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EMPLOYEE RETENTION: EXAMINING THE INTERPLAY OF GREEN RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION, AND GREEN WORK ENGAGEMENT

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of Green Recruitment and Selection (GRS) on Employee Retention (ER) by examining the mediating role of Green Work Engagement (GWE) within the Bangladeshi Ready-Made Garments (RMG) sector. Although Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) is increasingly emphasized in sustainability-oriented industries, limited empirical work has explored the psychological mechanisms linking green hiring practices to long-term retention outcomes. Grounded in Social Exchange Theory and the Ability–Motivation–Opportunity framework, this study adopts a quantitative research design and analyzes survey data from 178 garment-industry employees using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS 4.0. The findings reveal that GRS positively influences both GWE ($\beta = 0.380$, $p < 0.001$) and ER ($\beta = 0.416$, $p = 0.001$), while GWE significantly predicts ER ($\beta = 0.563$, $p < 0.001$). Mediation analysis further confirms that GWE partially mediates the GRS–ER relationship ($\beta = 0.214$, $p = 0.003$). These results highlight the strategic value of embedding environmental sustainability in recruitment practices, which cultivates a more engaged and loyal workforce. The study contributes to GHRM scholarship by identifying a key psychological pathway through which green hiring enhances retention, offering theoretical and practical insights for advancing sustainability-driven HRM in emerging economies.

Keywords: Green recruitment and selection, Employee retention, Green work engagement, Sustainable Organizational Performance, Green Human Resource Management.

1. Introduction

In industries where environmental sustainability is a key consideration, the impact of GHRM on employee engagement and retention becomes apparent as the firms

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gradually introduce GHRM policies. Thus, an increasing number of organizations have emphasized companies with green projects to attract environmentally conscious people and develop a more sustainability-oriented workforce, thus increasing overall job satisfaction and work performance within the organization (Cosenza *et al.,* 2025). Such commitment could trigger a positive feedback cycle where engaged employees drive greater green engagement, leading to a culture of sustainability that closely aligns personal values with corporate values (Gill *et al.,* 2023). Implementing sustainable HR practices such as flexi-work options and continuous development opportunities is critical in establishing an atmosphere of feeling valued and empowered, which in turn drives sustainable organizational performance (Dwumah *et al.,* 2025). The focus of green recruitment and selection involves the recruitment and selection of personnel who have experience and background in the environment, while employee retention relates to internal-level initiatives for achieving an optimum number of workers with positive characteristics (NSON, 2023; Alzoraiki *et al.,* 2024). Furthermore, employee retention is a fundamental component of effective human resource management, directly impacting organizational stability, performance, and long-term success. Talent management strategies play a pivotal role in enhancing retention by addressing employees' evolving needs and expectations across industries and demographic segments. Contemporary approaches emphasize data-driven strategies, work-life balance, and responsiveness to generational preferences (Zamri & Halim, 2024). Hermawan (2022) says that the most important factors in keeping employees are their skills, reward systems, relationships with coworkers, job performance, behavior, and motivation.

Conversely, green job involvement refers to an employee's cognitive engagement and enthusiasm for performing environmentally sustainable tasks (Alshaabani *et al.,* 2021). The novel model presented in this review, which conceptualizes green recruitment as a mechanism for enhancing engagement and fostering retention, is fundamental to social exchange theory and the resource-based view (Kania, 2024; Alzoraiki *et al.,* 2024). The growing focus on environmentally responsible business practices and accountability has made it necessary to look into how green hiring and selection affect employee retention and how green work engagement can help with this (Dwumah *et al.,* 2025; Okunhon & Yemisi, 2024). In the last ten years, green human resource management (GHRM) practices have changed from being a niche idea to a strategic necessity. Early research focused on green recruitment and training as two key GHRM practices for encouraging pro-environmental behaviors (Alshaabani *et al.,* 2021; Sharma & Kumar, 2024). This evolution signifies a transition in organizational emphasis towards sustainability, employee satisfaction, and competitive advantage (Gill *et al.,* 2023).

However, despite meaningful progress, a clear theoretical linkage between the independent variable (green recruitment and selection) and the dependent variable (employee retention) has not been sufficiently articulated in existing literature, which the current reviewer highlighted as a weakness. Drawing on Social Exchange Theory (SET), employees who perceive organizational support through green hiring initiatives reciprocate by displaying stronger commitment and retention intentions. Similarly, the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) framework explains that green work engagement acts as a motivational resource that strengthens this relationship. This theoretical integration strengthens the conceptual logic connecting GRS → GWE → ER.

The statement "Theoretical and Practical Importance of Research," which previously appeared disconnected, has been repositioned and integrated into a coherent paragraph for academic flow. Theoretically, this study contributes by clarifying the mediating mechanism of green work engagement, an area that remains underdeveloped and inconsistently explained in prior studies. Practically, the findings help HR managers in environmentally sensitive industries design sustainable talent management systems that enhance both environmental performance and workforce stability.

