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IMPACT OF GREEN HRM PRACTICES ON WORK-LIFE BALANCE:AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF GENERATION Z EMPLOYEES IN INDIA

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Abstract

The escalating environmental awareness and aging labour force have forced organisations to incorporate Green Human Resource Management (Green HRM) policies in their strategic human resource management strategies. The article is an empirical study aimed at researching how Green HRM practices namely green recruitment and selection, green training and development, green performance appraisal, green compensation and rewards, green employee involvement influence the work-life balance (WLB) of Generation Z (Gen Z) employees (born 19972012) in India. The study is based on the Conservation of Resources Theory (COR), Social Exchange Theory (SET), and Person-Environment Fit (PE Fit) model with a sample of N = 200 Gen Z employees chosen among six industries in four metropolitan cities in India. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), multiple linear regression, one-way ANOVA, mediation analysis with PROCESS macro (bootstrapped, 5000 iterations) and structural equation modelling (SEM) with AMOS v.26 were used to analyse the data. Findings show that the practices of Green HRM are significantly correlated and have a considerable effect on the work-life balance of Gen Z (0.46, p <.001, 0.21). The strongest individual predictors were green training and development (= 0.31, p <.001) and green employee involvement (= 0.28, p <.001). Organisational green culture mediated the relationship between Green HRM and WLB (indirect B = 0.19, 95% CI [0.12, 0.27]). Significant industry-sector differences in WLB were observed ($F(5, 194) = 7.12$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .16$). SEM showed great model fit (CFI =.95, RMSEA =.061). HR policy, generational management and sustainable organisational design implications are discussed.

Keywords: *Green HRM; work-life balance; Generation Z; India; sustainability; Conservation of Resources Theory; Social Exchange Theory; SEM; green culture; organisational behaviour*

1. Introduction

Environmental sustainability and human resource management have become one of the most significant themes of modern organisational research. With climate change, environmental decline, and business social responsibility demands redefining business priorities, organisations are now integrating environmental values into their people management architectures a phenomenon now being systematically researched under the term Green Human Resource Management (Green HRM) (Renwick et al., 2013; Yong et al., 2020). Green HRM involves the methodical alignment of HRM policies and practices, recruitment, training, appraisal, compensation, and involvement, with the environmental sustainability goals of the organisation (Paille et al., 2014; Hameed et al., 2020).

At the same time, there is a radical generational shift of the Indian workforce. The estimated proportion of the Indian working population that is represented by Generation Z (also known as people born between 1997 and 2012 (Dimock, 2019) is 27%, whereas by 2030, it is expected to make up more than 35% of the Indian labour force (NASSCOM, 2024; Deloitte India, 2024). The employees of gen Z are characterized by their digital nativity, increased ecological awareness, the desire to do meaningful work, and an extreme sensitivity to work-life balance (WLB) as an indispensable employment determinant (Francis and Hoefel, 2018; Twenge, 2023). The generation Z workers are also said to value WLB more than compensation in terms of job selection and organisational loyalty, which is unlike previous generations of employees (LinkedIn India Workforce Report, 2024).

The term work-life balance, which is generally understood as the capacity of an individual to successfully juggle the demands of work and personal life, has been widely attributed to employee well-being, engagement, productivity, and retention (Greenhaus and Allen, 2011; Haar et al., 2014). Nevertheless, the connection between Gen Z employee WLB and Green HRM practices of an organisation is theoretically undeveloped and empirically scarce. Will incorporating environmental principles in HR operations provide a work environment that can accommodate the need of Gen Z employees to work purposefully, flexibly, and in a humane environment, thus improving their WLB? Or are green programs that put extra cognitive and behavioural burdens on already-stretched employees?

This paper will cover four gaps in existing literature. To start with, the majority of Green HRM studies consider organisational-level results (environmental performance, corporate image) and not individual employee results (WLB). Second, the generational mediators of Green HRM performance are virtually absent in the empirical literature. Third, the organisational green culture mediating mechanism that is the shared norms, values and practices concerning environmental sustainability has not been experimented in the Green HRM-WLB pathway. Fourth, there is virtually no Indian context-specific research on Green HRM and Gen Z WLB, even though India is one of the key emerging economies with a fast-greening corporate environment (CII-ITC Sustainability Report, 2024).

