate green practices, enacted through an ES strategy, and firm performance, suggesting that organizations that “go green” are more profitable due to three key factors: (1) an increase in green creativity (intended), (2) an increase in general creativity (unintended), and (3) an increase in innovation which subsequently drives organizational performance. Furthermore, this paper used AMO theory to show how high-involvement GHRM practices moderated this impact, such that the adoption of these practices would further increase creativity (green and general) and, consequently, innovation. Finally, this paper illustrates the important role green values play on whether employees will engage in green and general creative behavior.

THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

This paper contributes theoretically to the literature by creating a comprehensive theoretical model that explains how ES strategy leads to organizational performance because of creativity (green and general) and innovation (green and conventional). First, while some recent research, albeit limited, has shown that green management practices impact green creativity (Mansoor et al., 2021), we focus solely on the ES strategy and suggest that it is positively related to green creativity (intended) and general creativity (unintended). To our knowledge, the literature has yet to investigate green and general creativity in a comprehensive model. By doing so, we posit, that the ES strategy will encourage green creativity (intended) and general creativity (unintended) in its employees. In short, we suggest that an ES strategy will have other positive impacts on the organization that are not solely related to ES (i.e., general creativity).

Secondly, through the lens of AMO theory, we posit that high-involvement green HR practices (Ability, Motivation, and Opportunity) are positively related to green creativity (intended) and general creativity (unintended). This addresses Song and Yu’s (2018) call for research examining how human resource management may impact green creativity. Furthermore, we extend the literature that has looked at GHRM and green creativity (Abualigah et al., 2022; Ahmad et al., 2022; Hameed et al., 2022) by investigating its impact on general creativity, which has yet to receive adequate attention.

Furthermore, we attempt to explain the “black box” between ES strategy and corporate performance by suggesting that creativity (e.g., green and general) leads to innovation (e.g., green and conventional) which results in increased organizational performance. This provides a comprehensive explanation of how the implementation of an ES strategy may lead to organizational performance. While some literature suggest green innovation may negatively impact organizational performance (Aguilera-Caracuel and Ortiz-de-Mandojana, 2013; Zhang and Walton, 2017), we provide

an alternative view that investigates organizational performance as a positive outcome of ES strategy, creativity (e.g., green and general) and innovation (e.g., green and conventional).

Finally, we investigate the boundary condition of employee green values, suggesting that they moderate the relationship between ES strategy and green creativity (intended) and general creativity (unintended). While green values are positively related to green creativity (Wu et al., 2021), no literature has investigated the impact on general creativity, nor has the literature investigating the relationship between values and ES strategy. By investigating this link, we propose the importance of green values in realizing an ES strategy.

While this paper contributes to the literature in several ways, these circumstances may not always hold in certain contexts, for instance, when greenwashing (i.e., a strategy where organizations communicate and claim to address environmental issues when they make no substantial actions to address these issues (Walker and Wan, 2012) occurs. In these situations, organizations may communicate an ES strategy but would not follow through with actions. For example, if an organization states that it will offer green training and never implements it. Alternatively, an organization may claim to reward green creativity when they only reward general creativity that conflicts with green creativity (e.g., not implementing green creative ideas and monetarily rewarding creative products that increase energy consumption and waste over current levels). Not surprisingly, the literature has shown that “greenwashing” is negatively related to firm performance (Neumann, 2021; Walker and Wan, 2012). Walker and Wan (2012) suggest this may be too adverse market reactions; however, we would posit that it might be due to employee behavior as well.

If leaders do not support or oppose the ES strategy, we would suggest that the realized benefits might not occur as well (e.g., leadership may moderate the relationship between ES strategy and creativity (e.g., green, and general). This suggestion is supported by research showing that green transformational leadership positively affects employee green creativity (Sidney et al., 2022), suggesting that leaders also have a role to play in this relationship. Finally, at the employee level, when employees are under significant pressure and have high workloads, they may not feel they have the time and energy to invest in green initiatives. When employees experience role overload, they may resent ES initiatives as these may be viewed as another chore they must do on their already filled workload. In line with this thought process, research has shown that that time pressure can negatively related impact creativity (Amabile and Gryskiewicz, 1987; Andrews, 1996; Yu and Wang, 2022).

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

This paper makes a number of practical contributions as well. First, it suggests that a key factor to consider in increasing organizational performance is the strengthening of an organization’s creative and innovative capacities, which can be done through the adoption of an ES strategy. Second, there are inherent practical suggestions for how different HRM bundles (i.e., high-involvement green HRM) may impact employee green creativity. This may serve as a guide for HR practitioners who want to increase creativity in their firms. Finally, our theorizing suggests that an ES strategy will not only encourage green creativity but general creativity as well. For managers, the benefit of going green is not restricted to improved environmental performance but is also associated with an increase in the organization’s general creativity.

Future research should investigate this model empirically. A plausible approach for this is through a multi-level single organizational design, which examines if employees who perceive stronger ES strategy demonstrate higher green and general creativity, which impacts their team’s innovative performance (i.e., green, and conventional) and overall performance. Measures of perceived ES (Wijethilake, 2017), green values (Chou, 2014) and high involvement green HRM practices (Dumont et al., 2017) could be taken at the employee level. At the same time, measures of creativity could be

measured by managers completing George and Zhou's (2001) scale of creativity (i.e., conventional) and adapting Chen and Chang's (2013) measure of green creativity. Finally, senior leaders could measure innovation and performance by adapting measures to the organizational context (i.e., green innovation (Singh et al., 2020) and conventional innovation (Vera and Crossan, 2005).

Future research should systematically investigate whether organizations that adopt an ES strategy experience increases in green creativity and general creativity among employees. Research should investigate employee perceptions to determine if individuals who perceive stronger organizational support for an ES strategy demonstrate more green and general creativity. Research could investigate how the implementation of ES impacts employee wellbeing (i.e., does implementation of ES strategy cause role overload, as employees now have the added pressure of implementing green initiatives). Finally, research could also consider how GHRM impacts career success; for instance, do employees who are supportive of ES rise faster in an organization?

In this paper, we argued that an ES strategy impacts 1) employee green creativity (intended), 2) employee general creativity (unintended), 3) organizational innovation, and 4) organizational performance, and that these effects are enhanced through the implementation of high-involvement GHRM practices. We used AMO and creativity theories to explain these relationships. As well, this paper has provided a number of possible future research avenues that could be utilized to further test the propositions advanced in our model. In sum, our framework identifies the potential benefits that the adoption of an ES strategy will have on an organization. We hope that our conceptualizations generate research to more fully understand the impact of ES on organizational performance. Given current concerns with environmental sustainability, the benefits of this research would be timely for both scholarly research and society at large.

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