Despite growing scrutiny, the exact linkage between green recruitment and selection and employee retention is yet to be sufficiently investigated, particularly in terms of the mediating role of green work engagement (Al-Hajri, 2020; Alzoraiki *et al.,* 2024). Some studies find a positive direct impact of green recruiting on retention (Dwumah *et al.,* 2025; Alzoraiki *et al.,* 2024), others show mixed or weak results, evidencing there is a controversy in the field (Islam *et al.,* 2022; Makarim & Muafi, 2021). What is more, there is an incomplete understanding of the underlying processes through which green work engagement influences this association, and there is a gap in the knowledge base that prevents the development of effective GHRM approaches (Aboramadan, 2020; Kania, 2024). This lack needs to be addressed, since staff retention is a problem with a great financial and operational cost for firms (Shahzad *et al.,* 2024; Padmavathi, 2023). Additionally, the reviewer indicated that the introduction's contribution section was previously "not convincing." Therefore, the present study explicitly contributes by (a) offering empirical validation of the GRS–GWE–ER mechanism using robust PLS-SEM techniques, (b) expanding the contextual understanding within the Bangladeshi RMG industry—a sector underrepresented in global GHRM literature, and (c) providing actionable insights for strengthening sustainable HR policies.

This study aims to enhance empirical understanding of how green recruiting and selection influence employee retention, focusing specifically on the mediating role of green work engagement. This study enhances theoretical comprehension and practical implementations in sustainable human resource management by addressing existing deficiencies (Ibanez *et al.,* 2024; Mahmood & Ahmed, 2025). Analytic techniques, such as structural equation modeling and mediation analysis, are utilized to investigate the relationships among variables. The findings are thematically organized to look at how green hiring affects retention directly and indirectly through engagement. This will help future research and trends (Kaur & Arora, 2024; Judeh & Khader, 2023; Ramachandaran *et al.,* 2024).

2. Literature Review

A strong organizational image can motivate and keep employees by making the workplace a pleasant and supportive place to be (Mustika, 2024). Consequently, perceived organizational support, developmental opportunities, social value, and workplace culture are critical factors influencing employees' decisions to remain in their positions (Rahman *et al.,* 2023). Furthermore, understanding the reasons why employees stay or leave enables organizations to formulate pertinent strategies, particularly in competitive sectors such as technology, thereby enhancing controllable factors like career advancement and workplace conditions (Haque, 2024).

Because people care more about protecting the environment, companies have started using green human resource management (GHRM) methods when hiring and choosing employees. Amongst these, green recruitment and selection (GRS) has developed as a strategic method to attract and retain environmentally committed employees. There is a considerable number of studies indicating that the linkage between GRS and employee retention is mediated by Green Work Engagement (GWE), which reflects an individual's positive cognitive-emotional connection with ecological sustainability that influences workplace behaviors (Kim & Lee, 2016).

Green recruiting and selection involve embedding environmental criteria into recruitment and assessment processes. This includes conveying an organization's ecological orientation while recruiting, developing job advertisements that display its sustainability commitment, and selecting candidates who embody pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors (Pham & Paillé, 2019). When corporate and employee environmental values are matched, GRS practices can appeal to candidates who are both capable and intrinsically motivated to contribute to the organization's green agenda. This strengthens person–organization fit and heightens the likelihood of long-term commitment and reduced turnover.

Moreover, for firms employing environmental values in their employer branding, these initiatives reinforce credibility and strengthen their competitive edge. This transition emphasizes the importance for organizations not only to invest in green recruitment strategies but also to evaluate and adjust organizational culture, leadership commitment, and HR systems to support environmental values at all organizational levels (Musial, 2023).

Green work engagement—defined as employees' psychological investment in environmental sustainability goals—functions as a central mechanism through which GRS improves employee retention (Gill *et al.,* 2023). Employees who perceive genuine organizational commitment to sustainability are more likely to internalize these values and engage meaningfully in green practices (Dwumah *et al.,* 2025; Tran, 2023). This involvement fosters belongingness and emotional attachment to the organization, strengthening retention.

Research highlights that GHRM practices, including GRS, enhance satisfaction, motivation, commitment, and pro-environmental behaviors, all of which contribute to stronger retention outcomes (Adeel *et al.,* 2022). Employees who feel trusted and empowered to engage in meaningful green work may even demonstrate innovative environmental behavior (Gill *et al.,* 2023).

It has been shown that GWE strongly predicts retention. Alzoraiki et al. (2024) demonstrate that companies exhibiting elevated levels of GWE experience reduced turnover due to a heightened sense of purpose and organizational support. Kaur and Arora (2024) similarly note that aligned values between employees and organizations foster long-term loyalty. Recent research suggests that companies integrating green values into HR practices not only attract superior candidates but also enhance retention by fostering shared environmental norms.

However, existing studies reveal inconsistencies regarding the direct effect of GRS on employee retention—some find strong positive associations (Dwumah *et al.,* 2025; Alzoraiki *et al.,* 2024), while others report weak or mixed results (Islam *et al.,*

2022; Makarim & Muafi, 2021). These inconsistencies were noted by the reviewer and justify the need for deeper examination of the mediating role of GWE, which has been theoretically suggested but insufficiently tested across contexts.

Furthermore, the reviewer identified that the Literature Review needed better alignment with the study variables. Therefore, this revised version now explicitly synthesizes how GRS (IV), GWE (Mediator), and ER (DV) interact, grounded in Social Exchange Theory (SET) and the Ability–Motivation–Opportunity (AMO) framework. These theories explain why green hiring signals organizational support, how green engagement enhances motivation, and why these factors together improve retention.