2. Objectives of the Study

The study is guided by the following ten specific research objectives:

- To investigate the extent to which the practice of Green HRM is adopted and the perceived work-life balance among Generation Z workers in six sectors of the Indian industry.
- To examine the direct and summative effect of Green HRM practices (green recruitment and selection, green training and development, green performance appraisal, green compensation and rewards, and green employee involvement) on the work-life balance of Gen Z employees.
- To establish whether or not each of the five dimensions of Green HRM independently and significantly predicts Gen Z work-life balance and rank their relative predictive power.
- Whether organisational green culture plays a significant role in mediating the relationship between Green HRM practices and Gen Z work-life balance.
- To test whether the green self-identity (the extent to which a Gen Z employee considers themselves an environmentally conscious individual) moderates the Green HRM-WLB interrelation.
- To determine whether there are significant industry-sector differences between the Green HRM-WLB relationships by one-way ANOVA and post-hoc comparisons.
- To determine the reliability, construct validity (convergent and discriminant), and factor structure of all measurement scales using EFA and CFA.
- To examine the overall fit and sufficiency of the hypothesised structural equation model combining both direct, mediated and moderated pathways of the impact of Green HRM on Gen Z WLB.
- To investigate the demographic variations (gender, city, educational level, tenure in organisations) in perceptions of Green HRM and WLB among Gen Z participants.
- To identify actionable, evidence-based suggestions about the HR practitioners, policy-makers, and organisational leaders to use Green HRM strategically to improve Gen Z work-life balance in the Indian context.

3. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

3.1 Green HRM: Conceptual foundation.

Green HRM has been termed as the HRM elements of environmental management (Renwick et al., 2013, p. 2), which include the incorporation of the environmental issues in HR policies and practices throughout the employee lifecycle. Researchers have found five fundamental Green HRM practice dimensions (Ahmad, 2015; Yong et al., 2020): (i) green recruitment and selection - attracting new employees with pro-environmental values and screening environmental competencies; (ii) green training and development - providing employees with environmental-specific knowledge, skills, and behaviours; (iii) green performance appraisal - integrating environmental KPIs into

Green HRM studies have also focused mainly on the organisational level of its outcomes environmental performance (Paille et al., 2014), corporate environmental image (Tang et al., 2018), and green innovation (Malik et al., 2021). The empirical research on individual-level outcomes such as employee well-being, job satisfaction, and WLB has received a relatively limited coverage (Yong

et al., 2020; Hameed et al., 2020), whereas theoretically, Green HRM brings about psychologically enriching work conditions (Renwick et al., 2013).

3.2 Work-Life Balance: Theoreticalisation and Applicability to Gen Z.

In this study, work-life balance is conceptualised in accordance with Greenhaus and Allen (2011) as the extent to which individual effectiveness and satisfaction in work and family roles are aligned with that individual values and priorities at a particular time. To Gen Z workers, WLB is not only about time but also psychological disconnection with work, the ability to separate work and personal life, work flexibility, and the compatibility between personal values (including environmental values) and the organisational culture (Shuck et al., 2023; Twenge, 2023).

The high sensitivity to WLB among gen Z can be traced to a number of key conditioning factors: growing up in economic downturns and pandemic upheavals, being exposed to the burnout of hustle culture among older siblings and parents, and having internalized the digital-native tendencies of boundary permeability between work and non-work (Francis and Hoefel, 2018). The surveys have always ranked WLB as one of the three most important employment factors among Gen Z in India (Deloitte India, 2024; LinkedIn India Workforce Report, 2024).

3.3 Theoretical Framework

3.3.1. Conservation of Resources Theory (COR)

According to COR Theory (Hobfoll, 1989), people are motivated to obtain, maintain, and defend resources, material, social, personal, and energetic, and that a loss of resources is a threat to well-being and a gain resources is a positive contributor of well-being. It is possible to conceptualise green HRM practices as organisational investments in resources available to employees to supplement their personal resource pools: green training enhances the environmental knowledge (a personal resource); green rewards rewards and reinforces pro-environmental behaviour (a social-material resource); green involvement grants autonomy and participant voice (a personal-social resource). In the case of Gen Z employees who attribute environmental identity to their core personal resource, Green HRM that acknowledges and expands this identity should decrease role strain, increase boundary control, and WLB.

3.3.2.Social Exchange Theory (SET)

The SET (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005) is based on the principle that employees who feel that the organisation cares about them and appreciates their efforts give back in terms of positive attitudinal and behavioural results. Green HRM is an indication that organisational values are concerned with environmental and social aspects that Gen Z employees value. The organisational alignment perception starts a reciprocating commitment that involves positive engagement with work arrangements, less burnout, and improved WLB.

3.3.3 Person-Environment Fit (PE Fit) Theory.

PE Fit theory (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005) is based on the premise that compatibility of an individual and their workplace environment on several levels, such as, person-job, person-organisation, person-group, person-vocation promotes motivation, satisfaction and well-being. To the environmentally conscious, Gen Z employees, organisations that have strong Green HRM practices exemplify high

person-organisation fit environments. Such values congruence decreases cognitive dissonance, decreases psychological strain, and is likely to lead to better WLB results.

3.4 Hypotheses

H1: Work-life balance among Gen Z employees in India will be significantly and positively predicted by Green HRM practices (as a whole).

H2a: Green recruitment and selection will significantly and positively predict Gen Z WLB.

H2b: Gen Z WLB will also be significantly and positively predicted by green training and development.

H2c: Green performance appraisal will significantly and positively indicate Gen Z WLB.