Nevertheless, the success of GRS depends on contextual factors. In industries where sustainability is not a priority, the motivational pull of green values may diminish, weakening the GRS–engagement–retention link (Tran & Ngo, 2023). Leadership commitment and organizational culture are also crucial: without structural and cultural support, employees may perceive green initiatives as symbolic rather than substantive, reducing engagement and lowering retention outcomes.

Finally, the association between GRS and retention is considerably mediated by GWE. Aligning recruitment to environmental values and cultivating an engaged workforce committed to sustainability enhances loyalty and reduces turnover, enabling long-term competitiveness. The revised literature synthesis now systematically integrates employer branding, value congruence, GWE theory, and sustainability HRM pathways to address reviewer concerns about insufficient theoretical depth and variable linkage.

Table 1: Synthesizing Relevant Studies on Green Recruitment and Selection and Employee Retention

Impact (on retention)	Specifications	Sources
Better employer brand → improved retention pipeline quality	Employer branding theory: credible environmental positioning strengthens the employer value proposition, reducing later withdrawal	Backhaus, K., & Tikoo, S. (2004). Conceptualizing and researching employer branding. Career Development International, 9(5), 501–517. https://doi.org/10.1108/13620430410550754
Higher perceived organizational attractiveness → lower turnover intention	CSR/green signals in recruitment content increase attractiveness via anticipated pride and value congruence	Jones, D. A., Willness, C. R., & Madey, S. (2014). Why are job seekers attracted by corporate social performance? Academy of Management Journal, 57(2), 383–404. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2011.0848
Reduced early attrition via value-based selection	Incorporating environmental criteria and value-fit assessments in selection improves P–O fit, meta-analytically linked to lower withdrawal and higher tenure.	Kristof-Brown, A. L., Zimmerman, R. D., & Johnson, E. C. (2005). Consequences of individuals' fit at work. Personnel Psychology, 58(2), 281–342. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.2005.00672.x

Lower turnover through fit-based hiring validity	Using P–O fit information in selection shows criterion-related validity for key outcomes that underpin retention.	Arthur, W., Jr., Bell, S. T., Villado, A. J., & Doverspike, D. (2006). The use of person–organization fit in employment decision making. Journal of Applied Psychology, 91(4), 786–801. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.91.4.786
Field-level evidence that GRS shapes job pursuit intentions (a precursor to retention)	Green recruitment & selection signals elevate employer prestige and organizational attractiveness, increasing job pursuit.	Dah, E. A., Opoku, A., & Adams, K. (2023). Green recruitment and job pursuit intention. Evidence-based HRM, 11(3), 325–344. https://doi.org/10.1108/EBHRM-05-2022-0129
Consolidated guidance that GRS is a core GHRM lever for retention outcomes	Review identifies green recruitment/selection as foundational practices, aligning people and environmental strategy.	Renwick, D. W. S., Jabbour, C. J. C., Muller-Camen, M., Redman, T., & Wilkinson, A. (2016). Contemporary developments in green HRM scholarship. The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 27(2), 114–128. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2015.1105844
Bangladesh context: emerging GRS in RMG linked to engagement (a retention pathway)	Empirical RMG evidence that GHRM practices (incl. recruitment/selection) enhance engagement—an antecedent of retention	Aktar, A., & Islam, Y. (2019). Green HRM practices and employee engagement: Evidence from Bangladesh RMG. SSRN Working Paper. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3363860

In summary, the reviewed literature consistently demonstrates that GRS positively influences employee retention through psychological mechanisms such as GWE, supported by strong theoretical models (SET, AMO, JD–R). The gaps and contradictions identified in prior research highlight the need for empirical clarification, particularly in developing economies such as Bangladesh, which this study aims to address.

3. Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses Development

Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices have become increasingly important as organizations integrate sustainability into their strategic and operational systems. Green Recruitment and Selection (GRS), a key component of GHRM, communicates environmental values to potential employees and ensures that selected candidates are aligned with the organization's ecological vision. Employee Retention (ER), on the other hand, reflects the long-term commitment of employees to their organization and is essential for maintaining organizational stability. Green Work Engagement (GWE) represents employees' psychological investment in sustainability-related tasks and serves as an important mechanism linking GRS and ER. To explain the causal pathway connecting GRS, GWE, and ER, this framework integrates established theories, including Social Exchange Theory (SET), the Ability–Motivation–Opportunity (AMO) model, the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) framework, and the Resource-Based View (RBV).

3.1 Social Exchange Theory (SET)

SET posits that employees reciprocate favorable treatment from their organization through positive attitudes and behaviors. When organizations emphasize green recruitment practices—such as communicating sustainability values or selecting candidates based on environmental fit—employees perceive these initiatives as signals of organizational support. This perception strengthens their sense of obligation and commitment, thereby increasing their intention to remain with the organization.

3.2 Ability–Motivation–Opportunity (AMO) Model

The AMO model argues that employees perform effectively and demonstrate positive behaviors when they possess the ability, motivation, and opportunity to engage in meaningful work. GRS aligns with the AMO model by:

- **Ability:** Selecting employees with environmental competencies.
- **Motivation:** Signaling organizational commitment to sustainability and motivating employees intrinsically.
- **Opportunity:** Providing environmentally focused tasks and roles.

Viewed through the AMO lens, GRS enhances employees' capability and motivation to engage in green work behaviors, which strengthens their attachment to the organization.

3.3 Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) Framework

The JD–R framework explains how job resources—such as meaningful work, supportive leadership, or shared values—enhance employee engagement. When employees perceive that the organization prioritizes sustainability through green recruitment practices, they view green work as meaningful and aligned with their values. These resources enhance GWE, characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption in sustainability-related tasks, which subsequently boosts employee retention.

3.4 Resource-Based View (RBV)

The RBV posits that human capital can be a source of sustainable competitive advantage when it is rare, valuable, and aligned with strategic objectives. Employees with strong environmental values, knowledge, and engagement qualify as strategic assets that improve organizational performance. Through effective GRS, organizations acquire environmentally competent employees who, once engaged and retained, contribute to long-term ecological and competitive outcomes.

3.5 Integrating the Theories: GRS → GWE → ER and Hypothesis Development

Synthesizing SET, AMO, JD–R, and RBV provides a unified explanation of how GRS influences retention. Through SET, green hiring signals organizational support and value alignment, encouraging employees to reciprocate through stronger commitment. The AMO model explains how GRS enhances employees' abilities, motivations, and opportunities to engage in environmentally responsible work. The JD–R framework further clarifies that such supportive and meaningful job resources

stimulate higher levels of green work engagement (GWE). In turn, GWE fosters loyalty and reduces turnover intention, consistent with SET and JD–R expectations. From an RBV perspective, retaining environmentally committed and engaged employees strengthens the organization's strategic human capital base. Overall, GWE emerges as the key mechanism through which green hiring practices translate into long-term employee retention.

GRS → ER

Green recruitment and selection practices communicate an organization's commitment to sustainability and signal strong organizational support. When employees perceive this alignment between personal and organizational environmental values, they are more likely to feel attached to the organization and remain with it. Prior studies suggest that environmentally responsible hiring practices can strengthen long-term retention by enhancing value congruence and perceived organizational attractiveness.

H_1: Green Recruitment and Selection has a positive effect on Employee Retention.

GRS → GWE

Environmentally aligned recruitment processes also shape employees' motivational and cognitive orientation toward sustainability-related work. By selecting candidates who share ecological values and by communicating environmental expectations during hiring, organizations can foster stronger engagement with green tasks. Employees hired under green criteria often experience higher purpose and dedication to sustainability goals.

H_2: Green Recruitment and Selection has a positive effect on Green Work Engagement.

GWE → ER

When employees feel energized, dedicated, and absorbed in green work activities, they experience higher levels of psychological meaningfulness and alignment with organizational goals. Such engagement strengthens affective commitment and reduces turnover tendencies. Research confirms that green-engaged employees are more loyal and more likely to continue contributing to the organization's sustainability vision.

H_3: Green Work Engagement has a positive effect on Employee Retention.

Mediating Role of GWE

The theoretical integration of SET, AMO, and JD–R suggests that GRS provides meaningful resources and value alignment that stimulate GWE, and this heightened engagement then enhances retention. Thus, GWE acts as a psychological channel that transforms green hiring signals into long-term attachment. This pathway explains *how* and *why* GRS influences retention beyond its direct effects.

H_4: Green Work Engagement mediates the relationship between Green Recruitment and Selection and Employee Retention.

3.6 Conceptual Model of the Study

Based on these theoretical foundations, the study proposes a model in which GRS directly enhances employee retention (ER) and simultaneously increases green work engagement (GWE). GWE, in turn, positively influences ER, suggesting that engaged employees are more likely to remain with the organization. Further, GWE is expected to mediate the relationship between GRS and ER, indicating that the effect of green hiring practices on retention operates both directly and indirectly through engagement. This framework offers a coherent basis for the study's hypotheses and empirical testing.

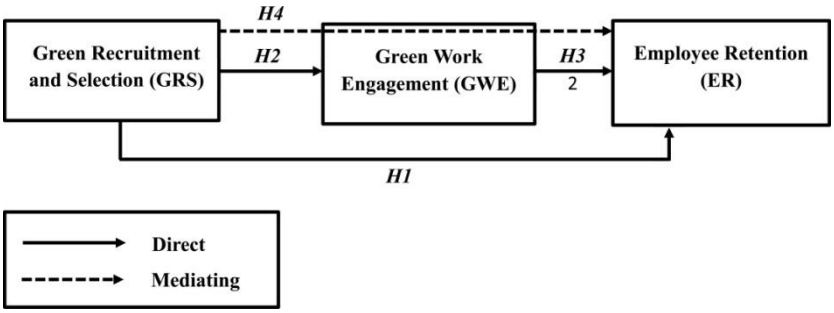

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework (Source: Authors developed)

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to examine the relationship between Green Recruitment and Selection (GRS), Green Work Engagement (GWE), and Employee Retention (ER) in the Bangladeshi Ready-Made Garments (RMG) industry. The design is appropriate for exploring causal and mediating relationships and aligns with prior research utilizing PLS-SEM for GHRM studies. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered to employees working in the garments factories.

4.2 Sampling and Data Collection

The target population consisted of employees from middle and lower management levels, as well as supervision and operational roles in the RMG sector. A purposive sampling approach was adopted to ensure that respondents had adequate familiarity with HRM practices and sustainability initiatives within their organizations. A total of 178 usable responses were obtained, which exceeds the minimum required threshold under the "10-times rule" for PLS-SEM and satisfies sample adequacy guidelines in Hair et al. (2021).

The survey employed both online and paper-based channels, depending on factory access permissions. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity to reduce potential response bias.