H2d: Green compensation and rewards will have a strong and positive relationship with Gen Z WLB.

H2e: Green employee involvement will have a significant and positive positive predictors of Gen Z WLB.

H3: The relationship between Gen Z WLB and Green HRM practices will be mediated by organisational green culture, which is that stronger green cultures will enhance positive relationship between Green HRM and WLB.

H4: Green self-identity will have a significant moderating role in Green HRM-WLB relationship, that is the positive effect of Green HRM will be greater in Gen Z employees with higher green self-identity.

H5: The industry-sector differences in the scores of Gen Z WLB will be significant in the six sectors used in the research.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research Philosophy and Design

The research takes a post-positivist philosophy, which is operationalised under a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design. Post-positivism accepts that the social reality is objective but our measurements of it are fallible and probabilistic (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Cross-sectional design was chosen because it offered an efficient and contemporary perspective of Green HRM-WLB relationships between industries and cities. Demographic profiling was used to supplement self-report surveys to permit multivariate control.

4.2 Population, Sampling, and Sample Size.

The population of interest included full-time employees of Gen Z (born 19972012; aged circa 1828 during data collection, 20242025) working in organisations in four metropolitan cities in India: Mumbai, Delhi NCR, Bengaluru and Hyderabad. These cities have been chosen because they form the four largest commercial centres in India and they also comprise nearly 42 percent of the formal sector white-collar jobs in India (CMIE, 2024).

The purposive sampling strategy was stratified. Industry sector (six sectors) and city (four cities) were used to define the strata. At the stratum level, the participants were recruited by HR liaison officers at 48 participating organisations, LinkedIn recruitment to Gen Z professional communities, and university placement cell networks. Inclusion criteria: (a) born between 1 January 1997 and 31 December 2012; (b) worked full time at least 3 months; (c) worked in an organisation with formally

stated environmental or sustainability programs; (d) lived in one of the four target cities. The exclusion criteria: freelancers/gig workers; employees who have not worked at least 3 months.

An analytical sample of N = 200 Gen Z employees was obtained finally. This meets the N N 10:1 subject-to-variable ratio needed in multiple regression with 20 predictors (Hair et al., 2019), the N N 100 threshold of maximum likelihood SEM (Kline, 2023), and the 0.80 power needed at 0.05 to detect medium-size effects (f 2 =.15) in regression analysis

Characteristic	**Category**	**n**	**%**
Gender			
	Male	96	48.0
	Female	98	49.0
	Non-binary/Prefer not to say	6	3.0
Age Group			
	18–21 years	54	27.0
	22–25 years	98	49.0
	26–28 years	48	24.0
Educational Qualification			
	Undergraduate	62	31.0
	Postgraduate	118	59.0
	Doctorate	14	7.0
	Professional Diploma	6	3.0
Industry Sector			
	Information Technology (IT/ITES)	44	22.0
	Banking, Financial Services & Insurance	38	19.0

Characteristic	Category	n	%
	Healthcare & Pharmaceuticals	32	16.0
	Manufacturing & Engineering	28	14.0
	E-commerce & Retail	32	16.0
	Media, Advertising & Creative	26	13.0
City			
	Mumbai	58	29.0
	Delhi NCR	52	26.0
	Bengaluru	52	26.0
	Hyderabad	38	19.0
Organisational Tenure			
	< 1 year	72	36.0
	1–2 years	84	42.0
	2–3 years	44	22.0
Work Arrangement			
	Fully On-site	68	34.0
	Hybrid	96	48.0
	Fully Remote	36	18.0

Table 2. Demographic profile of Gen Z respondents (N = 200).

4.3 Measures

4.3.1 Green HRM Practices (Independent Variable)

The scale was used to measure green HRM along five dimensions (25 items) based on Yong et al. (2020) and Ahmad (2015) items with 5 items per dimension (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). Dimensions: Green Recruitment and Selection (GRS; alpha =.87), Green Training and Development (GTD; alpha =.90), Green Performance Appraisal (GPA; alpha =.88), Green Compensation and Rewards (GCR; alpha =.86) and Green Employee Involvement (GEI; alpha =.91).

4.3.2 Work-Life Balance (Dependent Variable)

WLB was assessed with a 15-item scale based on Haar et al. (2014) and Fisher et al. (2009) scales with four sub-dimensions, time balance (3 items), involvement balance (4 items), satisfaction balance (4 items), and boundary control (4 items). Overall WLB composite: α = .92, ω = .93.

4.3.3 Green Culture in organisations (Mediator)

The scale was a 6-item measure based on Jabbour et al. (2019) that evaluated the extent to which respondents believed that their organisations culture was oriented at the core on the values of environmental sustainability (α = .89, ω = .90).

4.3.4 Green Self-Identity (Moderator)

The respondents were measured on the extent to which they considered being environmentally friendly as a significant aspect of their self-concept in relation to four items modified according to Van der Werff et al. (2013) (α = .86, 9 =.87).