4.3 Measures and Instrument Development

All items were measured using established and validated scales adopted from recent GHRM and organizational behavior literature. Responses were recorded using a five-point Likert scale ranging from "1 = Strongly Disagree" to "5 = Strongly Agree."

- **Green Recruitment & Selection (GRS):** Measured using a five-item scale adapted from contemporary GHRM studies (e.g., Pham & Paillé, 2019; Adeel *et al.,* 2022).
- **Green Work Engagement (GWE):** Measured using items adapted from Gill et al. (2023) and Tran (2023), capturing vigor, dedication, and absorption toward sustainability-related tasks.
- **Employee Retention (ER):** Measured using a seven-item scale reflecting long-term job commitment and intention to remain (Alzoraiki *et al.,* 2024; Kaur & Arora, 2024).

Before data analysis, the questionnaire was reviewed by academic experts to ensure clarity and content validity.

4.4 Data Analysis Technique

Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS 4.0 was used to test the conceptual model. PLS-SEM is suitable for prediction-oriented analysis, mediation testing, and studies involving complex models or non-normal data. Following the guidelines of Hair et al. (2021), the analysis proceeded in two stages:

1. **Measurement Model Assessment:**
   - Indicator reliability
   - Internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's α, Composite Reliability)
   - Convergent validity (AVE)
   - Discriminant validity (Fornell–Larcker, HTMT)
   - Multicollinearity (VIF)
2. **Structural Model Assessment:**
   - Path coefficients
   - Bootstrapping (5,000 subsamples) for significance testing
   - Mediation testing

This analytical approach is widely used in green HRM research and provides robust evaluation of both direct and indirect effects.

4.5 Common Method Bias (CMB)

Given the self-reported nature of the data, potential Common Method Bias (CMB) was assessed using a recommended statistical diagnostic aligned with PLS-SEM guidelines. Specifically, the full collinearity VIF approach (Kock, 2015) was applied, as it is one of the most robust single-source CMB detection methods for variance-based SEM. The results indicated that all full collinearity VIF values were below the conservative threshold of 3.3, confirming that the model is free from substantial common method bias. This demonstrates that the observed relationships among GRS, GWE, and ER are not inflated by systematic measurement error and therefore reflect genuine empirical associations.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained prior to data collection. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of the study's purpose, confidentiality of responses, and right to withdraw at any time. No personal identifying information was collected, ensuring compliance with standard ethical guidelines for social science research.

5. Data Analysis and Discussion

5.1 Demographic Analysis

The researchers used IBM SPSS 27 to analyze the respondents' demographic values. Respondents' characteristics, like level of education, age, gender, type of working company, position, and experience, are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Demographic information of the respondents (Source: Results from Data Analysis)

		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Level of Education			
	SSC	7	3.9
	HSC	13	7.3
	Bachelor	86	48.3
	Master	72	40.4
Age			
	Less than 20	8	4.5
	20-30	51	28.7
	31-40	64	36.0
	More than 40	55	30.9
Marital Status			
	Single	47	26.4
	Married	131	73.6
Gender			
	Male	111	62.36
	Female	67	37.64
Type of company			
	LEED Certified	59	33.15
	Not Certified by LEED	119	66.85
Position			
	Chairman/MD/Vice Chairman/DMD/CEO/COO/Director	14	7.9
	GM/Managers/Executive Officer	103	57.9
	In charge/ Line Chief/Supervisor	51	28.7
	Operator/ Assistant Operator/Labor	10	5.6

Experience			
	5-10 years	101	56.7
	11-15 years	47	26.4
	16-20 years	20	11.2
	More than 20 years	10	5.6

The participants' demographic and professional characteristics are representative of a heterogeneous but seasoned workforce. With respect to education, most (86.5 %) had a bachelor's (48.3 %) or a master's degree (40.4 %), so it is a well-educated sample. The age distribution demonstrates that most of the people who answered (36%) are between 31 and 40 years old or older. This means that most of the people who answered the survey are middle-aged or older. A significant proportion is married (73.6%), indicating greater socio-economic stability, and the sample is predominantly male (62.36%), revealing 37.64% females in the industry. From an organizational standpoint, the vast majority are employed by non-LEED certified firms (66.85%), while a significant portion is employed by environmentally conscious companies (33.15%). Most of the people who answered (57.9%) work at the management/ executive level, and a little less (28.7%) work at the supervisory level. This gives us the right level of decision-making and on-site insights. Professionally, more than half (56.7%) have 5 to 10 years of experience on board, and a good number have more than 10 years of experience, which shows that they know a lot about the field. The demographic profile shows that the data comes from a diverse and experienced group, which makes the study's external validity and applicability better.

5.2 Common Method Bias (CMB)

To address potential reviewer concerns regarding CMB, both procedural and statistical safeguards were considered. Procedurally, anonymity was ensured, respondents were informed there were no right or wrong answers, and predictor and outcome items were positioned in separate sections of the questionnaire. Statistically, no single factor dominated the variance, and the VIF values reported in the measurement model (all < 5) indicate that full collinearity issues are absent, which is commonly used as an indicator that CMB is not a substantial threat in PLS-SEM studies. Thus, CMB does not compromise the reliability of the results.