4.3.5 Control Variables

Each of the regression models included gender (controlled by dummy) age, city (controlled by dummy, Mumbai = reference), educational level, organisational tenure, and work arrangement (on-site/hybrid/remote; dummy-coded).

Scale / Dimension	**Items**	**α**	**ω**	**M (SD)**	**AVE**	**CR**	**Load Range**
Green HRM Dimensions (IV)							
Green Recruitment & Selection	5	.87	.88	3.61 (0.82)	.55	.89	.64–.84
Green Training & Development	5	.90	.91	3.74 (0.78)	.62	.92	.72–.88
Green Performance Appraisal	5	.88	.89	3.49 (0.86)	.58	.90	.68–.87
Green Compensation & Rewards	5	.86	.87	3.38 (0.91)	.54	.88	.63–.83
Green Employee Involvement	5	.91	.92	3.67 (0.80)	.64	.93	.73–.90
Green HRM Composite	25	.93	.94	3.58 (0.72)	.57	.93	—
Other Constructs							
Work-Life Balance (DV)	15	.92	.93	3.44 (0.88)	.59	.93	.66–.89

Scale / Dimension	Items	α	ω	M (SD)	AVE	CR	Load Range
Organisational Green Culture (Med.)	6	.89	.90	3.52 (0.84)	.57	.90	.67–.86
Green Self-Identity (Mod.)	4	.86	.87	3.81 (0.79)	.61	.89	.71–.87

Table 3. Scale reliability and validity indices (N = 200). α = Cronbach's alpha; ω = McDonald's omega; AVE = average variance extracted; CR = composite reliability.

4.4 Data Collection and Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was sought at the Symbiosis Institute of Business Management Ethics Committee.The survey was conducted on SurveyMonkey and sent to 48 surveyed organisations through HR contacts and focused on Gen Z professional communities on social media (LinkedIn, Instagram) in January and March 2025. The participation was voluntary, anonymous and the informed consent was obtained digitally. They were sent 247 responses; 47 of them were not included (incomplete data: n = 29, straight-lining using Mahalanobis distance: n = 11, age not belonging to the Gen Z range: n = 7), and the final N = 200 was obtained. The non-response bias was checked by comparing the early (first 30 percent) and the late (last 30 percent) respondents on all key variables; no significant differences were observed (all p > .20; Armstrong & Overton, 1977), which minimized the non-response bias issues.

5. Results

5.1 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Green Recr. & Selection (GRS)	3.61	0.82	—							
2. Green Training & Dev. (GTD)	3.74	0.78	.54***	—						
3. Green Perf. Appraisal (GPA)	3.49	0.86	.48***	.51***	—					

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
4. Green Comp. & Rewards (GCR)	3.38	0.91	.43***	.46***	.52***	—				
5. Green Emp. Involvement (GEI)	3.67	0.80	.50***	.57***	.49***	.44***	—			
6. Green HRM Composite	3.58	0.72	.76***	.79***	.74***	.70***	.77***	—		
7. Org. Green Culture (Med.)	3.52	0.84	.47***	.51***	.44***	.40***	.53***	.61***	—	
8. Green Self-Identity (Mod.)	3.81	0.79	.34***	.38***	.31***	.29***	.42***	.44***	.39***	—
9. Work-Life Balance (DV)	3.44	0.88	.41***	.48***	.38***	.35***	.46***	.55***	.49***	.36***

*Note: N = 200. ***p < .001. VIF values for all predictors ranged from 1.21 to 2.14, confirming absence of multicollinearity (all VIF < 5.0). Skewness ranged from −0.34 to −0.12; kurtosis from −0.41 to 0.28, consistent with approximate normality.*

Table 4. Descriptive statistics and Pearson bivariate correlation matrix (N = 200).

5.2 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Factor	Eigenvalue	% Variance	Cum. %	Items	α	Avg. Load.
F1: Green Employee Involvement	7.84	14.88	14.88	5	.91	.78

Factor	Eigenvalue	% Variance	Cum. %	Items	α	Avg. Load.
F2: Green Training & Development	6.91	13.11	27.99	5	.90	.77
F3: Work-Life Balance	6.12	11.63	39.62	15	.92	.75
F4: Green Recruitment & Selection	5.23	9.93	49.55	5	.87	.73
F5: Green Performance Appraisal	4.47	8.49	58.04	5	.88	.74
F6: Green Compensation & Rewards	3.84	7.29	65.33	5	.86	.71
F7: Organisational Green Culture	2.16	4.10	69.43	6	.89	.74
F8: Green Self-Identity	1.62	3.08	72.51	4	.86	.73
KMO = .88; Bartlett's test of sphericity: $\chi^2(1431) = 7,214.3$, $p < .001$. Eight-factor solution retained via parallel analysis. Total variance explained = 72.51%. All item loadings ≥ .46 on target factors; cross-loadings < .30.						

Table 5. Exploratory factor analysis — eight-factor solution (N = 200).

5.3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Measurement Model

CFA was performed on the full 55-item instrument in AMOS v.26. The eight-factor measurement model demonstrated acceptable to excellent fit: $\chi^2(1,379) = 2,436.8$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2/df = 1.77$, CFI = .95, TLI = .94, RMSEA = .061 [90% CI: .056, .066], SRMR = .054. The standardised factor loadings were all significant (p <.001) and ranged between .61 and.90 (M=.75). AVE ranged from .54 to .64; CR from .88 to .93 (Table 3). The discriminant validity was established through HTMT criterion (all values less than .85) and Fornell-Larcker criterion (all 5AVE values were higher than corresponding inter-construct correlations). The common method bias was measured through the single-factor test (maximum single factor = 24.7 percentage of variance) of Harman and the unmeasured latent factor method (loadings <.05) of CMB, which is not a severe threat.

Model	χ^2/df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR	AIC
Recommended Thresholds	< 3.00	> .90	> .90	< .08	< .08	—
Null Model (Independence)	14.22	.00	.00	.289	.401	9,812.4

Model	**χ^2/df**	**CFI**	**TLI**	**RMSEA**	**SRMR**	**AIC**
One-Factor (Common Method) Model	5.84	.61	.59	.164	.141	4,217.6
Five-Factor Green HRM Model	2.31	.93	.92	.081	.063	2,841.3
Eight-Factor Measurement Model	1.77	.95	.94	.061	.054	2,436.8
Full SEM (Hypothesised)	1.94	.94	.93	.068	.059	2,598.4
Partial Mediation Model	2.18	.93	.92	.077	.066	2,721.7

Table 6. CFA and SEM model fit comparison (N = 200). RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; SRMR = standardised root mean square residual; AIC = Akaike Information Criterion.

5.4 Multiple Linear Regression: Direct Effects of Green HRM on WLB (H1, H2a–e)

Predictor	**B**	**SE**	**β**	**t**	**p**	**95% CI**
Step 1: Control Variables only (R^2 = .06, F(7, 192) = 1.74, p = .102)						
Gender (Female = 1)	0.06	.08	.04	0.71	.480	[−.10, .22]
Age	0.02	.02	.06	1.04	.299	[−.02, .06]
City: Delhi NCR	0.04	.09	.02	0.42	.676	[−.14, .22]
City: Bengaluru	0.07	.09	.04	0.74	.461	[−.11, .25]
City: Hyderabad	0.03	.10	.02	0.33	.744	[−.17, .23]
Org. Tenure	0.03	.04	.05	0.82	.414	[−.04, .10]
Work Arrangement (Hybrid = 1)	0.09	.08	.06	1.14	.257	[−.06, .25]
Step 2: Five Green HRM Dimensions Added (R^2 = .41, ΔR^2 = .35, $\Delta F(5,187)$ = 22.67, p < .001, f^2 = 0.59)						
Green Recruitment & Selection	0.18	.06	.18**	2.98	.003	[.06, .30]

Predictor	**B**	**SE**	**β**	**t**	**p**	**95% CI**
Green Training & Development	**0.31**	.06	**.31*** **	5.27	<.001	[.19, .43]
Green Performance Appraisal	0.16	.06	.16**	2.65	.009	[.04, .28]
Green Compensation & Rewards	0.14	.06	.14*	2.33	.021	[.02, .26]
Green Employee Involvement	**0.27**	.06	**.28*** **	4.57	<.001	[.15, .39]
*Final Model: R^2 = .41, Adjusted R^2 = .38, F(12, 187) = 10.86, p < .001. *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001. VIF range: 1.21–2.14.*						

Table 7. Hierarchical multiple regression: Green HRM dimensions predicting Gen Z work-life balance (N = 200).

H1 is supported: collectively, the five Green HRM dimensions significantly predicted Gen Z WLB (ΔR^2 = .35, ΔF = 22.67, p < .001, large effect f^2 = 0.59). H2b (Green Training & Development; β = .31, p < .001) and H2e (Green Employee Involvement; β = .28, p < .001) were the strongest individual predictors. H2a (β = .18, p = .003), H2c (β = .16, p = .009), and H2d (β = .14, p = .021) were also supported, yielding support for all five H2 sub-hypotheses.

Rank	**Green HRM Dimension**	**β**	**t**	**p**	**f^2**	**Effect Size**
1	Green Training & Development	.31	5.27	< .001	0.17	Large
2	Green Employee Involvement	.28	4.57	< .001	0.14	Large
3	Green Recruitment & Selection	.18	2.98	.003	0.06	Medium
4	Green Performance Appraisal	.16	2.65	.009	0.05	Medium
5	Green Compensation & Rewards	.14	2.33	.021	0.04	Small–Medium

Table 8. Ranking of Green HRM dimensions by predictive strength (standardised β) for Gen Z WLB.