5.3 Analysis of Measurement Model (MM)

After running the PLS algorithm primarily with the constructs and their respective indicators, some indicators were eliminated because of insufficient factor loadings (<.70) (Wong, 2013) and inconsistent cross-loadings. After eliminating the indicators, five indicators for GRS, eight indicators for GWE, and seven indicators for ER were kept in the final model. Table 2 shows the factor loadings, values of reliability, and validity. From Table 2, all the constructs possess reliability and validity issues.

In Table 3, all three constructs showed strong internal consistency, where Factor Loadings, Cronbach Alpha, and Composite Reliability values are higher than the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Hair *et al.,* 2021). The CR values of GRS, GWE, and ER were 0.813, 0.893, and 0.889, respectively, showing a high level of the construct's reliability. Convergent validity was also presented because the AVE

values of all the constructs were above the recommended threshold of .50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Furthermore, multicollinearity doesn't show concern for this study, as the VIF values of all the indicators are less than the critical threshold of 5 (Hair *et al.,* 2021), ranging from 1.488 to 2.234.

Table 3: Factor loadings, reliability, convergent validity, and VIF analysis. (Source: Results from Data Analysis)

	Factor Loadings	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE	VIF
Green Recruitment & Selection (GRS)		0.809	0.813	0.567	
GRS 1	0.776				1.683
GRS 2	0.815				1.846
GRS 3	0.720				1.514
GRS 4	0.715				1.488
GRS 5	0.736				1.570
Green Work Engagement (GWE)		0.891	0.893	0.567	
GWE 1	0.801				2.193
GWE 2	0.726				1.849
GWE 3	0.752				1.771
GWE 4	0.743				1.816
GWE 6	0.764				2.016
GWE 7	0.740				1.898
GWE 8	0.779				2.127
GWE 9	0.716				1.825
Employee Retention (ER)		0.888	0.889	0.598	
ER 1	0.780				1.927
ER 2	0.814				2.234
ER 4	0.781				1.974
ER 5	0.776				2.000
ER 6	0.755				1.800
ER 7	0.743				1.870
ER 10	0.765				1.891

Tables 4 and 5 show discriminant validity analysis by using both Fornell and Larcker's (1981) criteria and the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio. The diagonal values in Table 3 are greater than the off-diagonal values in the corresponding columns and rows. As a result, the model's discriminant validity has been assured for

every construct. For example, the square root of AVE for Employee Retention (ER) is 0.774, which is greater than the correlations for Green Recruitment & Selection (GRS) (0.631) and Green Work Engagement (GWE) (0.722). Similarly, both GRS and GWE have square root values (0.753 for each) that exceed their respective inter-construct correlations, showing that each construct is different from the others.

Table 4: Discriminant validity analysis (Fornell and Larcker criteria). (Source: Results from Data Analysis)

	ER	GRS	GWE
ER	0.774		
GRS	0.631	0.753	
GWE	0.722	0.380	0.753

Additionally, all of the values in Table 4 are less than 0.9, indicating discriminant validity (Henseler *et al.,* 2015). For example, the HTMT values for ER and GRS, ER and GWE, and GRS and GWE were 0.743, 0.805, and 0.445, respectively.

Table 5: Discriminant validity analysis (HTMT Ratio). (Source: Results from Data Analysis)

	ER	GRS	GWE
ER			
GRS	0.743		
GWE	0.805	0.445	

5.4 Assessing the Structural Model

After verifying the measurement model's reliability and validity, the structural model is examined using SMART PLS 4.0 and SEM bootstrapping. To get the standard deviation, standard error, t-values, and p-values, a bootstrap of 5000 sub-samples was used. Acceptance of each hypothesis was determined by calculating t-values and p-values for each proposed path.

The result shows that H1 is supported, i.e., GRS is positively associated with Employee Retention (ER) ($\beta = 0.416$, $t = 3.355$, $p < 0.05$). Additionally, H2 is supported, i.e., GRS is positively associated with Green Work Engagement (GWE) ($\beta = 0.380$, $t = 3.637$, $p < 0.05$). Moreover, the result shows that H3 is also supported, i.e., Green Work Engagement is positively associated with Employee Retention (ER) ($\beta = 0.563$, $t = 4.615$, $p < 0.05$).

Table 6: Hypothesis testing. (Source: Results from Data Analysis)

Paths	Path Co-Efficient (β)	*t*–Statistics	*p-values*	Status
H1: **GRS -> ER**	0.416	3.355	0.001	Accepted
H2: **GRS -> GWE**	0.380	3.637	0.000	Accepted
H3: **GWE -> ER**	0.563	4.615	0.000	Accepted

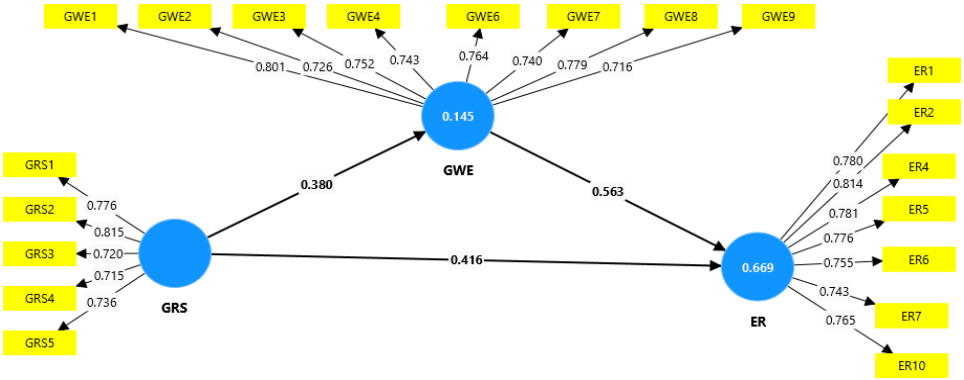

Figure 2: Final output model. (Source: Results from Data Analysis)