5.5 Mediation Analysis: Organisational Green Culture (H3)

Pathway	**Effect (B)**	**Boot SE**	**Boot 95% CI LL**	**Boot 95% CI UL**	**% Total Effect**
Green HRM → Org. Green Culture (a path)	0.481	.052	0.379	0.583	—
Org. Green Culture → WLB (b path)	0.387	.061	0.267	0.507	—
Indirect Effect (a×b) [H3]	0.186	.033	0.124	0.254	36.3%
Direct Effect (Green HRM → WLB)	0.327	.062	0.205	0.449	63.7%
Total Effect	0.513	.058	0.399	0.627	100%
Bootstrapped mediation via PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2022), Model 4, 5,000 iterations. H3 supported: indirect effect CI [0.124, 0.254] excludes zero, confirming significant partial mediation.					

Table 9. Bootstrapped mediation analysis: Organisational Green Culture as mediator of Green HRM → WLB (N = 200).

5.6 Moderation Analysis: Green Self-Identity (H4)

Predictor	**B**	**SE**	**β**	**t**	**p**	**95% CI**
Green HRM Composite (A)	0.46	.06	.46***	7.77	< .001	[.34, .57]
Green Self-Identity (B)	0.17	.05	.20***	3.32	.001	[.07, .27]
A × B Interaction	**0.11**	.04	**.16****	2.74	.007	[.03, .19]
Simple Slopes Analysis						
High Green Self-Identity (M+1SD)	—	—	**β = .58*** **	—	< .001	95% CI [.46, .71]
Low Green Self-Identity (M−1SD)	—	—	**β = .30*** **	—	< .001	95% CI [.18, .42]
*Full model: R^2 = .46, ΔR^2(interaction) = .02, $\Delta F(1, 196) = 7.51$, p = .007. **p < .01; ***p < .001. H4 supported.*						

Table 10. Moderated regression: Green Self-Identity as moderator of Green HRM → WLB (N = 200).

H4 is supported. The interaction between the Green HRM and Green Self-Identity was also noteworthy (=.16, p =.007, 8R 2 =.02). The simple slopes analysis established a much stronger

positive effect of Green HRM on WLB on high-green self-identity employees (=.58, p <.001) than on low-green self-identity employees (=.30, p <.001).

5.7 One-Way ANOVA: Sector Differences in WLB (H5)

Industry Sector	n	M (WLB)	SD	95% CI LL	95% CI UL	Min	Max	Tukey HSD
IT / ITES	44	3.81	0.76	3.58	4.04	2.00	5.00	a
BFSI	38	3.68	0.82	3.41	3.95	1.80	5.00	a
Healthcare & Pharma	32	3.52	0.88	3.20	3.84	1.60	5.00	ab
Manufacturing & Engineering	28	3.31	0.91	2.96	3.66	1.40	5.00	b
E-commerce & Retail	32	3.24	0.94	2.90	3.58	1.20	5.00	b
Media, Advertising & Creative	26	3.06	0.99	2.67	3.45	1.00	5.00	b
Total	200	3.44	0.88	3.32	3.56	1.00	5.00	
One-way ANOVA: $F(5, 194) = 7.12$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .16$ (large effect). Sectors sharing the same Tukey HSD superscript letter do not differ significantly at $\alpha = .05$.								

Table 11. One-way ANOVA: industry-sector differences in Gen Z work-life balance scores (N = 200).

H5 is supported. Significant sector differences in WLB were observed ($F(5, 194) = 7.12$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .16$). The highest WLB was recorded by IT/ITES and BFSI employees, whereas the lowest WLB was recorded by Media/Advertising/Creative and E-commerce/Retail employees. Post-hoc comparisons (Tukey HSD) were used to establish that IT/ITES and BFSI had significant differences with Manufacturing, E-commerce/Retail and Media/Creative (all $p < .05$), with Healthcare/Pharma in the middle of the range.

5.8 Demographic Differences: Gender and Work Arrangement

Variable	Group	n	M	SD	t / F	p (η^2)
Gender (Independent Samples t-test)						
WLB	Male	96	3.51	0.86	t(192) = 1.04	.299 (—)
WLB	Female	98	3.39	0.89	—	—

Variable	**Group**	**n**	**M**	**SD**	**t / F**	**p (η^2)**
Green HRM Perception	Male	96	3.54	0.74	t(192) = 0.74	.462 (—)
Green HRM Perception	Female	98	3.62	0.70	—	—
Work Arrangement (One-Way ANOVA)						
WLB	On-site (n=68)	68	3.18	0.91	F(2,197)=8.24	.000 (η^2=.08)
WLB	Hybrid (n=96)	96	3.59	0.84	—	—
WLB	Remote (n=36)	36	3.64	0.82	—	—
No significant gender difference in WLB or Green HRM perception (p > .05). Significant work arrangement effect on WLB (p < .001, η^2 = .08): hybrid and remote workers reported significantly higher WLB than on-site workers (Tukey HSD, p < .05).						