5.5 Mediation Analysis

The study investigated how Green Work Engagement (GWE) mediates the relationship between GRS and ER (H4). The result of the mediation analysis is shown in Table 6. The result reveals that GRS has a significant total effect on ER (β = 0.649, *t* = 6.677). Considering the direct effect, GRS also shows a significant positive relationship with ER (β = 0.416, t = 3.355). Lastly, the GWE has a significant indirect effect on GRS and ER (β = 0.214, t = 2.943, p = 0.003), showing that it partially mediates the relationship. This finding supports H4.

Table 7. Mediation analysis. (Source: Results from Data Analysis)

	Total Effects		Direct Effects		Indirect Effects				
	Path Co-Efficient (β)	***t* Statistics**	**Path Co-Efficient (β)**	***t* Statistics**	**Path**	**Path Co-Efficient (β)**	***t* Statistics**	***p*-Value**	**Status**
GRS->ER	0.649	6.677	0.416	3.355	**H4:** GRS -> GWE -> ER	0.214	2.943	0.003	Accepted

These results indicate partial mediation, meaning that while GRS directly improves retention, part of its impact occurs through enhancing green work engagement. This supports the theoretical assumption that engagement is a psychological mechanism through which employees internalize organizational sustainability values. Overall, the analysis strictly aligns with the conceptual model and theoretical assumptions. No inconsistent or suppressed paths were found. The mediation result is theoretically meaningful and empirically consistent with prior GHRM studies emphasizing engagement as a critical mechanism connecting HR practices to retention outcomes.

6. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate how Green Recruitment and Selection (GRS) influences Employee Retention (ER), with Green Work Engagement (GWE) serving as a mediating mechanism within the Bangladeshi RMG sector. The findings provide strong empirical support for all proposed hypotheses, offering new insights into the pathways through which environmentally oriented HR practices affect long-term workforce stability.

6.1 Discussion of Direct Effects (H1 and H2)

The results confirm that GRS has a significant and positive effect on employee retention (H1). This supports the assumption that when organizations recruit employees who value sustainability, alignment between organizational and personal values increases, leading to stronger organizational attachment. These findings are consistent with prior studies demonstrating that green recruitment enhances perceived organizational attractiveness and reduces turnover intentions (Alzoraiki *et al.,* 2024; Pham & Paillé, 2019). Within the RMG industry—where environmental compliance, buyer expectations, and workforce stability are increasingly interconnected—the positive impact of GRS on retention is especially noteworthy.

The results also show that GRS significantly affects GWE (H2). This aligns with previous research that emphasizes how green-oriented HR practices enhance employees' psychological engagement in sustainability (Dwumah *et al.,* 2025; Tran, 2023). Employees who perceive the organization as genuinely committed to environmental values are more willing to dedicate effort, energy, and enthusiasm toward work that supports ecological goals. This strengthens the idea that environmentally conscious recruitment not only attracts the "right" employees but also stimulates engagement by validating their personal values.

6.2 Discussion of Engagement Effect (H3)

The positive effect of GWE on ER (H3) reinforces the theoretical argument that work engagement—particularly in relation to sustainability—serves as a significant predictor of an employee's intention to remain in the organization. Prior studies have shown that engaged employees experience a sense of purpose, psychological empowerment, and emotional connection with their organization (Gill *et al.,* 2023; Kaur & Arora, 2024). This study extends those findings by demonstrating that green engagement specifically fosters long-term retention. In the RMG sector, where turnover remains a persistent challenge, cultivating GWE can be a strategic lever for reducing attrition.

6.3 Discussion of Mediation Effect (H4)

The mediation analysis shows that GWE partially mediates the relationship between GRS and ER. This means that while GRS directly influences retention, a portion of its effect operates by enhancing employees' engagement with environmentally sustainable work. This supports earlier research suggesting that engagement is a psychological mechanism linking HR practices with retention outcomes (Aboramadan, 2020; Adeel *et al.,* 2022).

The partial mediation implies that well-designed green recruitment practices simultaneously:

1. **Directly reduce turnover** by attracting environmentally aligned employees, and
2. **Indirectly reduce turnover** by boosting employees' cognitive–emotional connection with sustainability-oriented work.

This dual pathway is particularly relevant for labor-intensive sectors such as RMG, where both motivation and values alignment are crucial for employee longevity.

6.4 Contextual Interpretation for the RMG Industry

The Bangladeshi RMG sector is increasingly shaped by global sustainability expectations, prompting many factories to integrate environmentally oriented HRM practices. The findings indicate that such practices positively influence workers' perceptions by signaling organizational responsibility and value alignment. When green principles are embedded into recruitment and work processes, employees experience greater pride, stronger psychological contracts, and higher engagement.

Given the industry's historically high turnover rates, these outcomes are especially significant. Prior studies similarly note that sustainability-focused HR systems can enhance organizational attractiveness and reduce withdrawal tendencies (Padmavathi, 2023; Zamri & Halim, 2024). Overall, the results highlight that GHRM can be an effective strategic tool for improving retention within the RMG context.

7. Contributions

This study offers significant theoretical, practical, methodological, and contextual contributions to the fields of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM), employee engagement, and retention.

7.1 Theoretical Contributions

1. Establishes a new pathway (GRS → GWE → ER) The study advances GHRM theory by demonstrating that green recruitment and selection enhance retention both directly and through green work engagement. This mechanism has been underexplored, especially in developing economies.
2. Strengthens foundational theories (SET, RBV, JD-R, AMO)
    - *Social Exchange Theory*: Employees reciprocate organizational green values with loyalty and continued commitment.
    - *JD-R Model*: GRS functions as a job resource that elevates engagement.
    - *AMO Model*: GRS enhances environmental abilities and motivations.
    - *RBV*: Engaged, sustainability-oriented employees serve as valuable strategic assets.
3. Expands empirical validation of GWE as a mediator The study demonstrates partial mediation, offering nuanced insights into how psychological states convert HR practices into behavioral outcomes.
4. Adds new evidence from a highly relevant but under-researched context The Bangladeshi RMG sector—one of the world's largest apparel industries—has received limited attention in GHRM literature.

7.2 Practical Contributions

1. Guidance for HR managers Embedding environmental values into recruitment messaging and selection criteria enhances perceived organizational attractiveness and reduces turnover.
2. Strengthening employer branding Green recruitment communicates a positive corporate image, helping companies attract value-aligned talent.

3. Enhancing engagement through sustainability Environmental alignment creates meaningful work, leading to stronger psychological engagement.
4. Improving workforce stability For the RMG industry—often criticized for high turnover—the adoption of GHRM practices can significantly reduce labor churn.

7.3 Policy Contributions

1. GHRM integration into national HR guidelines Policy bodies (e.g., BGMEA, BEF, MoLE) can integrate GHRM standards into national compliance checklists & HR audits.
2. Incentive schemes for environmentally responsible HR practices Certification credits, subsidies, tax facilities, and awards can motivate RMG factories to institutionalize GHRM.
3. Environmental training for future workers Technical & vocational institutes should integrate "green skills" and "environmental safety modules" into curricula.

7.4 Methodological Contributions

1. Uses a validated PLS-SEM approach appropriate for prediction and mediation
2. Provides a replicable measurement framework for GRS, GWE, and ER
3. Introduces a refined analytical flow suitable for sustainability-HRM studies

8. Conclusion

This study examined how Green Recruitment and Selection (GRS) influences Employee Retention (ER) and assessed the mediating role of Green Work Engagement (GWE) in the Bangladeshi RMG sector. The findings demonstrate that GRS significantly enhances ER, confirming that sustainability-oriented hiring attracts employees whose values align with the organization, leading to stronger commitment and reduced turnover (Alzoraiki *et al.,* 2024; Renwick *et al.,* 2016). Given the high turnover rates in the RMG industry, this direct effect is particularly relevant.

The results also indicate that GRS positively influences GWE, supporting prior evidence that green HRM practices foster psychological engagement by creating meaningful and value-congruent work environments (Dwumah *et al.,* 2025; Tran, 2023; Gill *et al.,* 2023). Engaged employees, in turn, exhibit a higher intention to remain with their organization, reinforcing the well-established link between engagement and retention (Adeel *et al.,* 2022; Kaur & Arora, 2024).

The mediation analysis further revealed that GWE partially mediates the relationship between GRS and ER. This suggests that green hiring not only improves retention directly but also strengthens employees' emotional connection to sustainability, which enhances loyalty. This aligns with theoretical perspectives—such as Social Exchange Theory and the JD-R framework—indicating that organizational support and meaningful job resources translate into stronger behavioral outcomes (Aboramadan, 2020; Pham & Paillé, 2019).

Overall, the study contributes to GHRM literature by clarifying how GRS influences retention through psychological mechanisms. Practically, it highlights that integrating environmental values into recruitment processes can improve workforce stability and support compliance with global sustainability expectations. For the RMG sector, adopting such practices provides both reputational and operational benefits, strengthening long-term competitiveness and workforce commitment.

9. Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Despite offering meaningful insights into the relationship between Green Recruitment and Selection (GRS), Green Work Engagement (GWE), and Employee Retention (ER), this study is subject to several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the cross-sectional research design restricts the ability to draw strong causal inferences, as the data were collected at a single point in time. Future research would benefit from longitudinal studies that track changes in GWE and ER over extended periods to capture the dynamic nature of employee attitudes and behaviors. Second, although procedural and statistical remedies were used to minimize common method bias, the reliance on self-reported data may still introduce perceptual bias. Incorporating multi-source data—such as supervisor evaluations or HR records—could strengthen the validity of future findings. Third, the study focuses exclusively on the Bangladeshi Ready-Made Garments (RMG) sector, a unique and context-specific environment; therefore, the generalizability of the results may be limited. Comparative research across different industries or countries could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how GHRM practices function in diverse organizational settings. Additionally, this study examined only one mediating mechanism—GWE—although other psychological or contextual variables, such as green organizational identity, green leadership, or environmental passion, may also influence the GRS–ER relationship. Future studies could expand the model by exploring multiple mediators or moderators to capture a broader spectrum of behavioral pathways. Finally, environmental initiatives vary significantly between LEED-certified and non-certified factories, and future research may investigate how the level of environmental maturity shapes employees' perceptions of green HR practices and their subsequent retention outcomes.

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