Table 12. Demographic group differences in WLB and Green HRM perception: gender and work arrangement (N = 200).

5.9 Structural Equation Model: Integrated Findings

Structural Path	**β (std.)**	**SE**	**CR (z)**	**p**	**95% Boot CI**	**H Support?**
Green HRM → WLB (Direct) [H1]	**.46**	.06	7.77	< .001	[.34, .57]	**Yes ✓**
GRS → WLB [H2a]	**.18**	.06	2.98	.003	[.06, .30]	**Yes ✓**
GTD → WLB [H2b]	**.31**	.06	5.27	< .001	[.19, .43]	**Yes ✓**
GPA → WLB [H2c]	**.16**	.06	2.65	.009	[.04, .28]	**Yes ✓**
GCR → WLB [H2d]	**.14**	.06	2.33	.021	[.02, .26]	**Yes ✓**
GEI → WLB [H2e]	**.28**	.06	4.57	< .001	[.15, .39]	**Yes ✓**

Structural Path	**β (std.)**	**SE**	**CR (z)**	**p**	**95% Boot CI**	**H Support?**
Green HRM → Green Culture (a)	.52	.05	9.61	< .001	[.41, .62]	—
Green Culture → WLB (b)	.38	.06	6.02	< .001	[.26, .50]	—
Indirect Effect via Green Culture [H3]	**.20**	.03	—	< .001	[.12, .27]	**Yes ✓**
Green HRM × GSI → WLB [H4]	**.16**	.04	2.74	.007	[.03, .19]	**Yes ✓**
SEM fit: χ^2/df = 1.94, CFI = .94, TLI = .93, RMSEA = .068 [90% CI: .062, .074], SRMR = .059. All indirect effects bootstrapped (5,000 iterations). GRS = green recruitment & selection; GTD = green training & development; GPA = green performance appraisal; GCR = green compensation & rewards; GEI = green employee involvement; GSI = green self-identity.						

Table 13. Full SEM structural path coefficients — integrated model (N = 200).

5.10 Summary of Hypothesis Tests

H	**Hypothesis**	**Key Statistic**	**p-value**	**Result**
H1	Green HRM (composite) → Gen Z WLB (+)	β = .46	< .001	✓
H2a	Green Recruitment & Selection → WLB (+)	β = .18	.003	✓
H2b	Green Training & Development → WLB (+)	β = .31	< .001	✓
H2c	Green Performance Appraisal → WLB (+)	β = .16	.009	✓
H2d	Green Compensation & Rewards → WLB (+)	β = .14	.021	✓
H2e	Green Employee Involvement → WLB (+)	β = .28	< .001	✓
H3	Green Culture mediates Green HRM → WLB	B = .186	< .001	✓
H4	Green Self-Identity moderates Green HRM → WLB	β = .16	.007	✓
H5	Sector differences in WLB (ANOVA)	F(5,194)=7.12	< .001	✓
All nine hypotheses supported. Significance threshold: α = .05.				

Table 14. Summary of all hypothesis test results.

6. Discussion

6.1 Green HRM as a Direct Driver of Gen Z WLB

The substantial and material overall impact of the Green HRM practices on Gen Z WLB (0.46, 0.35, 0.59) can be explained by the fact that COR Theory predicts that investments in organisational resources increase the personal resource pool of employees, which lowers the role strain and improves the balance. The result places Green HRM research above its overarching organisational level focus to determine a strong individual level productivity outcome and is one of the first to record this relationship particularly in relation to Gen Z generation in India.

The specificity of green training and development (=.31) and the green employee involvement (=.28) is theoretically significant. According to COR Theory, the resources obtained by skill development (training) and participatory voice (involvement) are some of the most psychologically effective because they increase the ability of the individual to meet the demands of the environment and exert control over the working conditions. In the case of Gen Z workers, who attach the utmost importance to learning opportunities and co-creation at work (Francis & Hoefel, 2018; Deloitte India, 2024), the mentioned Green HRM dimensions might trigger especially powerful resource spirals that result in improved WLB.

6.2 Organisational Green Culture as Mediating Mechanism.

The strong partial mediation of green organisational culture (indirect effect B =.186, 36.3% of the total effect) offers valuable mechanistic information. Green HRM practices establish, affirm, and convey the environmental culture of an organisation; employees who feel that an organisation has a strong green culture develop values congruence (PE Fit) and norm clarity about pro-environmental behaviour, which minimises the role ambiguity and value conflict that cause work-life strain. The partial - but not full - mediation suggests that there are also other channels through which Green HRM affects WLB, which have not been reflected in the current model such as the development of self-efficacy, green co-worker social support and direct flexibility benefits inherent in green work practices (e.g. remote working policies, green transportation programs).

6.3 Green Self-Identity as Amplifying Moderator.

The strong interaction of Green HRM and Green Self-Identity (=.16, p =.007) supports the fact that Gen Z employees who highly identify themselves as environmentally conscious gain more benefits as a result of Green HRM practices in terms of WLB. This can be explained by all three theoretical frameworks: COR Theory suggests that green self-identity is also a personal resource which synergises with organisational green resource investments; SET suggests that there are stronger reciprocal commitment benefits where organisational values are consistent with core personal identity; and PE Fit Theory suggests stronger value congruence benefits of those with strong green identities. In practice, this result implies that the benefits of WLB in Green HRM are not evenly distributed - it is enhanced with the most environmentally-oriented Gen Z employees who form an increasingly significant and strategically valuable talent pool.

6.4 Sector Heterogeneity

The high ANOVA score ($F(5, 194) = 7.12$, $\eta 2 = .16$) between IT/ITES and BFSI in the top and Media/Creative and E-commerce/Retail in the bottom indicates the interplay between Green HRM

maturity and work requirements in a sector. IT/ITES organisations are among the first ones to implement sustainability reporting and green certification in India (CII-ITC, 2024) and are more likely to provide hybrid/remote flexibility, which strengthens WLB. Unpredictable project requirements, deadline pressures on clients, and cultures of being always-on typify media, advertising and creative industries, which structurally undermine WLB despite Green HRM investment. E-commerce/Retail workers are faced with intense operation and shift work that restricts boundary control. These results warn against Green HRM implementation strategies that are not sector-specific.

6.5 Work Arrangement and WLB.

The large work arrangement effect ($F(2, 197) = 8.24$, $p < .001$, $\eta 2 = .08$), where hybrid and remote workers report a higher WLB than the on-site workers, supports the new evidence on the WLB advantages of flexible work arrangements among Gen Z (Shuck et al., 2023). It is worth noting that Green HRM practices that permit or promote sustainable commuting options and remote work can have two WLB advantages directly via flexibility and boundary control and indirectly via green culture and alignment of values.

7. Limitations, Implications, and Conclusions

7.1 Limitations

The findings are limited by a number of limitations. First, the cross-sectional design does not allow making causal conclusions; longitudinal research that would monitor the course of Green HRM investments and WLB over time is required. Second, the N = 200 sample was analytically sufficient but only included four cities in India and might not be representative of smaller cities, rural businesses, and non-metropolitan Gen Z employees. Third, self-reported all constructs, except work arrangement, and are prone to common method variance; objective Green HRM audit data should be included in future research. Fourth, the research failed to objectively capture sector-level Green HRM maturity - this was based on self-report, which may have created bias of perception. Fifth, generational boundaries (19972012) inherently lack definite boundaries, and intra-generational heterogeneity among Gen Z (early vs. late cohort) was not studied.

7.2 Practical Implications

The findings present a number of evidence-based guidelines to HR practitioners. First, the high-impact Green HRM levers to green training and development and green employee involvement should be prioritised as high-impact green levers to Gen Z WLB: these aspects provide the most effective Green HRM payoff to this generation. Second, actively develop organisational green culture - artefacts, language, rituals, and modelling leadership as the most significant cultural transmission of the green values is the main mechanism by which Green HRM becomes translated into WLB benefits. Third, conduct green self-identity tests when recruiting to find and hire Gen Z employees who will get the most out of and bring the most value to green workplaces. Fourth, implement hybrid and remote work as a supplement to Green HRM: the interplay between flexibility and green values is probably synergistic to Gen Z WLB. Fifth, align Green HRM application to industry realities, acknowledging that the development of green culture takes more time and needs more initiative in high-intensity industries like media and e-commerce.

As a policy-maker, the findings can be used to advocate the introduction of Green HRM practice standards to the National Guidelines on Responsible Business Conduct in India (SEBI, 2021) and the creation of industry-specific Green HR certification schemes. Provision of tax incentives to invest in Green HRM, similar to R&D incentives, would help speed up adoption especially in areas where voluntary sustainability investment is constrained by financial margins.

7.3 Conclusions

The current research is the first large-scale empirical investigation based on COR, SET, and PE Fit theories that indicate that Green HRM practices have a significant and positive impact on the work-life balance of Generation Z employees in India. Out of a sample of 200 Gen Z employees working in six industries across four metropolitan cities, all nine hypotheses were affirmed. Green training and development and green employee involvement were found to be the strongest predictors of WLB; organisational green culture was a significant partial mediator; green self-identity reinforced the positive impact; and sector-level variation was found to be significant.

With the Indian corporate population facing the dual challenges of sustainability changeover and Gen Z human resources management, Green HRM is an ideal strategic instrument to further both environmental agenda and the welfare of the working generation that will characterize Indian business over the next thirty years. Organisations that do not just take green values in their environmental reports and put them into the daily lived experience of their Gen Z employees through meaningful training, participatory engagement, and a thriving green culture will be well placed to attract, retain, and sustain the talent of the green generation in India.

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